FROM WHERE I STAND
TOPICAL SONGS FROM AMERICA AND ENGLAND
SUNG BY:
PEGGY SEEGER

VOCALS:
Kitty MacColl / Ewan MacColl / Calum MacColl / Neil MacColl
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SIDE 1
Band 1 UP IN WISCONSIN (Don Lange, © Barking Spider, arr.
Peggy Seeger, N. MacColl) 4:40
Band 2 DRAGLINES (Deborah Silverstein, © same, arr. Peggy
Seeger) 2:50
Band 3 VOICES FROM THE MOUNTAINS (by and © Ruthie Gor-
ton) 1:54
Band 4 PLEASE MR. REAGAN (Peggy Seeger, © Ewan MacColl
Ltd, arr. Peggy Seeger, N and C MacColl) 3:08
Band 5 GRAPE-PICKERS TRAGEDY (by and © Jack Warshaw,
arr. Peggy Seeger) 4:25
Band 6 TAKE THE CHILDREN AND RUN (Don Lange, © Bark-
ing Spider, arr. Peggy Seeger and C. MacColl) 3:15
Band 7 THIRD SHIFT (by and © Muriel Hogan, arr. Peggy
Seeger and N. MacColl) 1:50

SIDE 2
Band 1 CARGO OF DREAD (Don Lange, © Barking Spider, arr.
Peggy Seeger and Calum MacColl) 2:13
Band 2 BLACK LUNG (by Hazel Dickens, © Happy Valley
Music) 2:40
Band 3 TAFT-HARTLEY (Charley King, © Pied Asp Music, arr.
Peggy Seeger and N. MacColl) 3:14
Band 4 ARAGON MILL (by and © Si Kahn, arr. Peggy Seeger
and C. MacColl) 3:06
Band 5 AGENT ORANGE (by and © Muriel Hogan, arr. Peggy
Seeger) 4:50
Band 6 ENOUGH IS ENOUGH (by Peggy Seeger, © Ewan Mac-
Coll Ltd.) 5:06
Band 7 THoughts Of Time (by Peggy Seeger, © Ewan Mac-
Coll Ltd.) 3:10

PEGGY SEEGER has been singing and playing American
folk music all her life. Brought up in Washington, DC, she settled in
England in 1958 when she began working and living with Ewan
MacColl. She has made her life a combination of singer,
housewife, songwriter. Her daughter Kitty (9) sings on this disc.
Her sons Neil (23) and Calum (19) are excellent guitarists. In case
there is any confusion as to credits, the boys play the lead guitars.

Supporting accompaniment, Calum and Neil MacColl.
Sound Engineer: Nick Godwin
Recorded at Pathway Studios, London
Production: Neil MacColl
Cover photograph: Ewan MacColl

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FROM WHERE I STAND  TOPICAL SONGS FROM AMERICA AND ENGLAND  SANG BY PEGGY SEEGER  VOCI: Kitty MacColl / Ewan MacColl / Calum MacColl / Neil MacColl

Way back in 1956 I met an Israeli boy in Copenhagen. I was seeing the world from underneath a knapsack, a banjo and a guitar. He was on his way to Alaska to do a two-year stint in a logging camp. He was intrigued by the American folksongs that I had been brought up with. He knew very little about traditional music but when I told him I was intending to stay in England, he said 'I'd have to get over the idea of singing American folksongs on stage. Stung by his equating the music I loved to a bout of influenza, I protested, but he insisted: "Your songs will become more English every year. They'll change because you change." I took this with many grains of salt and continued to sing the songs in two dozen countries over the two dozen years that followed.

The crisis didn't really hit me until the mid-1970's when I discovered that there were a number of my favorite indigenous American songs that I just never seemed to sing any more: Old Joe Clark, Cindy, and many of the banjo tunes. I was definitely leaning towards that section of American music which had originated in Britain, and indeed I became a fine ballad-singer. But I was a prime case of cultural displacement and disorientation. I had always been interested in industrial and protest songs and I now became interested in contemporary American topical music. Not having been brought up in a "traditional" setting (other than that of sitting by the phonograph playing Carter family records) I had to start looking for roots. Lacking a proper southern drawl with which to do justice to a Sarah Ogan song, or the mid-Western laconic delivery necessary (to my mind) for The Ludlow Massacre, I drifted forward in time to the newer, urban-oriented songs, the kind of songs on this record. I need these musical ties that make me feel as if I am still part of the action of the land of my birth. They make it possible for me to continue singing the folk songs on stage. Songs like Taft-Hartley may now be part of history, but then so are Woody Guthrie's songs - and I am deeply indebted to the many writers whose songs I sing, for they make it possible for me to keep forging links in my cultural chain.

