TEAR DOWN THE WALLS: SIXTIES RADICALISM AND THE POLITICS OF SPACE IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

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This thesis is my own work.

Anthony Ashbolt
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This thesis concerns the role played by the politics of space in the San Francisco Bay Area during the radical upheavals of the 1960s. Space, understood as both region or locality, on the one hand, and specific public spaces, on the other, mediated Sixties radicalism to a considerable extent. And nowhere was this clearer than in the San Francisco Bay Area. From the beginning of the decade to the end, the Bay Area constituted a dynamic space at the forefront of Movement activism, a territory at once American and yet somehow autonomous or exceptional. Moreover, struggles over space, from the early civil rights and free speech conflicts to People's Park, helped shape radical thought and action in the region. By the late 1960s, the Bay Area (in particular Berkeley) came to represent a revolutionary enclave, a free territory or liberated space. This reflected the existence of a self-confident radical consciousness which was becoming decidedly provincial. Yet, it is also true that the issues fought over, like People's Park, raised significant, indeed vital questions about the purpose of public space. A vibrant politics of space was placed on the agenda by Bay Area radicals in the Sixties, even as their own strategic thinking was being moulded by the politics of space itself.
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<tr>
<td>ALF</td>
<td>Artists Liberation Front</td>
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<tr>
<td>BPP</td>
<td>Black Panther Party</td>
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<td>BSU</td>
<td>Black Student Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIO</td>
<td>Congress of Industrial Organizations</td>
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<td>CLP</td>
<td>Communist Labor Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>CORE</td>
<td>Congress of Racial Equality</td>
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<td>CPUSA</td>
<td>Communist Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>ERAP</td>
<td>The Economic Research and Action Project of SDS</td>
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<td>FSM</td>
<td>Free Speech Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSU</td>
<td>Free Student Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>HUAC</td>
<td>House Un-American Activities Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILA</td>
<td>International Longshore Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILWU</td>
<td>International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>KPFA</td>
<td>Community radio station established by the Pacifica Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAACP</td>
<td>National Association for the Advancement of Colored People</td>
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<tr>
<td>NFWA</td>
<td>National Farm Workers' Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Progressive Labor (or the Progressive Labor Party)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROTC</td>
<td>Reserve Officer Training Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>RSU</td>
<td>Radical Student Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>RYM 11</td>
<td>Revolutionary Youth Movement 11</td>
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S.F. State  San Francisco State College
SDS  Students for a Democratic Society
SLATE  Slate of candidates for student election at Berkeley
SNCC  Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee
STDW  Stop the Draft Week
SWP  Socialist Workers Party
TASC  Towards an Active Student Community
TWLF  Third World Liberation Front
UC  University of California
UF  United Front
VDC  Vietnam Day Committee
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INTRODUCTION

Despite the enormous volume of material which explores the activities and analyses the ideologies of American radical movements in the 1960s, there is a missing or buried aspect of enquiry. It concerns the role of space: both space understood as region or locality, and space understood as specific areas within the natural or built environment, particularly significant public spaces. While there has been a flowering of what could loosely be called spatial studies over the last twenty years, space remains a frequently unexplored factor in the work of historians and social scientists. In the 1960s, for instance, space was significant for radical movements in ways which have eluded many, if not most, commentators. Space is frequently taken for granted, is an assumed part of the order of things. It does not need investigating because it is there.

A book by James Miller about the New Left is called "Democracy is in the Streets". Yet Miller does not look closely at the politics of the street, at the way the space of the street mediates activism or even helps shape styles of protest. Rather, in his work, the street is assumed. Streets are there, they are physically present, so what more is there to say?

"Democracy is in the streets", blared the headline of one [Tom] Hayden's preconvention manifestos. Hayden himself quoted Chairman Mao: "Dare to struggle, dare to win".

1 For instance, the work of Marxist theorists like Henri Lefebvre, Manuel Castells and David Harvey (some of which is referred to elsewhere), has had a minimal impact upon the academic disciplines of history, sociology or political science. While this is partly because their prose can be somewhat inaccessible, it also reflects hostility or indifference to theoretically informed discussions of space.

2 James Miller, "Democracy is in the Streets": from Port Huron to the siege of Chicago (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987).

3 Ibid., p. 298.
What does it mean to say that "democracy is in the streets" and what, if anything, did Mao have to say about this important subject? It is not self-evident that democracy and streets should be connected this way unless streets are examined as public spaces, as potential venues for democratic participation. Even then there is more work to be done. The very organization of urban space, the function of streets and parks and buildings, affects political practice. Many radicals in the 1960s understood this, if only in a conceptually incoherent way. And it is difficult to make the concept "space" coherent when its points of reference are sometimes quite different. A degree of flexibility is essential but so, too, is some precise specification of what is meant by space and what "the politics of space" involves.

Space, as Henri Lefebvre has argued, is inscribed with the political, economic and ideological processes governing the relationship between human history and nature. There is, consequently, a distinctive and important politics of space. While the economy erects fundamental frameworks for this spatial politics, ideology gives it order and meaning. In the words of Manuel Castells, "The ideological system organizes space by marking it with a network of signs, whose signifiers are made up of spatial forms and whose signifieds are ideological contents". It is possible, indeed, to read spatial forms as if they were texts. In this way very ordinary parts of everyday life, for instance buildings and streets, might have an ideological and political significance which is easily overlooked. Social relationships, as Marx understood, do not only take place between people but in definite social contexts. In his defence of Marx's historical materialism, G.A. Cohen has suggested that "space deserves membership in the set of productive forces ... Ownership of


space certainly confers a position in the economic structure. Even when a piece of space is contentless, its control may generate economic power ...". Indeed, control over space, over its function or purpose, is a critical factor in all sorts of power relationships. Can there, however, be more precise ways of defining what space, in this particular context, means?

Space refers to a site, a location which can be specified directly (Wall St., the Grand Canyon, the Empire State building, San Francisco, not to mention smaller spaces like a bedroom). Such space also contains a symbolic dimension which may be particularly important and more difficult to specify. The symbolic elements of spatial politics can be absolutely crucial, giving particular spaces a character or quality which they might appear to lack. In the end, however, the symbolic is still connected to, even though it also momentarily transcends, the actual site. If space is used purely as a symbolic reference, it tends to lose particular significance and can mean almost anything at all.

To stress the importance of spatial politics is to give space a conceptual status which some philosophers might dispute. For instance, David Gross has argued that

Time is the milieu of true comingling and interaction, space is not. Time creates emotional bonds that link people together as something more than co-existing points in space. The result of thinking only spatially may be only personal despair and the loss of a sense of brotherhood.

9 This explanation is related to, but not entirely the same as, Lefebvre's concept of space as interpreted by Gotttdiener: "Space is a physical location, a piece of real estate, and simultaneously an existential freedom and a mental expression. Space is both the geographical site of action and the social possibility for engaging in action"; M. Gotttdiener, The Social Production of Urban Space, p. 123. It is not, however, clear whether the "mental expression" or "social possibility" retain some connection to the location.
Gross is heavily influenced by Georg Lukacs who, in his discussion of reification under capitalism, observed that "time sheds it qualitative, variable flowing nature: it freezes into an exactly delimited, quantifiable continuum filled with quantifiable 'things' ... in short, it becomes space". Under capitalism, in order words, time becomes "spatialized". People lose a sense of moving through time and, instead, become locked into space as reified categories. While this critique of the spatialization of time is very important, it should not lead, as it does for Gross, to a rejection of space as an "empty concept". The work process, the culture industry, even urban organization itself, within contemporary capitalism tend to reflect the predominance of frozen time. But a struggle against reification would surely be a struggle to revitalize time and space. Indeed, can time be rescued if there is not an attempt to reconstruct space?

It is true, as Fredric Jameson has argued, that "our daily life, our psychic experience, our cultural languages, are today dominated by categories of space rather than categories of time". In aesthetic terms, this represents an eclipse of high modernist themes of temporality, which were also related to memory. Philosophical arguments about time and space have been linked frequently to theories of memory and forgetting. Theodor Adorno directly related Lukacs' theory of reification to the concept of forgetting. And the critique of a politics of forgetting is closely bound up with the critique of a bourgeois ideology of progress. For Walter Benjamin, the very concept of human progress was simply the progress "through a homogeneous, empty time". And Adorno believed that "the spectre

12 David Gross, "Time, Space ...", p. 78.
14 Frederic Jameson, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism", *New Left Review*, 146, July-August 1984, p. 64.
of man without memory ... is more than an aspect of decline - it is necessarily linked with the principle of progress in bourgeois society".\textsuperscript{17} Progress, in other words, strips away the bonds of collective solidarity which underpin the potential for remembrance.

Attempts to rescue time are thus prompted by a desire to preserve memory. Yet, as Herbert Marcuse once warned, "The wounds that heal in time are also the wounds that contain the poison. Against this surrender to time, the restoration of remembrance to its rights, as a vehicle of liberation, is one of the noblest tasks of thought".\textsuperscript{18} Time, in other words, can be a source of forgetting as well as one of memory. Moreover, to borrow an argument from Michel Foucault, the philosophical adulation of time ("richness, fecundity, life, dialectic") over space ("the dead, the fixed, the undialectical") has tended to blind some theorists to immensely important aspects of power politics.\textsuperscript{19} Or, as David Harvey has suggested:

\begin{quote}
The priority given to time over space is not in itself misplaced ... What is missing, however, is an appreciation of the practices that underlie the priority. Only in such a light can we understand those situations in which locality, place, and spatiality reassert themselves as seemingly powerful autonomous forces in human affairs.\textsuperscript{20}
\end{quote}

If David Gross's dismissal of space were to be applied consistently, then all talk of space would be reified communication. Yet he himself connects the loss of time to a destruction of "memory, process and community".\textsuperscript{21} The very term community involves some sense of space. Gross is really arguing against spatialization rather than the

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
  \bibitem{17} Theodor Adorno, cited by Martin Jay, \textit{Marxism and Totality}, p. 234.
  \bibitem{19} Michel Foucault, cited by John A. Agnew, \textit{Place and Politics: the geographical mediation of state and society} (Boston: Allen & Unwin), 1987, p. xi.
  \bibitem{21} Gross, \textit{Time, Space..."}, p. 76.
\end{thebibliography}
concept space. His remark that space is an "empty concept" is reminiscent of those theories, so adeptly exposed by Henri Lefebvre, which conceived of space as neutral.\textsuperscript{22} It is only an empty concept when thrown around too casually. The plea "I need more space, man" may be vacuous counter-cultural sloganeering. But this does not mean that popular struggles for more space or perhaps better space, struggles dealing with the very structure of everyday life, are misdirected. Nor does it mean that the prominence of spatial images and metaphors (including "space" itself) in Sixties radicalism reflected a spatialization of thought. Rather, struggles concerning space are an integral part of radical social movements. These movements often raise issues that are vitally connected to the politics of space (environmental policies being an obvious example) and there can also be a spatial politics at work in their strategic actions (for instance, street demonstrations). The Sixties slogan "the streets are for the people" may sound trite but it did bring into focus questions about the ownership of space, the organization and function of public thoroughfares.\textsuperscript{23} Moreover, as Sara Evans and Harry Boyte have argued, "free spaces" (whether conceived of as autonomous institutional forms, vibrant local communities or various types of public gathering places) have had a highly significant role to play in struggles for democracy.\textsuperscript{24} But even if space is not "free" or "alternative", it helps shape the social world within which social movements act. Indeed, radical activism can be nourished (and also defused) by specific spatial contexts.\textsuperscript{25} A city without a real centre, for instance, is probably not an ideal venue for social protest. And if

\textsuperscript{22} see Henri Lefebvre, "Reflections ...", p. 340.

\textsuperscript{23} The street, as Robert Gutman has argued, is a crucial "social fact" which raises questions of ownership and control, of power: "The Street Generation", in S. Anderson (ed.), On Streets (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1978), p. 249.

\textsuperscript{24} Sara M. Evans and Harry C. Boyte, Free Spaces: the sources of democratic change in America (New York: Harper & Row, 1986); also see their "Schools for Action: radical uses of social space", democracy vol. 2, no. 4, 1982, p. 55-65. Sara Evans, in her book on women's liberation, points out the significance of "new arenas - social space" for women active in the New Left and civil rights movement [Personal Politics: the roots of women's liberation in the civil rights movement and the new left (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979, p. 220].

\textsuperscript{25} see Peter Saunders, "Space, the City and Urban Sociology", in D. Gregory & J. Urry (eds.), Social Relations and Spatial Structures (London: Macmillan, 1985), p. 82.
democracy is in the streets, then the question of which streets becomes significant. On one level, symbolically, every street but on another, perhaps more fundamental level, specific streets have the size and role, the connections to places of power and authority, which make them useful sites of action.

Similarly, specific locations - cities or regions or districts within cities - can play a critical role in the process whereby radical movements are nurtured and sustained. Take away these locations and the political atmosphere would look very different. The significance of place has been underestimated in many works dealing with radicalism in the 1960s. After all, the New Left transcended place and spoke to an entire generation in the western world. The New Left project was general social transformation, not particular tinkering. Or that, at least, is how it seemed. And it is part of the story. But another part concerns definite locations, sites of radical action, delineated spaces which possessed enormous symbolic significance. Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley (and the south campus area surrounding it), along with the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco, were such spaces. But so, too, were the cities of Berkeley and San Francisco and, indeed, the San Francisco Bay Area as a whole. And sometimes, of course, it was the state of California, or even the West Coast, which was seen as special or exceptional. Yet

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26 For a discussion of the devaluation of place in both orthodox and Marxist social science, see John A. Agnew, Place and Politics, p. 62-79.

27 The term 'San Francisco Bay Area' applies to the city of San Francisco and the counties in the region surrounding it (see Appendix One). 'Bay Area' is frequently a loose designation, referring either to the region as a whole or to San Francisco - Berkeley - Oakland. These are the traditional centres and the focus in this dissertation is primarily upon San Francisco and Berkeley, although Oakland and Palo Alto (along with nearby Stanford University) receive some discussion. On the Bay Area, see Neal R. Peirce, The Megastates of America (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1972), p. 628-649; James E. Vance Jr., Geography and Urban Evolution in the San Francisco Bay Area (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964): Vance suggests that in the vernacular 'Bay Area' now designates the region, while it once used to refer mostly to San Francisco (p. 76-7); Mel Scott, The San Francisco Bay Area (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959); "Regionalism and the Bay Area", special issue of Pacific Research & World Empire Telegram Vol. IV no. 1, November-December, 1972. Robert Wuthnow has analysed the Bay Area as a "cultural seedbed". He suggests that the Bay Area is marked out as different or special because of its cultural pluralism and diversity, its tradition of accepting and legitimating new social experiments and also due to the presence of prominent public figures, like the Beats, who endorse cultural and political dissent: The Consciousness Reformation (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 215-224.
the Bay Area was, in a sense, as different from Los Angeles as it was from the rest of America (recognizing, of course, that it was always a part of America). East Coast radicals may have perceived California as essentially homogeneous but radicalism in the Bay Area had a quality or character, perhaps even intensity, rarely evident in Los Angeles. And, for that matter, it was rarely evident in so concentrated a form elsewhere in America. There were other centres, other places, which contributed much to the spirit of Sixties radicalism. Madison (an intellectual as well as student community), Ann Arbor (real birthplace of Students for a Democratic Society), the East Village of New York, played significant roles in the history of dissent in the 1960s. So did many other places at particular times. While Sixties radicalism did not, of course, entirely depend upon or even revolve around one particular urban agglomeration, specific sites of radical action or bases for radical movements and ideas were essential. The theory of uneven and combined development might apply even to radical movements and, if so, in the 1960s the San Francisco Bay Area functioned as the most important metropolitan centre of social, political and cultural upheaval in America and perhaps also in the western world. This seems like a grand claim. It is is not, however, a claim for the centrality of the Bay Area in all radical activism, or particularly, in all New Left intellectual work. Everything did not happen in the Bay Area first and flow outward to the periphery. But the Bay Area was pivotal in the formation and development of the activist New Left, the counter-culture, the student movement, the anti-war movement, the northern civil rights and black power movements, the gay and (to a lesser extent) women's liberation movements.28 Other regions or cities were much more important at particular times but throughout the 1960s the Bay Area was ready to assume centre stage at any particular time.

28 All these movements or tendencies can be grouped under the label "the Movement". The term "the Movement" is used in this dissertation to denote the general movement for social change, while terms like New Left or counterculture are used to refer to more specific entities. Definitions are not, however, absolute in this context and some people use the term the Movement to refer to the New Left. The problem with this conflation of terms, however, is that many people involved in the Movement were really part of the old left. In the Bay Area, for instance, members of the Communist Party (CPUSA) played a prominent part in radical activism throughout the decade. The New Left really refers to a radical student or intellectual tendency, to some degree centred organizationally upon Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and around journals like Root & Branch, Studies on the Left and Radical America.
If that really is the case then all histories of Sixties radicalism would surely acknowledge it, so is there anything else to add? The problem, however, is that the Bay Area's special role might be pointed to briefly (or source material from the Bay Area might be used extensively) but little attention has been paid to questions about regional peculiarities and the high degree of regional or local consciousness in the Bay area. The dynamic role of Berkeley has, of course, been singled out. Tom Hayden in his recent autobiography observes that "To be in Berkeley was to feel yourself at the center of history being made".29 And an early history of the New Left by Irwin Unger did point to the critical role of the Bay Area, particularly Berkeley: "nowhere in the country, whether at the beginning of the New Left or at its end, was any community so willing to support dissent against the established political and cultural institutions of the nation as Berkeley, both the college and the city".30 This has implications for any history of Sixties radicalism, implications concerning the relationship between regionalism or localism and national protest, but Unger does not dwell on the question at length. Nor, perhaps, should he have. A history of the American New Left cannot probe every regional manifestation of dissent. Nevertheless most histories, as is slowly being recognized, do not deal adequately with the local or regional dimension of Sixties radicalism. In 1974 Richard Flacks, a veteran New Left thinker and activist, noted the importance of the local level:

Organizationally, SDS, the Resistance, and other national student-based movements of the middle sixties were loose networks. Their real life occurred in hundreds of autonomous local groups and chapters. Few coherent policies were adopted nationally. Few manifestos were issued from above. The national organization gave a kind of historic dimension to local activity, but it did not


direct it. Had this experience been taken seriously, it could have helped create the basis for a sustainable New Left organizational format.  

In other words, according to Flacks, a failure to recognize the strategic significance of locality helped make the national New Left organizations more ephemeral than they otherwise might have been. If he is right, then this raises serious questions about the role of the locality in a national organization, questions which cannot be brushed aside as irrelevant to the project of social transformation. More recently, he has developed the point:

None of the histories of SDS deal adequately with the campus milieux within which the day-to-day life of late sixties student activism was played out. Instead they focus on the national leadership group in SDS, whose experience and perspectives were increasingly remote from those shared by most members.  

Wini Breines has also commented upon the fragmented nature of the New Left but perceives in that fragmentation a positive rather than a negative force:

Critiques of the New Left assume that the lack of a single unified movement constituted a failure ... [but] no unified center could have represented the multiplicity and variety of perspectives and activities ... There was no unity because each group, region, campus, commune, collective, and demonstration developed differently, but all shared in spontaneous opposition to racism and inequality, the war in Vietnam, and the repressiveness of American social norms and culture, including centralization and hierarchy. 


And these movements, she might have added, did more than that. They helped put a vibrant politics of space on the agenda. And nowhere was this clearer than the San Francisco Bay Area.

The term "politics of space" is being used in two different senses, so some further clarification is in order. Region or locality have been identified as "spaces". A certain type of politics, which might be profoundly localist, flows from that particular circumstance. In an age of mass culture and international travel it is easy to underplay the importance of regional and local conditions. So, one aspect of the politics of space concerns the locality (Berkeley, San Francisco or districts and communities like Haight-Ashbury) and the region (the Bay Area). The other aspect concerns the politics which revolve around public (and sometimes private) spaces, for instance street politics. Access to, or control of, certain public spaces were extremely important factors in Sixties radicalism. Moreover, a profound sense of territoriality, typical of subcultures, developed in the Bay Area, particularly Berkeley. By the late 1960s, specific venues like Telegraph Avenue, or even Berkeley as a whole, were seen as radical enclaves or liberated territories. This was reflected dramatically in language used at the time. "Space" was not a prominent term in radical discourse before 1965. Between 1965 and 1967 it became more evident and by 1968 the language of many Bay Area radicals was permeated with references to space or territory. Transformations in the New Left - from protest, to resistance, to revolution - help explain this development, as does the increasing impact of the counter-culture. But so does the politics of space itself. Struggles over space from 1964 on constituted significant moments in the history of Bay Area radicalism. Berkeley, as usual, led the way. The public spaces so important to Berkeley radicals gave them a specific identity and helped shape the language they used. This seems like crude materialism but the point is that place can have a significant impact upon language. Dynamic public spaces, places for gathering and organizing, critical strategic domains, can encourage new modes of thinking and consequently new terminology.
Spatial politics in the 1960s involved, amongst other things, tearing down walls or breaking down barriers of various sorts. There is, however, a paradox. As quickly as radicals in the Bay Area were tearing down walls, they were also erecting ones of their own. A regionalist or localist perspective pervaded their politics, giving the Bay Area as a whole (more frequently just Berkeley or San Francisco) the role of an island, a province somehow separate from the rest of America. A local consciousness was most evident in Berkeley, spawning perceptions of the possibilities for revolution in one town, even one street. Moreover, much of the community-oriented politics was based, by the late 1960s, on an idea of discrete communities all possessing their own identities and in need of their own forms of regulation. Community self-determination thereby expressed a provincialist orientation. A vision of genuine community, in other words, was falling in on itself. Parochial self-confidence helped sustain Bay Area radicalism but also generated self-defeating mythologies.

This study is organized in a partly chronological fashion but does not obey absolute rules of chronology. Following the first chapter, which involves a general discussion of the 1960s and the way various commentators view the decade, the historical context which made the Bay Area special or exceptional in the American radical tradition is established. Then the years up until the middle of the decade provide the essential framework, with the focus being upon regionalism and struggles over space. Following this, the cultural dimension of radicalism and regionalism in the 1960s is explored in two chapters which deal, especially, with the "moment" of Haight-Ashbury and the contradictions of cultural radicalism. The final chapters cover the later years of the Movement, concentrating upon Berkeley in 1968 and 1969. This period witnessed increasingly militant battles over space, the development of a keenly felt localism alongside the turn towards revolutionary ideology, and growing counter-cultural influence upon radical spatial politics. Through it all, we see a region at the forefront of radicalism, movements experimenting with the politics of space in new ways and manifesting

34 "Tear Down the Wall" is a repeated line in Jefferson Airplane's call to rebellion "We Can Be Together" (from the 1969 album Volunteers).
a high degree of local or regional consciousness which strengthened radical commitment and yet also sponsored narrow provincialism.

* * * * *

Marshall Berman has remarked upon the aesthetic modernism present in much activist politics of the 1960s, a modernism-in-the-streets which revived the public domain by breathing life into public space.\(^{35}\) Radicals in the 1960s did engage in much creative spatial politics, raising significant issues about the purpose and place of democratic participation, about the "walls" which signified ownership and control. Looking back, it might seem like so much mindless militance, especially in the late 1960s. To interpret it this way, however, is to see everything through a distorted lens focussed upon images of violence, disruption and destruction. Herbert Marcuse recognized the importance of the radical project in the 1960s, while also acknowledging that there were "chaotic" and "immature" modes of protest. The New Left, he argued, "put an all-encompassing, if forgotten and suppressed dimension of radical social change on the agenda".\(^{36}\) The politics of space was very much a part of this forgotten dimension, setting a context for and helping shape both activism and thought.

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"The truth value of memory ... lies in the specific function of memory to preserve promises and potentialities which are betrayed and even outlawed by the mature, civilized individual ..."

(Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, p. 33)

The Sixties' Battleground

Anniversaries sponsor tributes, self-assessments, recognition of past deeds and, sometimes, a revival of old ideals. They can also trigger weepy nostalgia as well as regrets, shaky generalizations as well as obsessions with specific detail. While the dust settles around the books and essays written for the twentieth anniversaries of movements and events in the 1960s, a pattern emerges. The Sixties have become a battleground once again. This time, the struggle concerns memory. "There is history", Christopher Lasch has observed, "that remembers and history that originates in a need to forget".¹

¹ Christopher Lasch, "Introduction", in Russell Jacoby, *Social Amnesia: a critique of conformist psychology from Adler to Laing* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975), p. viii. An increased interest in concepts of memory and forgetting is reflected in a number of academic and popular publications. See, for example, the special issue of *The Journal of American History* Vol. 75 no. 4, March 1989, especially David Thelen, "Memory and American History", p. 1117-1129.
For many years, neo-conservatives and their fellow-travellers have been trying to build up a picture of the radical Sixties as a time of disastrous social consequence. With at best selective memories, at worst phenomenal forgetfulness, they have fashioned a decade of radical activism and thought primarily characterized by moral degradation, political bankruptcy and, moreover, shameful hypocrisy.2

More recently, veterans of the New Left and related social movements have told their stories, or delved into a complex and easily distorted past, with the intention of restoring memory. They have helped bring the Sixties back into focus and even, if only fleetingly, back into popular consciousness. Todd Gitlin, Tom Hayden, Richard Miller and Maurice Isserman, all with backgrounds in SDS, have produced valuable, albeit incomplete, accounts of the American social and political movements which shaped or laid the groundwork for a decade of radical activity.3 All of these studies tend to interpret the experience of the early New Left in sympathetic terms and cast doubt upon the direction of radicalism in the later

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years of the decade. Miller eulogizes the spirit of Port Huron, Hayden writes most openly and interestingly about his early experience, Gitlin is careful but also caustic in his assessment of the post-67 Movement and Isserman, while acknowledging that responsibility for what eventually occurred can be traced back to the early days, does perceive a perversion of goals and strategies later on. Such perspectives are understandable. The Marxist millenarianism and cultural revolutionary posturing evident from 1968 on seemed like a much distorted outgrowth of New Left idealism. But perhaps this is not an adequate characterization of that period. Dreams of revolution were self-defeating but they also expressed (if only at times) some of the fundamental desires of radicalism throughout the 1960s - for community, for public space, for social relationships freed of authoritarianism, domination and exploitation. To be sure, a confusion between authority and authoritarianism, a narrow understanding of community, an etiolated spatial politics, tended to predominate in the latter period. This did spell the end of the Movement but not of its central ideals.

Earlier studies, possibly less caught up in a process of packaging the Sixties, by Wini Breines, Clayborne Carson and Sara Evans have also evidenced a concern to revivify the spirit of Sixties radicalism by remembering the experience and intellectual

4 see Winifred Breines, "Whose New Left?", p. 528. Neither Katsiaficas nor All (see Ibid.) share these criticisms of the later New Left. If anything, they are far too uncritical. Also see Nigel Young, An Infantile Disorder? The Crisis and Decline of the New Left (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977). Young perceives a breakdown of the New Left later in the decade but he does connect this to a lack of organizational stability from the outset (see, in particular, p. 324 ff.). Interpretations which see radicalism in the 1960s moving, almost inexorably, from a state of innocence and idealism in the early years of the decade to mindless adventurism later on, are common. See, for example, Alan J. Matusow, The Unraveling of America: a history of liberalism in the 1960s (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), p. 309 & 330; William L. O'Neill, Coming Apart: an informal history of America in the 1960s (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1971), p. 303.

5 Richard Flacks seems to be developing a similar point in his critique of Gitlin, Miller and Isserman: "... by fostering the impression that the New Left was a failed project that ended with the decade, these books may be perpetuating some of the very habits of thought they seek to correct". ("What Happened to the New Left?", p. 94). Moreover, as Wini Breines has observed, "the politics of the late sixties ... were not simple signs of the deterioration of the movement. There were imaginative political experiments as well as desperate responses to the apparent uselessness of years of peaceful demonstrations and organizing in the face of continued escalation of the war". ("Whose New Left?", p. 544).
directions of the civil rights, student and feminist movements.\textsuperscript{6} Towards the end of his book on the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Carson observes that "purposeful amnesia about recent Afro-American history has enabled many contemporary blacks to ignore the fact that they enjoy the benefits of sacrifices made by earlier generations."\textsuperscript{7} This is not the only form of forgetting manifest since the end of the 1960s. As the editors of one book about the Sixties have suggested, "trashing the sixties" has become a "strategic feature" of attempts to cement some form of neo-conservative ideological consensus.\textsuperscript{8} Neat descriptive phrases, pot summaries, gloating observations about what the Sixties was really like have become common. Recent "anniversary" volumes have at least provided a balance to simple morality tales which go something like this:

The truth is that the Sixties were a period of unfettered self-indulgence on the part of the privileged children of the Western middle class, and that the decade’s legacy is, with the rarest of exceptions, lamentable.\textsuperscript{9}

Such sermons make a virtue out of partial accuracy. There were privileged children, there was self-indulgence but is this really the whole story? Narrow interpretations of Sixties radicalism can be spectacularly vulgar. Take, for instance, Joseph Conlin’s observation: "... the agitations and gospels of the sixties were no more than fads of a people decaying culturally, intellectually, psychologically and


\textsuperscript{7} Clayborne Carson, \textit{In Struggle ...}, p. 301.

\textsuperscript{8} Sohnya Sayres, \textit{et al.}, "Introduction", in \textit{The 60s Without Apology}, p. 8.

morally". Allan Bloom, in his bestselling *The Closing of the American Mind*, casts Sixties radicalism as a villain bent upon undermining the education system in America. Whether or not one agrees with Bloom's diagnosis of the current state of higher education, his arguments about the Sixties result in a caricature very similar to Conlin's.

An essay in 1968 by historian Daniel Boorstin established some of the essential foundations for this style of criticism. Genuine radicals, argued Boorstin, "affirm community" but the student and black movements "deny any substantial community - even among their own 'members'". Their revolt essentially stressed "sensation" over "experience", instant gratification over long-term vision. So, during the decade inward-focussed tendencies were dressed up in pseudo-radical costume. Similar arguments have been put forward by many commentators from Lewis Feuer, with his concentration upon generational rebellion, to Edward Shils, with his stress upon "self-determination" as a celebration of the individual self, a self outside of any traditions or conventions. As reaction set in, Boorstin's view began to look like common sense. Even before the Movement had withered away completely, Jonah Raskin referred to a "vendetta against the radical sixties" running alongside a revival of nostalgia for the 1950s. More recently, Paul Lyons has observed a darker side to

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11 Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: how higher education has failed democracy and impoverished the soul of today's student*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987). While only one chapter deals specifically with the Sixties (p. 313-335), he also makes it clear elsewhere that the real villain of the piece is Sixties radicalism.


the national rehabilitation of Vietnam veterans: "in its attempt to transcend the politics of Vietnam ... it tends towards reconstructing the history of the 1960s along neo-conservative lines" and thus "perpetuates the invisibility of 'the other', the Vietnamese".16

If radical movements in the 1960s were simply faddish, solipsistic and hedonistic, than this explains (or so it seems) the 1970s. A swing towards EST, millionaire maharishis, bio-whatever and cosmic consciousness in the Seventies was not surprising. One set of fads replaced another. In that sense, Sixties radicalism and Seventies cultural style are seen to be homologous. There were, without a doubt, continuities. Peter Clekak might be right to raise doubts about the degree of difference between the two decades.17 He is wrong, however, to see the search for personal fulfilment as the key link. Tendencies towards subjectivity and therapeutic consciousness were present in the New Left, even in early pronouncements like the *Port Huron Statement*.18 But the subjectivity explored by the New Left was mostly of a different order from that mulled over in the cults or therapeutic groups of the 1970s. It had a definite political framework. It was (as Clekak knows) something more than a quest for personal development. As well as continuities and connections, there are clear differences, breaks and discontinuities between the two decades. Jerry Rubin as stockbroker or personal development advocate is not just a natural development of Rubin as Yippie. And Rubin the Yippie was not an automatic product of Rubin the anti-war organizer. There are connections but there are also, and crucially, transformations. Messianic cultist behaviour could, no doubt, be found in the Movement. This does not, however, make it a cult. While cults became more prominent in the 1970s, so did frisbees and roller


skates. Sixties radicalism can hardly be held responsible for all social trends which arose following its demise.

