

In 1970, Phil Ochs lamented, "And it seems that there are no more songs"—an observation perhaps grown out of the private anguish that would lead to his suicide six years later. But in the public arena, nothing could be further from the truth. The period since 1970 has seen an outright explosion of antiwar songs, spilling over from the familiar folk and folk-rock territories into a plethora of established and new genres not readily associated with peace songs: country and western, jazz, funk, soul, hard rock, acid rock, heavy metal, industrial rock, rap, and hip-hop, among others. Given the history of American military interventions and threatened interventions since the Vietnam War—through the Reagan/Bush years, from the first Gulf War to the September 11 attacks, and during the post-9/11 period—such an explosion is hardly surprising.¹

The Vietnam War still raged in 1970, the year that saw the My Lai massacre, the US invasion of Cambodia, and the shooting of unarmed students protesting at Kent State and Jackson State universities. The president of the cannily commercial Motown label, Berry Gordy, could easily sanction such vaguely stated protests as Edwin

Starr's "War" and The Temptations' "Ball of Confusion," as well as the latter group's love-in themed, psychedelic soul number "Ungena Za Ulimwengu (Unite the World)." But a marked step change was reflected in Martha and the Vandellas' single, "I Should Be Proud," with its implication that soldiers' lives were being wasted for evil political purposes. The conservative Nashville establishment had seen high-profile veterans like Earl Scruggs bolting for the antiwar camp (Scruggs performed at the 1969 Moratorium in Washington, DC); in 1970, the country songwriter Tom T. Hall's "Mama Bake a Pie (Daddy Kill a Chicken)" depicted a sardonic, wounded GI confronting the newspapers' declaration that "the war is just a waste of time." The R&B singer Roberta Flack recorded a bitter, jazz-inflected cover of Fred Hellerman's "Business Goes on as Usual," while George Clinton's soul/funk band, Parliament, damned everyone from President Nixon on down who didn't have "sense enough to come in out of the rain"—a charge of official ineptitude repeated in Grand Funk Railroad's "I'm Your Captain," which implicitly portrayed Nixon as increasingly isolated and out of touch. Paul Kantner and Jefferson Starship's "Mau Mau (Amerikon)" blasted both "Dick" Nixon and the "grade-B movie star governor's war" (referencing Ronald Reagan) against student protestors. In the wake of My Lai, Pete Seeger pointed a finger at the culpable officers (Calley, Medina, Koster), the Congress, the President, and the voters—all on board the "Last Train to Nuremberg." Amidst such heightened expression, it was even possible to see what the film director Robert Altman called (and hoped would be readily perceived as) "the stupidest song ever written"—his fifteen-year-old son Mike's "Suicide Is Painless," from the Korean War-set film, *M*A*S*H*—as a serious, if parodical, reference to American national suicide in the Vietnam War.²

Musicians continued to seek ways of dramatically bringing home the battlefield carnage. Psychedelic guitarist Jimi Hendrix built upon his electric demolition of "The Star-Spangled Banner" at Woodstock with his bullet-ridden "Machine Gun." But there were battles waged off the actual field, too, as noted by Barbara Dane in her album, *F7A! Songs of the GI Resistance*, a collection of antiwar songs recorded at the Army bases at Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Benning, Georgia; and Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Melanie Safka's "Lay Down (Candles in the Rain)" reflected the sheer mass of opposition to the war not only at Woodstock but also in the growing Moratorium movement, as did Buffy Sainte-Marie's "Moratorium"; and in May of 1970, over 100,000 people demonstrated against the war in Washington, DC. If the Moratorium didn't reply directly to Marvin Gaye's rhetorical question, "What's Going On?," the Steve Miller Band's "Never Kill Another Man," Chicago's jazz fusion suite, "It Better End Soon," and Freda Payne's "Bring the Boys Home" all served as powerful answers. Gaye's "What's Going On?" was prompted by incidents of police brutality inflicted upon increasingly militant protestors. With the deaths at Kent State and Jackson State in May 1970, the seeming war on protest was splashed across the newspapers and the TV bulletins. Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young ("Ohio"), Quicksilver Messenger Service ("What About Me"), the Steve Miller Band ("Jackson-Kent Blues"), and Jack Warshaw and Barbara Dane ("Kent State Massacre") all excoriated the perceived agents of oppression, whether the National Guard, the police, the President, or the Congress. Even the ultimate fun-time band, the Beach Boys, weighed in with "Student Demonstration Time" (a re-writing of Leiber and Stoller's "Riot in Cell Block Nine"), which draws a direct line from the Berkeley Free Speech Movement of 1964 to the Kent State/Jackson State killings.³