I speak with a kind of English accent now (Canadians ask me what part of Ireland I am from), but when I sing I slip naturally into American inflections. I write songs that have some American elements in them, but they arise from my British experience. I have included three of my own songs on the album because this is where I stand, where I live, with one foot in each country and a perspective that is mid-Atlantic.

Peggy Seeger
London, 1982

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**side one, band one**

**UP IN WISCONSIN** (by Don Lange)

Up in Wisconsin, just the other day,
They bombed a timber with a chemical spray;
Wanted it cleared, didn't care how,
Had to have a place to feed the cows ...  

Up in Alaska, where the men are men,
They hunt timber wolves from an airplane;
Pelts don't bring but a dollar or two,
Just enough to pay the pilot and the crew.

**CHORUS**:

Lord I want to go back home,
And fish those cold, crystal streams;
O Lord, I want to go back home once again,
Where the evergreens are green.

Way down south, in a bayou swamp,
Alligator lived in a cypress stump;
Poacherman comes with a hook and gun,
Make a briefcase for a rich man's son ...  

Farmer had a field of oats and hay
Till they come to build another highway;
Condemned his land, bought at their price,
Made a concrete runway out of paradise. **(CHORUS)**

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**side one, band two**

**DRAGLINES** (by Deborah Silverstein)

Coalport, P.A.
Just a little town, tucked too far away
For anyone to know.
But the folks born and raised
For six generations working day by day
Trying to keep themselves a home.

**CHORUS**:

Draglines at my heart,
They're tearing us apart
And the mountainside where we were born,
Must I weep and mourn for the land
That took ten million years to form,
Now all my eyes can see are just
The bleeding scars across the mountainside,
Across the mountainside.
Our neighbors down the road,
They farmed twelve acres, worked a heavy load,
Poor as dirt, though they tried.
Till the coal company came through,
Said, "We'll mine your land, take the burden off
Of you,
And we'll see that you get by." (CHORUS)

First they tore down their home
Where their grandma and all the kids were born,
They just brushed it all aside.
Then came the big machines,
Ripped up the trees and muddied all the streams
While the family stood and cried.

FINAL CHORUS:
_Draglines at my heart,_
_They're tearing us apart,_
_And the mountainside where we were born,_
_O, take warning that the storm clouds will come,_
_And block out the sun_
_That's shining on the folks who seek their fortunes,_
_Off the families who have died_
_Trying to survive_
_Across the mountainside._

(Peggy, concertina)

PLEAS, MISTER REAGAN (by Peggy Seeger)

If you go to Little Bookham, go beyond the "Rose and Crown"
Take a left, the second right, until the road goes down
A little hill and then turn left again, just by the willow tree,
There's a house, a dog, a cat, two kids and my old man and me.

I saw it in the paper, so I know it must be true,
They've got more bombs than targets and they don't know what to do,
There's SS-20's aimed at Yeovil, even Clacton-on-the-Sea,
But no-one, nowhere's, ever aiming anything at me.

CHORUS: So please, Mister Reagan, I'm missing all the fun,
The other players in the game have pieces, I've got none,
I don't want to live beyond my time, be left here all alone,
Please let me have a little missile of my own.

It must be great to live in London or in Naples or in Cannes,
You know how many bombs you'll get and what you've got in hand,
I think the great atomic finals should be held for all mankind,
And Little Bookham's very very very far behind.

I feel so insignificant, it just like I was poor,
Even Dallas cannot raise my spirits any more,
I've got a dandy little shelter and a great survival kit,
But with a shield, without a sword, how can I do my bit?(CHORUS)

If I had a missile I could hold it in my lap,
And someone on the other side would put me on their map
And I'd be part of our defences, I could push my button too,
Then I'd be as good as them, and half as good as you.

Now I come to think of it, one is not enough,
The enemy is all around, about to call my bluff,
So please, Mister Reagan, would you send me two?
One to aim at Thatcher and the other at you.

(Calum, guitar; Neill, mandolin; Peggy, banjo)

NOTE: The idea for this song was taken from a small item in the
GUARDIAN, December 13 1981, claiming that "by the end of the
decade there will be about 80,000 nuclear warheads in the great
arsenals, aimed at virtually every town in the Northern Hemisphere...
but there are simply not enough military targets to meet the number
of warheads."