Shiva Naipaul's *Black and White* is one product of an historical revisionism which collapses the sixties into the seventies.\(^{19}\) The book examines the social and political background to the tragic events surrounding the People's Temple in Guyana in 1978. Naipaul divides the story into two parts: the first looks at Guyanese society and politics; the second, and most important, delves into the weird and wonderful world of California, in particular the San Francisco Bay Area, during the Sixties and Seventies. There are some witty observations of new age consciousness in California. Naipaul adroitly exposes the fetishism of human relationships and perpetual states of self-analysis. Yet, while it is never stated explicitly, the message floating through in the end is that Sixties radicalism is somehow responsible for the mass suicide/murder of Temple devotees, as well as for the new age narcissism. Naipaul does not ignore the religious fundamentalism behind Jim Jones' hysterical vision but he does manage to make radical ideology function as one element of such fundamentalism. Complex moments of protest and resistance are taken out of historical context, plumbed for their sensationalism and, through dramatic journalistic conjuring, emerge later in different, even more terrifying costume. The Free Speech Movement (FSM), Summer of Love and the People's Park struggle thus masquerade as protospectacles paving the way for the big one at Jonestown.

While it is extremely important to examine the political and cultural climate which nurtured or sustained groups like People's Temple, there can be a temptation to suggest that this context was produced by radicalism alone. Because it was based for a period in San Francisco, the Temple (Naipaul seems to assume) must thus reflect that city's and region's crazy ambience and radical heritage. Rather than poverty, institutional authoritarianism, spectacular consumer culture and the decline of community being mostly responsible for warping the social vision and practice of the Temple, it is simply radicalism working in another way. That the Movement contained some of the seeds of narcissism, mystical obeisance and

mass sacrifice is not in dispute. Naipaul, however, seeks to explain all themes of protest and opposition with reference to the impulse of self-gratification or the vital worship of false idols.

Naipaul is an outsider in terms of the American scene, an observer who likes to see a big distance between himself and his subjects. Perhaps, then, he does not so much "forget" as inflame temptations to forget within others. It all seems very neat. The implication is that if you could not see the roots of Jonestown in the FSM or Haight-Ashbury or the Black Panthers, then you were as blind as the Communists who continued to praise Stalin despite powerful evidence of the Gulag's horrors. And that, so it goes, is precisely what the left always does - it holds up corrupt societies or groups as embodiments of utopia or the vanguard of progressive social change. So why not see Jonestown as a natural outgrowth of leftist utopianism?

The answer, essentially, is that history is not so neat. Indeed, such a portrayal represents a gross distortion of what actually happened. It reifies complex historical processes and, as Theodor Adorno once remarked, "every reification is a forgetting". Adorno's observation has been borne out by the most public and ferocious rejection of Sixties radicalism in recent years. When David Horowitz and Peter Collier announced in the Washington Post Magazine, that they had voted for Reagan in the 1984 Presidential election, it came as a shock. Horowitz, in particular, had been a respected and influential New Left intellectual. How can such a transformation be explained? If the Washington Post piece and other publications by Horowitz and Collier are examined closely, they reveal a systematic reification of history, a convenient forgetting of the facts. A version

20 Theodor Adorno, cited by Martin Jay, Marxism and Totality ..., p. 229.

21 Peter Collier and David Horowitz, "Lefties for Reagan: we have seen the enemy and he is not us", The Washington Post Magazine, March 17, 1985.

of "the God that failed" thesis is being recycled and, as before, there are significant gaps, failures of memory, twistings of the truth. They condemn a past which never existed in precisely the way it is being painted. Such historical reconstruction serves present ideological commitments, thus memory is automatically distorted or selective. As with an earlier breed of New York intellectuals, movement from left to right has fostered political amnesia, whereby the past is written under a cloud of current perspectives.23

David Horowitz and the Politics of Forgetting

In the early 1960s, David Horowitz, a young scholar at the Berkeley campus of the University of California, wrote a book about the burgeoning Berkeley student movement.24 He paid homage to the student activists who, more than any other student grouping in the United States, had been responsible for generating a "new politics". His conclusion, written two years before the Free Speech Movement erupted, was prophetic:

The fight that the students are putting up is just the preliminary struggle. They are young and they are growing up in a world which for them is also young. For this world, they have new ideas and new methods for

23 see Alan Wald, The New York Intellectuals: the rise and decline of the anti-Stalinist left from the 1930s to the 1980s (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), p. 3-24. Wald uses the term "political amnesia" in much the same way as I do. Coincidentally, I had written about the politics of forgetting, or "political amnesia", in relation to David Horowitz before Wald's important book was published: see "Requiem for the Sixties? On David Horowitz and the Politics of Forgetting", Arena, 73, 1985, p. 127-137 (reprinted in Radical America, Vol. 19, no. 6, November-December 1985, p. 65-73); "Political Amnesia", Arena, 78, 1987, p. 30-6. Wald deals with Horowitz but not in a sustained fashion (p. 348-50). Nevertheless, his interpretation shares much with mine: "The political transformation of David Horowitz is strongly reminiscent of the type of renegacy ... in which an apostate misrepresents his or her past and fashions a new career out of denouncing his or her former comrades".

putting them into practice. They have, in short, a new politics. The fight now is the fight for the freedom to work it out.25

At that time, Student was "the document of the turning point in student consciousness"26 and David Horowitz's later work was even more significant.

His study of U.S. foreign policy, From Yalta to Vietnam, first published in 1965 under the American title, The Free World Colossus, remains a landmark piece of scholarship and established his reputation as one of the most important contributors to a growing body of revisionist history.27 In the mid 1960s, having left America, he was a research director of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation in England.

By 1968 he had returned to the San Francisco Bay Area and was an editor of the renowned radical magazine Ramparts. While at Ramparts, Horowitz gave no indication of an impending intellectual crisis and continued publishing important works which were increasingly informed by a critical Marxist perspective.28 He was, however, becoming increasingly cranky about the undisciplined adventurism and vulgar ideological contortions of some groups within the American New Left. He was, of course, not alone. In 1979, he wrote an article for The Nation in which he acknowledged ceasing political activity by the mid 1970s and effectively abandoning

25 Ibid., p. 160.
Marxism soon after. While highly critical of the left, this piece reflected a residual radical commitment. He was worried by the Left's supposed "moral and political double standard":

The left's indignation seems exclusively reserved for outrages that confirm the Marxist diagnosis of the sickness of capitalist society. Thus, there is protest against murder and repression in Nicaragua, but not Cambodia, Chile but not Tibet, South Africa but not Uganda, Israel but not Libya or Iraq.

The element of truth in this observation was swamped by distortion and, elsewhere in the article, a bristling anti-Sovietism tends to suggest alignment with cold war liberalism. It is as if he was just on the verge of saying "Goodby to all that". But something pulled him back. He criticized Noam Chomsky for practicing the "double standard" yet still acknowledged that "Chomsky's intellectual integrity and moral courage ... set a standard for political intellectuals". These are not the words of a Reagan supporter. And at the end of the article he challenges the left to reconstruct itself: "the way for the left to begin to regain its utopia, to fashion a new, more adequate vision of radical commitment and radical change, is to take a firmer grip on the ground under its feet". So the final farewell was yet to come.

Horowitz and Collier acknowledge that voting for Reagan was their way of turning their back on the Sixties, of saying "goodbye to all that - to the self-aggrandizing romance with corrupt Third Worldism; to the casual indulgence of Soviet totalitarianism; to the hypocritical and self-dramatizing anti-Americanism which is the New

29 David Horowitz, "A Radical's Disenchantment", The Nation, December 8, 1979, p. 587. More recently, Horowitz has traced his disillusionment with the left directly to 1974 when an associate of his was murdered by the Black Panthers (at the time he had been giving the Panthers some assistance); "Letter to a Political Friend ...", p. 202. An event like this can constitute, psychologically and politically, a crucial turning point. It does not, however, explain adequately a transformation over time as thorough as Horowitz's.

30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., p. 589.
Left's bequest to mainstream politics". Sections of the New Left might be accused of all these things but they were not defining aspects of Sixties radicalism. More importantly, Horowitz never upheld any such tendencies. He was critical of the deification of Third World liberation movements, never supportive of Soviet "totalitarianism" and was not, in any real sense, anti-American. More recently, Horowitz has acknowledged that

"This New Left of which I was one of the founders, was ... embarrassed by the tarnish the Soviet totalitarians had brought to the socialist cause. It turned its back on Stalin and his heirs."  

Horowitz, quite clearly, forgets faster than most. Moreover, he constantly stressed "authentic" American ideals and aspirations against those that were held aloft by U.S. policy makers. Indeed, he never abandoned his faith in the essential virtues of American democracy. Horowitz concluded *From Yalta to Vietnam* with these words:

... when America set out on her post-war path to contain revolution throughout the world, and threw her immense power and influence into balance against the rising movement for social justice among the poverty-stricken two thirds of the world's population, the first victims of her deeds were the very ideals for a better world - liberty, equality and self-determination - which she herself, in her infancy, had done so much to foster.

Elsewhere he stressed the "increasingly violent contradiction" between American imperialism and the American revolutionary ideals. And he even described counter-insurgency programmes

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33 Collier and Horowitz, "Lefties for Reagan ..."

34 Horowitz, "Nicaragua ...", p. 28; also see Collier and Horowitz, "Another 'Low Dishonest Decade ..."., p. 17, where they acknowledge that for the New Left, in the main, "the Soviets remained stigmatized".


36 Horowitz, "Introduction" in *Corporations and the Cold War*, p. 22.
(not entirely tongue-in-cheek) as "'un-American'". In a response to the Weatherman celebration of Third World Liberation Movements, he observed that "It is certainly true that the liberation of the Third World will hasten the liberation of the U.S. But it is no less true that the American revolution is the key to the liberation of mankind". There is nothing sinister here, no blatant genuflection at the altar of what Daniel Boorstin used to call "the genius of American politics". Still, there is a profound Americanism at work, a faith in the ultimate salvation of humankind through the goals and beliefs which inspired the foundation of American nationhood.

In their initial farewell to the New Left, Horowitz and Collier refer to "our hand-me-down Marxism". But it was Horowitz who in 1969 wrote a scathing critique of the "hand-me-down Marxism" of sections within the New Left. So in what sense could it have been his ideological heritage when, in fact, he stood against it at the time? His memory is playing tricks. Horowitz is now turning his own peculiar phraseology against himself in a ceremonial display of self-congratulation masquerading as self-criticism. Excoriating past beliefs, renegade leftists end up worshipping the God that succeeds. And they, in turn, become successful merchants of political

37 Ibid., p. 10.


40 Horowitz, "Hand-Me-Down Marxism ...", particularly p. 17-18. He was careful to make a distinction between two kinds of Marxism:

A Marxism which is ... flexible, open and unafraid to rethink its revolutionary perspectives according to specific conditions; and which fashions its language as a means of communication analysis and mobilization, rather than employing it merely as ritualistic invocation, can be just the powerful instrument that a revolutionary movement requires.

But there is also Marxism of the hand-me-down variety, where an ideological perspective and vocabulary developed in a different epoch or a different political-cultural environment is transposed whole and adopted as an all-embracing wisdom.
mythologies. Banking upon failures of memory, they invent a past full of political blindness and moral turpitude. Their words become little more than "memoryless repetition"\(^{41}\) of dogma designed for ex-radicals. In his autobiography, Norman Podhoretz asked:

Where then does radicalism now live? ... in self-hatred and self-contempt. It was out of an infection of self-hatred and self-contempt ... that the radicalism of the sixties was born.\(^{42}\)

Horowitz has also suggested recently that "hatred of self, and by extension one's country, is the root of the radical cause".\(^{43}\) Chronicles of absolute disillusionment tend, unfortunately, to reflect absolute intellectual decay.

The "goodbye to all that" syndrome has a venerable tradition within the American left. Old left graveyards are littered with vitriolic confessionals and the New Left, being not so new in any case, has not escaped the recurring orgy of acrimonious rejections of the past. Aileen Kraditor, once a promising Sixties radical historian, has confessed her mistakes, rewritten the history of radical history, and is now at the forefront of the Conservative Historians Forum.\(^{44}\) While Robin Morgan's famous farewell to the New Left constituted an affirmation of radical feminism rather than a complete rejection of the past, it was filled with bitterness levelled at a movement which, for all its faults, had provided the basis from which a new feminist culture could spring.\(^{45}\) There are, moreover, the unwritten valedictions by those who have handed in their Sixties medals and merged into the flat landscape of small town America. As the editors

\(^{41}\) Russell Jacoby, *Social Amnesia* ..., p. 102.


\(^{43}\) Horowitz, "Nicaragua ...", p. 31.


of the journal *Social Text* have observed, "what you think the 60s was is one of the forms in which you affirm or repudiate a whole part of your own life".46

Amnesia fuels the "goodbye to all that" syndrome. The characters in the film *The Big Chill*, for instance, cannot really recapture their past in any coherent way. Indeed, one of the most disappointing (yet also interesting) aspects of the film is that the previous commitment to the Movement is never explained or explored satisfactorily. In a sense, these characters are portrayed as being just along for the ride, making their way from one form of self-indulgence to another. This, to be sure, is part of the story of the Sixties. But it cannot account for all those who remain committed to New Left ideals and aspirations and does not even begin to address the complexities of the years which followed.

For many of those within the Movement, the seventies and eighties proved to be what the forties and fifties had been for a number of radicals from the 1930s: years filled with disillusionment, despair, questions of identity, personal doubts and political realignment. Horowitz himself acknowledged becoming self-focussed: "We turned inward - not, I would say, out of narcissism but out of a recognition unfamiliar and in some ways threatening to our radical ideas, that failure (like success) is never a matter merely of 'the objective circumstances'. It has a root in the acting self".47 This is not to suggest that all, or even the great majority of, Sixties radicals turned against their past in the decade that followed (just as all radicals from the thirties did not automatically follow the path mapped out by Sidney Hook). But it is to point to the fact that the crisis within the New Left generated a number of different reactions among some of its leading figures: retreat to the academy, a move towards Democratic Party politics, quietism, spiritual salvation (or rather the image of spiritual salvation), therapeutic chatter, right wing and religious fundamentalism. A number of leading personalities have highlighted the range of choices or options open

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46 *Social Text* editors, "Introduction" in S. Sayres *et al.*, *The 60s Without Apology*, p. 8.

to those who underwent some form of political transformation. Eldridge Cleaver, for instance, is now a conservative Republican. Such is the fate of fashion-conscious celebrities. Tom Hayden's various transformations have been more interesting. Now a Democratic representative in the state of California, Hayden lived the New Left in all its guises. From left-liberal humanist in the early years to revolutionary ideologue in later years, Hayden is perhaps the genuine prodigal son. He has come home to the heartland of social democracy where father-figures like Irving Howe (and elder brothers like Michael Harrington) had argued he should have been all along. His autobiographical reflections are lucid and at times fascinating, although modesty (could it be guilt or self-hatred?) seems to prevent him from writing the full story (particularly regarding his Bay Area experience). He does not wallow in bitter recollections or mourn lost opportunities or beat himself with a neo-conservative birch fashioned by Norman Podhoretz. The book is, somewhat unexpectedly, free of overloaded apologies to Vietnam veterans. "No one", Hayden argued a few years ago, "can feel utterly righteous about his Vietnam experience, whether he bombed a village or used a draft deferment to escape those killing fields." The comparison is odious and its purpose dubious. He also berated his anti-Americanism and lamented the way he had "compounded the pain of many Americans who lost sons and loved ones in Vietnam". There are elements of forgetting in these words. Domestic tranquility has more than softened Hayden's rhetoric. It has pushed it at times very close to a

48 Daniel Bell once suggested that "a radical is a prodigal son ... He may eventually return to the House of his elders but the return is by choice"; cited by Alexander Bloom, *Prodigal Sons: the New York intellectuals and their world* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 170.

49 Tom Hayden, *Reunion*. On the Bay Area, see p. 328 ff.

50 Tom Hayden, "One Dove's Late Lessons from the Vietnam War", speech to a symposium on the Johnson years, adapted by the *Los Angeles Times* and reprinted in the *International New York Herald Tribune*, July 10, 1986. Todd Gitlin tends to reflect similar feelings when he reminds himself of the brutality of the Hanoi regime in the 1950s (*The Sixties*, p. 269). Unfortunately, as David Hunt has argued, Gitlin gets his "facts" from distorted, even fabricated, right-wing accounts (David Hunt, "Coming to Terms with Post-War Vietnam", *Socialist Review*, April-June 1989, p. 120).

51 Ibid.
sort of consensus politics which seeks to forget recent history by remembering an essential oneness, a unity of the American people.\textsuperscript{52}

\textbf{The Sixties Were ...}

The Sixties were a time of great divisions, of battles over fundamental priorities, of tensions within and between social movements, of exploratory and prefigurative politics.\textsuperscript{53} Critics of Sixties radicalism tend to ignore, slide past or reconstruct the actual \textit{histories} of political and cultural dissent, and end up providing a caricature. This is easy to do. Certain forms of cultural radicalism, in particular, were susceptible to distorted characterization partly because they revealed occasionally contradictory tendencies. Even political radicalism was subject to media hype, whipped-up sloganeering, personality fetishism.\textsuperscript{54} This does not, however, negate the positive aspects of Sixties radicalism. Struggles for democracy and community, as well as those against the war and racism, deserve and have achieved positive rites of remembrance. But a certain style of forgetting, of reification, does threaten to triumph.

Irving Howe, in his autobiography, concluded that "the sixties speak mostly about the spillage of idealism, the draining of energy".\textsuperscript{55} The radical movements of that decade never really fitted into Howe's mildly reformist programmatic politics, so his memory would produce such a response. And, in one sense, he is right. But there is another sense in which his words flow too easily and capture too

\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Ibid.} ("the United States needs a post-Vietnam foreign policy consensus")

\textsuperscript{53} For a discussion of prefigurative politics" see Wini Breines, \textit{Community and Organization} ..., p. 6-7.

\textsuperscript{54} On the mass media and the New Left, see Todd Gitlin, \textit{The Whole World is Watching: mass media in the making and unmaking of the new left} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

neatly the complexities of Sixties radicalism. He is trying to convey a sense of disillusionment and decay as the Movement shifted further and further away from the liberal-left to which he belonged. This is part of the story but other parts are floating around unattended.

The Sixties, as it happens, do not speak mostly of any one thing or two tendencies. There were, of course, central concerns and issues, primary goals and desires. But many other issues and questions intervened, giving the Movement what Louis Althusser, in one of his better moments, might have called an overdetermined character. To put it another way, the varied radical actions and ideals never (despite the usefulness of "the Movement" as a term) achieved an essential unity. This, too, is mythology and it is sometimes perpetuated by sympathizers as well as critics. George Katsiaficas' attempt to argue for the existence of "a unified world historical movement" is unconvincing: "... in 1970, autonomous women's and gay organizations worked as parts of an emergent internationalist revolutionary movement whose main domestic leadership was the Black Panther Party".56 He then acknowledges that this unity was quickly broken up, with the various movements going their separate ways.57 To suggest, however, that there was, even for one year, a united internationalist revolutionary movement is retrospective wishful thinking and to claim the Panthers constituted its domestic leadership is at best specious. There was a real spirit of internationalism, there were forms of collective bonding but there was also national and regional circumstance as well as a host of divisions within movements and organizations.58 The international dimension of Sixties radicalism was important, indeed vital. So, too, was local identity and sectarian fissiparousness. There is a marvellous family tree of Marxist-Leninist organizations in America which reveals a plenitude of different groups, reproducing themselves almost at will, squabbling about the correct line on


57 Ibid.

58 Paul Piccone has remarked upon a symposium dealing with 1968 in which contributors strived "in vain to locate global unifying themes" when the nature of their empirical evidence stressed "essentially endogenous factors"; Paul Piccone "Reinterpreting 1968: Mythology on the Make", Telos, 77, Fall 1988, p. 30.
everything. So when Katsiaficas, writing of the prospects for revolution in the U.S. stipulates "It would be a working-class feminist revolution against racial domination or nothing at all", the latter alternative seems more likely. Universalism as against particularism is a noble ideal but difficult to sustain in the face of a politics to some degree fractured by regional characteristics and specialist orientations. The goal may be worthy but the path towards its realization is filled with many obstacles. Despite claims to international solidarity, Marxist national movements, have, upon achieving power, became decidedly nationalist. Territorial definitions, images, senses of belonging, construct the world of international politics. They also had a significant role to play in the history of Sixties radicalism.

59 Ibid., p. 179.

CHAPTER 2

GO WEST!

Specific regions or localities can have immense drawing power. They may come to symbolize hope, opportunities for the future, freedom to move, flexibility, tolerance and innovation. The Bay Area had that role in the 1960s but it did not just happen that way. It was a product of history. The Bay Area’s radical tradition provided an essential framework for activists there, giving them a particular identity. Moreover, a powerful sense of place helped shape their political and cultural perspectives. The Bay Area constituted a critical venue for political and cultural dissent throughout the 1960s. San Francisco and Berkeley, in particular, pointed the way forward, signalled potentialities and drew many radicals from other regions into their orbits. Along the way, a cultural and political tendency, borne of the politics of space, marked out the Bay Area as different and injected radicalism there with a strong regional flavour.

Region, Locality and Bay Area Exceptionalism

Regional differences within America make it difficult to speak of a national identity. It is not so much that there is no national identity but that it is structured regionally, experienced as a fractured sense of belonging to the whole. The same is true of the New Left. To a degree, the American New Left was an accumulation of local organizations, circumstances and events rather than a coherent national movement. The relative geographical mobility of leaders and some participants did not lessen the extent to which a local identity could develop. Wini Breines has argued that the local community focus was a strength of the New Left, enabling it to
practise participatory democracy and thus develop within the movement the kind of politics and the kind of style which prefigures a new society. Russell Jacoby, however, has pointed to some of the difficulties associated with the existence of a geographically mobile cadre and a local base:

Any recent history or account of the left reads like the travel itinerary it nearly is: endless groups of individuals moving in and out of cities every few years, if not months ... The geographic mobility might seem to provide lines of communication and information that facilitate analysis. The opposite is true. Mythology flourishes ... a trademark of the U.S. left is the traveller just back from somewhere with a glowing account of left-wing activity and progress - inevitably false - which contrasts dramatically with local difficulties.

Part of the problem seems to be that any ideology imbued with a profound sense of localism can become trapped in a framework of social introversion, ultimately relying upon a narcissistic commitment to intimacy. If that occurs within radical movements, they can develop an inflated sense of their own worth and purpose. Nevertheless, localism can also encourage bonds of solidarity which were once experienced culturally (in ethnic, rural and working class communities) but have been eroded substantially by the impact of mass consumption as a technique of integration and domination.

Indeed, the role of the locale or community as a site of resistance to the encroachments of capitalist modernity should not

1 Wini Breines, "Community and Organization: The New Left and Michels' Iron Law", Social Problems Vol. 27, No. 4 (April 1980), p. 419-427; also see Wini Breines, Community and Organization ...


be underestimated. A Marxist focus upon class consciousness can obscure the communal roots of class cohesion. It can also be easy, or at least ideologically convenient, to overlook the profoundly conservative appeal to tradition which marks much communally based struggle against the bourgeois order of things. Even the communitarian sympathies and localist orientations of many radicals in the Sixties reflected what was, in certain ways, a conservative suspicion of large-scale impersonal cities and bureaucracies, and a consequent search for meaning in the smaller collective or neighborhood or rural commune.

In a mass society, particularly one without a powerful oppositional labour movement, local populism may be the only realistic avenue open to the left. Hence in the 1970s many veterans of the New Left turned to the neighborhood, organizing their politics around local issues, electing "leftist" city councils. This "pastoral

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retreat of the New Left", as Michael Walzer has described it, was not an entirely new development. Forms of local populism were evident in Sixties radicalism, from various attempts at community organizing to high degrees of community consciousness in student or hippie enclaves.

Localism, despite its apparent attractions, does possess contradictory impulses - on the one hand, towards building a base of resistance to the ruling political and economic system but, on the other hand, towards a narrowing of the domain of social reality. Both of these tendencies were very much present within the New Left in the San Francisco Bay area. Radicals there had a strong sense of regional pride which simultaneously strengthened their commitment and tempted them with excessive parochialism. In the early and mid-Sixties, the Bay Area's status as a centre of radicalism was cemented. Berkeley, in particular, achieved iconic status. During an SDS national conference on campus action and social change at the Berkeley campus in 1966, a student from the Mid-West noted that the discussion was dealing with issues which were far too advanced for his campus, where they were still pondering the possibility of doing things which had been done in Berkeley five or six years before. A Berkeley activist merely responded that occurrences at Berkeley "can serve as illustrations for other places". And this is precisely the sort of part played by Berkeley radicals throughout the

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10 The term 'San Francisco Bay Area' refers to the city of San Francisco and the nine counties in the region surrounding it (see Appendix One). The 'Bay Area' is frequently a loose designation with the focus being upon San Francisco, Berkeley and Oakland (the latter two cities being in Alameda County). If these three cities are linked on a map, the result is a triangle. This has a symbolic significance of sorts, for their relationship is triangular in another sense. San Francisco is primarily a financial and administrative centre, Oakland an industrial city and Berkeley a university town. The Bay Area attained its reputation in the Sixties primarily through these cities, although Palo Alto mainly through Stanford University, had a reasonably important role to play later in the decade.

11 Reported in Gene Dennis, "Political Profile of SDS in Transition", People's World, January 14, 1967. Tom Hayden has also noted that Berkeley "continually set an example for movements across the country" (Reunion, p. 331).
Sixties: setting examples, pointing the way forward, elucidating the possibilities for the New Left in America and elsewhere.

The Bay Area as a whole, but Berkeley and San Francisco in particular, was invested with rich symbolic significance. And even if the symbol frequently functioned as myth, it remained potent. At an anti-nuclear demonstration in Chicago in 1979, a paraplegic Vietnam Veteran commented hopefully that "This is the beginning of a new resistance. Berkeley '68 is happening here in 1979". Why Berkeley? Why not Paris or Chicago or Columbia University in 1968? Perhaps he was thinking of the anti-war actions in Berkeley in 1965 or, even more likely, the 1967 march on the Oakland induction center which heralded the new era of resistance. Up to a point, however, it does not matter which year in the Sixties he had picked. From 1960 on, Berkeley and/or San Francisco was seen to harbour the advanced guard of New Left activism. A brief resume of significant moments in local New Left history highlights this.

The demonstrations against capital punishment, specifically galvanizing around the case of Caryl Chessman, and against HUAC in San Francisco in early 1960 marked what Berkeley radical Michael Rossman termed "the birth cry of the new left". When civil rights campaigns gained momentum in the north in 1963 and 1964, San Francisco led the way. Demonstrations against discriminating living practices, culminating in the Sheraton Palace and Auto Row occupations, produced the largest number of arrests for civil disobedience yet recorded for the northern civil rights movement and brought about a dramatic change in living practices. Black comedian Dick Gregory even alluded to "the San Francisco method"

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12 Quoted in Laura Cianci, "McNamara sparks an '80s-style protest", In These Times, May 30-June 5, 1979. There must be a special ring to the phrase "Berkeley '68". In his autobiography, novelist Philip Roth discusses a rather meek and mild fraternity party in the 1950s and notes that this was not, after all, "Berkeley '68 or Woodstock '70" [The Facts (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Girous, 1988) p. 56] Unfortunately, I cannot recall what happened at Woodstock in 1970.

which gained results but avoided violence and frustration.14 The Berkeley Free Speech Movement (FSM) was profoundly influential not only nationally but internationally. In a Belgian Situationist International pamphlet, which was a trenchant critique of student life, the FSM was seen as providing "a revolutionary gesture":

> Idle reader, your cry of 'What about Berkeley?' escapes us not. True, American society needs its students; and by revolting against the university hierarchy they have automatically called that society into question.15

As Lewis Feuer has observed, after FSM "Berkeley entered the idiom; whether it was the student movement in Berlin or London, the question ... was whether another 'Berkeley' was going to occur".16 And the Berkeley Vietnam Day Committee (VDC) also provided an international example. A VDC committee statement included the following piece of self-promotion:

> We in Berkeley cannot but be proud of our contribution to the Movement. The example of VDC ... has inspired people all over the world. There are today VDCs not only in Vancouver to LA, but in Iowa and as far away as Belgium and Australia.17

Militant demonstrations against troop trains which passed through west Berkeley marked the real beginnings of civil disobedience directed against the war in Vietnam. And the march on Oakland's induction centre in 1967, just before the famous Pentagon demonstration chronicled by Norman Mailer,18 signalled a swing towards street-fighting. Meanwhile, the Oakland Black Panthers were gaining a high profile internationally, with their revolutionary

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17 VDC committee statement, Berkeley Barb, April 1, 1966.

demands, confrontationist style and charismatic machismo leadership. And despite the prominence of the Paris and Columbia student revolts in 1968, it was the frequently violent struggles in Berkeley and also at the campus of San Francisco State University that year and the next, which captured the trajectory of the New Left. Tear gas, street battles, states of emergency, massive campus disruption, the National Guard patrolling the streets, the slaying of one white man and blinding of another during the People's Park conflict, would all have catapulted the Bay Area, in particular Berkeley, into a position of international significance if it had not already had one. The point does not need labouring, except for the fact that it might enlighten some East Coast or Mid-West radicals who saw their city or campus as the epicentre of radical dissent.¹⁹

To be sure, not everything happened first or even happened at all in Berkeley during the 1960s. The fact that some commentators seem to assume that it did is itself a significant testimony to Berkeley's actual and symbolic roles. In his autobiographical account of the Sixties, British New Left thinker and activist Tariq Ali claims that "the idea of a teach-in [about Vietnam] had originated on the Berkeley campus".²⁰ The first teach-in, however, was at the Ann Arbor campus of the University of Michigan. While memories fade, symbolic power lives on. Symbols, however, do not arise miraculously. The teach-in at the Berkeley campus of UC was the largest and most successful of the teach-ins. Even when you are wrong about Berkeley, you can also be right.

In 1970 Tom Hayden suggested that Berkeley is "a place where you can be higher on Revolution than anywhere else but it is also a place where people are getting serious".²¹ They could not have been

¹⁹ One east coast New Leftist I was having a casual conversation with in 1979 expressed surprise when I asked whether he had perceived Berkeley as the leading centre of radicalism in the decade. He seemed to remember that his group, if anything, sought direction from Chicago in the late 60s because the headquarters of SDS was there.

²⁰ Tariq Ali, Street Fighting Years, p. 50. Ali compounds this minor error by then suggesting that teach-ins spread across campuses in America, "helping to generate the student radicalization that led to the formation of the Students for a Democratic Society [SDS] the following year, 1966". But, worse still, he eventually gets it right, noting on p. 117 that SDS was founded in 1960. So much for the facts!

getting too serious if language like that was still common currency but that is the sort of sensibility (if not sense) evoked by Berkeley in the late Sixties. This reflected the very real role played by Berkeley radicals and an intense local consciousness which could breed self-delusion. A Berkeley radical reviewing Regis Debray's influential book *Revolution in the Revolution*? in 1967 suggested that "Berkeley is Latin America in microcosm". Well, why not? It was hardly seen to be America in microcosm. Whether the local New Left guerillas would take to the hills and form their own guerilla foci was not a question borne of pure fantasy, except for the fact that the hills were already occupied by wealthy professionals. Local pride sustained the New Left in Berkeley but also helped distort its political perspective.