Destroyed American GIs—both the stone dead and the walking dead—peopled such songs as Sonny and Cher's "Classified 1A," Don McLean's "The Grave," Johnny Cash's "Man in Black," Steve Goodman's "Ballad of Penny Evans," and Grand Funk Railroad's "I Can Feel Him in the Morning." The disorientation of the Vietnam veteran returning to a domestic battlefield was captured neatly in John Denver's rendering of Bill Danoff's "Readjustment Blues," while the imagery of human and material waste culminated in the stark vision of John Prine's returned, heroin-addicted veteran, "Sam Stone," whose Purple Heart is no match for the "monkey on his back" or the hole in his arm "where all the money goes." Prine reserved his contempt for the blithe patriotism of conservative arm-chair warriors blind to the real costs of their "dirty little war" ("Your Flag Decal Won't Get You into Heaven Anymore"). Strikingly, this particular war was often put in the context of a chain of other wars with equally depressing body counts, whether the Second World War in Graham Nash's "Military Madness" or—more frequently—Native American massacres and dispossession at the hands of the US Army, such as Buffy Sainte-Marie's "Soldier Blue" (the title song to Ralph Nelson's eponymous "Vietnam Western") and Paul Revere and the Raiders' popular cover of John Loudermilk's 1959 song, "Pale Faced Indian," now retitled "Indian Reservation." In the realm of fantasy, Vietnam informed Randy Newman's "Political Science," a merciless satire on the apparent default position of the US military in response to any alternative way of life: "They all hate us anyhow / So let's drop the big one now."⁴

The antiwar presidential candidate George McGovern could boast of considerable musical support in the general election of 1972 (for instance, Neil Young and Graham Nash's "War Song," as well as active fundraising and campaigning from the likes of Carole King, Alan Jay Lerner, Henry Mancini, Liza Minnelli, Peter, Paul

and Mary, Robert Preston, Harold Prince, Simon and Garfunkel, Barbara Streisand, James Taylor, Dionne Warwick, and Andy Williams). However, Nixon's landslide reelection kept the Republican administration firmly at the helm of "Vietnamization," the increasing reliance on the doomed South Vietnamese troops to prosecute the remainder of the war on their own. The bitterly criticized US bombing campaign over North Vietnam during Christmas of 1972 was followed in the New Year with the signing of the Paris Peace Accords and the termination of US military involvement. But that hardly ended the proliferation of antiwar songs spilling from the pens of songwriters with their eye on the broader historical trends. Thus, Tom Paxton could continue to warn, "When princes meet, the poor little men must tremble," and Phil Ochs, in his rewriting of "Here's to the State of Mississippi" (1964), excoriated "the State of Richard Nixon," where "the wars are fought in secret, Pearl Harbor every day." Nixon's resignation in the wake of the Watergate scandal and the brief Ford administration did not silence the critical musical voices condemning America's ongoing clandestine adventures, such as Paxton's "The White Bones of Allende" targeting the CIA in Chile and the Ramones' "Commando," in which the official aim remains to "get them ready for Vietnam"—wherever the next Vietnam might be. President Jimmy Carter's serious consideration of a neutron bomb, which would vaporize people but leave property intact, prompted the punk band, the Dead Kennedys, to scream out "Kill the Poor," while his reintroduction of mandatory registration for the military draft in 1980 (the draft had been dormant since 1973) inspired the Kennedys' sardonic "When Ya Get Drafted," lamenting the new armed forces "stocked with kids from slums."⁵