THE GRAPE-PICKER'S TRAGEDY (by Jack Warshaw)

The night-time is hot and the city is sleeping,
Ramon Sanchez takes Maria, his wife, by the hand;
The American border's a mile down the highway,
The border you've got to cross over to work on the land.
(Cross over to work on the land.)
Ramon and Maria just follow the foot-steps
To a place called "The Hole" a little ways over the line;
Ten-thousand are begging for work in the vineyards,
Where fruitflies and hoppers are thicker than grapes on the vine,
Thicker than grapes on the vine.

At four the bus starts on another day's journey.
At six the sun in the sky and the hills glowing red.
At eight they arrive and by nine they are weary.
At eleven the drone of the duster is heard overhead.

The dusterplane's loaded with tanks of spray poison
To kill off the fruitflies and hoppers that damage the crops,
But it's killed off the insects that feed on the fruitflies,
They're breeding unchecked and so fast that the dusting can't stop,
So fast that the dusting can't stop.

The dusterplane circled low over the vineyard;
Ramon knew the sound that means 'run for the trucks or the shed';
The poison rained down where Maria was working;
Maria worked on and a few hours later was dead.
And a few hours later was dead.

"Ramon," said the grower, "we're all mighty sorry.
She must have been sick long before she came up from the south.
That spray don't hurt people you know we don't want trouble,
So here's your day's pay, go away, and don't open your mouth.
Go away, and don't open your mouth."

He turned on his heel and walked out of the office.
Maria was taken to town and they gave him her things.
There's nowhere to go but back over the border.
Adios, mi Maria, it's their blood the next harvest brings.
It's their blood the next harvest brings.
(Peggy, autoharp and guitar)

side one, band six

TAKE THE CHILDREN AND RUN (by Don Lange)

Telephone rang, have you heard the news?
Carrion crows coming home to roost.
Over at the plant, you know, something went wrong,
Take the children and run....

They say they'll fix it if we just stay calm,
Go back to your factories, go back to your farms.
Don't you get angry, don't you lose your cool.
And the bosses will share their power with you,
Take the children and run....

Doctor Atomic lying through his teeth
Says we've nothing to fear but fear itself.
He visits the plant in a lead-lined suit,
It comes out looking like courage on the evening news,
Take the children and run....

You're on the Commission and you're sixty years old,
You make a deal with the devil and your profits unfold,
But twenty years down the line and that little girl
Is in the prime of her life, her blood cells grow wild,
Take the children and run....

I saw the reactor through an April haze
It looked like a blunderbuss aimed at the sky.
It's your friendly atom raging out of control,
And your scientists praying for Lady Luck's smile,
Take the children and run....

(Calum, bowed psaltery, Peggy, guitar)

side one, band seven

THIRD SHIFT (by Muriel Hogan)

I've got it together, but not quite,
Out into the weather, it's a cold night.
When most of the city is going to bed,
I'm shaking the cobwebs out of my head.
I'm working that third shift - I guess it's all right
Better get pushing, it's midnight...

When I started working, the first night
I thought I'd be lonesome, but I wasn't right,
The people on my shift, they're friendly and strong.
As steady as heartbeats, going all night long.
You watch those old timers, they really know how
To make it on third shift, I'm seeing that now,

You know, we get an extra twenty-seven cents an hour
For these screwed-up hours we keep;
While the president and his whole board of directors
Making plenty more money being sound asleep---

While I'm making my piece-rate, all right,
As long as I'm pounding the whole damned night
We watch for the sunrise, welcome the dawn
Pretty soon clean the old machines and get on home,
We've got this one sewn up, we're doing all right
We're out in the sunlight--- Hey, I'll see you tonight!
All right!
(Peggy and Neill, guitars)
CARGO OF DREAD (by Don Lange)

It's raining tonight on the interstate highway
The sign says the way-station's closed.
Smoky's in bed, so the radio said,
So it's time now to make your move.
A Trans-Star rig rumbles into the night
While galaxies whirl high above,
White pills in his head and a cargo of dread,
That trucker is dreaming of love.

It's raining tonight on Duane Arnold Station,
The guard waves his hand, Go ahead!
Duane isn't worried, 'cause he lives upwind,
So he tucks his small children to bed.
Another investment, another return,
You know, the risk's not as great as it seems.
But the people of Paloma live on a bomb
And some of them sweat in their dreams.

It's raining tonight on the garden I planted
By the light of the warm summer sun.
My half-life is thirty-five, I hope to be alive
To help when the harvest comes in.
Some sow the soybean, Some sow the winter wheat,
Some sow the cancerous wind,
And you know in your soul that they won't be responsible
When that last deadly harvest comes in.