Berkeley or Bay Area "exceptionalism" was itself a sub-category of Californian "exceptionalism". The cultural Zeitgeist shifted in the 1960s, giving all things Californian an aura of vitality:

Now it was not Europe but the West Coast of America that was the furthest rim of experiment in life and art, to which one made one's pilgrimage in search of liberation and enlightenment...

Clothing fashions, living styles, modes of speech, a general social and cultural ambience were being developed in California and exported elsewhere. California as a whole had an image of being more open, more in tune with innovative politics and hip culture. And its climate - a factor not to be underestimated in assessing the political environment - permitted sustained activity through the year. The Californian image could, nevertheless, repel some political activists even as it enticed others. Vida, the main character in Marge Piercy's novel of the same name, reacts quickly to a friend who is trying to persuade her to come and live in Los Angeles:

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23 David Lodge, *Changing Places* (London: Martin Secker and Warburg, 1975), p. 177. Lodge's novel, much of which is set in Berkeley ("Euphoric State") is not only a superb satire of academic life but also contains many sharp observations about radicalism Berkeley style in the late 1960s.
I'm an East Coaster. I understand the politics here. I work better. Our there it's just too much scenery.24

In other words, a regional consciousness and identity did not exist only on the West Coast. But it was unquestionably stronger there.

In early 1966, Jerry Rubin observed that the Bay Area is a 'radical's dream', holding within it a potentially radical social base embracing students, a liberal middle class and a large black population.25 There is a very real sense in which Rubin was actually pointing to his specific regional base at that time, the Berkeley-Oakland-San Francisco axis, rather than the entire Bay area. The term 'Bay Area' when used by Berkeley radicals frequently signified their immediate environment more than the region as a whole. That again points to the strength of a local radical identity there. But it is also true that terms like 'Bay Area', 'west coast' and 'California' were (and are) almost interchangeable even though their specific geographical referents are vastly different. Thus Rubin, writing in 1968, paid homage to California and yet, in listing its contributions to the Movement focussed almost entirely on the Bay Area and mostly on Berkeley or San Francisco:

It's a regional as well as a generational revolution. Certainly it is a hell of a lot easier to build a new cultural alternative in California than it is in New York. New Advances come when you have a base, a home ... think of all the things that have first come out of California and then like shock waves hit the country ...

The HUAC demonstrations, the Free Speech Movement, the first militant anti-war demonstration, the rock music, the first underground papers, the peace candidates, the Resistance, the first official anti-war third party, the hippies, the differs, the dances, the Mime Troupe, and the first flowering of communities where our

morality and values are dominant; where the "straight society" is suspect.26

Given that the Bay area was Rubin's first real political "home" and that it was the epicentre of the Movement, this catalogue of events and organizations is unsurprising. Yet what is interesting is that what was primarily a Bay Area consciousness was being articulated as a Californian consciousness, just as Rubin had earlier tended to collapse the Bay Area into Berkeley, Oakland and San Francisco. It is apparent that the symbolic element in such regional classification was extremely important. The frontier was as large or as small as one wished it to be but it was still different in kind from the rest of America:

To the youth of America, we say 'Go West, young man'. The weather, the free spirit, the emphasis on youth, and the dominance of our types means revolution. We claim California as a guerilla base.27

Yet, in Rubin's eyes, the one real problem with California was that it did not possess "enough theatrical props" like the Pentagon or the New York Stock exchange.28 So perhaps Vida was right - in the end, it was just too much scenery.

While the focal point of frontier radicalism in the Sixties was more often than not Berkeley, San Francisco also thrived on the myths and realities of regionalism. In the early 1960s the noisy anti-Communist crusader Dr. Schwarz alleged that San Francisco was a political Gomorrah of the west coast,29 thus presaging similar sorts of enlightened comments by moral fundamentalists well over a decade later. Displaying remarkable perspicacity, Schwarz revealed his belief that "(Kruschev) has chosen San Francisco as the headquarters of the


27 Ibid.


29 Dr. Schwarz, cited in Editorial, The Nation Jan. 27, 1962, p. 70.
world communist dictatorship". When in doubt, pick San Francisco or Berkeley! Yet even bizarre political mythologies can contain elements of reality. While Kruschev may not have had San Francisco in mind as the headquarters of World Communism, he could have done worse. San Francisco, more than most other American cities, has a rich radical tradition. And it is that tradition which provided an historical foundation for Sixties radicalism in the Bay Area. The New Left was not so new that it lacked any connections to a radical heritage passed on by previous generations, a heritage which was itself mediated by regionalism.

The Historical Framework: Politics

San Francisco is noted for being an open, progressive, tolerant and liberal city. This has something to do with the city's historical status as the key city in the American west, an "instant city" arising out of the feverish swirl of the Californian gold rush. Once a major maritime port, San Francisco always managed to attract a non-conformist itinerant population as well as staid settlers and frontier capitalists. It now possesses a remarkably diverse population which is, in the main, highly conscious of the city's charms and its historical background. The sweeping Bay, the discrete and sometimes colourful neighborhoods, a downtown not yet built out of existence, an image of romance and adventure, a sensation of being on the frontier in more ways than one: all these characteristics sustain San Francisco's international popularity and partly serve as a magnet drawing the disaffected or marginalized, the drop-out or dissident,

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30 Dr. Fred C. Schwarz, quoted in Fred J. Cook, "The Ultras", The Nation, June 23, 1962, p. 573. Schwarz was leader of the far right Christian anti-Communist Crusade.


the high-minded or simply those "high" on any possible range of lifestyles, philosophies, natural substances or chemicals. The city's reputation as open and tolerant has deep roots in the special role played there by labour and radical movements. Without that historical framework, embodying a strong tradition of political and cultural radicalism, San Francisco and even the Bay Area as a whole would not have figured so prominently in the 1960s.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, San Francisco was becoming identified as a "union town", in contrast to its California cousin Los Angeles which was an "open shop" city.\textsuperscript{33} Even within the Bay Area there were divergences in political temperament and style. Oakland was the base for the Socialist Party, and its offshoot the Communist Labor Party (CLP) until the early 1920s. The arrest of around twenty movement leaders in the Oakland area during the Palmer raids and the gathering police suppression of radicalism there helped shift the centre of communism in California to San Francisco.

\textsuperscript{33} The skilled trades, in particular, had been unionized in San Francisco during the late 19th century. This was assisted by San Francisco's remoteness, because employers found it difficult to bring in non-union skilled labour; see Walton Bean, \textit{Boss Ruef's San Francisco} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952) p. 12-13. The labour movement at that time was hardly radical. A narrowly populist programme prevailed, with anti-monopoly convictions conveyed partly through anti-Chinese propaganda; see Alexander Saxton, \textit{The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the anti-Chinese Movement in California}, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971). On the difference between labour practices in San Francisco and Los Angeles, see Walton Bean, \textit{California: an interpretive history} (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978), p. 140-6. Compared to Los Angeles, San Francisco was a culturally heterogeneous metropolis. This was partly because foreign groups lived in isolation in Los Angeles and this was a result of "landspread" and the fact that the harbour is not directly connected to the life of the city; see Carey McWilliams, "The Los Angeles Archipelago", \textit{Science and Society}, Winter 1946, p. 41-2.
The California communists, whether in the Communist Party (CPUSA) or the CLP, were independent of outside influence (whether from the east coast or Moscow) to a degree which is not really appreciated. A frontier spirit, reflected in vigorous local pride and consciousness, seemed to live on within Californian communists, particularly those from the Bay Area. They were distanced from national headquarters and this aided the development of a special tradition which was largely fashioned in the Bay Area, a tradition which helped give the local Communists a more significant role in the 1960s than they tended to have in some other regions.

One event stands above all others in the history of working class mobilization in the San Francisco Bay Area - the 1934 west coast longshore strike. The strike was long and bitter, marked frequently in San Francisco by clashes between strikers and police strike-breakers. On "Bloody Thursday", July 5, police stormed picket lines and a raging battle ensued, with the strikers using bricks and spikes against police guns, clubs and tear gas. Two strikers and one

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34 Ralph Schaffer, "Communism in California", *Science and Society*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (Winter 1970), p. 426. Also see Al Richmond, "Anita Whitney - Communist", *Political Affairs* (April 1955), p. 44-54. Anita Whitney was a leading Communist in the Oakland area and was active in the formation of the Communist Labor Party (CLP) in California. In 1936 she became state Chairman of the Communist Party. Towards the end of November 1919 she was arrested under California's Criminal Syndicalism Act. At her trial the prosecution endeavoured to establish connections between the CLP and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), as the CLP had voiced some support for the IWW's dedication to class struggle. At that time, the IWW were the primary targets of repressive ruling legislation and litigation. Earlier, in 1916, two close associates of the IWW in San Francisco - Tom Mooney and Warren Billings - had been framed for the bombing of a Preparedness Day parade. Kenneth Rexroth has identified San Francisco's radical anarchist heritage, going back to the IWW days, as one of the many sources of San Francisco's unique political and cultural position, see his "San Francisco's Mature Bohemians", *The Nation*, February 23, 1957, p. 159.

35 Ralph Shaffer, "Communism in California", p. 421; in his "Formation of the California Communist Labour Party", *Pacific Historical Review* Vol. 36, 1967, p. 65. Shaffer suggests that the Californian story might be similar to the real national story. It would seem, however, that this was yet another instance of Californian exceptionalism. Other regional branches or offices may have expressed some independence but probably not to the same extent or in the same way as Californian Communists.

sympathizer were killed and at least 115 strikers, policemen and bystanders taken to hospital for treatment. The National Guard was ordered in that night and the dock area became an armed encampment. But the Guard’s presence combined with the events of "Bloody Thursday" momentarily galvanized working class support throughout the Bay area and a general strike, only the second in American history, was under way. The strike did not spread along the coast and, although it briefly crippled the Bay Area, was over in a few days.

The longshoremen had been struggling for a new award and, in particular, for a union-controlled hiring hall. Their work (or lack of it) was at that stage determined by a 'shape-up' system whereby employers picked and chose from ranks of potential workers every morning. The 1934 strike eventually produced substantial gains in wages and hours, but the union achieved only partial control of the hiring hall. This control was extended through future battles and the hall became central to the vibrant political culture which developed around San Francisco’s docks. The hiring hall, jointly controlled by the union and employers, established the principle of a preferential dispatch of union members. This centralized method of hiring engendered a great degree of contact between the longshoremen, contact which extended to the cafes and bars and general neighborhood surrounding the waterfront. Moreover, the cooperative nature of their work - it was done by gangs - and the skills and responsibilities involved, gave the men a sense of on-the-job community and pride in their labour. In short, the 1934 strike helped cement a vibrant working class community on and around the docks. Like most other such communities, it was to be whittled away in the post-war years but its legacy remains imprinted upon the spirit of San Francisco.

State and local authorities, along with the maritime and media moguls, made it clear that "Communism" was to blame for the 1934 strike.\(^{38}\) The police and National Guard were used to engender a climate of repression and vigilante groups raided known radical hangouts in the region. Conservative trade unions were also concerned by the strike. To some degree, workers were taking action independent of their union, which was a semi-autonomous arm of the corrupt International Longshore Association (ILA). The strike helped create a cohesive rank and file which, in 1937, voted for the establishment of a separate west coast union, the International Longshoreman's and Warehouseman's Union (ILWU), under the leadership of Harry Bridges. Bridges, an Australian well versed in the theory and practice of trade unionism, had been the chairman of the 1934 strike committee. He led the ILWU through the war years; upholding a "no strike" pledge which he even promised to extend well beyond the war if the shipowners would agree to stop trying to undermine the union.\(^{39}\) No such agreement was forthcoming and waterfront battles continued, culminating in a victorious 95 day strike in 1948. The ship owners had been forced to come to terms with the ILWU and the '48 strike really marked a turning point for labourers on the docks. Between 1948 and 1971 no major onshore strike was called and during this period a significant industry agreement was worked out, an agreement which signalled the end of what longshoreman and ex-New Left activist Herb Mills has termed "the good old days".\(^{40}\) The 1960 Mechanization and Modernization Agreement guaranteed certain conditions of labour and a retirement fund, in exchange for the introduction of automation. The ILWU

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\(^{39}\) Charles P. Larrowe, *op. cit.*, p. 288. This proposed extension of the labour-capital compromise was in line with CPUSA policy. Although Bridges has denied ever being a member of the Party, he certainly tended to work within its policy framework (which was rather flexible). The high point of trade union struggle in the Bay Area immediately after the war was the 1946 Oakland general strike. The strike had been called to block the strike-breaking efforts of Oakland and Berkeley police in a shop workers dispute. Oakland was "shut down" for two and a half days, in what was the west coast's first general strike since 1934. San Francisco labour leaders gave no support to the strike and it did not, as a result, have the same significance for the region as the 1934 strike; see Stan Weir, "American Labor on the Defensive: a 1940s Odyssey", *Radical America*, July-August, 1975, p. 178 ff.

\(^{40}\) Herb Mills, "The Good Old Days" in his *Labor/Management Relations* ...
leadership, with Bridges still at the helm, felt it had to face up to the reality of technology and endeavour to secure a share of its benefits.\textsuperscript{41} The Agreement produced substantial economic gains for the union but eroded work rules and practices which had been fought for in the 1930s.\textsuperscript{42} A degree of union job control was cut back and even the cooperative nature of longshore work was undermined. Mechanization imposed a monotonous standardization of practices and a separation of worker from worker.\textsuperscript{43} The work was made easier but automation atomized longshoremen and helped undermine their working community. Because of limitations in San Francisco's waterfront, longshore operations were mostly shifted to Oakland when the new technology was being introduced. A once vibrant neighborhood was slowly dismantled, leave in its stead the plastic trappings of commercialism Fisherman's Wharf style. The withering away of such traditional working class communities is one part of an important historical backdrop to the New Left's search for community. Changes in work and in the social relations created through labour were connected to a broad structural reorganization of life under contemporary capitalism. Automation was accompanied by suburbanization, the diffusion of industry and the rise of an administrative bureaucracy, all of which tended to undercut the potential for working class radicalism. But this process also set the stage for a radical critique which would often play upon images of technocratic control, dehumanization and alienation. In short, the radical yearning for community in the 1960s occurred under conditions which increasingly lessened the very possibility of community.

Unlike other major American cities, in San Francisco a New Deal coalition of liberal and labour forces continued in the post-war years and the unions were, to an extent, becoming built into the

\textsuperscript{41} Proceedings of the Fourteenth Biennial Convention of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, April 3-7, 1961, p. 5.


\textsuperscript{43} Herbert Mills, Labor/Management Relations ... and "The San Francisco Waterfront ..."
administrative life of the city. This partial absorption of labour into the mainstream boosted San Francisco’s image as a progressive city, even as it signalled a decline in working class militancy. But at the very time when structural changes in capitalism and in everyday life were beginning to have a profound effect upon the future of Old Left organizations, McCarthyism and cold war ideology generally intervened, threatening the survival of radicalism throughout America.

In the late 1940s, the Communist Party in Northern California, which had a membership of around 2,500 or 3,000, operated from a labour base, particularly (as might be expected) in the maritime industry. The influence of Communist cadres permeated the labour movement in the Bay Area to the point where Congress of Industrial Organization (CIO) councils there were under left leadership. While repression during the 1950s certainly undermined this organizational strength, Communist leadership in the region mostly decided not to go underground. Elsewhere, the CPUSA leaders had, in order to avoid arrest, divorced themselves from mass organization and were operating through underground channels. There was still a sense, on the west coast generally, of the possibilities for struggle.

45 Al Richmond, interview with author, August 2, 1979. Richmond was editor of the west coast Communist paper *People’s World*.
47 see Joseph Starobin, *American Communism in Crisis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), particularly p. 214-24. According to Jessica Mitford there was some adherence to underground practice in the Bay Area; see her *A Fine Old Conflict* (New York: Vintage, 1978), p. 135 ff. Also see Al Richmond, *A Long View from the Left*, where he observes: "... colleagues of mine in the California communist leadership also vanished. They were ‘unavailable’, you said; unavailable, that is, for arrest, although most often you did not verbalize it... Oh, so-and-so, you said, and then you described a sweeping downward arc with your hand, as if to indicate some vast subterranean region. Since those who remained available were prone to arrest, the operative organizational leadership was vested in the unavailable”. (p. 299)
48 Jessica Mitford has described, for example, a campaign in the 1950s to desegregate housing in an Oakland suburb. The campaign was run under the auspices of the Civil Rights Congress, an organization which did not dare rear its head on the east coast: *A Fine Old Conflict*, p. 128 ff; Peggy Dennis, interview with author, February 21, 1979.
This facilitated the development of a regional Communist strategy which departed from national policy directives. Rather than adopting a 'zero hour' commitment, which stipulated that political preservation in the face of "fascist" onslaught required the abandonment of the Party's public face, some key Californian Party figures were endeavouring to sustain Communism's open presence.49 Eleven leading Californian Communists, including seven from San Francisco, were arrested in 1951 and charged under Smith Act provisions relating to conspiracy to advocate the overthrow of the U.S. government. This drew flak from the national party headquarters, which enquired why these Californian leaders had been available for arrest.50 Yet California lost only one third of its Party membership in the years 1947-56, as against a two-thirds national loss.51 Perhaps, therefore, the political strategy adopted on the west coast was a more fitting response to McCarthyist intimidation. But such a judgement cannot really be made without taking into account the general political climate on the west coast. Peggy Dennis, wife of the late Communist leader Eugene Dennis and herself an active member of the Party at the time, has remarked that coming out to California during the McCarthyist period was "like a fresh breath" and that their child felt like crying when they had go back to New York".52 Many cities in the 1950s passed legislation outlawing the CPUSA but no such measure was seriously considered in San Francisco.

The situation was more repressive in Los Angeles. The Party there could not rent an office because of city administration harassment.53 This can be explained, in part, by the fact that the Party base in Los Angeles was in the Arts (particularly Hollywood) and not in labour. But it does reflect upon differences between the two cities and between northern California and southern California generally, differences which were in some way structurally inscribed:

49 Al Richmond, A Long View ..., p. 312-13.
50 Ibid., p. 314.
51 Ibid., p. 367.
52 Peggy Dennis, interview with author, February 21, 1979.
53 Al Richmond, interview with author, August 2, 1979.
Even after the balance of population and wealth shifted to the South, the old California establishment retained the seats of power in the North. In this respect the California Communist Party was certainly indigenous. Like its corporate adversaries (e.g., Southern Pacific, Standard Oil, Bank of America, University of California), the party kept its state headquarters in the North, although a majority of its membership was in the South.\(^54\)

While there was greater flexibility and tolerance of dissent in the Bay Area, anti-Communist agitators were still at work there. There were many attempts to smash the ILWU and its leadership. In the late 1930s Harry Bridges had been subject to deportation hearings due to charges that he was a Communist. And in 1950, after a lengthy trial, he was convicted of committing perjury at his 1945 citizenship application hearing because he had responded negatively to the question about whether he had ever been a Communist. While this decision was later overturned by the Supreme Court, 1950 was also the year in which the ILWU was, along with ten other unions, expelled from the CIO. This tended to isolate the union politically and press it into accommodation, rather than confrontation, with business.

Apart from Bridges and the seven arrested under the Smith Act, large numbers of Bay Area radicals were persecuted during the 1950s. Jessica Mitford has described her appearances before the California State Committee on Un-American Activities, 1951, and the House Un-American activities Committee (HUAV), 1953.\(^55\) She points out that most of the people named in the 1953 San Francisco hearings (and there were over 300) were without jobs and unemployable by the time the Committee departed.\(^56\) Kenneth Rexroth's assertion in 1957 that Congressional witch-hunters are virtually "run out of town" in San Francisco\(^57\) must thus be treated

\(^{54}\) Al Richmond, *A Long View* ..., p. 322.


with some suspicion. Nevertheless, the HUAC hearings in San Francisco in 1957 and 1959 helped fuel consciousness in the Bay Area about the Committee's persecution of people and ideals. The 1959 hearings, in particular, provoked some stiff resistance from citizen and labour organizations as well as sections of the media. For the first time in its history, HUAC dropped its subpoenas and abandoned the witch-hunt.58

There is a limit to the number of shocks a political movement can withstand, and the combination of McCarthyism, Kruschev's revelations about Stalin, and the Soviet intervention in Hungary, left the CPUSA in ruins by the late 1950s. Most who had gone underground abandoned the Party between 1956 and 1957. The tension between an underground leadership and a public organization proved too great in the context of the Kruschev and Hungary crises.59 Even in San Francisco, the Party's influence, particularly in the labour movement, had been cut back severely.60 Nevertheless, the Party's paper in California, People's World (which was published in San Francisco) persevered and retained a radical vision. This enabled it to enter the 1960s as a committed public organ rather than a mere appendage to an increasingly minor sectarian force. People's World carried along the banner of united front strategy, endeavouring to appeal to a constituency far wider than Party membership. It "had built an influential following" since 1938, through its relatively undogmatic appraisal of events, especially in the fields of labour and race relations.61 According to its editor Al Richmond, it was the paper which established an atmosphere within the Californian Party, congenial to the maintenance of an aboveground presence.62

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59 Joseph Starobin, American Communism in Crisis, p. 223.
60 Al Richmond, interview with author, August 2, 1979. Richmond has noted that the late 1950s was the only time in the history of the Party in San Francisco that there was not a "union carpenter". There had been a large Communist contingent in the building and culinary trades which was virtually wiped out.
61 Joseph Starobin, American Communism in Crisis, p. 25; Al Richmond, Ten Years: the story of a people's newspaper (San Francisco: Daily People's World, 1948).
62 Al Richmond, interview with author, August 2, 1979.
Moreover, its editor and many of its journalists were to become reasonably sympathetic to Sixties radicalism. This helped contribute to a regional peculiarity which established the Bay Area as somehow different both in the history of American Communism and in the history of the New Left.

The Historical Framework: Culture

The seeds of a militant student movement and counter-culture were planted in the Bay Area in the 1950s. The essential elements in these stirrings of rebellion was given a comfortable home there, for the region has a rich history of bohemianism. Even in the 1860s there was an identifiable bohemian component of San Francisco which had been nurtured by the frontier spirit of adventurism. The formation of the Bohemian Club in 1872 placed San Francisco on the map of cultural experimentation. The Club still exists today, not quite in the form imagined by its founders, one of whom was Henry George. While it began as a centre for artists and writers, by the beginning of the twentieth century it had become a wealthy man's haunt. Bohemian energy did exist outside the confines of the Club in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Richard Miller has suggested that the artistic community which had sprouted around the San Francisco School of Design by the 1890s represents America's first true Bohemia - Gelett Burgess, Gertrude Stein, Isadora Duncan and Jack London being just some of the names associated

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64 G. William Domhoff, *The Bohemian Grove and other retreats* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 1-59. Until relatively recently, the Club was a haven for mostly male members of America's illustrious power elite. Included in the Club's operations was a retreat, called the Bohemian Grove, which offered up servings of "culture" wrapped in a curious, almost unfathomable, series of rituals, observances and celebrations.

Indeed, prior to the 1906 fire, San Francisco had established a strong reputation as the "Paris of America". While a bohemian element survived beyond 1906, Greenwich Village in New York rose to prominence, thus tilting the axis of cultural experimentation and dissent towards the east coast.

It was the period after the Second World War which witnessed a rebirth of San Francisco's bohemian reputation, primarily as a result of the so-called "Literary Renaissance" but also, in part, due to the creation of community radio station KPFA. While KPFA was not specifically "bohemian", it did provide a significant outlet for cultural and political rebels. It first went to air on April 15, 1949, having been established by the Pacifica Foundation, a non-profit making educational corporation formed in San Francisco three years earlier. The Foundation's outlook was distinctly pacifist and humanist. KPFA came to reflect that on air but it also encouraged a diversity of artistic and political expression. In an age when the communications industry had established prohibitive control over the free-flow of ideas and information, when art and music were increasingly subject to the manipulations of monopoly commerce, when politics began to stink of repressive inquisitorial practices, KPFA emerged as a beacon of rationality. It did much to promote (or at least allow time for) the sort of dissenting viewpoint which was to become a cornerstone of Sixties radicalism. During the 1960s, it reported events in a systematic and frequently committed way. In the previous decade it had provided clear scope for anti-McCarthy campaigners and for San Francisco's alternative culture.68 That culture ended up revolving around, but did not entirely depend upon, the Beats.

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68 Kenneth Rexroth, in D. Meltzer (ed.), *Golden Gate: interviews with 5 San Francisco Poets* (Berkeley: Wingbow Press, 1976), p. 42. Rexroth notes that KPFA offered a lot of Zen Buddhist material. Alan Watts, for instance, held what was called the "Sunday Sermon".
Those discontented hipsters of the Fifties who became known as "the Beat Generation" were closely identified with San Francisco, even though New York had been an initial breeding ground. Beat culture was brought to public consciousness chiefly through the novels of Jack Kerouac (and, to some extent, William Burroughs), the poetry of Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Gary Snyder and Gregory Corso, as well as through Ferlinghetti's San Francisco bookstore and publishing house City Lights. The Beats combined Whitmanesque visions of America, stream of consciousness prose, jazz cadences, mystical philosophy, ecological awareness, drug-induced introspection, sexual ambiguity and (in the case of Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti and Snyder but not Kerouac) radical critiques of the social order. Kerouac's *On the Road* may have been the bible of the Beat Generation but Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* was its statement of becoming:

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by
madness, starving hysterical naked,
dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn
looking for an angry fix,
angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly
connection to the starry dynamo in the
machinery of night,
who poverty and tatters and hollow-eyed and high sat up
smoking in the supernatural darkness of cold-
water flats floating across the tops of cities
contemplating jazz....

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69 The origins of the term "Beat Generation" are usually attributed to Jack Kerovac. Kerovac has said that it was Herbert Huncke (Elmo Hassel in Kerovac's novel *On the Road*) who told him the meaning of the word 'Beat', its function in Negro jive language; see Nell Cherkovski, *Ferlinghetti: a Biography* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1979), p. 127); Bruce Cook *The Beat Generation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 6. "Beat" carries various connotations - beaten, low down, marinalized - but is also evocative of jazz rhythms. "Beat Generation" encompasses these meanings but adds a spiritual dimension, with Beat being short for beatitude; see Francis J. Rigney and L. Douglas Smith, *The Real Bohemia* (New York: Basic Books, 1961), p. 25 ff. The word "hipster" refers to those who are cool, in the know (as in "hip (or hep) to the jive") and thus part of the hip subculture.

The Beats experimented with literary and poetic style, bridged gaps between popular and high culture (through, for instance, jazz-poetry performances) and tried to stretch the imagination of an entire generation. So, too, did those involved with the San Francisco Literary or Poetry Renaissance. It is tempting, indeed, to use the terms "Beat Generation" and "San Francisco Literary Renaissance" interchangeably. That would not be entirely accurate but there are crucial interconnections. Beat culture was bound up with the literary renaissance championed by poet Kenneth Rexroth. Rexroth was not, strictly speaking, "Beat" (in the same way as Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerovac and Gary Snyder were) but both he and fellow poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti tend to disapprove of the "Beat Generation" label, preferring to see the Beats as a moment in an avant garde poetic regeneration. The Beats, however, were surely more than a literary event. There was, as Paul Goodman has observed, a "total Beat experience" which made them a living critique of the existing system. Much of their art, for instance, might appear insignificant or worthless if viewed apart from this experience. Nevertheless, their opposition to the system was acted out mainly in terms of lifestyle and literature. While they may have been the cousins of Britain's Angry Young Men, like them the anger was mediated by subjective aesthetic concerns.

The romantic frontier reputation of San Francisco, together with the increasingly prominent literary renaissance, attracted hipsters from the east coast to the city's North Beach neighborhood and also to Berkeley. John Clellon Holmes even referred to San Francisco as the "other world" where one could find a "total Beat experience." Prior to Ginsberg's and Kerouac's shift to San Francisco, the chief figures in the Renaissance (which included poets from San Francisco and Berkeley) were Kenneth Rexroth, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Philip Lamantia, Robert Duncan and Gary Snyder.

71 Prior to Ginsberg's and Kerouac's shift to San Francisco, the chief figures in the Renaissance (which included poets from San Francisco and Berkeley) were Kenneth Rexroth, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Philip Lamantia, Robert Duncan and Gary Snyder.


74 This is dealt with more thoroughly in the chapter on the contradictions of cultural radicalism.

Francisco as the Paris of the younger generation because of the renaissance in literary creativity and experimentation. Like Paris, San Francisco was acting as a cultural magnet, drawing people to it with the offer of something new and invigorating. Many may have been making journeys similar to those extolled in Kerouac's novel On the Road but whatever their road was to San Francisco, they contributed to a vision of the city as both as a refuge and a grand happening in a society which increasingly trivialized experience. The hero of Jerry Kamstra's novel on Beat Life in North Beach has such a vision:

San Francisco is not America; it's what's left of America. It's the Great Wall of China of America's Forgotten Promises! Here in San Francisco have gathered all of society's children, space-age dropouts from the American dream, Horatio Alger in reverse, descending from riches to rags and gathering now on the corners of Grant and Green in their beads and spangles and marijuana smoke to watch the entire structure crumble.

This perspective was not unusual. In the 1950s some cultural radicals began to reflect a firm regionalist bias. Rexroth was the key figure. While Ferlinghetti did not have much time for the "regional point of view", Rexroth championed the cause of San Francisco to the point where its only real rival internationally was Paris (and even then a certain degree of patriotism pulled him back to America or, rather, back to San Francisco). He was a strict San Francisco regionalist (if not provincialist). "I always feel", he has written, "like I ought to get a passport every time I cross the Bay to Oakland or Berkeley". He also suggested in his autobiographical novel that "the world pattern of post-War II culture" was developed in San Francisco

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78 Lawrence Ferlinghetti, in D. Meltzer (ed.) Golden Gate, p. 117.

and, elsewhere, bluntly stated that "The San Francisco scene dominates world culture". While he was referring to a specific sort of avant garde culture, the claim appears grossly exaggerated (where to pick just one case, do the New York abstract expressionists fit in?). Nevertheless, his views reflected a regionalist sensibility which helped shape cultural and political radicalism in both San Francisco and Berkeley. Sometimes, as with Rexroth, it was focused upon San Francisco. Sometimes, as with many New Left activists, the centre was Berkeley. But many cultural and/or political radicals, including Beat poets Allen Ginsberg and Gary Snyder, moved freely between the two cities.

Rexroth once referred to the "San Francisco Renaissance and the New Generation of Revolt and our Underground Literature and Cultural Disaffiliation. Such a pastiche of images quite befits the Sixties and the immediate intellectual underpinnings of rebellion in that decade are to be found in the Beats, as well as in writers like Paul Goodman, Norman Mailer and C. Wright Mills. According to Rexroth, the "underground culture" was not underground in San Francisco but "dominant - in fact almost all there is". He attributed the exuberant qualities of San Francisco to a number of factors: the city's radical political heritage; the pacifist orientation of many intellectuals, partly due to the large numbers of conscientious objectors who came there after serving in nearby detention camps during the Second World War; the existence of an "independent and skeptical labor force" made up of mobile workers like longshoremen.


