

I Don't Want Your Millions Mister

Jim Garland



Chorus:

I don't want your millions, Mister,
I don't want your diamond ring.
All I want is the right to live, Mister,
Give me back my job again.

1. Now, I don't want your Rolls-Royce,
Mister,
I don't want your pleasure yacht.
All I want's just food for my babies,
Give to me my old job back.

Chorus

2. We worked to build this country, Mister,
While you enjoyed a life of ease.
You've stolen all that we built, Mister,
Now our children starve and freeze.

Chorus

3. So, I don't want your millions, Mister,
I don't want your diamond ring.
All I want is the right to live, Mister,
Give me back my job again.

Chorus

4. Think me dumb if you wish, Mister,
Call me green, or blue, or red.
This one thing I sure know, Mister,
My hungry babies must be fed.

Chorus

5. Take the two old parties, Mister,
No difference in them I can see.
But with a Farmer-Labor Party
We could set the people free.

Chorus

6. So, I don't want your millions, Mister,
I don't want your diamond ring.
All I want is the right to live, Mister,
Give me back my job again.

Chorus

Jim Garland (April 8, 1905 - September 6, 1978) was a songwriter from the coal mining country of eastern Kentucky, where he was involved with the communist-led National Miners Union (NMU) during the violent labor conflicts of the early 1930s called the "Harlan County War".

Garland came to New York City in 1931 with his older half-sister Aunt Molly Jackson and later followed by sister Sarah Ogan where he participated in the Greenwich Village folk music scene. Two of his best-known songs are "The Death of Harry Simms" and this one, "I Don't Want Your Millions, Mister", set to the tune of the "Greenback Dollar" variant of "East Virginia".

This song is about the conditions in the coal mining areas of Appalachia. Garland sang at the Newport Folk Festival in 1963 and can be seen in documentary film footage seated behind and to the right of Bob Dylan as Dylan performs. His sister Sarah Ogan Gunning sang there in 1964.

The song was recorded by both Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger. Since it follows Guthrie's pattern of putting new topical words to a traditional tune, I thought for a long time that it was written by Woody but later found out about Jim Garland.