

"My country 'tis of thy people you're dying"

Buffy sainte-Marie

(Best Of Buffy Sainte-Marie - 1970)

Now that your big eyes have finally opened,  
Now that you're wondering "how must they feel?",  
Meaning them that you've chased across America's movie screens.  
Now that you're wondering how can it be real  
That the ones you've called colorful, noble and proud  
In your school propaganda  
They starve in their splendor?  
You've asked for my comment I simply will render:

My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.

Now that the longhouses breed superstition  
You force us to send our toddlers away  
To your schools where they're taught to despise their traditions.  
You forbid them their languages, then further say  
That American history really began  
When Columbus set sail out of Europe, then stress  
That the nation of leeches that conquered this land  
Are the biggest and bravest and boldest and best.  
And yet where in your history books is the tale  
Of the genocide basic to this country's birth,  
Of the preachers who lied, how the Bill of Rights failed,  
How a nation of patriots returned to their earth?  
And where will it tell of the Liberty Bell  
As it rang with a thud  
Over Kinzua mud,  
And of brave Uncle Sam in Alaska this year?

My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.

Hear how the bargain was made for the West:  
With her shivering children in zero degrees,  
Blankets for your land, so the treaties attest,  
Oh well, blankets for land is a bargain indeed,  
And the blankets were those Uncle Sam had collected  
From smallpox-diseased dying soldiers that day.  
And the tribes were wiped out and the history books censored,  
A hundred years of your statesmen have felt it's better this way.  
And yet a few of the conquered have somehow survived,  
Their blood runs the redder though genes have paled.  
From the Grand Canyon's caverns to Craven Sad Hills  
The wounded, the losers, the robbed sing their tale.  
From Los Angeles County to upstate New York  
The white nation fattens while others grow lean;  
Oh the tricked and evicted they know what I mean.

My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.

The past it just crumbled, the future just threatens;  
Our life blood shut up in your chemical tanks.  
And now here you come, bill of sale in your hands  
And surprise in your eyes that we're lacking in thanks  
For the blessings of civilization you've brought us,  
The lessons you've taught us, the ruin you've wrought us --  
Oh see what our trust in America's brought us.  
My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.  
Now that the pride of the sires receives charity,  
Now that we're harmless and safe behind laws,  
Now that my life's to be known as your "heritage,"  
Now that even the graves have been robbed,  
Now that our own chosen way is a novelty --  
Hands on our hearts we salute you your victory,  
Choke on your blue white and scarlet hypocrisy  
Pitying the blindness that you've never seen

That the eagles of war whose wings lent you glory  
They were never no more than carrion crows,  
Pushed the wrens from their nest, stole their eggs, changed their story;  
The mockingbird sings it, it's all that he knows.  
"Ah what can I do?" say a powerless few  
With a lump in your throat and a tear in your eye --  
Can't you see that their poverty's profiting you.

My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.