81 There was an important school of abstract expressionists in San Francisco, centred around Clyfford Still, in the late 1940s and early 1950s. See Dore Ashton, "An Eastern View of the San Francisco School", Evergreen Review Vol. 1, no. 2, 1957, p. 148-158. Ashton claims that, even following Still's move to New York, San Francisco "is still, after New York, the major source of avant garde painting of quality" (p. 158).


and seamen; absence of racial conflict and an affluent laissez-faire character of life; an artistic community which was part of the working class rather than part of academia.\footnote{Ibid., p. 159-60. On the conscientious objectors who came to San Francisco, also see Rexroth in D. Meltzer (ed.), \textit{Golden Gate} ..., p. 43.} This latter reference was an obvious barb directed at the New York poetry establishment, whose representatives felt little more than contempt for the Beats and their art.\footnote{For an interesting insight into the academic-Beat relationship see Dianne Trilling, "The Other Night at Columbia: A Report from the Academy", \textit{Partisan Review} (Spring 1959), p. 214-30, also see Morris Dickstein, \textit{Gates of Eden}, p. 3-4.} Indeed, New York was singled out for stiff criticism by Rexroth. The pace of life was too hectic, the scene too commercial.\footnote{Kenneth Rexroth, "San Francisco Letter", in E. Mottram (ed.), \textit{A Rexroth Reader}, p. 260 and in D. Meltzer (ed.), \textit{Golden Gate} ..., p. 35.} Similar criticisms of New York would later come from San Francisco hippies.

Despite Rexroth's proud local consciousness, the Beats did mix influences from the west and east coasts. The embodied a "conjunction of opposites", a blending of New York and San Francisco.\footnote{William Everson in D. Meltzer (ed.), \textit{Golden Gate}, p. 91.} This is where Ginsberg and Kerouac step in.\footnote{Ibid., p. 92.} Both were from New York originally and very much bound up with the Bohemian life of that city described by John Clellon Holmes in his novel \textit{Go}.\footnote{Both Ginsberg and Kerouac were leading figures in the novel. In England it was published under the title \textit{The Beat Boys} (London: Ace Books, 1959 [1952]).} Moreover, Kerouac's novel \textit{The Subterraneans} was ostensibly about the North Beach scene but actually detailed experiences in New York.\footnote{Ann Charters, \textit{Kerouac: a biography} (San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1973), p. 360. Kerouac, at the time of writing \textit{The Subterraneans} in 1953, was only "aware" of the San Francisco scene and had not even been to the region. It is the only novel of his which involves a dramatic change in setting or character from that which really existed; Jack Kerouac, \textit{The Subterraneans} (New York: Grove Press, 1958).} A "regionalist" perspective like Rexroth's
is thus risky. Things, however, did become concentrated in San Francisco. Beat culture there laid the groundwork for Sixties counter-cultural experience and helped prepare a generation of rebels and activists for the task of confronting, intellectually and through everyday life, cultural and social conformity in America. For instance, the obscenity trial surrounding Ginsberg's book *Howl and Other Poems*, published by City Lights, brought to the surface many issues about free speech, the function of art and the degradation of life, which were to reappear prominently in the 1960s.\(^9\) An alternative culture did not spring up miraculously in the Bay area during the Sixties. It had solid roots in social developments, situations and experiences during the 1950s. The same is true (to a lesser extent) of student radicalism.

**Berkeley: "the place of all places to be"**

Across the Bay in Berkeley, an intense local consciousness was yet to surface. Nevertheless, the city was becoming a haven for disaffected radicals, some of whom would contribute to Berkeley's special image and reputation in the 1960s. The local campus of the University of California was a particularly comfortable nesting place. Not only was it one of the nation's leading research and teaching centres but it also possessed a certain "West Coast" ambience, a sense of open spaces, natural beauty and architectural diversity (if not confusion). Moreover, it was a dynamic part of the town rather than a completely separate unit. The relationship between town and campus became extremely important in the Sixties, establishing a crucial context for radical politics.

While Berkeley had its own radical heritage, the UC campus was almost dead politically until the 1930s. Political groups began flourishing then and issues similar to those which nurtured a radical student generation thirty years later were brought to public notice. Students were organized around anti-war concerns (including compulsory military training), questions of social and economic justice, racial discrimination and free speech. The years during and following the Second World War, however, produced the same sort of decline in radicalism on campus as elsewhere in society. The drift from radicalism was spurred on by the Tenney Committee which, in its report an "un-American activities" in California, charged some degree of Communist influence in the University of California. A Loyalty Oath for Professors was subsequently introduced but thirty-two professors refused to sign and were dismissed by the UC Board of Regents in 1950. Conflict over the Oath did not disappear, however, and the dismissed Professors were reinstated by the California Supreme Court in 1952, in a decision which challenged the legitimacy of the oath.

From that time on, Berkeley began to develop an image of tolerance, openness and flexibility similar to San Francisco's (despite a 1951 Board of Regents ruling which prohibited speakers from the CPUSA addressing campus audiences). This was certainly the impression of Soviet affairs specialist Bill Mandel who came to Berkeley in 1957 partly because of the apparently relaxed and liberal political climate in the Bay Area. He became involved in the

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93 In 1912 the town elected a Socialist mayor. This was not, however, a case of regional exceptionalism as 72 other cities or towns across the United States also elected Socialist Party mayors that year; James Weinstein, *Ambiguous Legacy: the left in American Politics* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1975), p. 7.


Berkeley Socialist Forum, a group which included a UC solid-state physicist and a rocket propulsion expert. According to notes in his private collection:

*Berkeley was only place in country* where respectable (and security-cleared) scientists would speak under socialist auspices at the time.97

Students, however, were far from active in the early 1950s. A narrow conception of their role within the larger society, coupled with possible fears of McCarthyism, sustained student apathy. But by the latter part of the 1950s the situation was beginning to change and students were showing signs of increasing political interest and commitment.

In the spring of 1957, a group aiming to politicize the campus community formed at Berkeley. Towards an Active Student Community (TASC) only lasted a short while and was replaced by SLATE, an organization put together by some students running a slate of candidates for student government office. At first, TASC and then SLATE raised issues concerning student welfare and rights. They called for, amongst other things, the removal of discriminatory clauses in fraternity and sorority constitutions, voluntary ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps), a voluntary health insurance plan for students and fair wages for part-time student workers in neighborhood shops.98 Such demands can be seen as an attempt to bring the university into line with the doctrines of a liberal welfare state. The idea that students could act as self-conscious agents was encouraged by SLATE. Issues of student government and autonomy

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97 Bill Mandel, Memo to Paul Allen, KPFA, 1979. Nathan Glazer has also remarked upon the drawing power of Berkeley at this time: "... in 1957, when I visited Berkeley for the first time, a number of socialist youth leaders from the East had just migrated here, because they found the political climate peculiarly congenial to their work". ("What Happened at Berkeley", in C.G. Katope & P.G. Zolbrod (eds.), *Beyond Berkeley: a sourcebook in student values* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1966), p. 50. Also see Michael Harrington's favourable description of Berkeley in the late 1950s and early 1960s in his autobiography *Fragments of the Century* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), p. 135 ff.

98 see *About SLATE*, a document distributed to students at Berkeley in 1961, (Slate file, University of California Archives); David Horowitz, *Student*, p. 17-22.
prompted its formation, and its battles (at least in the early stages) were largely conducted in those terms. But there were divisions in the organization. In 1958 the *Cal Reporter* (SLATE's occasional newspaper) noted a threeway division in the group, involving the administratively oriented, the politically oriented and the ideologically oriented. The politicos, whose aim was to take various issues to the mass student constituency, were losing out, supposedly, to the back door lobbyist. Meanwhile, the ideologues were endeavouring to refine the liberalism which underpinned SLATE. The divisions were perhaps not crucial but they pointed to future divisions within the student community and future developments which would turn the spotlight on weaknesses inherent in liberal ideology. While some in SLATE were trying to make the liberal paradigm relevant and morally aware, it was being whittled away by persistent witch-hunting and a rising tide of racial conflict. Despite the mustiness of its liberal cloak, SLATE tried to build a student body conscious of its own potential. Moreover, it inspired the development of similar groups on campuses elsewhere in America (for example, VOICE at Michigan, POLIT at Chicago and ACTION at Columbia). It thus helped usher in a decade of student activism.

In October 1959, the two-day protest and hunger strike of one student, Fred Moore, against compulsory ROTC on the Berkeley campus presaged later anti-war commitment and shook campus complacency. In the words of David Horowitz, his action "can only be properly understood as a unique example of moral courage ... his courage was a challenge to ours, the strength of his beliefs made us consider our own beliefs". A radical consciousness was also developing amongst Berkeley students at this time in response to southern sit-ins. Protests against discriminatory practices at local Woolworth and Kress stores were staged regularly by campus CORE


100 For example, in 1960 SLATE organized a weekend conference to discuss the direction and tactics of the student movement and to look into the possibility of national co-ordination. Over 20 colleges were represented by 140 students. Amongst those present was future SDS leader Tom Hayden. Hayden was, a little later, the main person involved in the establishment of the student party VOICE at Michigan.

101 David Horowitz, *Student*, p. 23.
But the real possibility of a new era of student radicalism was signalled more clearly by two highly charged issues in the early months of 1960 - the execution of Caryl Chessman and, more importantly, furtherHUAC hearings in San Francisco. The many vigils outside San Quentin against Chessman's impending execution alerted participants to the power of the state, the cold inhumanity of a bureaucratic machine. A number of those involved were from the Berkeley campus or community. "When word came [of the execution on May 2]," remembers one demonstrator, "I started to cry. That day at San Quentin began for real my hatred for this system that governs us". Or, as another put it, "Our eyes were opening, a mystification was breaking, we were beginning to see the acts of Official America as ugly, wherever we looked". This process of awakening was soon to accelerate rapidly. Early in April HUAC had announced its intention to hold hearings into Communist Party activities in northern California. By late April, forty eight subpoenas had been served. A large protest movement grew, embracing labour activists as well as student and faculty members from Berkeley, Stanford and San Francisco State. The central student organization was an ad hoc Berkeley group, Students for Civil Liberties which included many SLATE members. It had collected two thousand student signatures calling for the abolition of HUAC. A Berkeley student whose political activity had been marginal was summoned by


103 Chessman, a convicted sex-offender (with some doubts still surrounding his case), had turned his hand to writing and this contributed to his status as a cause celebre. Prisoners who possess literary talent (or at least literary pretensions) can develop, as Norman Mailer would know, an excessively romantic rebellious image. This is not to suggest that those who were demonstrating against Chessman's execution were not operating from the highest principles - in the main, their protest was more against capital punishment than for Chessman.

104 Michael Myerson, These are the Good Old Days: Coming of Age as a Radical in America's Late, Late Years (New York: Grossman, 1970), p. 60.

105 Michael Rossman, The Wedding ..., p. 34.

the Committee and this galvanized burgeoning student opposition. A rally held in Union Square on the first day of the hearings (Thursday, May 12) was attended by around one thousand people and picketing outside San Francisco City Hall, the venue of the hearings, continued throughout what was a mostly uneventful day. On the second day, however, many students had tried to gain admission to the hearings and, when most failed, their protest became noisier and a sit-in on the steps of City Hall ensued. Officers of the San Francisco motor squad promptly appeared, thrusting fire hoses towards the spectators. The hoses were turned on but failed to drive most demonstrators away. Police then charged at the crowd, swinging clubs and throwing or dragging people down the stairs of City Hall. A number were badly beaten by baton-swinging and leg-kicking policemen but protestors, most of whom were students, kept coming back to the steps. Even when the hoses were turned on again, the demonstrators could not be dispersed, so policemen eventually dragged, threw or pushed them down the stair-case. Many were injured and over sixty arrested.

This was "Black Friday", a day which severely dented San Francisco's image as a liberal city. While San Francisco's mayor, George Christopher, refused to criticise the Police Department, he did make it known that HUAC was not welcome in City Hall any more. Harry Bridges was more forthright, expressing concern that a democratic tradition of politics in San Francisco had been violated: "This isn't Little Rock, Arkansas ... This is San Francisco". Memories of the 1934 strike and Bloody Thursday had faded. San Francisco's contemporary reputation was at stake. To some degree, however, that reputation was bolstered by the student demonstration. While most newspaper reports painted the demonstrators in a


110 Harry Bridges, quoted in *Ibid*. 

negative light, the *Washington Post* paid homage to the rebirth of student activism: "It is heartening, despite the excesses, to see American students behaving once more like American students - and not like robots or zombies".\(^{111}\)

The HUAC hearings helped crystallize the concerns of a newly stimulated political consciousness, particularly in Berkeley but also elsewhere.\(^{112}\) Perhaps the police who had turned the fire hoses on had performed "a baptismal service",\(^ {113}\) a ritual acknowledgement of the American New Left's impending historical moment. In the words of Eric Hobsbawm, a founder of the British New Left, "the discovery that action - especially direct action - can be undertaken and can work has come to them [the students] with immense, liberating force".\(^ {114}\)

A report by J. Edgar Hoover and a film later made by HUAC both pointed to the Communist menace in San Francisco as being behind the events of Black Friday. Arranging evidence in a selective and distorted way, Hoover concluded that

> the Communists demonstrated in San Francisco just how powerful a weapon Communist infiltration is. They revealed how it is possible for only a few Communist agitators, using mob psychology, to turn peaceful demonstrations into riots.\(^ {115}\)

Some Communists and sons of daughters of Communists were involved in the protests. But that is not the point. The leadership of


\(^{112}\) A reporter from the *San Francisco Chronicle* found campuses throughout California reflecting a sense of political vitality shortly after Black Friday, see William Kellner, "Political Issues Rouse Students: California Campuses", *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 22, 1960, reprinted in *Ibid*.


the campaign was not Communist. Even if it had been, what does that indicate? Possibly only that the CPUSA, like other Marxist or socialist sects, had disciplined cadres ready to assume the responsibilities of leadership. Part of the power of American cold war ideologues lay in their labelling of diverse people and groups (who may or may not have been under some Communist leadership) as "Communist" and thereby collapsing what was, in effect, rampant pluralism on the left into an overarching monolith. As Al Richmond has remarked, the Berkeley campus at that time had such a wide range of groups that "you would have been hard put to think of an ideological trend, even the most bizarre or esoteric, that was not represented in some way in the student body or faculty".116

The HUAC film 'Operation Abolition' was compiled out of footage, obtained under subpoena, from two television stations. It toured the country with a live supporting act made up of hardened anti-Communist speakers who highlighted the dangers of the red menace.117 Whatever the inaccuracies and distortions which permeated the film (there were, apparently, many) its impact cannot be denied. On the one hand, it received some acclaim from cold war converts and assisted the growth of a militant brand of right wing politics in the early Sixties. On the other hand, however, the film's campus showings mostly provoked picket lines and persistent audience jeering.118 HUAC, paradoxically, helped sponsor student radicalism both through its presence in San Francisco and through the publicity about the events of Black Friday which 'Operation Abolition' brought to campuses throughout America. In fact, for many students the film made Berkeley seem "the place to go" and go there they did. Frank Bardacke, a prominent Berkeley radical in the post-HUAC years, was one of them:

A nice little irony is that the movie 'Operation Abolition'

... I saw it when I was a student at Harvard - it was shown

116 Al Richmond, A Long View ..., p. 394.


at an ROTC class as political education for ROTC ... We went and made a scene there ... Well, it advertised the movement and I know a number of people who were recruited to Berkeley by the film.\textsuperscript{119}

The Bay area (more specifically San Francisco and Berkeley) was fast becoming the major breeding ground for New Left activism in America. An unofficial university Report in 1966 acknowledged the region's drawing power:

The Bay Area has become a leading cultural and scientific center of the United States. High among its attractions is the University at Berkeley. The magnetic force of such a community has attracted a diverse populace of unorthodox artists, writers, and thinkers as well as self-appointed social reformers, seekers after excitement and notoriety, and irresponsible cranks. But it has also brought to our campus a remarkable group of intelligent and imaginative young men and women who both contribute and respond to the atmosphere of the local community.\textsuperscript{120}

Throughout the Sixties events in the region reverberated nationally, often sponsoring changes in personal perceptions and personal life. Sara Davidson remembers Berkeley in the early 1960s as being "the place of all places to be. It was an enclave where things happened first, where the rules of middle class society did not apply."\textsuperscript{121} In an influential memoir of the Sixties, Elinor Langer recalls: "The change in my life came with the Free Speech

\textsuperscript{119} Frank Bardacke, interview with author, August 8, 1979.

\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Education at Berkeley: report of the Select Committee on Education} March, 1966 (University of California, Berkeley, Academic Senate), p. 26.

\textsuperscript{121} Sara Davidson, \textit{Loose Change} (London: Fontana, 1978), p. 55. \textit{Loose Change} is an autobiographical and biographical novel which focusses upon the experiences of three women in the Sixties (including the author) at Berkeley and elsewhere. Names (apart from the author's and her sister's) and details were changed to protect privacy but at least one of the major characters is a thinly disguised Berkeley activist. While hardly being great literature, the novel does capture fairly accurately a sense of the times in Berkeley. Jane de Lynn's cleverly satiric novel \textit{Some Do} (New York: Collier, 1978), set in Berkeley in the late Sixties, also transmits a feeling for time and place.
Movement".\(^{122}\) An SDS newsletter noted, in 1966, that Berkeley's Vietnam Day Committee "is seen by them [Berkeley radicals], and by most of the country, as being the vanguard of the anti-war movement - and Berkeley itself, of almost any political movement".\(^{123}\) In 1967, a Berkeley student representative was impressed by her reception at east coast campuses: "They look to Berkeley for what's happening...".\(^{124}\) SDS paper *New Left Notes* later that year referred to Berkeley being "radically ahead of other parts of the country".\(^{125}\)

Lewis Feuer has observed that "Berkeley led the way" in the "urge to violence" which characterized New Left protest in the late 1960s.\(^{126}\) Similarly, Irving Louis Horowitz suggested that the level of violence in the anti-war movement was "greatest on the West Coast, particularly in the Bar Area".\(^{127}\) And such was both the perceived and real difference between Berkeley and the rest of America that a recent arrival from Washington could assert breathlessly in 1970 that "After spending five years in the Movement in the capital city of the capital of world counter-revolution, it almost seems here that the revolution has been won".\(^{128}\)

San Francisco, Berkeley, and at times the Bay Area as a whole represented political and cultural space, space somehow distant from, or perhaps a few yards ahead of, national circumstances and priorities. Regionalism mediated radicalism in the Bay Area to an extent rarely recognized. It was a regionalism given substance, in the first instance, by events at the beginning of the Sixties and by San Francisco's historical role as a centre of labour radicalism and

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\(^{123}\) SDS Regional Newsletter, Vol. 1, no. 6, February 1966, (SDS file, Bancroft SPP).


\(^{125}\) *New Left Notes*, November 6, 1967.


\(^{128}\) *Berkeley Barb*, July 31-August 1, 1970.
bohemianism. A strong sense of place gave radical groups and communities there great strength. It also tended to weaken them in one crucial respect. Self-confident assertions of local supremacy, similar to those articulated by Kenneth Rexroth, helped nurture supreme self-satisfaction. Proud regional identity was but one step away from blinkered provincialism.
CHAPTER 3

FREE SPACE, FREE SPEECH

Genuine freedom of speech depends upon guaranteed access to certain public venues. Place, indeed, mediates the exercise of free speech. And particular places can become vibrant parts of a community, functioning as centres of activism, participation and preaching. This, in a sense, is precisely what Berkeley's free speech controversy was all about. Students were struggling for much more than the right to speak. They were involved in a battle over space, initially over access to one piece of land. Through that conflict, along with earlier civil rights struggles, a radical community was born. While the community did transcend spatial barriers (not all radicals lived in the neighborhood adjacent to the campus), it was also profoundly dependent upon a sense of place and forged a close identification with specific public spaces. In fighting for access to space in 1964, Berkeley radicals paved the way for an increasingly militant politics of space later in the decade. It was a politics which highlighted issues of ownership and control, of social administration and regulation, of public rights in a democratic society. It also brought into focus the relationship between town and campus, citizen and student, public and private.

Space and Public Life

Spatial forms within contemporary capitalism possess a certain symbolic power which assists the reproduction of social relations.1 The advancing segmentation of the capitalist city since the Second World War is simultaneously geographical and symbolic. Aspects of suburban development - housing tracts, enormous shopping malls,

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1 see Pierre Bordieu, "Symbolic Power", a Stencilled Occasional Paper from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham.
the pre-eminence of cars and consequent proliferation of freeways - are powerfully symbolic. They help organize a social perception of life which is easily reproduced. This perception is finally grounded in a mode of spectacular consumption.\textsuperscript{2} The spatial reorganization of the working class, including (and most importantly) the separation of work from residence, occurred alongside the rising importance of consumption as a regulator of social habit and thought. The politics of suburban development is thus manifest.

Similarly, urban renewal is deeply political. It most frequently functions as an assault on traditional communities in the name of a modernism masquerading as social progress.\textsuperscript{3} Moreover, within America and elsewhere, it has generated a series of struggles which ultimately raise questions about the social ownership of space. Urban renewal and related issues surrounding growth prompted most of the neighborhood struggles in the U.S. during the 1960s.\textsuperscript{4} Urban social movements have since then become even more important as the force of resistance to an array of repressive circumstances in everyday life. There are, in short, new social contradictions specifically related to contemporary urbanism which have unleashed movements of opposition coalescing around anything from garbage removal to public transport.\textsuperscript{5}

The central importance of mass consumption in the post-war dynamic of capitalism generated new tensions within and between the public and private domains. Richard Sennet has discussed the increased abandoning of the public domain exemplified, for example, by the spread of what is effectively "dead public space"; space

\textsuperscript{2} see Guy Debord, \textit{Society of the Spectacle} (Detroit: Black and Red, 1977).


constructed purely for the purposes of motion through or on rather than for human congregation. Such developments intensify the atomization of social life. The removal of obstacles to space which contemporary technology has accomplished actually privatizes much of the public domain. This is, after all, the thrust of capital accumulation. Thus the fetishism of commodities is a crucial moment in the decline or, more accurately, perversion of public life. The public realm now tends to be one of mass consumption which actually bespeaks a "culture of narcissism". Personal life is, thereby, shaped under conditions which deny it a significant public presence. If we can speak of a crisis of contemporary capitalism, then it is partly a crisis in the relationship between public and private. And this helped structure the context within which the New Left and the counter-culture of the 1960s acted.

In seeking to revitalize public life, radical movements in the 1960s helped make the politics of space a prominent issue. Direct references to space were not common in the early 1960s. By the end of the decade, however, radical discourse in the Bay Area was filled with spatial allusions. The critical turning point appears to be the Free Speech Movement (FSM). For it is with the FSM in 1964-5 that we find the politics of space activating predominantly white middle class students around their own issues. The poor, especially poor blacks, have been made constantly aware of the politics of space in their lives, even if they are not conscious of its subtleties. Segregation, for example, encouraged an acute awareness of place in the social environment. It is not mere metaphor to talk of a politics of space at work in Alabama in 1963 and Berkeley in 1964. Struggles

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7 Manuel Castells, "Neo-Capitalism ...", p. 15.
8 see Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism*: also see Lasch's *The Minimal Self: psychic survival in troubled times* (London: Pan Books, 1985), p. 23-59: Peter Clekak has argued that "it was not so much a decline of public life that marked the sixties and seventies as it was a significant expansion, thickening and enrichment of private life". He raises the possibility that "physical spaces no longer were the only - or even the primary - common spaces in American culture". (*America's Quest for the Ideal Self*: p. 243 & 242). His use of the term space here is too loose, as it is throughout his book, pointing to a symbolic essence with marginal connections to material surroundings. Moreover, his optimistic assessment of the state of private life is highly questionable.
for civil rights and free speech were intimately connected in the 1960s. So it is hardly surprising that prior to the issue of free speech becoming important on the Berkeley campus, there was a sustained campaign on behalf of black job opportunities in San Francisco and many Berkeley activists also participated in the 1964 Southern Freedom Summer. Moreover, a number of concepts and strategies used by the white student movement in the late sixties can be traced back to the civil rights movement. Free speech on campus and civil rights in the community provided the foundation for many years of student activism in the Bay Area and also the foundation for much of the rhetoric and sloganeering prominent in the late 1960s.

Civil liberties issues were being generated constantly on the Berkeley campus. This was primarily a result of a set of guidelines about the university facilities and their function promulgated in 1959 by UC President Clark Kerr. Known as the Kerr Directives, these rules sought to maintain the university as an autonomous institution not subject in any way to "political or sectarian influence". But this autonomy could, supposedly, only be preserved if the university was not involved in, for example, contemporary political issues. So there was a rigid separation of on-campus and off-campus issues and also tight control over outside speakers. In the Spring of 1961 Malcolm X was invited to speak at Berkeley by the Students for Racial Equality. The administration would not grant permission, apparently because he was a religious spokesman. It was, however, undoubtedly more concerned about Malcolm X's political principles. Separation of the university and wider community, of off-campus and on-campus issues, was just one instance of management spatial politics.

Student involvement in "outside" causes invariably prompted cold war rhetoric from authorities, rhetoric designed to circumscribe the permissible areas of discourse and action. Demonstrations on

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10 C. Michael Otten, University Authority ..., p. 161.

11 Ibid., p. 175. Otten notes the administration's inconsistency here. The evangelist Billy Graham had been given permission to speak on campus just prior to the banning of Malcolm X.
campus and in San Francisco against the U.S. sponsored invasion of Cuba evoked references to communist agitators at work from Kerr and Edwina Pauley of the UC Board of Regents.\textsuperscript{12} In June, 1961, the California State Un-American Activities Committee under Senator Hugh Burns produced a report which alleged that SLATE was a "transmission belt" to reach students with "communist propaganda".\textsuperscript{13} The day before the report was published, the UC administration withdrew recognition of SLATE, ordering it off campus.\textsuperscript{14} SLATE had been involved in persistent struggle with the Burns Committee, defending the Communist Party's right to exist on and off campus. It had been campaigning against the ban on Communist speakers since the late fifties and sponsored petitions which eventually placed the issue on ballot as a referendum. The referendum was passed by a large margin and on July 22, 1963, for the first time in UC Berkeley's history, a Communist, Albert J. Lima, spoke on campus and the meeting was attended by around 1000 people.\textsuperscript{15}

Because the student movement was being politicized rapidly, this produced splits and tensions of various sorts. One SLATE member alleged that SLATE was moving away from issues of real historical significance and was too involved with the question of how to get back on campus.\textsuperscript{16} Yet a SLATE leader, Mike Miller, suggested that the organization should be involved primarily in issues of direct concern to the campus.\textsuperscript{17} Heading the list of these "domestic" issues were urban renewal and student housing. There was an urban


\textsuperscript{13} \textit{People's World}, June 17, 1961.

\textsuperscript{14} Kerr maintained that while he had seen the Burns report, this action was not provoked by the report.


\textsuperscript{16} Frank Kofsky, "Slate: Students, Lethargic, Apathetic, Timid, Enervated?", \textit{Slate Newsletter}, October 21, 1961. (Slate file, UC Archives)

\textsuperscript{17} Mike Miller, "Slate's Direction", \textit{Slate Newsletter}, October 21, 1961. (Slate file, UC Archives)
renewal project scheduled for the south campus area of Berkeley, where many students lived, and SLATE feared it would be turned into a middle class zone.\(^{18}\) This issue would surface again, in a different way and much more explosively, in 1969.

Civil Rights and FSM

Civil rights campaigns in the north, as in the south, gained momentum between 1963 and 1964.\(^{19}\) In Berkeley, where blacks lived almost exclusively in the city's southwest, the liberal City Council adopted a fair-housing ordinance which prohibited racial discrimination in the sale, rent or lease of any accommodation. The ordinance was, however, taken to a referendum in April, 1963, and defeated by over 2,000 votes.\(^{20}\) In October, there was sustained picketing outside the Mel's drive-in chain in San Francisco. Protestors would also go inside, order a cup of coffee and refuse to move, demanding that restaurants discontinue discriminatory hiring practices. Over 100 were arrested but the picketing resulted in the chain agreeing to a fair-hiring agreement.\(^{21}\) Soon after, pickets organized by CORE forced sixteen stores and businesses to sign documents guaranteeing fair labour practices.\(^{22}\) And in February, 18 Slate Newsletter, October 21 and November 3, 1961. (Slate file, UC archives)

19 On May 26, 1963, San Francisco hosted a huge parade for civil rights, focussed on the strife in Birmingham, Alabama. Thirty thousand participated, making it the biggest demonstration in San Francisco since the march celebrating Tom Mooney's release from San Quentin in May 1939 and the funeral procession for the two victims of Bloody Sunday in July 1934. Nathan Glazer has remarked upon his first teaching year at Berkeley, 1963-64: "student political activity was vigorous beyond anything I had recently seen at any other American college". ("What Happened ...", in Kapote & Zolbrod (eds), Beyond Berkeley ..., p. 46).


1964, CORE campaigned for weeks against the Lucky Store chain and won an agreement on hiring practices. Apart from picketing outside the Lucky Store shops, protestors used a tactic similar to that employed in the campaign against Mel's. This was the "shop-in". People would fill up their bags with goods and then refuse to pay on the grounds that the shop owner was an unfair employer. Or they might rearrange the shelves and drop food on the floor. Civil disobedience strategies like these raised, if only marginally, issues concerned with the politics of space. They expanded the concept of the place of protest, the site of resistance.

The civil rights activists were mainly members of the Berkeley umbrella group, the Ad Hoc Committee to End Discrimination. The Committee was made up of representatives from various groups, including SLATE, but the leading faction consisted of representatives from three W.E.B. Du Bois study groups in the Bay Area. Informally connected to the CPUSA, the Du Bois Clubs were, according to one of their leaflets, formed to fulfil a need for left-wing leadership when liberal groups such as SLATE were crumbling. Their effective leadership of the Ad Hoc Committee highlights another aspect of the rather neglected relationship between the old left and the New Left. It is assumed sometimes that the driving forces behind the civil rights movement and the New Left were separated or distanced from a supposedly sterile or over-starched orthodox leftism. Yet, it needs to be stressed again, regional circumstances were very important in determining the character of local movements. The fact that the CPUSA in California, particularly northern California, had embraced historically a more flexible political approach than the National Office undoubtedly prepared some of the ground upon which the New Left


24 On one occasion blacks from a youth group in Oakland were invited to help "mess up the store". Perhaps they misunderstood the invitation because, as Frank Bardacke recalls, "they messed it up beyond our wildest dreams" (interview with author, August 8, 1979).

and the old left would intersect. A member of the Berkeley Du Bois group, Michael Myerson, recalled in his autobiography the historic significance of the campaign against Mel's: "For the first time in a generation, a Marxist movement was a major factor in the political life of an important American city". The prominence of the Du Bois Clubs in local civil rights campaigns prompted the usual dose of red-baiting. For example, one journalist claimed to have discovered a build-up of revolutionary activity in the Bay Area during the first few months of 1964. San Francisco, he alleged, "was purposely designated as the next area of 'take-over'", because of its steadily growing Negro population. These judgements had such a tone of urgency because they were concocted soon after a fiery campaign against the Sheraton Palace Hotel in San Francisco. The chief figure in that campaign was an 18 year old black Du Bois Club member, Tracy Simms. Michael Myerson has described her as being "unequalled as a mass leader in the Bay Area until Huey Newton began the Black Panther Party".