Frank Zappa's protest against Carter's reintroduction of the draft—"Drafted Again (I Don't Wanna Get Drafted)"—was followed

swiftly by his reaction to Reagan's election in 1980 and the conservative backlash that it portended: "Dumb All Over." In the wake of Carter's apparent impotence in the face of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the botched attempt on his watch to rescue fifty-three Americans held hostage by Iranian fundamentalists in Tehran, Reagan's strident militarism certainly bolstered conservatives who were smarting from the de facto American defeat in Vietnam, just as it sent alarm bells ringing in the antiwar camp. For the country rocker Charlie Daniels, whose later conservative statements would obscure his early antiwar profile that included backing Earl Scruggs at the 1969 Washington Moratorium concert, it was a case of being "Still in Saigon" (as he sang in his popular cover of Dan Daley's song). US skirmishes with Muammar Gaddafi's forces over Libya and the CIA's not-so-clandestine support of the anti-Marxist Contras in Nicaragua inspired the likes of the Dead Kennedys' "Bleed for Me," which was itself later integrated into another of the Kennedys' satires, "Kinky Sex (Makes the World Go Round)," a musical fantasy in which Reagan and Margaret Thatcher eroticize the onset of World War Three. Other responses to the Nicaraguan intervention—as well as the revelations that the Reagan administration had been selling arms to Iran in order to fund the Contras—included the Minutemen's "Untitled Song for Latin America," "All She Wants to Do Is Dance" from the Eagles' Don Henley, and Jackson Browne's "Lives in the Balance." Meanwhile, an ongoing civil war in El Salvador between leftist FMLN guerrillas and the ruling military junta supported by both the Carter and the Reagan administrations provoked a major outpouring of protest songs such as Peter, Paul and Mary's "El Salvador," Si Kahn's "Send Me Back to Georgia," John McCutcheon's "No Mas!" and White Lion's "El Salvador." Local wars appeared to be brewing on a number of fronts, increasing the general anxiety reflected in Stevie Wonder's "Front

Line," Bad Religion's "Part III," and Sun Ra's "Nuclear War." Tom Paxton parodied the concept of the neutron bomb with "The Perfect Bomb," which "turns the tanks to butter, but the people walk away." Less patiently crafted responses included Twisted Sister's "We're Not Gonna Take It" and the Dicks' "No Fuckin' War."⁶

At the beginning of Reagan's second term, the folk-rock artist Suzanne Vega had a mainstream hit with "The Queen and the Soldier," in which a young feudal warrior pays the ultimate price for refusing to fight in any more of his liege's mad wars. In contemporary America, though, the pioneering punk rockers, the Ramones, called into question the President's sanity over his highly criticized decision to pay homage to the German dead at the Bitburg cemetery, the final resting place of forty-nine of Hitler's Waffen-SS. Their song, "My Brain Is Hanging Upside Down (Bonzo Goes to Bitburg)," drew on Reagan's history of having played second fiddle to a movie chimpanzee; but it also carried sinister undertones: "Don't become one of Hitler's children." To the Dead Kennedys, Reagan was proving himself to be "Rambozo the Clown"—a cross between Sylvester Stallone's Rambo and a children's television clown; the song appeared on the album *Bedtime for Democracy* (a parodic reference to the Reagan film, *Bedtime for Bonzo*) along with the song "Potshot Heard Round the World," in which the news cast the two adversaries, Reagan and Gaddafi, as "cartoon villains and heroes." Reagan had campaigned on the promise that, after the malaise of the Carter years, it was to be "Morning in America," to which the post-punk band Timbuk3 sardonically replied, "The Future's So Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades"—the morning brightness more likely the result of a nuclear holocaust than any blithe campaign promise. "Weird Al" Yankovic's "Christmas at Ground Zero" taunted Reagan by name for the impending "mushroom cloud," and the heavy metal band