It's raining tonight on the Red Cedar River
Where radioactivity burns.
Children are dreaming and parents are scheming
To make them forget what they learned.
Old Noah escaped, on the water he fled,
But this water puts rot in your bones;
Don't beg for protection, don't ask directions,
'Cause brother, there's no place to run.
Brother, there's no place to run.
Brother, there's no place to run.

TAFT-HARTLEY SONG (by Charlie King)

Part of me says we shouldn't be striking
But most of me says we should,
'Cause when the owners get together with the U.S. government
You know, it ain't a-gonna do me no good,
And if they keep on hounding us a yellow-dog contract,
We're gonna have to turn it down.
Mr. Taft can dig it, Mr. Hartley can haul it,
'Cause I'm gonna leave it in the ground.

CHORUS:
Mr. Taft can dig it, Mr. Hartley can haul it,
Carter can supervise the crew,
And if they find it too hard, they got the National Guard
To fix their bayonets and shovel like fools.
It's gonna take a lot longer than eighty short days
For this miner to cool on down,
Mr. Taft can dig it, Mr. Hartley can haul it,
'Cause I'm gonna leave it in the ground.

Mine-owner don't worry 'bout safety regulations,
He's walkin' in the sun all day.
But when you're down in the mine the first thing you learn,
You gotta stay alive if you want to spend that pay,
If we sign away our rights to be wildcat strikin'!
You know they're gonna push us around.
Mr. Taft can dig it, Mr. Hartley can haul it,
But I'm gonna leave it in the ground.

Well, they took away our food-stamps, our medical plan,
I got a mortgage I just can't pay;
But the folks here in town are gonna give us credit.
'Cause they know I'll be back on my feet some day,
And if some gun-totin' thug takes to totin' for the owners
Better find himself another town.
Mr. Taft can dig it, Mr. Hartley can haul it,
'Cause I'm gonna leave it in the ground. (CHORUS)

BLACK LUNG (by Hazel Dickens)

He's had more hard luck than most men could stand,
The mine was his first love, but never his friend;
He's lived a hard life and he'll die,
Black lung done got him, his time is nigh.

Black lung, black lung, you're just bidin' your time:
But soon my sufferin', I'll leave behind.
But I can't help but wonder what God had in mind,
To send such a devil to plague this soul of mine.
Now, my daddy's pensioned off at eighty bucks a week,  
Seems to get smaller every year;  
If every time the kids are sick I'm reachin' in my pocket  
You know my pay raise is gonna disappear,  
No owner can outsmart me with his Taft and his Hartley  
While the coal supply is running down.  
He may own the coal but he don't own me,  
And I'm gonna leave it in the ground.

(Neill, guitar; Peggy on piano)

side two, band four

ARAGON MILL (by Si Kahn)

At the east end of town, at the foot of the hill  
There's a chimney so tall that says Aragon Mill.  
But there's no smoke at all coming out of the stack  
'Cause the mill has pulled out and it ain't coming back.

CHORUS:  
And the only tune I hear is the sound of the wind  
As it blows through the town, weave and spin, weave and spin.

There's no children at all in the narrow empty streets,  
All the looms have shut down, it's so quiet I can't sleep. (CHORUS)

Oh, I'm too poor to move and I'm too young to die  
And there's nowhere to go for my family and I.  
'Cause the mill has shut down, it's the only life I know  
Tell me, where can I go? Tell me, where can I go? (CHORUS)

(guitars, Peggy and Calum)

side two, band five

AGENT ORANGE SONG (by Muriel Hogan)

Well, I was seventeen, a great big kid, the year that I enlisted.  
I can't recall just why I did, my mom says I insisted.  
I had a strange idea then,Uncle Sam was right,  
Mom she cried, she signed the card and I went off to fight.

Got off the plane in Vietnam, it didn't seem like war.  
With all I saw I started wondering what we'd come there for.  
The officers got drunk at night, cheated on their wives,  
Those guys on the other side were fighting for their lives.

You know, the Army tried some fancy tricks to bring them to their knees  
Like Agent Orange defoliants to clear the brush and trees.  
We'd fly above the trail all day in clouds of poison spray,  
I never thought that chemical would take my life today.