Picketing at the Sheraton began on February 23, 1964. The Ad Hoc Committee alleged that the hotel pursued discriminating hiring practices, there being only 22 blacks in a total of 550 employees. A restraining order was obtained by the hotel, preventing students from staging demonstrations in the lobby and order was eventually amended to limit the number of pickets to nine. On March 1, 123 picketers were arrested for defying that order. The restraining orders were lifted the next day because they had been served inadequately but they had indicated the extent to which authorities will sometimes go in order to keep control of space or to limit spatial access. The campaign, indeed, developed into a battle over territory,

26 Michael Myerson, These are the Good Old Days: ..., p. 112.


28 Michael Myerson, These are ..., p. 115.


30 Picketers were either carried to police wagons or dragged by the feet, heads bouncing along the pavement. Comedian Dick Gregory, who was one of those arrested, was prompted to comment that "this is as brutal as anything I've seen in the South". (San Francisco Chronicle, March 2, 1964).
with the lobby of the hotel being occupied (at one stage by 800 picketers), and a new tactic - the sleep-in - devised. Protestors would lie on the floor, in chairs or on coffee tables and doze until picketing resumed after daylight. One participant observed:

There's no better place for a sleep-in than a hotel. We had bathroom facilities and there were restaurants open all night or by 6 am and all of us ate a hearty breakfast.31

Negotiations between the Ad Hoc Committee and the San Francisco Employer's Association finally produced an agreement which affirmed Equal Opportunity principles. It aimed at raising the percentage of minority group employees to 15-20 per cent, representing around 1500 jobs in the hotel industry.

Civil rights campaigners then shifted their attention to the car showrooms on Auto Row (Van Ness Ave).32 At one stage, three of the major showrooms were occupied and police arrested 226 picketers. This was the greatest number of arrests for civil disobedience in San Francisco's history. Shortly after, a fair hiring agreement was reached with the car dealers. Struggles against discriminatory hiring practices continued throughout 1964 but the Sheraton Palace and Auto Row demonstrations were the high points of conflict. Civil disobedience was becoming the central tactic for student radicals. Despite (or perhaps because of) the large numbers arrested, the movement had won important victories. As Communist Party activist Carl Bloice observed:

... there are Negro carhops and waitresses where there were none before, there are Negro desk clerks and accountants in hotels where there were none before and there's been an increase in the number of Negroes in sales and clerical positions throughout the Bay Area.33


32 The local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) led these demonstrations but CORE and the Ad Hoc Committee were actively involved.

While historian James O'Brien has suggested that the local civil rights movement slowed down its activities following Sheraton Palace and Auto Row, a leading member of CORE in Berkeley, has argued that his organization "maintained a hectic level of continuous and effective activity" through the summer of 1964. When the University commenced operations for the 1964-5 year, the Ad Hoc Committee targeted the ultra conservative daily the Oakland Tribune, owned by Oakland power broker William Knowland. The Committee gathered figures showing that only 25 of the paper's 1250 employees were black, even though 30 per cent of Oakland's population was black. A division quickly surfaced within the Committee, one group arguing for an immediate sit-in and the other for a gradual escalation of conflict. This split eventually resulted in the Committee falling apart but the context in which the move against Knowland's paper fitted was, due to events on campus, highly significant. Free speech was again surfacing as the major framework of reference at Berkeley. The civil rights struggle was symbolically connected to the issue of free speech but it was the latter which served to spawn a self-aware student movement, conscious of its own status as a subject of domination and possible agent of change. More than anything else, it was the politics of space which structurally underpinned the transformation of the student movement. Fighting on behalf of space for others was a prelude to the struggle on behalf of space for self.

The free speech issue initially centred around the right of students to use the Bancroft Way entrance of the campus for political

34 James O'Brien, The Development of ..., p. 270-1. O'Brien refers to CORE's relative failure in its next campaign, against the Bank of America. But, even though the Bank did not officially recognize CORE, a fair employment pact was signed after picketers had slowed down operations by joining lines and "banking-in".


38 Michael Myerson, These are ..., p. 121.

39 see Mario Savio, Eugene Walker and Raya Dunayevskaya, The Free Speech Movement and the Negro Revolution, (FSM file, UC archives)
campaigning. That entrance, and the plaza behind it, are essentially extensions of Telegraph Avenue (see Appendix Two). The Avenue stretches for miles down through Oakland, where it traverses a community caught on the cutting edge between garish commercialism and dire poverty. But in the five or six blocks in Berkeley before the Avenue meets Bancroft Way, there is a flourishing business area composed of shops, cafes, clubs and hotels; a compressed city centre which, because the Avenue provides the main thoroughfare into and out of the campus, is always animated. This spatial connection between the campus and the Avenue is a crucial structural factor in the formation of Berkeley's radical community. One only need analyse the lack of any useable spatial link between Stanford's campus and the Palo Alto community to understand some different features in the respective radical traditions. A Stanford SDS pamphlet from the late 1960s begins:

The students at Stanford University do not have a community. We have no Telegraph Ave, no Village, no residential area ....

The Avenue is not the only important factor in the spatial organization of the campus. The entire area immediately behind the Bancroft Way entrance and also adjacent to the old Sather Gate entrance structurally underpins Berkeley's student radicalism. This originated with vast changes in campus layout between 1952 and 1964. Basically what occurred was the conversion of that section of Telegraph Avenue beyond Bancroft Way and up to Sather Gate into a mall (Sproul Plaza), the concentration of social science and

40 For a critical analysis of the Oakland power structure and the plight of the city itself, see Warren Hinckle et al., "The Story ...", p. 25-50. If there is a politics of no space, then Oakland embodies it. As Gertrude Stein once said: "The trouble with Oakland is that when you get there, there's no there there". For a more affectionate portrait of Oakland, see John Krich, Bump City: winners and losers in Oakland (Berkeley: City Miners Books, 1979).

41 Stanford SDS, Through the Looking Glass: a radical guide to Stanford, no date (probably 1968), New Left Collection, Hoover Institution on War Revolution and Peace (HIWRP). Stanford SDS activist Jim Schoch has observed that organization on campus posed no real problems because the living and study areas were not too spread out. He also, however, noted that the distance between Stanford and Palo Alto militated against any involvement in city politics.

humanities buildings near the mall, and the construction of the new Student Union alongside it. With these alterations, the campus administration centre, Sproul Hall (later known as Berkeley's Winter Palace), which fronted onto the Plaza, lay immediately juxtaposed to a physical and social environment utilized mainly by students from the social sciences and humanities; that is, by students who were most amenable to the political campaigning at Bancroft-Telegraph. The Terrace of the Student Union, which at that time had a superb view over Berkeley and the Bay was one space which activists marked out as their own.43 Campus spatial arrangements thus provided a potent setting for the FSM, helping to inject militant students with an intense consciousness of territory. And changes in student living patterns, particularly the fact that more students were living away from home in private apartments and houses, also generated new possibilities for radical action.44

For many years, students had used a strip of sidewalk at the junction of Bancroft and Telegraph, just outside the university entrance, to set up card tables, hand out leaflets and, in general, organize support for their cause. The sidewalk strip functioned as the de facto free speech (or Hyde Park) area for students. The official Hyde Park, designated by the administration in 1962, was the Lower Plaza and the main flow of student traffic passed it by. It had been assumed that the Berkeley Council owned the Bancroft-Telegraph strip and the Council had given students permission to use it. A small plaque announcing the beginning of the university was positioned 26 feet in front of the university entrance posts. So a 26 foot wide pavement which appeared to be an extension of the city sidewalk was actually owned by the University and it was this piece of land that students used as a free speech area. The university administration was alerted to this discrepancy by a reporter from the Oakland Tribune. In effect, students were violating university regulations governing political activity on campus. In September, the Dean of Students wrote a letter to the presidents of all off-campus

43 Ibid., p. 60 and Sol Stern, "A Deeper Disenchantment", Liberation vol. 9, no. 11, February 1965, p. 16.
political organizations, informing them that the university rules would, in future, be enforced at the Bancroft-Telegraph strip. Students quickly formed a "United Front" (UF) which represented 18 diverse political groups, ranging from Students for Goldwater to the Du Bois Club. A petition was drawn up defending use of the Bancroft-Telegraph strip for the distribution of literature which advocated action on various issues. This was rejected by the Dean, who offered students a second Hyde Park area, in front of Sproul Hall, but permitted the distribution of "informative" literature only. The administration was making a distinction between information and advocacy. Yet such a distinction made no sense to the civil rights movement. The key issue became advocacy because regulation of the content of speech represented "a death blow" to the movement. Recent civil rights campaigns had all depended upon the distribution of literature which encouraged action around the fair employment issue. One of those campaigns, of course, was against the *Oakland Tribune* and there was much suspicion at the time that Knowland was pressuring the administration to take action against the students.

Within a short while, the UF had shifted its focus from the attempt to regain certain rights to a campaign for freedom of speech. In other words, the sudden proscription of a practice hitherto deemed permissible generated a heightened consciousness of ways in which the University administration severely circumscribed all forms of political life. University officials, and powerful people in the community, perceived the importance of the Bancroft-Telegraph strip as a centre of rising political dissidence. Radicals saw it as highly significant for the same reason and also because it offered some relief from the constrictive policy on political

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45 Max Heirich, *The Spiral of Conflict* ..., p. 106 and 111.

46 Michael Rossman, *The Wedding Within the War*, p. 96; also see Hal Draper, *Berkeley* ...., p. 243.

47 Hal Draper, *Berkeley* ..., p. 25-6; Max Heirich, *The Spiral of Conflict*, p. 106-7. Heirich suggests that there is no real evidence that Knowland was directly involved. Yet, it was a journalist from the *Tribune* who discovered that students were operating on university property and the *Tribune* informed the Chancellor that picketing against the paper was being organized on the campus.

activity. There was nothing surer to provoke an angry response than the denial of a space which students believed to be, in one sense at least, their own.

In an effort to confront university regulations directly, card tables were set up at both Bancroft-Telegraph and in front of Sather Gate on September 30. Eight students were cited for violating university regulations but a piece of paper declaring that "We have jointly manned the tables at Gather Gate" was circulated quickly for signatures. Following speeches from UF leaders, around 500 students entered Sproul Hall demanding a disciplinary hearing. The administration refused to respond, the eight cited students were suspended indefinitely and the student occupation continued after the building was locked. While the sit-in ended early the next day, card tables were again arranged at Bancroft-Telegraph. Administrative staff demanded that one of those sitting at the CORE table, Jack Weinberg, identify himself. In line with a UF decision, Weinberg refused and was arrested promptly by a university lieutenant. He began to address the crowd, claiming that the university was a knowledge factory but "some of the products are not coming out to standard specifications" and the university was trying to purge these products.49 The factory metaphor figures prominently in the language of radical students at this time. They were influenced, in part, by the work of Hal Draper, a university librarian and Marxist scholar, who had detailed Clark Kerr's philosophy of making the university an integral part of the power structure, a knowledge factory which fulfilled a service function.50 The factory or industrial image proved a powerful signifier of inhuman tendencies, tendencies which were part and parcel of modern urban civilization. There was, indeed, an essential romanticism in this use of rhetoric, a questioning of the values and practices embedded in industrial modernity.

49 Ibid., p. 119-20; Weinberg on FSM Sounds and Songs of the Demonstration, FSM Records Department, January 1965.

Weinberg was escorted to a police car but training in the art of mass civil disobedience had prepared the students well and they quickly moved to block the car, surrounding it on all sides. Gradually, the car assumed enormous symbolic significance:

by this time we realize simply that we have to hold that car. That car is the only thing we've gotten in six years. It's our car; it isn't the cops' car any more.

They held the car captive for 32 hours, using its roof as a speaking platform. To borrow the language of the late sixties, that car represented liberated territory. In the words of Michael Rossman, the Free Speech Movement was "forged around" the car and the incident carried with it, in miniature, aspects of "the entire conflict". The change in name from UF to FSM occurred soon after and the latter was radicalized early in its life, following a split between more militant groups like SNCC and CORE, and the more moderate or right-wing groups like SLATE, the Young Democrats and the Young Republicans. Thus the split was between those groups who had organized in the civil rights struggle and were trained in the art of civil disobedience and those whose involvement in off-campus issues was much more sedate. The radicals wanted the free speech struggle to be escalated and they won the day. FSM demands were that disciplinary proceedings against students be halted, that university policy be revised to protect free speech (with only the courts being allowed to regulate the content of political expression) and that regulations which unnecessarily restrict political action be repealed.

51 The surrounding of the car was possibly less spontaneous than it appeared. Frank Bardacke has even referred to a "dress rehearsal" for this incident at a demonstration against Madam Nhu in 1963. A policeman arrested one student but students quickly milled around him. One protestor, Lennie Glazer, apparently lent over the policeman and told him, in threatening terms, to "let the guy go". The policeman eventually did release the student. Bardacke insists that Glazer was also the first person to sit down blocking the police car in 1964 and some evidence seems to support this (interview with author; also see Max Heirich, The Spiral of Conflict, p. 150)

52 Michael Rossman, The Wedding ..., p. 110.

53 Ibid., p. 128.

54 The Position of the Free Speech Movement on Speech and Political Activity, FSM file UC archives; Max Heirich, The Spiral ..., p. 269.
endorsed a policy that certain areas on campus could be "used by students and staff for planning, implementing, raising funds or recruiting participants for lawful off-campus action". FSM, however, rejected this because it effectively regulated "the content of speech". For these areas or spaces to be genuinely free, advocacy of unlawful action could not be disallowed.

At a huge rally on December 2 FSM leader Mario Savio made his famous speech, a speech which captured the ideological trajectory of the civil rights and free speech activists:

We have an autocracy which runs this university. It's managed ... There's a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart that you can't take part, you can't even passively take part and you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus and you've got to make it stop. And you've got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people who own it that unless you're free the machine will be prevented from working at all.56

Max Weber, as Wini Breines has suggested, was very much present in Savio's language.57 But so, too, was an ethic of struggle which was central to the civil rights movement and a critique of the rational scientific industrial mind which was important to sections of the New Left but particularly prominent in some Beat literature. Indeed, the speech can perhaps be seen as amalgamating the discourses of critical sociology, cultural radicalism and civil rights. It

55 cited in ibid. (FSM pamphlet).
57 Wini Breines, Community and Organization ..., p. 25. Breines does not acknowledge the extent of Savio's debt. "The central question", Weber once wrote, "is not how we further and accelerate it [Bureaucracy] but what we have to set against this machinery, in order to preserve a remnant of humanity from this parcelling out of the soul, from this exclusive rule of bureaucratic life ideals". (Cited by Arthur Mitzman, "Roads, Vulgarity, Rebellion, and Pure Art: the Inner Space in Flaubert and French Culture", The Journal of Modern History Vol. 51, no. 3, September 1979, p. 504).
certainly served as an inspiration to the 1,000 students who then occupied Sproul Hall.\textsuperscript{58}

The Dialectics of Space and Community

The rally in Sproul Plaza, the occupation of Sproul Hall or perhaps a march down Telegraph Ave, became common occurrences. The critical importance of spatial links between the Plaza, the administration centre, the student union building and Telegraph Ave, was underscored time and time again. Rarely was there a speech as compelling as Savio's to sponsor militant action. Idle speculation about whether the same speech would have had the same sort of impact in a different setting with different spatial arrangements would be silly. Yet the material conditions of life do help mould (not automatically but in sometimes subtle ways) political consciousness. And the spatial aspects of those material conditions are frequently overlooked, just as space itself, while a determining aspect of human behaviour, is often not spoken of.\textsuperscript{59}

Some of FSM's organizational energy was spent designating territories, marking out turf. We do see with FSM the beginnings of an intense awareness of space in Berkeley. Bancroft-Telegraph represented space for students who had limited resources. Thus an issue of the FSM Newsletter highlighted the contradiction within a university policy which allowed Edward Teller to go all around the country building bigger and better bombs but prevented students from using one small area for political purposes.\textsuperscript{60} A 'Provisional Platform of the Free Speech Movement' busily designated 13 "Hyde

\textsuperscript{58} Details of this occupation, the arrest of close to 800 students and subsequent FSM rallies or campaigns (including the effective student and faculty strike) can be found in many publications but, in particular, see Heinrich's \textit{The Spiral of Conflict}, Part III.


\textsuperscript{60} FSM \textit{Newsletter}, October 20, 1964, p. 3 (FSM File, UC archives).
Park" type areas including Bancroft-Telegraph.61 This was what would become known later that decade as the claiming or reclaiming of territory or turf. Closely associated with this was a notion of taking politics to the people; free speech as something open vis à vis the closed universe of legitimated political discourse.62 So we have the idea of a committed public presence - central to New Left thought and practice - linked to specific areas, spatial foci for action. Here then is the partial fertilization of a concept of "free space".63 There can be a geographical delineation of such "free-space" - the Bancroft-Telegraph strip - or it can be represented through alternative institutions, such as the Free Universities which soon sprang up in many American cities. In both cases there is a marking out of territory within which radical activism can be nourished. To use the words of Harry Boyte, "such space provides the crucial context for incubating alternative conceptions, ideas and values, for deepening the definition of protest from defense of what exists into a struggle for new conceptions of rights and possibilities".64 In that sense, the struggle over space during the FSM was certainly a springboard for the militant actions which shaped Berkeley’s identity.

By January 1965, FSM had won a significant victory. The University administration introduced reasonably flexible interim rules governing the time, place and manner of political activity on campus. The Bancroft-Telegraph strip was restored as a centre of free speech activity and Sproul Hall steps were designated an open discussion area at lunch hour and between 4 pm and 6 pm. There was to be no outright restriction on the content of speech and advocacy.65 FSM

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61 'Provisional Platform of the Free Speech Movement', pamphlet distributed on November 13, 1964 (FSM file, UC archives).

62 Barbara Garson, "Right Speak; Wrong Speak", FSM Newsletter November 17, 1964, p. 3 (FSM file, UC archives); also see Herbert Marcuse, One Dimensional Man (London: Sphere Books, 1968), p. 78-103.

63 see Harry Boyte, "Building the Democratic Movement ..." p. 22-3.

64 Ibid., p. 22; also see John Case and Rosemary C. Taylor (eds), Co-ops, Communes and Collectives: experiments in social change in the 1960s and 1970s (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979).

65 A new set of highly restrictive policies were proposed early in 1965 by the Regents Committee to Review University Policies. Faculty pressure resulted in the proposals being modified drastically. Despite a sideshow struggle over the rights to "obscene" speech, free speech (while subject to a series of regulations governing time, place and frequency) was still protected for students.
had almost exhausted itself but two of its leaders, Jack Weinberg and Bettina Aptheker, pressed for the formation of a new organization which could take the place of FSM and engage in long-term struggles with the University administration. In other words, they wanted a radical student organization which would enable the movement to transcend ad hoc politics. Specifically modelled on industrial unions, it was to be called the Free Student Union (FSU). Both Weinberg and Aptheker had been schooled in traditions of socialist organizing. And if anything was missing from the Berkeley movement it was that sense of organizational continuity, of clearly focussed long-term strategy, which socialist parties or movements at least strived for. Yet this was precisely what made it refreshing to someone with anarchist tendencies, like Paul Goodman. He claimed that the language used in Berkeley soon after FSM was existential and "used with simplicity and conviction", whereas the language of SDS involved talk of "strategy" which grated.

The Berkeley movement was developing, so it seemed, an identity distinct from the national new radicalism. This was partly reflected in FSM's reasonably flexible approach to organizing. The very self-confidence of Berkeley activists allowed a fluid sense of politics to evolve. Moreover, through a series of free speech and civil rights struggles a community had been formed. A profound commitment to community had been spurred, undoubtedly, by the


67 Free Student Union Foundation pamphlet (FSM file, UC archives).

68 Weinberg was associated with the International Socialist Group on campus and Aptheker, daughter of prominent Marxist historian Herbert Aptheker, with the Du Bois Club. This again points to the critical importance of bridges between the old and the new left in the development of Berkeley's new radicalism.


70 Michael Rossman, *The Wedding ...*, p. 134. Observations from one FSM activist, however, do cast doubt upon that flexibility. Barbara Garson, in her personal correspondence at the time, refers to power-hungry stars and self-interested leaders. She was precursing later critiques of the New Left, particularly those coming from the feminist movement. (Barbara Garson, private correspondence, FSM file, UC archives.)
philosophical context which FSM saw itself acting within. FSM was not, primarily, a revolt against educational alienation. A survey conducted in November 1964, showed that while there was a widespread basis of support for FSM, students expressed little dissatisfaction with their courses, professors or education in general.71

The basis of the students' protest was, unsurprisingly, resentment at having been denied the right to political activity. Increasingly, this was perceived as a denial of space and activists sought to not only recover lost territory but to also cement a communal space. Writing later of the Sproul Hall occupation, Michael Rossman observed:

in that quarter acre of territory liberated by our presence,
we acted out our universe in miniature. An icon came to
flower - the compact panorama of our community, newly
revealed in the bud of its growth.72

Another activist, Gerald Rosenfeld, in referring to the earlier occupation of the Sheraton-Palace hotel, commented "For twenty-four hours we were a community".73 Lewis Feuer, a noisy opponent of FSM, used one of Rosenfeld's comments to suggest an essential duplicity: "[he] thus confessed in an aside that the avowed, overt, manifest goal of jobs for Negroes was only a 'pretext' for something else he was seeking, the community of the young".74 Yet Rosenfeld was referring to reporters who questioned whether the white students involved in the occupation were campaigning for black job opportunities or were "using that as a pretext for something else". Acknowledging an essential truth in their reckoning, he commented:


We were concerned about those jobs, but there was much more at stake that night. What this experience gave us, and what their experience in the civil rights movement gave the students who committed themselves to it, was the knowledge that a community is possible, that the basis for a viable society is ... a shared humanity and mutual need of each other.  

Feuer saw this as generational posturing but it was a genuine plea for bonding, for solidarity, for a communal consciousness which transcended the self. There were, certainly, strong elements of subjectivity in the free speech struggle (more so than in civil rights campaigns). Yet it was a subjectivity formed with reference to community. FSM undoubtedly sowed some seeds for sloppy individualistic "new age" thinking. This is partly because the focus was self rather than other. Yet it did not lead inevitably in that direction. In the short run, at least, it helped foster a dynamic radical community.

Community, of course, is a tricky term. It can, for example, be used (or at least conjured up) in defence of exclusive white neighborhoods. Preserving space or defending territory is not always or necessarily a noble element in the struggle for democracy. This is common sense but it does not mean that the term "community" is hopelessly bankrupt. Nor do the multiple definitions of community, some of which are in tension (if not contradictory), suggest that the

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75 Gerald Rosenfeld, "Generational Revolt ...", p. 17.

76 Michael Rossman, for instance, moved steadily towards a subjectivity which celebrated "the politics of consciousness" rather than political commitment [see his New Age Blues: on the politics of consciousness (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1979), particularly pp. 61-6 which contain a reassessment of FSM in terms of the "consciousness revolution"].

word is conceptually vacuous. "Community" signals collective involvement, social and cultural connectedness, common endeavour. These are essential characteristics of radical social movements and gain particular force in specific localities. Communities can transcend place but the concept of "interest communities" lacks a certain richness. David B. Clark has argued that "communities of interest" should play a more central role in social analysis. The modern world, he suggests, has not destroyed community but rather shifted it from a "local" base and invested it with more "cosmopolitan" characteristics. There is some truth in this but it runs the risk of dissolving community into any network where people are engaged in common sorts of activities. Can there, for instance, be a community of stockbrokers when the very values of the stock exchange are pitched against genuine community? Clark refers to community being "spontaneously engendered amongst virtual strangers - as is often typical of the youth scene today".

"Community" is here being thrown around in too haphazard a fashion. Some sense of collective identity is no guarantee of community - the

78 see Alan MacFarlane, "History, Anthropology and the Study of Communities", Social History No. 5, May 1977, p. 633. MacFarlane argues that any agreement about what community means is virtually impossible. Craig Calhoun, however, in a response to MacFarlane, defended the concept: "The fact that a number of varying concepts have been used under the common label does not, however, invalidate any of them"; see C.J. Calhoun, "History, anthropology and the study of communities: some problems in MacFarlane's proposal", Social History Vol. 5, no. 1, January 1980, p. 105-129. Social theorists need not get bogged down in definition hunting. Joseph Gusfield has suggested that there are essentially two major usages of community - the territorial and the relational. People may have communal relationships which are not territorially based but, as Gusfield notes, much analysis focuses upon the nature of human relationships within a particular territory; see Joseph R. Gusfield, Community: a critical response (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), p. xv ff. Nevertheless, the problem identified by Raymond Plant is not insignificant: "... is there a sense and definition of community which is relevant to modern autonomous individualistic urban life?"; Raymond Plant, Community and Ideology (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 36. Calhoun, amongst others, argues persuasively that there is such a sense and that the rejection of the concept community would leave an enormous gap in social and historical research.

79 Melvin Webber noted over twenty years ago that Americans were "becoming more closely tied to various interest communities than to place communities"; Melvin M. Webber, "Order in Diversity: Community Without Propinquity", in L. Wingo, Jr (ed), Cities and Space: the future use of urban land (Baltimore: the John Hopkins Press, 1963), p. 29.


81 Ibid.
very term "youth scene" hints of passing fads, transient orientations and tendencies, superficial rites of bonding.

In Berkeley, the sense of community was spatially connected to Sproul Plaza, Telegraph Ave and the living areas within the immediate vicinity of the campus. Without that spatial grounding, whatever communal consciousness had existed would have been somewhat diluted. Community was sought as an alternative to the crushing impersonalization fostered by a bureaucratic iron cage:

FSM was an excuse in the best sense of the word - an opportunity for creative and meaningful protest against a whole deadening style of life.82

Similarly, Mario Savio once referred to the free speech issue being "in some ways a pretext ... [whereby] the people could gain the community they formerly lacked ... we all have a hunger ... to break down the walls of the intellectual ghetto".83 Feuer is cynical about such "pretexts" or "excuses". He suggests, for instance, that "It was a remarkable sociological phenomenon to watch a Vietnam Day Committee parade and see a Nobel Laureate in Physics marching in new found community with the nonstudent 'drop-out' activist".84 Yet this is only remarkable if you dismiss the possibility that certain issues have the potential to generate feelings of solidarity which can, in turn, inspire a sense of community, however fragile. Civil rights, free speech and then Vietnam were such issues.

82 Robert Kaufman and Michael Folson, FSM: an interpretive essay, p. 29-30 (FSM file, UC archives).
An Emerging Radical Identity

FSM helped change the texture of campus and even town life dramatically. Political organizing and proselytizing gathered pace, facilitated by important new free speech areas like the Sproul Hall steps. Yet one FSM participant expressed dismay, early in 1965, at the failure of Berkeley’s radical community to sustain its "creative, radical potential". This "failure" tells us much about the character of Berkeley radicalism. It was a radicalism which moved from issue to issue, even to event, without ever cementing an organizational continuity. Despite this, it prospered. Free speech issues were still to surface but the overarching political context was provided, increasingly, by the war in Vietnam.

In May 1965, the Berkeley campus hosted a huge teach-in called Vietnam Day. Its organizers were determined to carry on the spirit of FSM, so there were to be no restrictions on participants from left groups or political parties. As Fred Halstead commented, they "refused to allow the government or the university, or even the Establishment-oriented movement figures, to set the terms of the debate". Consequently, a wide range of dissident views was presented. So Vietnam Day was, in a sense, a logical extension of the fight over free speech. To use the words of James Petras:

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86 Martin Roysher, letter cited in P. Jacobs and S. Landau (eds), *The New Radicals* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), p. 71-2. The Free Student Union, for instance, was short-lived. Even the Free University of Berkeley, which really began life with classes held during the Sproul Hall occupation and for a brief time captured the imagination of many radicals, failed to cement a solid counter-institutional presence in the community.
87 At one session, around 12,000 attended. Over the entire weekend, 30,000 participated; see Louis Menashe and Ronald Radosh (eds), *Teach-Ins: U.S.A.* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), p. 32-6.
89 Supporters of the war effort had been invited but they rejected the offer.
The Free Speech Movement won the right to have political space. Vietnam Day was a concrete application of that right.\footnote{James Petras, "Berkeley's Vietnam Days", \textit{Liberation} Vol. X, No. 5, August 1965, p. 31.}

This was a direct spatial reference which did not only function as metaphor. It also reflected a growing consciousness of place, of the organization and role of the physical environment in Berkeley and the Bay Area generally.

The Vietnam Day Committee was confronted on a number of occasions with issues surrounding the politics of space. For instance, the Bay Area was not simply, to use Jerry Rubin's phase, "a radical's dream". It was also the region through which a significant proportion of the men and material destined for Vietnam was channelled. Troop trains passed through Berkeley on the way to Oakland. Demonstrations against these trains in August 1965, served as a reminder that Berkeley and Oakland constituted strategic locations for America's war effort. While attempts to block the trains failed, they signalled a resistance to the region being used as a military conduit.\footnote{For accounts of the troop train demonstrations and subsequent anti-war actions in Berkeley see Thomas Powers, \textit{The War at Home: Vietnam and the American People, 1964-8} (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1973), p. 82 ff.} Moreover, it was at this time that the \textit{Berkeley Barb} was born. The \textit{Barb}, perhaps America's leading underground newspaper, played an important part in the development of Berkeley's radical community, providing information and analysis, bringing together culture and politics, and helping shape the identity of local radicalism.

In Berkeley, planning for the October 15-16 International Days of Protest focussed upon the Oakland Army terminal. On October 15, protestors set off down Telegraph Ave on their way to Berkeley but heard of a police road-block at the Oakland-Berkeley "border". Tactical discussions amongst the organizers followed. Should the marchers go towards Oakland or back to Berkeley? Was it to be immediate confrontation or strategic withdrawal? The marchers turned away from a potentially brutal street battle but these very
questions provoked "endless" debates throughout the Sixties and beyond, not just on that particular occasion.92 And they also gave substance to a politics mediated by spatial images and discourse. A newsletter chronicling the early history of VDC referred to the overall success of the International Days of Protest and then observed: "But the VDC still had a job to do. It had to break through the Oakland Wall".93 While 20,000 protestors did do this on November 20 (aided by court injunctions against the Oakland city administration), "the Oakland Wall" symbolized barriers to the exercise of free speech much as the attempted denial of the Bancroft-Telegraph strip had.

VDC made it clear that its struggle against American intervention in Vietnam was connected intimately to the struggle for genuine democracy within America.94 And the quest for radical community within Berkeley was part of that same battle. VDC perceived its role as one of community organizing. So, too, did the Scheer Campaign for Congress. Robert Scheer, a leading VDC activist, ran against the Democratic incumbent in the June 1966 primary. Much energy was focussed upon the campaign. It was seen as a way of revitalizing a radical constituency which, since the International Days of Protest, had "marched into a cul-de-sac" of ad hoc militance.95 On the night of the election Scheer, who won 45 per cent of the vote, proclaimed "We have to keep this movement in the community and not shrink back to the steps of Sproul Hall".96 Yet one of the problems, in the eyes of some radicals, was that this "community" was not organized sufficiently outside the Berkeley

92 Frank Bardacke, interview with author. The next day the Hell's Angels motor cycle gang introduced the Berkeley protestors to a dose of street-fighting for which they were ill-prepared.


94 Vietnam Day Committee, pamphlet (VDC file, Bancroft SPP).


In particular, "the Oakland Wall" remained and the anti-war base was stuck firmly in Berkeley. Another problem was the enthusiastic embrace of electoral politics. This was not, after all, in tune with predominant New Left sensibilities. Moreover, the strong role of the Communist Party and Du Bois Club in the Campaign provoked a certain amount of resentment. In short, serious doubts about the future of Berkeley's radical community were being expressed, doubts which reflected some concern about local political tendencies. For instance, the Scheer Campaign's off-shoot, the Community for New Politics, focussed upon local issues and was criticized for almost bypassing the war in Vietnam. Yet many of these sorts of criticisms of Berkeley radicalism came from members of SDS. A tension had developed between localist orientations and national perspectives, a tension little explored in histories of the New Left.

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98 Zoe Isom, "Scheer Bureaucracy", p. 8. Scheer himself referred to the Campaign never establishing the legitimacy in Oakland which it had managed to attain in Berkeley (Conference for a New Politics tape, SDS collection WSHS, 517 A/16).