Metallica lamented the naive, twenty-one-year-old "Disposable Heroes" sacrificed at the altar of American militarism. For the Apalachian singer-songwriter, Hazel Dickens, there was one important question for Reagan and the Religious Right that championed him: "Will Jesus Wash the Bloodstains from Your Hands?"⁷

Reagan's pet project, a space-based missile defense shield dubbed "Star Wars" by a skeptical press, attracted the straightforward observation from Frank Zappa: "Star Wars Won't Work." The threat of nuclear destruction dovetailed with the growing specter of AIDS in "Never, Never Again" from the punk rockers, False Prophets, who intoned hypnotically, "Bring out, bring out, bring out your dead." Jello Biafra, the Dead Kennedys' lead singer and songwriter, joined up with the Canadian hard-core punk band, D.O.A., to craft "Wish I Was in El Salvador," a mock-wistful recollection of a US Marine trained for international police actions (such as the US invasion of Grenada in 1983, the bombings of Tripoli in 1986, the destruction of Iranian oil facilities in the Persian Gulf in 1987, and the invasions of Panama and the Philippines in 1989)—enterprises they also condemned in "Attack of the Peacekeepers." For the thrash metal band Slayer, an out-of-control militarism was leading to "Mandatory Suicide," while the hip-hop group Public Enemy weighed in with "Black Steel in the Hour of Chaos," in which a black prisoner masterminds a jailbreak, thus depriving the armed forces of cannon fodder. Contemplating in "Tehran" that "this is no Vietnam," the punk rock band the Offspring called for a simple, if drastic, solution: "Kill the President." The heavy metal and rock onslaught against the military policies of the late Reagan and early G. H. W. Bush administrations continued with savage commentary from the likes of Megadeth, Poison, Slayer, and Guns N' Roses. At the other end of the electric-acoustic spectrum, country singer-songwriter Kris Kristofferson released

an entire political album, *Third World Warrior*, much of which was devoted to critiquing the American interventions against the Sandinistas in Nicaragua.⁸

In January 1991, George H. W. Bush commenced Operation Desert Storm in a bid to drive Iraqi forces out of oil-rich Kuwait, which Saddam Hussein had unilaterally declared the nineteenth province of Iraq. As the US bombs fell on Baghdad, folksingers, rockers, hip-hoppers, punks, and rappers all headed for the studios. "You Shoulda Killed Me Last Year," sneered Ice-T, as the all-woman Seattle punk band, 7 Year Bitch, declared "No Fucking War"—a sentiment shared by the Houston rappers, the Geto Boys, who in "Fuck a War" damned Bush for "sendin' a nigga to the desert to get killed." The Offspring simply exchanged the word "Baghdad" for the word "Tehran" in their 1989 song and continued to sing as though nothing else had changed. In "How Much Longer?" Paul Leary of the Butthole Surfers began marking the time until "the Earth gets blown up," while, in "Not So Soft," Ani DiFranco mused on how "Those who call the shots / Are never in the line of fire." For the grunge band, L7, the Pentagon was chasing one big "Wargasm." For the L. A. punk band, Bad Religion, "King George and his rainbow cabinet" were legalizing murder, a charge of imperialism shared by Iggy Pop, whose "Caesar" is a mock ode to Bush. The jazz poet Gil Scott-Heron argued that, in light of recent and current events, "We better warn the Amish / They may bomb the Pennsylvanians." Most significantly, the Gulf War provided the background for the emergence of the first band to fuse rap with heavy metal: Rage Against the Machine, whose eponymous album introduced such critical anthems as "Killing in the Name," "Wake Up," "Freedom," and "Bullet in the Head."⁹