CHORUS: But I got the news this morning, the doctor told me so,  
Says they killed me in Vietnam and I didn't even know.

side two, band six

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH (by Peggy Seeger)

Something always keeps you scurrying  
With problems and with worrying,  
There's additives in the vittlés  
And there's poisons in the air;  
There's kids with problem parents  
And you can't imagine where  
You'll get the money to pay the bills  
You're getting old, getting fat,  
Behind the Joneses, lost your job  
And to top that  
You got no matches for the gas!  
Your head is always aching  
And the earth is always quaking  
And the kids are running wild.  
Cuts, cuts, more cuts,  
Cholesterol, the National Front,  
Traffic jams, the neutron bomb,  
Afghanistan, it's raining on your  
Holidays and still you try to smile,  
Deficits and overflows,  
The hurdles and the upstartows,  
Haven't we got enough without  
THE NUCLEAR SIDESHOW?

Every time you turn around  
You're shelling out anotherpound,  
The mortgage, the petrol,  
The insurance and the rent.  
A flutter on the Pools could be  
A ruinous event.  
VAT, PAYE, EEC, alimony,  
By '83 we'll be on our knees  
And the Portuguese will send us foreign aid.
In the hands of thugs
And mugs and husbands and their wives,
There's suicide and cancer
Or there's falling off a cliff
Or just an overdose of flu...
   Dying of shock on budget day,
   Drinking all your cares away,
   Cholera, diptheria, hysteria,
   Or snakebite in the jungles of Peru.
Plenty of ways of getting faster
To the day you breathe your last,
Oh, haven't we got enough without
A NUCLEAR DISASTER?

All the things you like to do,
The very things you'd hate to lose,
Sons and lovers, wife and kids,
The smell of treacle tart.
West Ham winning at home
Or dabbling in the arts.
   Bacon and eggs and books - flowers - clouds -
   Sleeping in and wishing you was winning the Bonds
Or simply gazing into space.
   Once upon a time, a loaf of bread,
   A double bed, a glass of wine, my love, and you.
   I've even heard it said that women get their kicks from watching little Harpic soldiers
   Marching down the loo.
All the good things that attract you,
Don't forget that it's a fact that
All of it could be lost because of
A NUCLEAR REACTOR.

There's answers everywhere you look,
They could be in the Holy Book,
There's power in the wind and water,
Power from the sun.
There's energy from outer space
From now to Kingdom Come.
   Insulation, conservation,
   Control the population
   Make MacDonalds with a soyabean
   And all things geothermal,
They're infernal 'cause no profit can be made.
Of course we could share out the wealth,
But some would say it ruined their health,
They'd have to go by train
Or by cycling - and re-cycling
   All the plastic and the glass,
   The News of the World, the metals
   And the nasty biodegradeable things
   That live down in the drains...
There's reforming of our institutions,
Maybe a little revolution,
Just remember that the nuclear way
May any day turn out to be a
   VERY FINAL SOLUTION.

(Kitty, supporting vocal)
NOTES FOR NON-BRITISHERS:

National Front: one of Britain's leading fascist organisations
V.A.T: Value-added-tax, added to a number of items to support
the European Economic Community expenses
P.A.Y.E.: Pay-as-you-earn, tax deductible at source.
kirby grips: bobby-pins
Ronan Point: a number of apartment blocks in London that proved
to be disastrously constructed
Spaghetti Junction: nickname for a junction of motorways near Birmingham
loo: toilet
West Ham: a football team
the Bonds: a national savings scheme which includes a weekly lottery
Harpie: a lavatory cleaning powder
News of the World: a scandal-mongering Sunday paper

side two, band seven

THOUGHTS OF TIME (by Peggy Seeger)

When first we loved and when our life was new,
Time lay before us like the space around a star,
But time moves faster than it used to do,
Thoughts of time will break my heart.

We've been through every weather you and me,
Forever twining ourselves together till death will us part,
But death seems nearer than it used to be,
Thoughts of time will break my heart.

We know our children will take wing and fly,
Ties will be broken and a circle torn apart,
But to know our children must grow old and die,
Thoughts of time will break my heart.

When our time is gone and others' time begun,
Our lives swept aside and others' lives about to start,
Then we'll join the past as countless more have done,
Thoughts of time will break my heart.

If we joined our dream, my love, we joined the fear
That one will be left behind, the other must depart,
But we've been in love for nearly thirty years,
Thoughts of time will break my heart.

Our dream is old, our dream is always new,
A dream ever with us, it was with us from the start,
The dream that all could live as lovers do,
A dream coming nearer though it always seems afar -
But to die before we see the dream come true,
Only that could break my heart.

(Heill, guitar; Peggy, autoharp)

(This song was written on my fortieth birthday, but
has been amended slightly since then.)