100 Isom, "Scheer Bureaucracy", p. 7 ff. Jerry Rubin was a short-lived manager of the campaign. Scheer actually wanted a local CPUSA member, Michael Meyerson, as manager. When Meyerson could not take up the position, Scheer then insisted that the Party put forward a replacement, so Carl Bloice became manager. (Al Richmond, interview with author).

CHAPTER 4

REGIONALISM AND RADICALISM

When, in 1965, SDS established a regional office in San Francisco, it was hoped this would signal a shift. Localism and regionalism would be subdued, the national organization would emerge triumphant. The reverse occurred. SDS's clumsy attempts to absorb the Bay Area into a national structure with national policies, procedures and perspectives, actually reinforced regionalist biases. This was highlighted by the sudden conversion of the two SDS officials who established the regional office. Arriving in the Bay Area, they were struck by provincialism, isolation and what they saw as "backward" politics. Very soon, however, they switched their cannons to SDS's national office. They had become Bay Area radicals. This was not a unique experience, particularly at that time. Just as in 1960 publicity about the Bay Area attracted many aspiring radicals to the region, so, too, publicity about FSM pulled increasing numbers of students and others to Berkeley. Most became quickly enmeshed in the style and character of Berkeley radicalism. Initially outsiders, they soon began reflecting a radicalism which was, to some degree, permeated with localist or regionalist sensibilities. The power of regionalism can be immense, even at times when (and in movements where) you might least expect to find it.

SDS and the Regional Question

A radical movement or organization which seeks profound and wide-ranging social change in a country as large and variegated as the United States must have a twin focus: the local or regional and the national. This frequently requires deft shuffling of different agendas, an alertness to the general and the particular, a simultaneous
commitment to the local grassroots and to a broader constituency. Little wonder, then, that the new populist organizations of the 1970s and beyond focussed upon the local level of neighborhoods and municipalities.\(^1\) Even at that level there can be a number of concerns and causes, and perhaps also a number of constituencies and communities, but there at least appear to be greater opportunities for democratic decision-making (as well as temptations towards parochialism) than exist at the national level. A radical organization with national goals and priorities necessarily finds it difficult to implement democratic participatory procedures. Yet SDS, particularly in its younger years, pushed the ideal of participatory democracy in society and in its own organization. This necessitated a simultaneous commitment to local and national levels of struggle, a commitment which SDS found difficult to sustain, partly as a consequence of its Eastern and Mid-Western origins and orientations. Indeed, SDS never really attained the national base it desired or achieved the national leadership to which it aspired. It was not, for example, able to establish a solid and enduring presence in the Bay Area. While SDS chapters became important on the Stanford and San Francisco State campuses, the organization could not cement a continuing role within the region. Berkeley, in particular, remained a self-confident enclave of dissidence with no apparent need for programmes of action developed elsewhere.

Late in 1964, SDS began establishing a system of regional organizations. This raised a series of questions about the relationship between the regional office and the National Office. As one SDS organizer put it:

We must think of what the role and function of the regions will be. Will the regions be just a central point in a communications network? How much responsibility will they have for SDS programs throughout the region, both on the chapter and the regional level? Will they formulate integrated regional programs and work to

\(^1\) Harry C. Boyte, *The Backyard Revolution*, p. 131. Boyte makes a useful distinction between the new populist groups and so-called new social movements, with the latter reflecting a national agenda even when operating on the local level.
build the region? Will they take major responsibility and initiative or will they merely follow the lead of the national office?²

These questions remained pertinent throughout the remaining years of the decade, partly because the regions gained a degree of autonomy which the SDS national leadership had not allowed for.³ In short, SDS never confronted the regional question effectively.

Localism and regionalism underpinned the politics of the New Left to such an extent that at the Spring 1969 conference of SDS there was a tendency for debates on international issues to be dismissed as irrelevant because the real work was being done, supposedly, on the local level.⁴ Yet, while SDS had always stressed the importance of local struggles, it had also seen itself as an organization which would bring together disparate local action programmes and develop a national strategy. This, many SDSers thought, compelled it to determine the character of local endeavours in order to ensure that they transcended parochialism. So, in 1965 SDS sought to become the coordinating agency for radicalism in the San Francisco Bay area. Its experience tells us much about the tension between the local and national levels of the New Left.

Problems of geographical distance and political difference were highlighted by SDS's relationship with the Bay Area. Al Haber's 1960 Presidential report listed the functioning chapters of the organization as being at the University of Michigan (which spawned most of the early leaders), Yale, Syracuse, New York City, Brooklyn College and Eastern Reserve, with others, including Harvard, Chicago and Wisconsin in the process of being formed. No idea for a chapter in


³ Edward J. Bacciocco, Jr., The New Left in America: Reform to Revolution 1956-1970 (Stanford: Hoover Institute Press, 1974), p. 172. The chapter at San Francisco State, for example, was totally independent of the national office and from around 1967 was dominated by Progressive Labor (PL); Alex Forman, interview with author, August 16, 1979.

the Bay Area was mentioned, although there was apparently an SDS representative there who worked on a travel subsidy basis. By 1963 SDS had some representation from Berkeley but it was not until the spring of 1964 that plans were underway to establish an SDS chapter at Berkeley.\(^5\) This is no minor historical curiosity. The student movement at Berkeley had been catapulted into national prominence in 1960. Yet SDS was only moving towards establishing a solid presence in the Bay Area in 1964. A report from an SDS member in Berkeley that year noted that "though many of the same things are done here that are done in the East and Midwest ... there is not the same continuity and possibility of building something permanent that exists with formal organization".\(^6\) This was the type of observation which was to reflect a common SDS feeling about Bay Area radicalism - things were too loose, too unstructured, too impermanent, with single issues and ad hoc committees springing out of nowhere, only to disappear again just as quickly. Yet the report did refer to one promising development - the formation of the San Francisco New School. The School had been initially founded in the Spring of 1964 by the San Francisco Opposition, a group of rather informal status, which supposedly operated under the motto "Opposed to Everything".\(^7\) Contact between SDS and the Opposition had been made in 1964 by a member who felt that the actions of Opposition people "were about as vague as their name".\(^8\) Nevertheless, he thought their work with the New School was promising and suggested that any SDS action in the Bay Area should be strongly connected to the individuals who made up the Opposition. The School's stated purpose was to create radical dialogue in the Bay Area

\(^5\) An SDS Work/List Mailing (25 March 1963) recorded 2 of the 16 on the national executive as being from the Bay Area. An earlier (Jan. 18, 1963) SDS Key List (list of contacts), has three names from Berkeley, one of whom was on the National Executive. (SDS papers, series 2A: 48 and 50.)


\(^8\) John Bancroft, "San Francisco Bay Area Left-Wing Politics - an SDSer's view" (September 1964), (SDS papers, series 2A: 67).
and courses were held with about one hundred students participating once a week.\textsuperscript{9}

The reason SDS people saw the School as a useful development was because it seemed to represent a partial move away from what was perceived to be narrow single-issue politics. The people involved in forming the Berkeley chapter of SDS hoped "to help give a more general perspective than any of the existing socialist or single-action groups now on campus can give".\textsuperscript{10} And by the middle of 1964 there was a Berkeley chapter which sought to involve itself in several projects, including a political programme aimed at removing Oakland's "incumbent city and county officials who collectively are responsible for a raft of social ills".\textsuperscript{11} Yet, even as late as December 1964, Mike Miller, organizer of San Francisco's radical community organization called Freedom House, felt compelled to write to the National Secretary of SDS, Clark Kissinger, suggesting that "You guys are going to have to realize that part of America does exist beyond the Rockies".\textsuperscript{12} He further pleaded that a full-time organizer like Tom Hayden be appointed to focus, in particular, on work at the Berkeley campus. It is curious, in fact, that Hayden had not done more to establish an SDS presence in Berkeley, because he had spent a month there in 1960, during which time he claims to have "got radicalized".\textsuperscript{13} But Kissinger told Miller that they did not have the finance for a Berkeley venture and that, in general, progress was being made, for they now had eight chapters west of the Mississippi, whereas one year ago they had none.\textsuperscript{14} Indeed, one SDS member at

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{9} The following courses were offered in the summer of 1964: Art in Society, the Relevance of C. Wright Mills, Community Organization in the Other America. The journalists Paul Jacobs and Saul Landau and theatre maverick R.G. Davis were amongst those in the Opposition.
  \item \textsuperscript{10} Eric Levine, "report on Verkeley" (sic), SDS \textit{Bulletin}, Vol. 2, No. 10, July 1964, (SDS papers, series 4A: 19).
  \item \textsuperscript{11} Eric Levine, letter to Helen (no surname), September 24, 1964, (SDS papers, series 2A: 101).
  \item \textsuperscript{12} Mike Miller, letter to Clark Kissinger, (October 11, 1964 (SDS papers, series 2A: 28).
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Tom Hayden, quoted in Jack Newfield, \textit{A Prophetic Minority} (New York: Signet Books, 1966), p. 96; also see Hayden, \textit{Reunion}, p. 33.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Clark Kissinger, letter to Mike Miller, October 14, 1964 (SDS papers, series 2A: 67).
\end{itemize}
that time had high hopes for the Berkeley chapter which had a membership of eighteen:

Berkeley SDS may well be on its way to being the third biggest chapter in the country. With 27,500 students on a politicized campus with plenty to do in the slums of Oakland and the defence industries of California, there is no reason why it shouldn't.\textsuperscript{15}

But there was a good reason - Berkeley's cumulative experience of radical struggle. No other campus had quite the same heritage and it gave Berkeley radicals not only a sense of leadership but also a sense of independence. Berkeley was a haven for ad hoc committees and other organizational forms which, arising from specific events or issues, functioned as coordinating agencies linking disparate groupings. To some extent this organizational flexibility was true of the entire New Left\textsuperscript{16} but, in Berkeley, no single group ever gained a strong leadership position. The Du Bois Club, Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) and Vietnam Day Committee (VDC), amongst others, furnished leaders from time to time but things tended to come together more spontaneously than would have been the case if one group had held ascendancy. The inability of SDS to establish itself as the main political group of the New Left at Berkeley shows the extent to which Berkeley had developed a strong political identity before SDS became prominent nationally. It was an identity which remained, undergoing changes of style and direction, one moment self-questioning and the other self-important, throughout the Sixties. And it was an identity which reflected a deeply felt regionalist bias.

A seasoned SDS organizer, Richard Flacks, writing in 1964, saw the position clearly - SDS could never be big in Berkeley because of all the strong competing left groups already there.\textsuperscript{17} However, he did

\textsuperscript{15} Mike Bancroft, letter to Johnny Bancroft, September 29, 1964 (SDS papers, series 2A: 67).


\textsuperscript{17} Flacks, memo to Potter et al., "Re California", September 21, 1964 (SDS papers, series 2A: 67).
argue that SDS's focus on community action could allow it to carve out a special role. This was at a time when SDS, through its Education Research and Action Project (ERAP), was developing a range of community projects, so community organizing did seem to be SDS's best point of entrance into the Bay Area. As well as fighting against conditions of poverty in specific urban communities, ERAP upheld the promise of participatory democracy. According to some SDS and New Left thinkers and strategists, community had replaced, or at least superseded, workplace as the major site of struggle in contemporary capitalism. As a consequence, the historic agency of change was no longer perceived to be the organized working class but rather the poor and outcast. SDS was not alone in community organizing, or in seeing much of the labour movement as a hindrance more than a help in projects directed at assisting poor communities. Freedom House organizer Mike Miller noted that the ILWU's role in a battle against redevelopment in San Francisco was less than salutary, reflecting its virtual absorption into "the liberal Establishment". This was partly because ILWU members (particularly the leaders, a number of whom were black) did not live in San Francisco's poor areas or ghettos such as Hunter's Point or the Fillmore district. Freedom House sought to work within poor communities and to find a political leadership within those communities rather than one supposedly transposed by the liberal Establishment. Miller's way of thinking fitted in neatly with SDS's philosophizing and there was some attempt to make Freedom House part of ERAP. SDS, however, had little regard for regional or even organizational autonomy at that time and saw itself as the logical umbrella organization for disparate groups and ventures. Some organizations, including SNCC and Freedom House, resented this presumption. After all, it seemed to fly in the face of a commitment to participatory democracy.

18 On the ERAP project see, in particular, Kirkpatrick Sale, SDS, p. 95-115 and p. 131-150; Winifred Breines, Community and Organization ..., p. 123-149.

19 see, for example, Todd Gitlin, "On Organizing the Poor in America", New Left Notes, December 23, 1966; James O'Connor, "Toward a Theory of Community Unions", Studies on the Left (Spring 1964) p. 143-8.


21 Mike Miller, interview with author, September 1979.
SDS Goes West

In most SDS correspondence between 1964 and 1965, Mike Miller (who was also involved with the San Francisco Opposition) was seen to be the best person to deal with in the Bay Area and, particularly in 1964, it was hoped that he would work closely with SDS in its endeavour to establish a presence in the region. He was seen as "searching desperately for an intellectual-political home", a thing which SDS could presumably provide. But the Freedom House people wanted to ensure that it remained an autonomous organization plugged into the ERAP communications network. Even while encouraging SDS to send an organizer over to enable Freedom House to develop nationally, Miller warned:

... For God's sake Don't do What was Done in a Letter that went from Ann Arbor to Stiles Hall in Berkeley - Talking About "Our People" in San Francisco ... doing block work in the Western Addition urban renewal site.

Sensitivity about the seemingly hegemonic tentacles of SDS was particularly acute in the Bay Area, where fairly solid (if irregular) organizational forms had developed well before SDS established an office in the area. This was partly evidence of a provincialist spirit which sections of the Movement in the Bay Area had cultivated. But it is also true that SDS concentrated its organizing efforts in particular regions, yet wanted to claim national status.

By the middle of the decade, however, SDS was beginning to understand the vital importance of the West Coast to any national movement. The Free Speech Movement, in particular, had alerted

22 Flacks, memo to Potter, op. cit.

23 Mike Miller, letter to Clark Kissinger, December 21, 1964 (SDS papers, series 2A: 28).

24 Ibid. [Underlined in original.]
SDS to the key strategic position of Berkeley. Clark Kissinger, writing to a Berkeley chapter member, observed: "As you probably know, SDS has really been working its ass off for FSM at a national level. We think it to be very important that the spirit and/or the people in the FSM be brought into SDS and into the student community as a whole". The assumption here was that it required an organization like SDS to make student movement policies and demands relevant on a national level. Nevertheless, SDS leaders did hope that students would perceive SDS as a sort of national FSM and thus be stimulated to join the organization. Indeed, in what was perhaps an unusual acknowledgement of Berkeley's leadership, Kissinger once observed that "... the SDS National Office has been acting as the East Coast Office of FSM". The FSM did promote a greater membership of SDS nationally but Berkeley radicals were, understandably, satisfied with their own political arrangements. Two SDS organizers went, separately, to Berkeley in early 1965 to try convince the movement there of the role SDS could play - former vice-President of the organization, Paul Booth, and Mike Davis. Booth saw the chief problem on campus being organizational, with an abundance of causes and actions, but no cohesive programme, no structure whereby issues and movements were directly related to each other. Davis expressed particular concern that no-one was even thinking about developing a larger strategy. So, while "the enthusiasm, solidarity and radicalism is still here ... the FSU [Free Student Union] and all the other organizations are floundering without achieving any sense of direction or continuity".

25 FSM organiser Steve Weissman reported to an SDS National Council meeting in December. He later did some organising for SDS on the west coast. Moreover, SDS sponsored a national speaking tour by FSM leader, Mario Savio.


27 Kirkpatrick Sale, SDS, p. 169.


30 Mike Davis, letter to Helen (no surname), May 11, 1965 (SDS papers, series 2A: 67).
Davis was, for a period in early 1965, a full-time SDS worker in the poorest part of west Oakland. Part of his project involved an attempt to build a leadership role for SDS in the community. West Oakland was the most dilapidated and impoverished part of the city, with 20 per cent unemployment. SDS set up office there in a run-down house and, at that time, this was viewed as the preliminary stage in the establishment of a western regional office for SDS. The project was imbued with the fervour of participatory democracy:

The project will act in the belief that the residents know what the important issues are through their day-to-day experience. The organizers work to bring together the people, patiently attempting to surmount the suspicion of such effort learned by poor people by watching the failure of countless well-meaning attempts to 'help' them. The project will receive its directions from the local residents; the organizers will ask people what the issues are, rather than proposing a program.31

Yet little thought had been applied to the venture and Davis saw the situation as at best embryonic but mostly just a confused muddle.32 Indeed, the Oakland Project, never functioned smoothly, in part because of tensions within its staff and also between some of the staff and members of the Berkeley chapter of SDS.33 A key problem, according to one SDS organizer, was that the project was associated with "Berkeley types" who were self-focussed ideological purists.34 Yet, it would seem just as likely that SDS was responsible for the failure of the Oakland Project. In a sense, it was guilty in its East Bay manoeuvres of the very things it accused Berkeley radicals of - hasty decision making, lack of a coherent strategy, a multiplicity of ideas without a concrete programme. While SDS abounded with romantic

31 "The West Oakland Project of Students for a Democratic Society", pamphlet (SDS papers, series 2B: 30).
32 Mike Davis, letter to Helen, op. cit.; on the Oakland Project also see James Miller, Democracy is in the Streets, p. 243.
34 Ken McEldowney, interview with author, August 1979.
energy, it simply was unable to read the political scenes in the Berkeley-Oakland region.

SDS people were, in general, appalled by what they saw as the underdeveloped sense of community organizing in the East Bay. This was one of the main complaints they levelled at the most prominent radical organization in Berkeley in 1965 and 1966, the Vietnam Day Committee:

an unpolitical approach among the VDC leadership has contributed to a relatively smaller emphasis on community organizing. The brainpower and energy have gone into big demonstrations which are fine for building a peace movement among the most sympathetic sections of society, but either frighten or leave cold the majority of the populace.35

Given the VDC's own view of itself as a community group, the SDS accusations might seem curious. But their real function was ideological - to exclude strategies which departed significantly from SDS's conception of what community organizing involved, what was really meant by "community" and how politics was to be introduced to the community. In contrast, the early contacts between SDS and Freedom House indicate a common meeting ground:

an SDSer coming in touch with Freedom House is immediately struck by its similarity with one of our ERAP summer projects ... I was struck immediately and continually during his [Mike Miller's] course on Community Organizing by how similar his terms, viewpoint and ideology were to that of ours in ERAP and SDS.36

So, here was a thing to approve of, indeed applaud, partly because it was ideologically congruent with SDS programmes. It could, in that way, be easily fitted into the nationwide apparatus SDS was


36 John Bancroft, "San Francisco ...".
attempting to establish. In all their dealings, SDS people stressed the need to build and sustain communities. Thus a letter from an SDS officer to the National Farm Workers' Alliance (NFWA) cogently expressed the necessary dialectic between single issues and community building:

... it seems to me that one possibility for attracting SDS people would be a proposal that those working on the boycott committees see themselves as having a dual role: primarily as boycott organizers who would leave their cities at the end of the summer with well-established boycott committees; but also as people who would try to hold ... a community of radical activists which would endure after boycott activity is called off.37

SDS could never get this dialectic in proper perspective with regard to Berkeley. The left there appeared to arise around single issues and to lack comprehensive policies and programmes. Nevertheless, it did constitute a movement and, more importantly, a community. SDS could not impose its ideas about community on the Berkeley New Left, precisely because a process of community-building (however unprogrammatic) had been going on in Berkeley since 1960. By the time SDS organizers arrived in 1965, this process had been revitalized by FSM. Berkeley radicals, in short, had developed a sense of community which remained essentially impervious to the seductive call of SDS's philosophy of community. And SDSers seemed almost unable to accept that a radical community could exist if it had not been organized by SDS.

37 Norm Potter (SDS Regional Office, San Francisco), letter to Phil Farnham, February 28, 1966 (SDS papers, series 3: 19).
The SDS Regional Office

The western regional office of SDS was established midway through 1965. Mike Davis had suggested that Berkeley be the venue for the office but Paul Booth favoured Oakland because of its potential to be activated by Berkeley radicals who supposedly displayed "undisciplined enthusiasm ... for serious community organizing". The most fruitful contacts, however, had been established in San Francisco - with Freedom House, the New School and the radical theatre group The San Francisco Mime Troupe, whose leading light, R.G. Davis, was part of the San Francisco Opposition. So SDS started business in San Francisco, sharing an office with the Mime Troupe. The two organizers appointed to the office, Ken McEldowney and Carolyn Craven, were immediately struck by the isolation of the west coast. Indeed, McEldowney communicated a strange sense of despair: "It's really amazing", he wrote, "how far behind people's thinking is on the west coast". Given the pivotal role of the Bay Area in the formation and development of the New Left, such an observation is somewhat astounding. Like other SDSers, McEldowney had developed an image of the Berkeley radicals as "single issue types" who could stage huge mass events but possessed no ability to develop multi-issue organizations. While Craven saw San Francisco as, in general, fertile ground, she also commented on the isolation and was critical of another aspect of Bay Area radicalism:

Most of the political groups out here, from da boys [Du Bols] to Vietnam Day Committee are top down

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38 While based in the Bay Area, the office was supposed to serve northern California, Oregon and Washington.

39 Mike Davis, letter to Helen, op. cit.; Paul Booth to Potter and Kissinger, op. cit.


41 Ken McEldowney, interview with author.
organizations run by people who are thrilled with their own power.  

Those reared in the climate of SDS participatory democracy were naturally wary of what could be seen as an arrogant political hierarchy imbued with localism. The image which Todd Gitlin (SDS President 1963-4) can remember having of the left leadership in Berkeley during the early Sixties was of them being "very talented, sometimes undisciplined, arrogant, provincial, smug in their provincialism". SDS, in 1965, hoped that it could change this political character and, in the process, became the chief coordinating agency for the broad Bay Area left.

After SDS established its office, it set up a store-front in the Haight-Ashbury (designed as a community service centre with an educational focus), started an adult group (Citizens for a Democratic Society), worked with farm workers during the grape strike and even did some organizing work amongst hippies and gays. The most prominent project, however, involved an attempt to revitalize the San Francisco New School. The School had stopped running classes in early 1965 and, according to correspondence from an SDS member, this was partly because the organizers were not part of a vibrant social movement:

He [Saul Landau] and his friends were in the business essentially for fun, and none of them was willing to administer the thing when it threatened to get too big. The people who attended class were also in it for fun, and for lack of anything to do on Wednesday night. The

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45 Ken McEldowney, interview with author. On gay politics and SDS in San Francisco, see Joel Roberts, "Street Youths Organize", SDS Regional Newsletter Vol. 1, No. 11 June 1966 (SDS file, Bancroft SPP). In June 1966, a grass-roots organization called Vanguard was formed to "promote self-help and protection among the hair-fairies, hustlers, lost kids ...".
moral he drew was that if the school had been run by people in a social movement like ours, it could turn into a fantastic school for middle class organizing.46

An earlier report from Paul Booth had suggested that while the educational work of the New School was important, its participants had "to be confronted with the need to become responsible and responsive to the growing student movement", which might even entail an organizational upheaval.47 And the School was soon handed over to SDS, with Carolyn Craven being appointed its administrator. She saw it as involving the creation of an essentially new New School, stimulating dialogue between student activists and radical young intellectuals and professionals, and initiating "a research and publication program to link Bay Area intellectuals and organizers with national thought and activity".48 Here again was the concern with regionalism, the feeling that the Bay Area had to be tied into a larger entity.

SDS acknowledged that "the Bay Area is one of the most exciting areas of the country" and that "in many ways it is a microcosm of the activity in the north"49 but there was still a missing ingredient which it hoped to supply through ventures like the New School. That ingredient was national consciousness and identity coupled with a national programme and strategy. Paradoxically, however, SDS became entangled with regional sensibilities towards the end of 1965. At that time, the National Office was under severe attack from the Federal Government, a situation exacerbated by media sensationalism.50 The issue which sparked the government and media attention was the developing militance of the anti-war and draft movements, which SDS supposedly encouraged or even orchestrated. While Attorney General

46 Walt Popper, letter to Dave Garson, June 21, 1965 (SDS papers, series 2A: 69).
47 Booth, letter en route, op. cit.
48 Carolyn Craven, letter to Robb, op. cit. and SDS New School pamphlet (SDS papers, series 2A: 69).
49 Ibid. (Pamphlet)
50 see Todd Gitlin, The Whole World is Watching, p. 85-123; Kirkpatrick Sale, SDS, p. 230-5; James Miller, Democracy is in the Streets, p. 248 ff.
Katzenbach and President Johnson were calling for investigations into SDS and charges of treason and conspiracy floated around freely. SDS began to close up, at least ideologically. For a brief time, however, Ken McEldowney was hopeful about the Bay Area's response to the crisis. He reported that a great deal of support and solidarity was being displayed and further suggested that SDS should not be deflected from the real task of fighting the war in Vietnam. He even referred to "the possibility that we be able to use this crisis to strengthen the peace movement and other movements for change". And chapter growth around that time was reported as being "really good". But the National Office and, in particular, Paul Booth (now National Secretary) felt beleaguered. Booth, with the assistance of only a few fellow members or associates, eventually issued a statement for the press. He articulated a "Build, Not Burn" strategy, which essentially involved a subtle dissociation of SDS from militant anti-draft strategies and stressed the moral energy which governed the organization's programmes. Despite its eloquence and sincerity, the statement spoke to a time in the movement which was being superseded. Strategy was moving from protest to resistance, membership of those influenced by youth culture was beginning to grow, and ERAP was floundering in part because the reality of community life failed to measure up to visions of community. The "Old Guard" leadership of SDS was being displaced. In short, a "new spirit" was seizing the organization, a spirit reflecting a greater sense of political and cultural rebelliousness. To add some regional spice, many of those drawn to SDS in the mid-Sixties came "from the South and the Great Plains", whereas the organization's "center of gravity" had been the East coast and the Mid-West. They became known as


54 Both James Kirkpatrick Sale and James Miller use the phrase "new spirit" to characterize the changes in SDS. See Sale, SDS, p. 198 and Miller, Democracy is in the Streets, p. 254. Also see Todd Gitlin, The Whole World is Watching, p. 129-133.

55 Todd Gitlin, The Whole World is Watching, p. 130.
the Prairie Power group: "Whether or not they came from an actual prairie, these Prairie Power people wore their hair longer and seemed looser in style, less formal and mannerly than the Old Guard generation". In this sense, they shared much with Bay Area (particularly Berkeley) radicals.

Booth's "Build, not Burn" statement highlighted the fragile nature of participatory democracy and exacerbated the tension between the national and regional bodies of SDS. Ken McEldowney, on behalf of Western Region SDS, sent a telegram to Booth, chastising him for implying that local autonomy did not exist and, in general, bypassing the SDS membership and thereby raising serious questions about the role of the national apparatus. One disgruntled SDS member was even reported to have said: "It's gotten to the point that I get up in the morning to read the New York Times to find out what policy I have to defend today".

The very isolation of the west coast from the Chicago (until May 1965 it had been New York) headquarters of SDS intensified feelings of abandonment. Booth's statement gave further fuel to a critique of the National Office which McEldowney was beginning to develop. Just before the furore over this affair erupted, McEldowney had complained vigorously about the insularity of the National Office. He noted that the regional office in San Francisco only heard of the split between SDS and its parent organization, the League for Industrial Democracy, from a press release that the office of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) had received. He concluded that "people who are representing SDS out of regional offices or large city projects are completely out of touch with what is happening nationally". Similarly, Carolyn Craven sent a letter to the National Office lamenting the fact that SDS was not sending enough material to the regional office and, in general, ignored its special

56 Ibid., p. 131.
57 SDS Regional Newsletter no. 3, December 1965 and SDS Worklist Mailing, no. 28, November 30, 1965 (SDS file, Bancroft SPP).
58 Ibid. (Newsletter)
needs. Craven's letter began: "I wish there were some way I could be convinced that I can get my point across, but as Ken and I have tried to in the past, we will try to again and again until we seem to get the message across". \(^{60}\) Obviously they did not get the message across because for a long time the regional office did not even send membership dues to Chicago due to the apparent aloofness of the National Office. \(^{61}\) A profound change of direction had thus occurred during the first months of SDS's western regional office. McEldowney and Craven had become, to some extent, Bay Area radicals sensitive to both regional peculiarities and national arrogance. They had started off determined to bring the Bay Area into the national organization and were appalled by the insularity and haphazardness of radicalism there. But by the end of 1965 they did not seem so sure that SDS was a truly national organization and were expressing severe displeasure at the lack of serious support for the regional office. According to McEldowney, it was not really possible to make SDS members in the Bay Area, or on the west coast generally, feel part of a national identity, precisely because of what was happening in the Chicago headquarters. \(^{62}\) This further suggests the degree to which SDS itself was variegated regionally. Hence, in retrospect, McEldowney can see that the establishment of an SDS office in San Francisco partly involved "outsiders coming in and imposing east coast stuff". \(^{63}\)

The Mecca of the Movement

Aspiring to national leadership, SDS ran into many problems along the way. For instance, having organized the first large national

\(^{60}\) Carolyn Craven, letter to National Office, no date - late 1965 (SDS papers, series 3: 19).

\(^{61}\) Ken McEldowney, interview with author.

\(^{62}\) Ibid.

\(^{63}\) Ibid.
demonstration against the war in Vietnam (the march on Washington in April 1965), SDS failed to grasp the initiative and develop a sustained anti-war co-ordinating role. That, at least, is the current view of Paul Booth. He really believes that SDS forsook a golden opportunity to turn itself into "the organizational vehicle of the anti-war movement".64 Perhaps, however, such regrets are misplaced. An SDS which could not even begin exercising control over radicalism in the Bay Area was hardly prepared to direct national anti-war strategy on a permanent basis. An insensitivity to regional peculiarities prevailed. There is no question that many of the criticisms which SDS levelled at Bay Area radicalism in the mid-Sixties were accurate. A certain provincialism governed the character of radical movements there. But so, too, SDS's insularity prevented it from developing an adequate approach to the regional question. Despite growth in chapter membership in early 1966, an expansion of office staff and a well-publicized project in the summer of 1966 involving research and action around various issues, by the end of that year the New School had faded away and SDS had, in general, failed to sustain the attempt to take Bay Area radicalism under its wing.65 The New Left there retained a strong regional character, its frontier status being a cause of celebration rather than despair.