The first Gulf War ended in February 1991 with the retreat of the Iraqi forces and Bush's declaration of victory and ceasefire. (To

the noise rock band, Killdozer, the war was a merciless "Turkey Shoot"—especially in light of reports of US strikes against retreating Iraqi troops—and the alternative rock band, Cake, made an obvious parallel with the Gulf War in "I Bombed Korea.") The Cold War ended with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and, early in 1992, the bitter civil war in El Salvador ended. The Arkansas Democrat Bill Clinton defeated Bush in the presidential election, following a buoyant campaign to the tune of Fleetwood Mac's "Don't Stop Thinking about Tomorrow." But any hopes for a respite from conflict were quickly shattered by a series of events: the bombing of the World Trade Center in February 1993; Clinton's order of a cruise missile attack on Baghdad in retaliation for an Iraqi assassination attempt on Bush; the dispatch of US warships to Haiti and an invasion to restore the elected president, Aristide, following a military coup; the US intervention in the Somali war, in which two American Black Hawk helicopters were shot down over Mogadishu; and a NATO bombing campaign against Bosnian Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. By 1996, anxieties were heightened further by Iraq's continued refusal to accommodate UN weapons inspectors and its incursions into NATO-imposed no-fly zones, prompting American retaliation ("Operation Desert Strike"). Meanwhile, Osama bin Laden proclaimed "jihad" against the United States for stationing its troops on the Islamic holy lands of Saudi Arabia, leading to fatal bombings of US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya. Thus, the handful of calming odes like James Taylor's celebration of the Clinton-brokered Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland, "Belfast to Boston," and Collin Raye's "It Could Happen Again," which commemorated the impromptu Christmas Eve truce of 1914, were swamped by portents of doom such as Iris DeMent's "Wasteland of the Free," Rage Against the Machine's "Vietnow," Sheryl Crow's "Redemption Day," and Molly Hatchet's

"World of Trouble." The eve of George W. Bush's bitterly contested election of 2000 saw the emergence of one of the most significant post-Vietnam protest songwriters, David Rovics of Portland, Oregon, who has continued to respond to American military adventures with new songs on an almost daily basis.¹⁰

The twenty-first century began with American and British forces bombing Iraq in a bid to wipe out Saddam Hussein's air defenses. The Taliban, firmly in control of Afghanistan and harboring Bin Laden's Al Qaeda operatives, were taunting the West with such provocations as the destruction of the sixth-century Bamiyan Buddhas on the grounds that they were "un-Islamic." But all seemed to pale into insignificance with the destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11th, 2001, by Islamist fundamentalists in two hijacked planes, causing the deaths of nearly 3,000 (another plane hit the Pentagon, while a fourth crashed in a Pennsylvania field, presumably en route to the White House). The US-led war on Afghanistan commenced within the month, accompanied by such domestic war-footing measures as the establishment of the Office of Homeland Security, the signing of the Patriot Act, and the sanctioning of military tribunals to try suspected foreign "terrorists." Reflecting the cross-section of charged emotions amidst the altered domestic and international landscapes, some singers expressed bewilderment, such as the country singers Alan Jackson in "Where Were You (When the World Stopped Turning)" and Dolly Parton in "Hello God," as well as Bruce Springsteen in numerous songs that make up his collective response to the September 11 attacks, *The Rising*. Some resorted to bluster, such as the Southern metal rockers, Jackyl, in "Open Invitation (I Hate You Bin Laden)," with belligerent samplings of George C. Scott in the film *Patton* and President Bush reading the 23rd Psalm; others resisted the urge to retaliate and

escalate, such as John McCutcheon in "Not in My Name" and the alternative punk rockers, Anti-Flag, in whose "Stars and Stripes" the call for military revenge is answered by a defiant "Not me!" and whose "911 for Peace" makes the plaintive cry, "I don't wanna die / (I don't wanna kill)." The alternative rockers, Wilco, countered the apparent hijacking of Christianity in a war against Islam by claiming, in "Jesus Etc.," that "love is all of God's money." In "Skylines and Turnstiles," the rock band My Chemical Romance asked the world for "something better" than a military response, while the funk-soul band, Sharon Jones and the Dap Kings, proposed—in a song that they would later pair pointedly with an angry version of Woody Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land"—"What if We All Stopped Paying Taxes." The Armenian-American rock band, "System of a Down," excoriated the media's fear-mongering in "Boom!" and the rapper Eminem set out specifically "to ambush this Bush administration" in his "Square Dance." David Rovics was especially prolific in establishing connections between the civilian dead in New York and those in Afghanistan and Iraq ("The Dying Firefighter," "My Daughter," and "Song for Basra"), as well as connections between the current and previous wars as imperial adventures ("From Kabul to Khartoum," "International Terrorists"). Steve Earle sang directly against the prevailing grain, not only by proposing in "Jerusalem" that "one fine day all the children of Abraham / Will lay down their swords forever," but also by attempting to understand the motives of the captured American Talib, John Walker Lindh, in "John Walker's Blues."¹¹

