

## A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

### PROTEST SONG IN THE UNITED STATES

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The term "protest song" covers a latitude of musical creation and views of society. A "protest", of course, is an utterance of opposition or resistance, "song", a setting of a text for voice, with or without accompaniment. Defining the genre, unfortunately, is not as easy a task as it first appears. A protest song suggests resistance to an abstraction of society--a song which expresses or reflects the spirit of opposition to a social order, past or present. A lament is not a protest song unless it includes some form of opposition to the condition depicted. Nor is a work song a protest song, unless there is more resistance than bitterness to the worker's complaint.

Thus, the literature on war songs would not be included in this listing, except as those songs criticize the military order under which the singers fight, or the social structure that created the war. Items of every ideology, of course, are included here, as well as song collections which include protest songs. Contemporary composers are represented by a single collection. Materials on the music of social protest are incorporated when they discuss the song form.

There is considerable variance in these standards. "Who Killed Cock Robin?" may once have been a protest song but its present audience is largely unconscious of this past. Because many protest songs reflect the singer's world view (and not always the listeners'), some have escaped attention, particularly the songs of African-Americans during the 19th century. On the other hand, some protests couched in the song form are practically unsingable, such as those composed by politically-militant but classically-trained composers in the 1930s.

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