Indeed, the Bay Area was the mecca of the Movement and many (perhaps most) leading radicals made pilgrimage there, some never returning to their city of origin. By the late Sixties, for instance, four of SDS's onetime leaders had gone west to San Francisco and Berkeley: Al Haber, Tom Hayden, Todd Gitlin and Carl Oglesby.66 While Oglesby had presided over the organization's transitional stage, ushering in the era of resistance, the others were part of SDS's "Old

64 Paul Booth, quoted in James Miller, Democracy Is in the Streets, p. 235.
65 Roy Dahlberg, letter to Dick Woodworth, February 1, 1966 (SDS papers, Series 3: 19); Roy Dahlberg, letter to Mrs. Pauline Scott, March 14, 1966 (SDS papers, Series 3: 19); SDS Regional Newsletter Vol. 1, no. 10, 1965 (SDS file, Bancroft SPP). An SDS newspaper announced the death of the old regional office and the birth of a new one in 1967: The Liberated Zone Vol. 1 no. 1, October 1967 (SDS papers, series 3: 18). No records of the new office are with the SDS papers and it seems to have played a marginal and ephemeral role in Bay Area politics, even though one local activist remembers it having six full-time workers for a brief period (Jim Hawley, interview with author, September 18, 1979).
66 Todd Gitlin, interview with author.
Guard" and thus, it might have been thought, less open to the temptations of frontier politics. But personal reasons for such moves intervened in wider social and political developments. Todd Gitlin recalls it this way:

New Left identities, roles, patterns of work, were exploding and drying up in the rest of the country and that freed a number of us to come out here... Everything seemed to point here.67

Things, however, had been pointing towards the Bay Area for a long time. The "old Guard" SDS leaders were partially repelled, in the first instance, by the strong cultural dimension of political radicalism in the region: "We were rather sobersided easterners and midwesterners, nothing hippie-dippie about us".68 When the cultural dimension exerted an influence upon politics in the New Left as a whole, even in SDS itself, they possibly could not resist the signals coming from the Bay Area. There was always a cultural side to New Left politics but cultural radicalism played an increasingly important role from 1965 on, particularly in San Francisco and Berkeley. Gitlin has recounted the story of an SDS meeting in 1967 which was disrupted by a group of cultural radicals from San Francisco. He sees the fact that SDS people failed to deal with the disruption effectively as indicative of "a larger chasm between political and cultural radicals".69 That chasm certainly existed but it was being bridged steadily in the late Sixties by many, like Gitlin and Hayden, who had earlier distanced themselves from cultural radicalism. This not only suggests the increasing potency of a politics fuelled by cultural rebellion but also reflects the impact of regionalism. Just as Hayden had been radicalized by his Berkeley experience in 1960, so too he and others shifted direction (physically and politically) because of

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67 Ibid.

68 Todd Gitlin, The Sixties, p. 225; similar opinions were expressed by Gitlin in my interview with him.

69 Ibid., p. 229; also see Emmet Grogan's account of the confrontation in his Ringolevio (New York: Avon 1972) p. 454 ff. The cultural radicals in question were, of course, from the Diggers (see Chapter Six for a discussion of the Diggers' style and philosophy).
what was happening in the Bay Area later in the decade. Once again, the frontier was beckoning.
CHAPTER 5

GENESIS OF A COUNTER-CULTURE

The politics of space is mediated by cultural perspectives, by ideas about the form, function and style of everyday life. Cultural radicalism in the 1960s contributed much to a developing critique of urban lifestyle and the priorities of industrial civilization. The critique would have had less force without the Haight-Ashbury experience. For it was in the Haight that a hippie community was formed, a community which tried, however incoherently, to project an alternative way of life. The community revolved around cultural commodities but also expressed its philosophical tendencies through the use of public spaces, particularly streets and parks, as important social venues. Moreover, in Berkeley spatial politics was highlighted by the hip "nonstudent" population which was taking an increasingly active role in the life of town and campus. University and state authorities, worried by these "nonstudents", tried to draw neat dividing lines between the campus and the town, the student and the nonstudent. Such divisions were meaningless to Berkeley's radical community, a community which was given strength by the direct relationship between Sproul Plaza and Telegraph Avenue.

Culture, Youth and the Berkeley Underground

The increasing importance of consumerism in the western world following the Second World War produced dramatic changes in everyday life and in perceptions which helped shape that life. The cultural values of neo-capitalism tended to evolve around consumption, pleasure and leisure, rather than work, restraint and
This transformation was particularly pronounced in America. Advertising and television programmes there sustained dreams of abundance and gratification which could only be satisfied partially by the system of production. Young people, in particular, were being teased as actual and potential consumers, being drawn into a web of dominant cultural relations. The world of *Leave it Bearer, My Three Sons, Gidget*, the Nelson family, was a world in which youth had come to occupy centre stage. Yet emergent cultural forms, also revolving around youth, began to disrupt the homely images of affluent contentment. Rebels with and without cause were being nurtured by the dominant culture itself. Unable to reflect critically upon its own premises and presumptions, that culture tended to idealize youth even as it often refused to take manifestations of youthful cultural dissent seriously. Maynard G. Krebbs, from the *Dobie Gillis* show, was mass culture’s contribution to an understanding of Beat culture and Ricky Nelson, from *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, typified the manageable pop idol who remained a dutiful son. Something, of course, was missing. The guts and energy, the raw drive of much youthful experimentation was glided over or blotted out by the dominant culture. Exceptions like *The Blackboard Jungle* or *Rebel Without a Cause* dealt, conveniently, with delinquent youth. Their threat to the system was marginal and marginalized. Yet, paradoxically, the “rebels” portrayed in such films became, to some extent, hero figures who embraced new cultural forms like rock music. Even as it propagated an ideal image of youth, mass culture was helping create a category of youth which would not fit in or adjust neatly to the given order of things. Beginning in the 1950s, a youth culture which challenged accepted conventions, and yet obtained certain concessions from the dominant culture, began to take root. Young people increasingly came to define themselves in terms of this culture, particularly its musical forms (mostly rock but also jazz and folk). Identification with youth culture was one way

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(albeit a frequently faulty way) to distinguish between "us" and "them", to signal an inchoate protest against the parent culture.

The slogan "Don't Trust Anyone Over Thirty" resonates with the self-confidence of Sixties youth culture. It was a sentiment first articulated by Jack Weinberg. The advice seems strangely unsuited to young radicals active in a region where the parent culture possessed a strong strain of radical or liberal-left ideology. But the slogan was mainly symbolic, suggesting a cultural distance more than a generational divide. Indeed, the generational aspects of Sixties radicalism are easy to overstate. "Youth culture" as a term denotes those cultural forms which appealed chiefly to young people. They may have been and not infrequently were performed or produced or appreciated by those who could no longer be classified as young. Cultural style, rather than age, was the ultimate determinant, even though this style carried strong generational connotations. Moreover, youth culture should not be seen as synonymous with cultural radicalism. Youth culture was frequently mediated by radical sensibilities (or at least what appeared to be radical sensibilities) but these did not give it form and direction. Youth culture played around at the edges of radical criticism. It was, however, suitably domesticated once the assault on mainstream mass culture had itself become a part of mainstream mass culture. The rock magazine *Rolling Stone*, which started in San Francisco in 1967, provides ample testimony to this process of domestication and absorption.

Youth culture is an over-arching term embracing all sorts of behavioural styles, while terms like cultural radicalism or counter-culture are more specific. The former suggests a larger Mannheimian "generation unit" than the latter. Those who

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3 Jerry Rubin in *Do It!* (p.89) suggested that Weinberg said this at an FSM rally but Weinberg recalls mouthing the slogan, at least in the first instance, to a reporter from the *San Francisco Chronicle*: "This reporter was getting under my skin with the suggestion that we were being manipulated, and finally I said in real exasperation, 'You know, we have a saying in the movement: Don't trust anyone over thirty'. I'd never heard it before. I think I made it up right then ...". (Jack Weinberg, interview, in Joan Morrison and Robert K. Morrison (eds), *From Camelot to Kent State*, p. 230-1.)


identified with Sixties youth culture (in terms of fashion, hair styles, sexual behaviour or, most importantly, music) constituted a sizeable generation unit. Theirs was a generalized youth culture which at some points transcended class divisions. This youth culture possessed no overall project against or even critique of the dominant culture, no coherent plan to construct an alternate way of life. Terms like counter-culture, cultural radicalism or alternative culture suggest a more intense opposition to the dominant culture, a more clearly mapped out set of values and a smaller, frequently subcultural, generation unit. Cultural radicals may and do employ the forms of youth culture but they do so in ways which announce (or at least try to project) a whole way of life different from that offered by the parent culture. Nevertheless, neat terminological barriers are often difficult to erect. One author has even used the terms 'hip culture', 'youth culture', 'cultural revolution' and 'Woodstock Nation' synonymously. But if labels like counter-culture or even hip culture are to have any real meaning at all, they must be differentiated from (or perhaps seen as a sub-category of) the general youth culture. Murray Bookchin once suggested that the real term for "hip culture" was "youth culture". The problem with this view, however, is that it places too much stress on the generational moment rather than the cultural dimension. To be hip was never simply to be young. It inferred a stylistic disposition, an orientation towards certain cultural

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7 For discussion and analysis of contemporary youth subcultures, see Dick Hebdige, Subculture: the meaning of style (London: Methuen, 1979) and Mike Brake, The Sociology of Youth Culture and Youth Subcultures (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980).

8 Richard Flacks, Youth and Social Change (Chicago: Markham, 1971), p. 17. Flacks does tend, however, to conflate youth culture and counter-culture.


forms and practices. A conflation of youth culture and hip culture obscures a certain way of being and knowing which the word "hip" was always meant to connote. Similarly, to equate Sixties youth culture with a counter-culture is to confuse distinct categories. Counter-cultural or "alternative" ideas and social practices pushed beyond the boundaries of youth culture. Or at the very least they extended those boundaries. If that is so, then the counter-culture could possibly be seen as the avant garde of a general youth culture.

The cultural side of dissent was highlighted in the Bay Area more than other regions. There was, in particular, a strong "nonstudent" tradition at Berkeley which encouraged the flowering of culturally dissident modes of behaviour. While most major American universities had nonstudent populations, in Berkeley the nonstudents became a spotlight component of the local culture especially following FSM. Publicity about FSM attracted growing numbers of nonstudents and, in the words of Jerry Rubin, "A whole new culture burst forth just outside the biggest university in the history of the world". The culture revolved around Telegraph Ave and its cafes, record and book shops and specialist movie houses. Clark Kerr once observed that "If anything in the United States could be said to resemble the Paris Left

11 Coming from black Argot, "hip" meant awareness of something, connectedness to it, as well as an ability to see through surface appearances. But the term also applied to a distinctive (rather than general) cultural grouping, defined in terms of style. See 'George Metefsky' (alias Abbie Hoffman), "Right On, Culture Freaks", in Hip Culture ... , p. 9.


13 Irwin Unger, The Movement ...., p. 77. This point is developed in Chapter 9.

Bank, it is the area around Telegraph Ave just off campus ... This disorganized anarchist 'Left Bank' crowd was able to strike a responsive chord among so many students this fall because ... a new student generation is now with us."\textsuperscript{15} And, he might have added, a new nonstudent generation.

There were a number of radicals who, either having completed courses at the University or dropped out, stayed in the town and participated in the politics of the campus and the community. There were others who occasionally sat in on courses and hung around the campus and Telegraph Ave. By 1965 these two sets of "nonstudents" had become known in some circles as the "Berkeley Underground" or "Hidden Community". Hunter S. Thompson noted that members of this Underground were, in appearance, "indistinguishable from students".\textsuperscript{16} This seems to differentiate them from the soon-to-be hippies but they were, in a very real sense, precursors of the hip influx. They smoked marijuana, indulged in casual sex and generally rambled around in the interstices of bohemianism and radical politics.\textsuperscript{17} Moreover, the observation of a Professor of History, Henry May, would tend to indicate that the nonstudents were hardly as invisible as Thompson claimed: "Tourist buses stop near Telegraph Avenue, so that sightseers can goggle at the 'beatniks', with their bare feet, beards, and long, dirty hair".\textsuperscript{18} This is supported by data which sociologists gathered around the same time Thompson was writing (August and September 1965). They suggested that "the most obvious characteristic which differentiated the non-students from members of the student body or conventional working youth is their general appearance", with more nonstudent males having long hair,

\textsuperscript{15} Clark Kerr, quoted in H. Draper, \textit{Berkeley ...}, p. 167; also see Henry May, "The Student Movement at Berkeley: Some Impressions" in S.M. Lipset and S.S. Wolin (eds), \textit{The Berkeley Student Revolt}, p. 454, where he suggests that "Telegraph Avenue, the 'Left Bank' area near the campus, now offers an intellectual bill of fare of almost indigestible richness".


\textsuperscript{17} Michael Miller, "Letter from the Berkeley Underground", \textit{Esquire} (September 1965), p. 85. Indeed, Lewis Feuer has even claimed that Telegraph Ave "was the birthplace of the 'hippie sub-culture'" (\textit{The Conflict of Generations}, p. 499).

\textsuperscript{18} Henry May, "The Student Movement ...", in S.M. Lipset and S.S. Wolin (eds), \textit{The Berkeley Student Revolt}, p. 457-8.
beards, extravagant dress and jewellery, and females having little or no makeup and straight hair over the shoulders. It seems extraordinary that a perceptive journalist like Thompson could fail to notice a distinctive nonstudent subcultural appearance. It may, however, indicate the extent to which the differences between students and nonstudents were becoming increasingly artificial except, of course, to academic sociologists and concerned administrators. Divisions were breaking down, territories were changing, the distance between student and nonstudent was diminishing. In short, the spatial separation of campus and community, street and lecture theatre, was becoming less defined. This was highlighted by the direct relationship between Telegraph Ave and Sproul Plaza. The constant flow of traffic from the Avenue to the Plaza and back again, made a neat dividing line (a wall) between town and campus virtually impossible. Indeed, Berkeley's radical community was partly formed around, and dependent upon, the dynamic association of the Plaza and the Avenue.

In his 1964 "Letter to Undergraduates", which was a prescient call to rebellion on the Berkeley campus, student Brad Cleveland had stated that

> the only large group of students I personally respect, other than the Freedom Fighters, are the dropouts ... This 'Hidden Community' of unseemly hangers-on in Berkeley now numbers in the thousands ... The fact is that these students are the real ones. Many have had the guts to cut their social umbilical chords, become genuinely free, and to begin coughing up with their own mistakes.

By late 1965, many of the "Hidden Community" had no formal connection (and never had one) with the campus. At that time, 46 per cent of male and 26 per cent of female nonstudents had been in

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20 Brad Cleveland, "Letter to Undergraduates", in S.M. Lipset and S.S. Wolin (eds), *The Berkeley Student Revolt*, p. 75 (his emphasis).
Berkeley less than six months. But these statistics do not necessarily undermine Cleveland's rhetoric. He was, it could be argued, referring to those who refused or could not be bothered to take part in the machine, dropouts in a more general sense. The labels students, semi-students, ex-students and nonstudents were being used often in an ideological way by authorities attempting to segment potential communities and thus establish clearer channels of power. As feminists from de Beauvoir on have recognized, defining woman as the Other cements male power and prestige. So, too, defining groups as the Other, interfering outsiders, strips them of legitimacy, and reinforces established mechanisms of social control or engenders new ones.

The existence of a large group of non-students in Berkeley moved Californian Assemblyman Don Mulford to sponsor a bill designed to keep nonstudents off the campus at times of dispute and confrontation. The Mulford Bill passed the Assembly and Senate easily and was signed by Governor Brown on June 2, 1965. This was but one of many attempts by fearful legislators, administrators or politicians to construct, ideologically, a world of outsiders who controlled the flow of events. Authority in the campus, community, state or nation could be tenuous if radical disturbance was not found to emanate in some strange way from down the street, across the Bay, over in New York or even, of course, Moscow, Peking or Havana. Berkeley's swelling non-student population posed a threat, so it was thought, to campus order and stability. Spatial barriers of one sort or another needed to be maintained. The trouble was that even as walls were being erected, radicals were tearing them down. New communities were being forged and they cut across neat divisions between campus and off-campus, student and non-student. They would also, eventually, help blur the distinctions between cultural and political radicalism.

Shortly after 1965, the Telegraph Ave nonstudent subculture became known increasingly as "hippies" or, more often, "street people". Indeed, by 1967 the Berkeley campus and community was

permeated by hip style and image. This was the time when Charles Reich, who later wrote *The Greening of America*, came to Berkeley as a visiting Professor of Law. He quickly immersed himself in the spectacles and sensations of the radical community:

If I stood quietly, I could see a lot of things happening on my street. Motorcycles and brightly painted cars and trucks would drive by. Long-haired girls and country-looking girls came and went. Each frame house possessed a unique appearance and personality. Some windows had signs or posters, some hinted at exotic decorations or living arrangements within...

When I started a walk by going down Derby toward Benvenue, music always seemed to come bursting out of the windows. The music was 1967 rock: the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, the *Doors*, and *Surrealistic Pillow* by the Jefferson Airplane. I listened to high guitar notes, soaring, visionary, making me shiver inside...

Noon in Sproul Plaza has become the most exciting and colourful part of my day ... this place was center of the hippie-love revolution, the revolution of politics, music, clothes and attitudes...

The revolution that was happening in Berkeley was this: the kids, those beautiful kids, had discovered they could free their minds. They had not solved many problems yet, their own or anybody else's. The particular choices would have to come later. From here on in it would be an inward adventure to find one's self and one's work.

Reich, albeit rather naively, succeeds in evoking the power of Berkeley's hip life, a power grounded in place - the streets, the houses, the Plaza. Berkeley radicals were simultaneously building

23 Charles Reich, *The Greening of America* (London: Allen Lane, 1971). This was a popular but simplistic hip manifesto.

upon, and changing the style of, their community and exploring their "inner selves". Unlike the Seventies when solipsistic Disneyland's of the soul became increasingly prominent, community and self in the Berkeley of the 1960s depended upon and fed into each other. The self, in other words, was firmly grounded in the culture and politics of community. It was only when the spirit of community had begun to collapse that the merchants of consciousness were able to move in and offer guarantees of salvation. The "inward adventure" of Sixties radicals in Berkeley was, for the most part, closely connected to the politics of dissent. Across the Bay, however, self-exploration and self-discovery framed the counter-cultural communal experience.

The Moment of Haight-Ashbury

The British social theorist Stuart Hall once referred to the hippies as "an American moment". And hippies were, in the first instance, a distinctive subcultural product of American society, a "moment" sustained by boom-time economic conditions, expanded leisure and explosive political conflict at home and abroad. It is possibly more significant, however, that they constituted a San Franciscan event. The city had captured the media imagination by 1966. Hundreds and then thousands of "flower children" had flocked to San Francisco in search of love, peace, community and self. They sought refuge from an American dream that was quickly crumbling in suburban wastelands, urban hothouses and the jungles of Vietnam. The Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco was the focus. In 1966, Timothy Leary's colleague Richard Alpert observed that


The Haight Ashbury is, as far as I can see, the purest reflection of what is happening in consciousness, at the leading edge of the society. There is very little that I have seen in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, that is giving me the hit that this place is because it has a softness that is absolutely exquisite.27

Its superb location in the heights of San Francisco, its many attractive Victorian houses and its closeness to both San Francisco State College and Golden Gate Park, made the Haight an ideal nurturing ground for a bohemian subculture (see Appendix Three). The district has gone through a few distinct phases. Most recently, "gentrification" has partly rescued what had become, even by the late 1960s (when most of the original hippies left), a run-down area.28 Prior to the 1960s, the Haight had been an essentially mixed district with a solid middle class component. It had also gained a reputation for being progressive, as many residents were associated with the labour movement.29 By the early 1960s, however, much of the middle class or affluent working class base had withered away. This was partly caused by the general process of post-war suburbanization. But plans for the commercial rezoning of large residential areas and for the construction of a nearby freeway (successfully opposed, in the end, by local residents) also contributed to a flight from the district. Property values, consequently, were forced down and the rent on houses lowered. At the same time - around 1962 and 1963 - rents in the North Beach area were rising steadily, forcing some remaining disciples of the Beat Generation to look elsewhere for the solace of Bohemian communalism. They chose Haight-Ashbury. Without this particular set of circumstances, cultivated in the soil of San Francisco's market forces, the trajectory of the Sixties counter-culture may have been entirely different. Just as the student

27 Richard Alpert, interview, San Francisco Oracle, Vol. 1, no. 5, 1966. In many ways this interview reflects the worst side of hippie philosophy. It reads these days like a parody of hip language ("See the one thing the system falls apart on is if everybody doesn't fill their consciousness with external games").


29 Sherri Cavan, Hippies of the Haight (St. Louis: New Critics Press, 1972), p. 44.
movement nationally and internationally owed much to the Berkeley experience, Haight-Ashbury was the concrete matrix for a hippie style and philosophy which spread throughout the western world.

Hippie connections to Beat culture were probably displayed more clearly in San Francisco than elsewhere. As a local hippie once explained, "the people who have been big forces in this movement are people who have been around, who are older".30 One of these "forces" or leaders, Peter Berg, has remarked upon the hippie lineage in Haight-Ashbury:

I don't think it happened in '65. Notice most of the people involved are from before '65 ... When I read Howl, I knew I didn't have anything to lose. That's what did it. That's what sent people out in search of experience.31

There are clear differences between the Beats and the hippies, differences of style, temperament, philosophy, appearance. But the links between the subcultures, a crucial one being spatial, should not be underestimated. Shortly after the subcultural territory had shifted from North Beach to Berkeley, a number of other factors came into play, underpinning a transition from Beat to hippie.

While it is tricky to use date stamps in hippie history, the San Francisco hippie scene really began, in a public sense, in the latter months of 1965. The Haight-Ashbury community came to prominence shortly afterwards. On Saturday night, October 11, 1965, a dance was held at the Longshoremen's Hall. It was organized by a group of hip entrepreneurs called the Family Dog Collective and featured rock bands The Jefferson Airplane, the Great Society and the Charlatans. San Francisco Chronicle jazz writer, Ralph Gleason, referred to it as "a hippy happening ... which was delightful and signified the linkage of the political and social hip movements. SNCC buttons and peace buttons abounded, stuck onto costumes straight


out of the Museum of National History". The next significant hippie spectacles were two dances (Appeal 1 and Appeal 2) staged as benefits for the radical theatre group, the San Francisco Mime Troupe, to cover its legal costs resulting from a battle over the right to stage plays in the parks of San Francisco. SDS was holding a regional conference in the same building as Appeal 1 and a conference report mentioned "the minor diversions caused first in the early afternoon by the rehearsals of the Fugs and the Jefferson Airplane and later by the SF Mime Troupe party, a small gathering of slightly 2,000 people and [the] wildest music the south of Market has heard since, perhaps the '90's ...". And on December, 10, 1965, Appeal 2 - a rock dance accompanied by light show - was staged at the Fillmore auditorium (in the Fillmore district, adjacent to Haight-Ashbury). It was a landmark event in counter-cultural history which cemented the role of the rock dance spectacle in the burgeoning Haight-Ashbury phenomenon. R.G. Davis, the founder and leader of the Mime Troupe remembers the occasion as

unbelievable joyous not only because of the music but also because it was a meeting of people concerned with pushing the establishment off their backs. I saw painters, musicians, politicos, theatres people, old friends, unknown long-hairs, straights all mixing, having given two bucks for a good fight.

The conjunction of political and cultural dissidence at the Longshore dance and the Appeals was the harbinger of a future relationship between the New Left and the counter-culture which, although tense and sometimes distant, steered the course of radicalism in the last years of the decade. So it was fitting that the Appeals were staged for

32 Ralph J. Gleason, "Wild Weekend Around the Bay", San Francisco Chronicle, October 18, 1965. This was the weekend of the International Days of Protest against the war in Vietnam. Gleason was an important chronicler of the San Francisco rock music scene. An officianado of jazz, he responded favourably to new musical developments and, in particular, treated "the San Francisco Sound" with great respect.


the Mime Troupe. Perhaps more than any other group in the Bay area, it had sought to politicize the aesthetic realm and ensure the cultural vitality of protest.

Theatre, Music, Style

Formed in 1959, the Troupe combined commedia dell'arte techniques and Brechtian realism in their plays. As well as theatre performances, it offered outdoor events, the first of which occurred in May 1962 in Golden Gate Park. Through the open air shows, the Mime Troupe was endeavouring to resurrect the early days of commedia as a form of popular culture. Indeed, the Troupe helped establish some of the elements of a cultural style which was to begin flourishing in the mid-Sixties. It presaged, in particular, the theatrical component of hippie style. Some Troupe members became actively involved in the Haight-Ashbury community and all sorts of hippie spectacles, from mass Be-Ins to improvised street or park theatre, resonated with ideas about performance placed on the agenda by Davis and his players. The Troupe found it easier to break down barriers between performers and audience in a park than in a theatre. But even with "inside" productions, it sought to connect the audience more directly with the performance. In the words of Davis, there was "no open fourth wall; in fact there were no walls". At any time, a theatre is a site of spatial relationships, even of spatial politics. With the Mime Troupe, the culture and politics of space was a paramount concern, moulding its performances, shifting its arenas, and pointing it in the direction of counter-cultural tendencies.

Davis has located two chief influences upon the Mime Troupe up until the mid 1960s - the San Francisco New School and 'the

35 Ibid., p. 31.
36 Ibid., p. 32.
post-abstract expressionists, or avant garde, in the Bay Area".37 The latter were concerned to move outside the gallery and became involved in theatre, film or artistic happenings. At issue, again, was the tearing down of walls, the moving of art into new spaces or new performance dimensions. In a similar way, the New School had endeavoured (like the Free Universities elsewhere) to move out of traditional teaching environments or frameworks and to establish alternative courses. The School, however, was still bound by four walls, whereas cultural radicals sought different spaces. Davis suggests that while he sometimes got the artists and politicos to talk, usually he had to move from one group to another.38 A cultural-political symbiosis was, in the mid Sixties, difficult to achieve. Yet that is what Davis searched for. In a short paper published by SDS he scorned "the a-political artist" and "the political person who is not artistic".39 Despite this, there was a clear tension between the political and the aesthetic within Davis, a tension somewhat characteristic of the relationship between culture and politics in the Movement. At the time of the FSM strike, Davis reproached radical students who staged a production of Brecht's Baal. There were, he argued, "times when not to act" and these were times when the direct political protest or statement - whether it be joining the picket line or staying out on strike - was more necessary than the staging of the play.40 The problem, however, with this outlook is that it can lead to a separation of culture and politics which possibly, in the end, becomes artificial. In the late Sixties Davis was to argue:

In terms of political activity, demonstrations and protests, for me, are ended. I've always said to myself that if the protest is more important than what we do in the theater, then we should go the protest. That means we


38 Ibid.,

39 SDS Regional Newsletter, Vol. 1, no. 16, 1966, SDS file, Bancroft SPP.

40 R.G. Davis, transcript of theatre review for KPFA radio, December 17, 1964, R.G. Davis papers, WSHS.
must do something very significant. Conversely, if we are
going to rehearse while they've getting shot in the streets,
our show better be very, very significant and it better
establish an absolute alternative ...

I think at this point, the radical theaters are required to
do what they have to do in a magnificent and significant
way, creating that alternative and telling the politicos it's
not enough to protest and show the contradictions of
society.41

On the surface, there seems to be a shift between the earlier Davis
who called for the primacy of politics and the later Davis who pleaded
for the specific legitimacy of radical theatre. Yet this sort of change
was not unusual precisely because the demarcation lines between
culture and politics in Sixties radicalism were not particularly strong.
Cultural mediations in New Left politics caused severe problems for
the Movement late in the decade, so perhaps Davis was right to
approach culture and politics as separate, but interconnected,
domains. Politicizing culture and also injecting politics with a worthy
dose of aesthetics is a different task from that of making politics a
cultural event (something which the Yippies, for example, seemed to
be attempting).

When Davis was arrested, on August 7 1965, for staging an
open-air play in defiance of the San Francisco Parks Commissioner,
the politics of radical theatre became a very public issue. The Parks
Commission had not approved the play, so issues of censorship and
free speech became central concerns once again.42 The Appeals to
raise money for legal defence were duly organized by Bill Graham, the
Troupe's promoter/business manager. And here lies another
significant thread in the skein of cultural radicalism during the
Sixties. Davis notes that Appeal 2 (the Fillmore dance) "was a big one
that made rock promoters drool, music critics hop and Graham

41 from Radical Theater Festival (San Francisco State College, September 1968), a
booklet put together by the Mime Troupe, R.G. Davis papers, WSHS.

42 R.G. Davis, The San Francisco Mime Troupe, p. 66 ff. The play was Il Candelao
by Giordano Bruno.
Indeed, Graham did rise. He became the most important rock entrepreneur of the 1960s and thus personified the commercially successful side of the cultural explosion. It is undoubtedly no accident that Francis Ford Coppola used him to act as the master of ceremonies for the girlie extravaganza in *Apocalypse Now*. That film, despite its setting, dealt much more with America in the Sixties than it did with Vietnam. And Bill Graham was, in reality, the master of ceremonies for the Sixties rock dance spectacle. In that role, he made a substantial contribution to the choreography of hip style. Yet while the Mime Troupe continued to challenge the political and cultural malaise of contemporary society (and won its right to stage plays in parks), Graham's pursuit of financial gain distanced him from cultural radicalism even as it made him a "high priest" of youth culture. Graham was, indeed, later accused by rock bands like the Grateful Dead and the Jefferson Airplane of exploiting the hip community. His response was simple: "I'm not a freakout, I'm not a hippie, I don't sell love, I sell talent and the environment". It would be churlish, however, to suggest that Graham was only in it for the money. He did allow the Fillmore to be used for various radical causes and threw in lights, sound equipment and band, all without charge.

Free performances in Golden Gate Park by bands like the Airplane and the Grateful Dead (almost taking a leaf out of the Mime Troupe's strategic "manifesto"), could not, in the end, combat the market dominance of rock music. Nevertheless, there was a sense of common endeavour amongst bands in San Francisco which distinguished the scene there and, at least in the early period (around '65 to '67) kept them at some distance from the

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43 *Ibid.*, p. 69. A third Appeal was also staged but was not very successful.

44 This, as far as I know, is an unusual interpretation but there are many other factors which seem to support it (the way the film itself was filmed like a rock dance light show; the Sixties music; the surfing; the direct homages to *Catch 22*; even the use of Brando who was still a cult hero of sorts). Nevertheless, the film does operate on a number of different levels.


commercialist dynamic which permeated the rock industry in Los Angeles or New York. A regional sensibility contributed to the distinctive qualities of the rock music culture in San Francisco. What became known as "The San Francisco Sound" was present at the birth of hippie style and the bands associated with that sound were highly conscious of this historic role.\textsuperscript{47} The trouble was that Bill Graham also sold history.

Paradoxically, Graham was associated, briefly, with the Artists Liberation Front (ALF). The ALF was a San Francisco group consisting of the Mime Troupe as well as artists, writers, musicians and actors who sought to challenge Establishment culture.\textsuperscript{48} In particular, it encouraged self-reliance, spurned liberal financial support and actively opposed censorship. ALF also, in 1966, sponsored a series of Free Fairs, described by one journalist as "small, groovy, decentralized Be-ins in scattered minority districts of San Francisco".\textsuperscript{49} On the one hand, Graham was committed, at least early on, to some form of cultural radicalism. On the other hand, this commitment came to be underwritten by the search for profits (and was thus not much of a commitment at all).