While the war in Afghanistan could be—and was—explained as a logical response to an attack on America, the same could not be said during the buildup to the war in Iraq. For many weeks, UN weapons inspectors had searched and failed to locate any Weapons

of Mass Destruction (WMD) said to be held by Saddam Hussein—nor were any ever to be found. In the face of extraordinary worldwide protests, the war on Iraq began with a US-led invasion in March 2003. No conflict since the Vietnam War has been responsible for such an exponential spike in the production of American peace songs, to the extent that this chapter cannot possibly do justice to the full output. Many of the songs are freighted with the implication that the war was more about George W. Bush avenging his father—and finishing his father's war—than securing America's safety from terrorism. Many songs, too, declare that the real aim was to entrench American influence in the Gulf and to preserve access to Iraq's rich oil fields and the spoils of post-Saddam reconstruction (to the particular benefit of the Halliburton oilfield corporation, with its close links to Vice President Dick Cheney). The year 2003 alone produced a plethora of songs—songs damning Bush (NOFX's "Idiot Son of an Asshole" and "Franco Un-American," John Mellencamp's "To Washington"); songs damning his Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice (Immortal Technique's "The Fourth Branch"); songs damning the mendacious media (Willie Nelson's "Whatever Happened to Peace on Earth") and the "money-hungry government" (Rise Against's "Blood-Red, White, and Blue"); condemnations of a complicit public (the Suicide Machines' "Your Silence" and Six Feet Under's "Amerika the Brutal"). Not only were some old songs revised to comment on the new war (Lou Reed's "Take a Walk on the Wild Side" rewritten as the hip-hop remix, "Georgie Joins the Army") but so too were some old American creeds, like the Pledge of Allegiance, which the alternative hip-hop poet Saul Williams refashioned as "The Pledge of Resistance" for the Not in Our Name organization. The punk label Fat Wreck Chords was particularly noteworthy for their Rock Against Bush project, to which leading performers and bands contributed the most seathing

character assassinations to come out of the war. The Texas country band, the Dixie Chicks, sparked a vicious backlash and boycott of their recordings by announcing from the stage in London that they were ashamed to have come from the same state as George Bush.¹²

Bush's ill-judged declaration of May 1, 2003, "Mission Accomplished," was greeted with skepticism and scorn by a host of songwriters, either immediately or in retrospect—David Rovics ("War Is Over" and "Four Blank Slates"); Disturbed ("Sacred Lie"); Billy Joel ("Christmas in Fallujah"); and Immortal Technique with the death-row prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal ("The War vs Us All"), among others. Bush's apparent play-acting in a military jumpsuit aboard the USS *Abraham Lincoln* (as well as the proliferation of video war games developed in part by the US Army) prompted the unsuccessful candidate for Congress, the Californian Bill Durston, to write "War Is Not a Game." Songwriters developed a variety of strategies to target aspects of the war complex. Some attacked the religious underpinning of the pro-war rhetoric; thus, both Rovics and the Nashville Session Players released songs with the title "Who Would Jesus Bomb?" The indie band, Bright Eyes, worried about "When the President Talks to God," while the Christian rockers, Brave Saint Saturn, condemned the hijacking of faith in "Blessed Are the Landmines." The metal band Lamb of God sneered, "Now You've Got Something to Die For." Secular, patriotic rhetoric equally came under fire, as in Rise Against's "State of the Union" and Randy Newman's "A Few Words in Defense of Our Country," which laments the calculated and cynical stoking of fear—on both the media and the political stages—against Franklin D. Roosevelt's wartime assurance that the only thing to fear was "fear itself." For the popular punk rockers, Green Day, being an "American Idiot" precisely meant succumbing to the "subliminal mind fuck."¹³

Some were content to target particular individuals such as Bush (Eminem, "Mosh"; Reagan Babies, "The King Bleeds Oil"; Eliza Gilkyson, "Man of God"; Tori Amos, "Yo George"; John Mellencamp, "Rodeo Clown"; Pink and the Indigo Girls, "Dear Mr. President") or his underling in the Department of Defense (David Rovics, "Paul Wolfowitz"). The musical attacks on media disinformation are too numerous to enumerate; suffice it to say that when the industrial metal band Ministry equated "feeding the public with lies" and "feeding the hungry with Yellow Cake" (yellowcake, or uranium, being indispensable in the production of nuclear weapons), the poisonous connection was established. Some sought to effect empathy, if not identification, with the victims of the US action on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan—not only Iraqis and Afghans (Patti Smith, "Radio Baghdad"; Michael Jackson, "We've Had Enough"; Jello Biafra and the Melvins, "Caped Crusader"), but physically and/or psychologically wounded US soldiers (some of whom would participate in recordings, such as an unnamed Marine whose admission to "committing genocide" featured in Lamb of God's "Ashes of the Wake"). Frequently they were depicted as pawns of the oil barons and corporations, in the time-honored scenario of the poor man fighting the rich man's war (e.g., James McMurtry, "Cheney's Toy"; David Rovics, "Operation Iraqi Liberation [O.I.L.]"). Steve Earle, in "Rich Man's War," was unique in proposing that the same equation ruled in the ranks of the jihadis, themselves recruited by "a fat man in a new Mercedes." For Prince, the victims also included Arab-Americans suffering from heightened bigotry and Islamophobia in the wake of the September 11 attacks ("Cinnamon Girl").¹⁴

The revelation in early 2004 of the brutal treatment and torture of Iraqi prisoners in the Abu Ghraib prison, along with the continued detention without trial and reported abuse of "enemy combatants"

held in the Guantanamo Bay camp, prompted a rash of bitter songs from the death metal band, Malevolent Creation (“Captured”), Rise Against (“Hero of War”), Patti Smith (“Without Chains”), and David Rovics (“After We Torture Our Prisoners,” “Guantanamo Bay”), among others. The following year, the widespread impression of official neglect in the wake of Hurricane Katrina (as well as the ongoing deterioration of the country’s bridges and road networks, widespread homelessness, and the outsourcing of jobs) prompted many calls for the redirection of resources from the foreign battlefields to the domestic front (Brett Dennen, “The Holidays Are Here [And We’re Still at War]”; Merle Haggard, “America First”). Songs called outright for individual resistance (Dirty Rotten Imbeciles, “Stupid, Stupid War”; R.E.M., “Final Straw”; Public Enemy with Moby, “Make Love, Fuck War”) and mass protest (Machine Head, “Clenching the Fists of Dissent”; David Rovics, “Trafalgar Square”). Inevitably, from within the musical sphere came the soul-searching question as to whether musical protest itself could ever be enough, as in “White People for Peace” from the punk rock band Against Me! For their fellow punks, Bad Religion, in “The Empire Strikes First,” mass protest seemed equally futile, given that the “ten million souls” marching in February of 2003 “couldn’t stop the worst / Couldn’t reverse.”¹⁵

The election of Barack Obama in 2008 ushered in a brief period of hope for a change in the directions and intensity of American militarism; such was the world’s love affair with Obama in the wake of the Bush years that he could win the Nobel Peace Prize simply by being elected. But to his antiwar critics, Obama was sending mixed messages; on the one hand, he was on record opposing the Iraq war as “dumb” and “rash,” but on the other, he was all for the war against Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. He had campaigned on the

promise to shut down the Guantanamo Bay camp within a year of taking office—a promise as yet unfulfilled. The Brooklyn songwriter Kevin Devine chose to update Phil Ochs’s sneering ode to selective liberalism, “Love Me, I’m a Liberal” (1966), with crocodile tears now being shed for the New York and Iraqi dead while “Afghanistan got what was coming.” Songwriter Mason Jennings proposed in “The Field” that the President himself should have the bravery to walk into the desert, “take a shovel, then dig each child their grave.” Tom Waits’s “Hell Broke Luce,” about Iraq war veteran Jeff Lucey (who committed suicide upon his return from the war) accuses the politicians with “their sorry asses stapled to a goddamn desk.” The questionably legal assassination of Bin Laden in 2011 under Obama’s direction prompted David Rovics, in “Osama Bin Laden Is Dead,” to sarcastically invite the “orphans in Afghanistan” and the maimed “people of Fallujah” to join in the celebrations. “Victory Stinks,” declared Jello Biafra and the Guantanamo School of Medicine, as an army of veterans suffering Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder came home from the Iraq war.¹⁶

Condoleezza Rice and Hillary Clinton notwithstanding, Ani DiFranco called in 2012 for “the way of the women” to “guide democracy” and “bring an end to war.” The escalation of Obama-sanctioned drone attacks against suspected “terrorists” in Pakistan and the Congressional debate over their possible use in the Syrian civil war in 2013 showed no signs of that happening. Rather, as Rovics noted in “Syria, 2013,” Obama and Britain’s David Cameron appeared to be “dictating the deal”—and so he asked nervously in a companion song, “Has the Bombing Begun?” Rovics had already written his “Song for Cindy Sheehan” celebrating the work of the peace activist whose son, Casey, was killed in Iraq in 2004. Sheehan had come to global attention by setting up her peace camp—“Camp Casey”—at

the gates of George W. Bush's vacation ranch in Crawford, Texas, in 2005. As Rovics sang,

Cindy's got some questions
And so does everyone
Because she is every mother
And he was every mother's son.¹⁷

And so the questions have continued—through the Israeli-Gaza conflict of 2014, with its mind-numbing death count of Palestinian children and adults (as well as young Israeli soldiers and civilians), and the continued US funding of the Israeli military machine. Hence Rovics's speedy self-release of the Gaza-inspired album, *Falasteen Habibti* (Palestine, My Love), even as the bombardment raged.¹⁸

As of this writing (November 2014), the US intervention against the so-called Islamic State in Syria (itself known to be recruiting some of its radicalized members with the aid of jihadist hip-hop music) is prompting renewed questions. Some of them are bound to be musical, as has been the case at least as far back as the Seven Years' War. Only when there are no more wars will there be no more questions—and no more antiwar songs.

NOTES

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. Lincoln quoted in Annie Adams Fields, ed., *Life and Letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1898), 269; Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), in *Mark Twain: Mississippi Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1982), 500; Pete Seeger, *Where Have All the Flowers Gone: A Singalong Memoir* (New York: Sing Out!, 2009), 149; Against Mel, "White People for Peace," *White People for Peace* (Sire Records, 2007).
2. On Vietnam and television, see Daniel C. Hallin, *The "Uncensored War": The Media and Vietnam* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1989). On the first Gulf War and television, see Philip M. Taylor, *War and the Media: Propaganda and Persuasion in the Gulf War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998); Douglas Kellner, *The Persian Gulf TV War* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992); and John R. MacArthur, *Second Front: Censorship and Propaganda in the Gulf War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992); Dan Rather quoted in Lisa Finnegan, *No Questions Asked: News Coverage since 9/11* (Westport: Praeger, 2006), 10.
3. On Al Capp and Baez: Dorian Lynskey, *33 Revolutions per Minute: A History of Protest Songs from Billie Holiday to Green Day* (New York: Ecco, 2011), 94.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. "Felix the Soldier," Irwin Silber, ed., *Songs of Independence* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1973), 32; see, for instance, "Brave Wolfe" and other ballads in Alan McNairn, *Behold the Hero: General Wolfe and the Arts in the Eighteenth Century* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1997), 42–49.