The shaky foundations of cultural radicalism were also highlighted by bohemian novelist Ken Kesey and his Merry Pranksters, who were immortalized in Tom Wolfe's The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test.\textsuperscript{50} Kesey and the Pranksters embodied a


\textsuperscript{50} Tom Wolfe, The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test (New York: Bantam, 1969). Wolfe's book, despite its immense popularity, is actually rather dull. Indeed, Morris Dickstein has referred to it being "stupefyingly boring" (The Gates of Eden, p. 140).
travelling proto-hippie spectacle. Their means of transport was a multi-coloured bus, driven by Neal Cassady, the real-life hero of Kerouac's *On the Road*. Just as that novel revolved around an endless search for experience, so too Kesey and his followers sought to grab the excitement of the moment. Far from "realizing the potential of a subversive, magical, ecstatic community in the belly of fat America",51 they played with a subcultural style which lacked any visions of the good society. Indeed, the connections established between the pranksters and the Oakland motor cycle gang The Hells Angels are illuminating.52 Their association was based upon an outcast sensibility forged around machines, sounds, games and drugs. Prior to a Berkeley anti-war march which was attacked by the Angels, Kesey addressed a rally on the university campus. He condemned the whole concept of protests and marches against the war because that was capitulating, supposedly, to the logic of the system.53 This was not similar to R.G. Davis' critique of protest marches but was rather an affirmation of outcast anger, resentment and even stupidity. Kesey then played 'Home on the Range' on his harmonica, told the crowd that the previous speaker, Paul Jacobs, reminded him of Mussolini ("you're playing their game"), returned to his harmonica and suggested the demonstrators were screaming for personal attention ("Me! Me! Me! Me! ... Yep, you're playing their game"). Here was the quintessential narcissist accusing anti-war protestors of being narcissistic, the merry Prankster making mock of serious political work, the cultural dissident who preferred to play games of his own making (as if they somehow were not borne of the American frontier dream). Kesey marked out the distance between certain forms of cultural radicalism and political radicalism. While the later Longshore and Appeal dances brought together, momentarily, the hip and the political wings of dissent, there was and could be no effective bridge between political radicals, on the one hand, and the Pranksters (let alone the Angels) on the other. There was a gulf which Allen Ginsberg occasionally tried to fly over, as with his poem

51 Sol Stern, "Altamont ...", in Ramparts (ed.), *Conversations with the New Reality*, p. 66. Stern is, however, a mostly harsh critic of the counter-culture.


addressed to the Angels just prior to another anti-war march. He pleaded with the Angels to recognize the legitimacy of anti-war marchers and to acknowledge a common enemy. Even so, he stripped such protest of political significance:

The mass of marchers are not POLITICAL, they're PSYCHOLOGICAL HEADS who don't want the country to drift into the habit of blind violence & unconscious cruelty & egoism NOT COMMUNICATION - with outside world or lonely minorities in America such as yourselves and ourselves AND the negroes AND the teadehads AND the Communists AND the Beatniks AND the Bircher AND even the so called Squares.54

Hunter S. Thompson thought that the key difference between student radicals and the Hell's Angels was that the former were "rebelling against the past", while the latter were "fighting the future".55 Their common ground, according to him, was antagonism to the present, the status quo. Yet Thompson's formulation is too neat and Ginsberg's plea, although clever in design, naive. The Angels inherited much of the dominant culture's celebration of the machine, individualism, pioneering violence and machismo. The student radicals were striving (even if at times incoherently) for a community distanced from such values. To an extent, Ginsberg must have realized this. Some of his roots, after all, lay in traditions of political radicalism. A cultural dropout like Kesey, however, possessed no real conception of community beyond collective

54 Allen Ginsberg, "To the Angels", Berkeley Barb, November 19, 1965; also reprinted in Thompson's Hell's Angels, p. 260.

55 Hunter S. Thompson, Hell's Angels, p. 268.
narcissistic self-indulgence and thus perceived the good life simply in terms of personal gratification.

Although Kesey pursued a paltry form of cultural radicalism, he was present at the birth of the Haight-Ashbury style. More than the Longshore and Appeal dances, it was the Trips Festival held at the Longshoreman's Hall over three days in January, 1966, which resonated with the sights and sounds of hippie cultural experimentation. The Trips Festival was a multi-media event inspired by a series of gatherings staged by Kesey. Known as "the Acid Tests", these gatherings or "happenings" promoted the collective experience of psychedelic drugs, in particular LSD. In the words of Tom Wolfe:

The Acid Tests were one of those outrages, one of those scandals, that create a new style or a new world view ... The Acid Tests were the epoch of the psychedelic style and practically everything that has gone into it ... it all came straight out of the Acid Tests in a direct line leading to the Trips Festival ...56

Indeed, one of Kesey's early Bay Area colleagues has testified,

We pioneered ... the hallmarks of hippy culture: LSD and numerous other psychedelics, body painting, light shows and mixed media presentations, total aestheticism, he-ins, exotic costumes, strobe lights, sexual mayhem, freakouts and the deification of psychoticism, Eastern mysticism, and the rebirth of hair.57

The Trips Festival was advertised as "a drugless psychedelic experience" featuring various San Francisco rock bands with light shows, Allen Ginsberg, Kesey and the Pranksters, plus numerous other participants or performers.58 The result was a stroboscopic

56 Tom Wolfe, The Electric ..., p. 223.
57 Vic Lovell, "The Perry Lane Papers", Mid-Peninsula Observer, Vol. 11, no. 8, no date (probably 1968). Lovell is specifically referring to the period he, Kesey and others spent in Menlo Park near Stanford University.
spectacle guaranteed to provide the framework of reference for hippie style. While for at least one participant the Trips Festival was "a drag, even on Acid" (nobody seriously believed it would be drug-free), to a certain extent it signalled the beginning of "the Haight-Ashbury era". One of the key figures in the Haight scene remembers the Trips Festival as "the first thing that got the larger, kind of whole community thing happening - everybody turning on together". In other words, it helped create a sense of community as a happening. This was just one element, albeit significant, of the entire Haight-Ashbury community experience.

A Hippie Community

The Trips Festival brought together, in graphic relief, the two crucial factors in hippie ways of being: drug experimentation, particularly involving LSD (acid), and music. Philosophies of love and community were underpinned by drug usage and involvement with rock music. A veritable psychedelic lifestyle was developing: "the street scene and its extensions into the art and living patterns that are being developed is in large part due to what is first envisioned and then consciously applied through the use of LSD and other drugs". LSD, for instance, broke down boundaries of perception, melting the self into the world around it. It is not hard for an ethic of love and community to flow from that sort of psychedelic experience. But it is, of course, hard to sustain it.

60 quoted in Ralph Gleason, *The Jefferson Airplane*...
62 Ron Thelin, interview, Leonard Wolff (ed.), *Voices from ....*, p. 228.
64 Charles Perry, *The Haight-Ashbury*, p. 265
Acid Rock was a synthesis of the twin foundations of hippie lifestyle. It was a musical form which paralleled the psychedelic experience. Jefferson Airplane's evocative song 'White Rabbit' expressed the centrality of both drugs and music to the hippies. The lyrics

One who makes you large
And one who makes you small
And the ones that mother gives you don't do anything at all
Go ask Alice, when she's ten feet tall

advocated psychedelic promiscuity, the music (a mixture of eastern musical styles and haunting garage rock) reinforced sensory exploration and expansion. The hippie community in San Francisco was thus founded upon two cultural (but also saleable) commodities - drugs and music - which helped define ways of living and ways of seeing. The term "community" is being used here in two senses. While the early dances and the Trips Festival were significant moments in the evolution of a hippie style closely identified with Haight-Ashbury, they helped cement only one level of hip community experience. Hippies constituted a community in that they possessed a collective style (revolving around drugs, music, fashion generally) which brought them together no matter where they were (the dances, for instance, were mostly staged outside the district). This, however, is an insubstantial or amorphous sense of community. More importantly, hippies achieved community by becoming wedded to particular places. A hippie community like that in Haight-Ashbury was bounded by place as well as taste and habit. It was a concentrated social experiment rather than a diffuse set of styles. That is why the signal event in the formation of the Haight-Ashbury hippie community was the opening of the Psychedelic Shop on January 3, 1966.

Radical subcultures like the Beats had used marijuana and peyote, sometimes even harder drugs, as part of their lifestyle experimentation but never before had drugs or, more specifically one

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65 The epigraph for Perry's *The Haight-Ashbury* comes from Tom Donahue, writing in a 1967 issue of *Billboard* magazine: "There are only two constants in the San Francisco hippie scene: music, grass and LSD". Who's counting?
drug, been the fundamental symbol around which a community grew. LSD, which was to remain legal until October 1966, provided such a symbol. The Psychedelic Shop was designed to provide information on drugs, particularly LSD, and it thus functioned as a support centre for, even a defining agency of, the infant hippie community:

Suddenly there was a common fact that everyone could identify with. It was right in the middle of town, and it was called the Psychedelic Shop ... And then more people started coming in and then pretty soon it was like the whole Haight-Ashbury was the community.66

Co-founder of the shop, Ron Thelin, has observed that while "things were happening in the Haight-Ashbury before we opened ... it seems like the Psychedelic Shop brought publicity to what was happening".67 All subcultures require bars, coffeehouses and other gathering places to sustain and extend their rituals. Frequently these haunts already exist as part of the larger culture and are taken over by new clientele as the process of subcultural identification gathers strength. But apart from the streets and parks, which were extremely important public spaces for hippies, it was mostly new shops which functioned as the playgrounds and points of consumption for hippies. These brought further publicity to the area, followed by new intakes of disaffected, searching youth. Hip culture was taking shape through the sponsorship of petty (and sometimes not so petty) entrepreneurialism.

Shops which opened soon after the Psychedelic Shop included the I-Thou Coffee Shop, In Gear (a hip outfittery) and the Print Mart (a hip poster shop). The hippie style, as opposed to the Beat style, was dependent upon non-literate cultural forms. The I-Thou Coffee Shop, which staged regular poetry readings, was rooted in a different subcultural mode even though it was part of the hippie scene in the Haight. Beat poet Gary Snyder (who, like Allen Ginsberg, was also involved with the Haight) has remarked that "Hippy equals Beat plus

rock and acid".68 That perspective, however, ignores a few critical differences in the style of dissent. Charles Perry has overstated the case somewhat by alleging that Beats were dismissive of hippies, regarding them as "imitation bohemians".69 Similarly, R.G. Davis is reported to have made a caustic observation about distance between Beat and hippie subcultures:

Look at the beatniks in North Beach; what did they leave there? A bookstore. And now look at the Haight, the new thing, what do they have there? A Print Mint.70

While the Print Mint has long since faded away, City Lights bookstore is still going strongly, so Davis' remark was telling. At the time, of course, he was essentially noting a cultural difference, with the Beats acting as emissaries of literary modernism and the hippies more connected to a visually oriented popular (or mass) culture. Hippie papers like the San Francisco Oracle communicated through a mixture of words and psychedelic art. The generous, even frenzied, use of colours and patterns in the Oracle was designed to replicate on paper the hallucinatory experience.71 Words frequently became buried under a plethora of pulsating images. The underground press, especially the Oracle, together with various sorts of broadsheets had a strong role to play as media of communication in the Haight but mostly radio served as the vehicle for information and music.72 To suggest that gurus like Norman Brown or Marshall McLuhan had a

68 Gary Snyder, Interview with author, November 1981.

69 Charles Perry, The Haight-Ashbury, p. 5. Some Beats, no doubt, did articulate such a view but there were also a few identified with the Beat Generation who were hippies or at least hippie fellow-travellers.

70 quoted by Charlotte Todd in Leonard Wolff (ed.), Voices from ..., p. 108. Nonetheless, the Print Mint did have a significant impact on poster design and advertising internationally (Haight-Ashbury Tribune, Vol. 1 no. 2, probably 1967).


profound influence upon hippie culture is to overestimate the cultural literacy of hippies. McLuhan's writings on the media may have had an impact upon leading underground media practitioners in America. But generalizations are risky, as this comment from a San Francisco hippie who ran a poster firm reveals: "You see, like I never read McLuhan, and I don't know anyone who has read him, because one of the things that is difficult to do is read".

The cultural radicalism of hippies was grounded, then, in style of living and being, in modes of experimentation, in psychedelic art and acid rock rather than in poetry or political manifestos. Hippie conceptions of time and space were qualitatively different from the temporal and spatial assumptions permeating bourgeois society. Their notions were partly influenced by the drug experience. Psychedelic drugs, for instance, encouraged a sense of crashing "through time and space". So, too, did the music which, in the words of Paul Willis, "attempted timelessness" and yet possessed "an abstract, complex shape". Even the hippie term "spaced out" carried connotations simultaneously applicable to drugs and music: "In the space held open by the drug experience [hippies suggested] it was possible to follow the line of particular instruments, and to differentiate the sound of different instruments in a way that was not possible normally". More importantly, however, hippies also played around with the politics of space. The spatial organization of contemporary industrial society was questioned through, amongst other things, communal living arrangements and the use of streets and parks as public forums. "Street life", in the words of one hippie, "breaks the conditioning of the perpetual motion machine".

73 David Armstrong, *A Trumpet to Arms*, p. 64.
78 Richard Honigman, "Flowers in the Street", the *Oracle*. August 1967.
Avenue, functioned as a point around which the counter-cultural community could develop and form an identity. It was a natural gathering place rather than a mere shopping centre through which individual consumers moved.

New shops in the Haight, together with the commercial rock concerts at the Fillmore and Avalon ballrooms, helped define the community. But life in the street, in Golden Gate or Buena Vista Park, in the commune or art pad was just as important. In other words, the Haight was a community in part founded upon, but not delimited by, the market-place. Traditionally, the market-place is not simply a venue for trade. It is also a collective arena, a space for human encounter. It can, indeed, be a rich source of experience, of theatre; a place where masks are worn and the "authentic" self hidden from view. In one sense, of course, hippies yearned for personal authenticity ("be yourself") but, at the same time, they were bedecked in colourful costumes and used the market-place as a space for performance. Indeed, much of the Haight revolved around theatre, or carnival, from the multi-media rock dances or "happenings" to daily life itself. The crucial role of the market in this suggests not only possible limits to the hippie critique of Establishment culture but also the very real seriousness with which the community set about establishing itself as, potentially, an alternative society. Here, in the Haight-Ashbury district, was a community which lived its opposition to bourgeois society. Yet it was underpinned by commercialism. Here also was a subculture which sought collectivity under the guiding principle of "doing your own thing". And here was a neighborhood, a communal space, within the city but somehow distanced from the urban technological nightmare. These sorts of paradoxes permeated the hippie experiment in San Francisco. They help explain its success as well as its failure.

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80 Charles Perry, The Haight-Ashbury, p. 252-3.
CHAPTER 6

THE CONTRADICTIONS OF CULTURAL RADICALISM

"San Francisco is a refugee camp for homosexuals".¹ These words, which introduced Carl Wittman's gay manifesto, announced a new phase in the relationship between regionalism and subcultural protest. By the early 1970s, homosexual identity in America was being expressed, in part, as regional identity. This phenomenon resonated with the experience of the Beat and hippie subcultures. San Francisco came to be the regional base, the primary focus, the dominant framework of reference for both subcultural groupings. The gay movement carried this city-subculture linkage forward. Yet homosexual identification with San Francisco did not rise suddenly in the late 1960s and early 1970s. There were close connections between Beats in San Francisco and a thriving homosexual community.² The turf or territory marked out by these two subcultures overlapped (in both a concrete and symbolic sense) and some key figures, like poet Allen Ginsberg, revealed this association through their lives and literature. Moreover, as has been suggested, the formative development of the Haight-Ashbury hippie community can be traced back to the time when a number of Beat Generation disciples moved into the district. Just before the district came to public prominence, an article in a San Francisco newspaper asked the question "Are Beats good business?" and quoted a real estate


agent who remarked that much of the credit for improvements in Haight-Ashbury living standards must go to recently arrived homosexuals.\textsuperscript{3}

While there was a clear distance between the hippie and homosexual subcultures in San Francisco during the late sixties, there was the shared relationship with the Beat Generation and also strong elements of a shared style of rebellion. Towards the end of his gay manifesto, Wittman comments approvingly upon the rise of counter-cultural sensibilities within the gay community: "The hip/street culture has led people into a lot of freeing activities: encounter/sensibility, the quest for reality, freeing territory for the people, ecological consciousness, communes".\textsuperscript{4} The affirmation of hip style reflected a significant debt to the subcultural modes of Beats and hippies. It also suggested that gays had learnt little about the contradictions of cultural radicalism. Even the more politically aware participants in the Haight-Ashbury experiment, such as the Diggers, could not escape these contradictions. The attempt to make the Haight, even San Francisco as a whole, a free district, a liberated space within the heart of America, collapsed all too quickly. Refugee camps can highlight critical social problems. They also tend to generate troubles of their own.

The Living Critique

The Beat Generation and hippies formulated a living critique of American society, a potent critique which slashed through the outer shell of bourgeois ideology and signified the possibilities of a creative alternative. Yet the intense subjectivity of that critique, which contributed to the dominance of style in everyday expression and social protest, generated numerous compromises with the dominant

\textsuperscript{3} Michael Fallon, "Are Beats Good Business?", \textit{San Francisco Examiner} (September 8, 1965); also see Sherri Cavan, \textit{Hippies of the Haight}, pp. 45-6.

\textsuperscript{4} Carl Wittman, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 24.
culture and with spectacular consumer culture. This sort of contradiction is not peculiar to radical subcultures. Working class youth subcultures attempt to bring together elements of traditional working class culture, in particular its argot and habit, and elements of the dominant capitalist culture, in particular its commodity fetishism. Traditional styles of speech and behaviour are mediated by new styles of dress, the possession of symbolic accoutrements like bikes and the worship of cultural heroes like Brando and Dean. Class experience is thus simultaneously reaffirmed and escaped; problems of adjustment to the social order are resolved in an imaginary way.5

Cultural rebelliousness may simply function as the avant-garde of bourgeois lifestyle innovation. This was true of the 1920s, when American youth proudly challenged cultural conventions yet remained politically conservative.6 Transformations in the cultural realm during that period signified more an adjustment of lifestyle to a new era of capitalism than they did the construction of an opposition. The increasing prominence of advertising in the 1920s helped rivet youthful experimentation to the ideological market-place of fashion.7 In a certain sense, the earlier Greenwich Village radicals, with their uneasy mixture of bohemianism, socialism and feminism, had paved the way for this development. They, too, were caught up in contradictions.8

Changes in the period after 1945, including some dramatic ruptures in the cultural sphere, tended to assist a new dynamic of capital accumulation centred around consumerism. This is not to suggest that all manifestations of cultural change were functional,

automatically, to the capitalist system but rather to place them within an overall context of shifting patterns of consumption and leisure. Beats and hippies pushed back the boundaries of cultural exploration and this was not necessarily inimical to the social values fostered by neo-capitalism. Irwin Silber, indeed, has argued that the capitalist system needed "the cultural revolution".9 On one level, this is true. Subcultural groups introduced different styles, techniques and commodities which perhaps initially threatened the Established order but in the end became a profit-making part of it. Rock music in the 1950s and 1960s may have posed a threat to "decent social standards" but they were the very sorts of standards which capitalism could no longer rely upon to generate spending. The ideology of consumerism fashioned different, more flexible, social values and even helped spawn subcultural pockets of resistance.

Capitalism did not, however, "need" the Beats and hippies. Rather, these subcultures could not entirely bypass the process whereby, frequently, "the capitalist system transforms the energy and vitality of the radical movement into its own social necessity".10 Beats and hippies ostensibly despised the culture of consumption and criticized it in a number of ways. Yet they also embraced some of its assumptions. The hippie experience, in particular, highlighted the contradictory pull in counter-cultural ways of being.11 One apparently glaring contradiction was noted by a New York feminist collective: "... Hip culture imprisons women in the name of freedom and exploits women in the name of love".12 Similarly, Herbert Marcuse once argued that the tribal or community focus of hippies actually tended to fashion new forms of repression or selfishness and thus did not


10 Ibid.


12 Lower East Side Women's Collective, "Love is a Four Letter Word", in Hip Culture, p. 39.
change anything fundamental in the society. But his suggestion that "the community can become acute only after the advent of social change and not before" denied the importance of prefigurative politics. It also established a standard differentiation between before and after, whereas processes of social transformation can be much more complex. It is important, nonetheless, to perceive the possibility that the positive side of a counter-cultural celebration of love and community was, at least sometimes, offset by self-interest or repressive practices within actual radical communities. Cultural radicals could not always avoid reflecting the very values they challenged. So hippies may have helped unleash a process of "profound cultural disintegration and transformation" but perhaps the final terms of their endeavour could be set by the society of the spectacle. Antagonism towards the dominant culture was accompanied by the furtive embrace of that culture. Moreover, inasmuch as hippies constituted the "research and development wing of post-industrial society", their trajectory can be located within the logic of industrial capitalism. Their celebration of leisure signalled an escape from bourgeois order and discipline but also endorsed a bourgeois vision of utopia. Regular genuflection at the altar of commodity fetishism mediated the hippie critique of plastic, pre-fabricated, fast-frozen America. Yet the critique remained. Processes of incorporation and negation did not completely blunt the critical edge of cultural radicalism.

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13 Herbert Marcuse, quoted from a seminar at the Institute for Policy Studies, Berkeley Barb, August 4-10, 1967. Marcuse was, as almost always, to change or at least adjust his perspective later on. For more favourable assessments of the counter-cultural project, see his An Essay on Liberation (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969) and Counter-Revolution and Revolt (London: Allen Lane, 1972). Marcuse was aware of contradictions within cultural radicalism, of what he labelled a "misplaced radicalism" which revealed disturbing anti-intellectual tendencies (Counter-revolution, p. 129).

14 Richard Flacks, Youth and Social Change, p. 72.

15 William Irwin Thompson, Lateline, ABC (Australia) Radio, September 1, 1975.


17 Susan Krieger has studied the "cooptation" of a hip radio station KMPX in San Francisco in the 1960s: Hip Capitalism (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1979). The trouble with Krieger's discussion is that this was only partial co-optation because KMPX was never particularly radical but simply programmed the new music which other commercial stations shunned.
All youth subcultures resist the process which makes them part of the parent culture and, in that way, reveal and act upon contradictions in that culture. The social world confronted by Beats and hippies was suffused with contradictions: there was the glamour of the spectacle and the turgid sameness of life itself; the idolization of the individual and the triumph of mass society; the pursuit of happiness and the reification of pleasure; the reliance upon collective will (expressed cogently by the ideology of consensus) and the replacement of that will by images of politics and life manufactured by the mass media. The subcultural response to this situation was conducted primarily, although by no means solely, on the level of style. Style was, of course, a key factor because it enabled "the communication of a significant difference" (even if it was, at times, an illusory difference) and thus of a group identity. Without this communication no subcultural experience could be formed.

To some extent, Beats and hippies had "made the question of style itself a political issue". Their lifestyles involved a simultaneous endeavour to reclaim urban community and strike out for the wilderness. This signalled a critique of the rational scientific progression of western civilization, for the Faustian ideals of progress had increasingly ruptured human community and distanced people from the natural environment. While the symbolic rejection of these ideals was projected through everyday life, it was also articulated in Beat literature. There is, in fact, a certain degree of truth in the notion that the hippies "were acting out what the Beats wrote". Hippie lifestyle reverberated with the city-country dialectic of Beat literature. The use of streets and parks as focal points of hippie everyday life reflected the simultaneous embrace of urban

19 Dick Hebdige, Subculture ..., p. 102 (his emphasis).
21 A discussion of the Beat and hippie challenge to Faustian Man can be found in Gunther S. Stent, Paradoxes of Progress (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Co., 1978), pp. 15-33 and 71-6.
22 Gregory Corso, quoted in Bruce Cook, The Beat Generation, p. 146.
sympathies and pastoral yearnings. The alternative course chartered by hippies was, in part, a response to the modern urban maelstrom of Allen Ginsberg's poem 'Howl':

Moloch whose eyes are a thousand blind windows!
Moloch whose skyscrapers stand in the long streets like endless Jehovahs! Moloch whose factories dream and croak in the fog! Moloch whose smokestacks and antennae crown the cities.

Suburbanization, mechanization and modernization had punctured the soul of the post-war city. Beats and hippies looked towards a reconstruction of that soul, a rebuilding of community.

Subjectivity and Territoriality

Even as it succumbed to the dynamic of development and redevelopment. San Francisco retained many old world charms. And this made it an ideal venue for the social critiques and lifestyle experiments launched by radical subcultures. For the pull of progress there was stepping up battle with a romantic, if not nostalgic, sense of preservation and conservation. And so, too, there was a tension between the new and the old in Beat and hippie social perspectives. They were, to borrow Jackson Lear's phrase, "antimodern" modernists or, at least, modernist critics of modernity. This

26 T.J. Jackson Lear, No Place of Grace, p. 296-7.
meant, of course, that they were in some ways hostile to the very conditions which gave rise to their cultural moment. Their relationship to the dominant culture was thus uneasy rather than entirely oppositional. Suspicion of consumerism did not stop the growth of consumerist tendencies (and yet there is a vast difference between, for instance, shops in the Haight and massive supermarket malls). Possession of the latest hi-fi system co-existed with restrained or limited, "small is beautiful" asceticism. While unable, or unwilling, to resist many of the temptations of industrial civilization, they nonetheless highlighted some of the significant issues confronting that civilization in the latter part of the twentieth century. Writing in 1967, the sociologist Fred Davis suggested that

>there is, as Max Weber would have put it, an *elective affinity* between prominent styles and themes in the hippie subculture and certain incipient problems of identity, work and leisure that loom ominously as Western industrial society moves into an epoch of accelerated cybernation, staggering material abundance and historically-unprecedented mass opportunities for creative leisure and enrichment of the human personality.\(^{27}\)

Davis was right to point out the significance of hippie lifestyle experiments but this does not mean that hippies were "rehearsing *in vivo* a number of possible cultural solutions to central life problems posed by the emerging society of the future".\(^{28}\) Rather, it indicates the extent to which they were enmeshed in the contradictions of social life under late capitalism. Their "cultural solutions" could not overcome these contradictions and were thus not solutions at all. Rather, they were incoherent attempts to grapple with important issues like the decline of public space, the dissolution of community, and the withering away of love and compassion in an increasingly heartless world.

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\(^{28}\) *Ibid.*
Rural communes were perhaps more of a "solution" than urban "ghettos" but both depended upon a sense of "territoriality" which is characteristic of subcultures. A firm commitment to place is an essential component of subcultural practices which ultimately transcend place. Beats and hippies offered universal visions - peace, love, community, harmony with nature - but that very universality was tied, at least in the beginning, to specific locations. This suggests again that some of the strengths (as well as, perhaps, the weaknesses) of radical subcultures and social movements emanate from a dialectical relationship between the general and the specific, the universal and the particular, the national or international and the local. It was thus important for hippies to have a special relationship with particular places and, above all, with a specific city. Terms like "refuge", "mecca", "Holy City" were used by hippies to identify San Francisco as the centre of their world (if only for a brief time). Yet there was another centre - the self. Both "centres" were conceived of spatially. Hence, talks on "inner space" were even offered, in San Francisco and Berkeley, by a man who considered himself to be an astronaut (of inner space). And Allen Ginsberg urged

"public utopia thru education in inner space ... discover the Guru in your own hearts ... and set forth within the New Wilderness of machine America to explore open spaces of consciousness in Self and fellow Selves.".

Despite the language, this was not merely an evocation of subjectivity. It was a call for publicly constituted subjectivity. A term like "inner space" came into being partly because questions of territoriality, of

29 Phil Cohen, "Subcultural Conflict ...", p. 27 and David Robins and Phil Cohen, Knuckle Sandwich: growing up in the working class city (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), p. 73 ff. While studies of working class subcultures do not always apply directly to cross-class or essentially middle class subcultures, there are definite similarities.

30 see Haight-Ashbury Maverick, vol. 1, no. 5, 1968. An interviewer, introducing Richard Alpert, throws around these sorts of terms with somewhat gay abandon.


32 Allen Ginsberg, "Public Solitude", Oracle Vol. 1, no. 5, 1966. Also see Ginsberg's interview in the Berkeley Barb, November 13-19, 1970, where he refers to moving "further left" through "practicing research into inner space". "Further left" may, in this context, simply be "far out" (another spatial metaphor).
public space, were so crucial to Beats and hippies. But a focus upon "inner space" did threaten to deflect attention from public space and to dissolve what were ultimately political issues into personal problems with personal solutions.

The subjective orientations of Beats and hippies always mediated their public social protests. But this subjectivity did not automatically make such protest ineffective (quite the opposite sometimes). So the Beats may have been essentially anti-political but this anti-politics confronted much of the sham and hypocrisy, much of the supermarket glamour and stuffy orthodoxy, in the dominant culture. Their search for experience was a way of getting out from under what Vaneigem has called "the weight of things in a vacuum". Disengagement provided the touchstone of their art. It was a disengagement which travelled the distance between cold existentialism and a vision of the future. Beat writing was, in general, highly subjective but at its best it was an existential probing which remained aware of social conditions. There was an undeniable tension between self and society in Ginsberg's work, yet the subjectivity of 'Howl' is socially constituted and always functions as something beyond the existential 'me'. Rexroth saw 'Howl' as "the confession of faith of the generation that is going to be running the world in 1965 and 1975". If that is so, then it was a generation battling dialectically with despair and promise. The Beat Generation was, after all, the bomb generation as well as the boom generation. Perhaps they were living a death-wish, as their craving for experience ultimately involved even self-destructive experiences. Their heroes were three men who led fast, 'crazy', even violent artistic lives and consequently died young - actor James Dean, jazz saxophonist Charlie Parker and poet Dylan Thomas. The subculture

34 Raoul Vaneigem, "The Totality for Kids", (Situationist pamphlet, no date), p. 31.
they built was, like their lives, fragile and insecure. This has much to do with the intensely personal moment of rebellion they articulated.

Amidst the affluence of the 1950s, there lurked a psychopathology generated by concentration camps and nuclear devastation, a psychopathology of everyday life which fed off cultural conformity.39 What Norman Mailer called "an uncharted journey into the rebellious imperatives of the self"40 was the Beat response to this social context. Yet rather than constituting a negating subject, perhaps the self functioned as a bourgeois prop in the theatre of experience:

Existentialism is bourgeois ideology in the hour of its retreat; because it is no longer able to pierce the mystifications, it settles on the subject, the self. The more the surface of reality deflects attention, the more the deflected focus on the individual. One seeks to compensate for the damages of an external reality by internal scrutiny; the hope is to fan some warmth out of the dead embers as protection against the chill of the outside. It does not work.41

Not everything in the Beat world revolved around introspection. The attempt to sustain a community of poets and artists may have been rendered incoherent and inconclusive by the politics of subjectivity but it was based upon genuine collective sensibilities. While Kerouac's solipsism did not always fit neatly with the critical social perspective advanced by Ginsberg, perhaps the assault on dominant cultural values was only partially compromised by the celebration of individual experience. Nevertheless, the contradictions were sufficient to allow mass culture to intervene and start rewriting the hipster script. Caricatures of the Beats in B-grade movies, t.v. shows

40 Ibid., p. 289.
41 Russell Jacoby, Social Amnesia, p. 63.
and cartoons stripped the rebellious self of its reason for rebellion.\textsuperscript{42} The howl of protest and self-affirmation was thereby rendered a hollow yelp. When it became possible in New York to "rent a genuine beatnik" (equipped with all the correct accoutrements) for social occasions,\textsuperscript{43} the triumph of the market was announced. This was echoed in the 1960s with the formation of a San Francisco business enterprise called "Hire-a-Hippie-Unlimited".\textsuperscript{44} Far from being rebellious, the self may have been seeking a rental outlet.

Had cultural disaffiliation thus been rendered but an aspect of exchange relationships in contemporary capitalism? Not quite. A commentator in the \textit{Wall Street Journal} imagined that the Japhy Ryder character in Kerouac's novel \textit{The Dharma Bums} would soon settle down comfortably in middle America as "an account executive or a book editor with too-expensive family, a white Jaguar, a collection of Maxwell Bodenheim poems, a Hammond organ, a hi-fi set and a mild delusion he is somehow shaping the world".\textsuperscript{45} The contradictions of cultural radicalism do not, however, always generate such a simple pre-determined ending. Japhy Ryder was, in real life, Beat poet Gary Snyder- and while the Beats had dissipated as a social force in the early 1960s, many returning to New York,\textsuperscript{46} Snyder was to become a prominent figure in the San Francisco hippie scene. Moreover, he has never severed his close ties to the American radical tradition.

The Beats were not subject to quite the same commercial pressures as hippies. The problem of the role of business in the Haight was one of the key dilemmas facing leading participants in the community. Ever-increasing numbers of hippies had arrived by early 1967 and this, coupled with the announcement of a Summer of Love in that year, signalled immense strain on the community's resources.


\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 277.

\textsuperscript{44} \textit{San Francisco Chronicle}, September 1, 1967.


\textsuperscript{46} see Ralph Gleason, "Begone Dull Beats ", \textit{New Statesman}, June 2, 1961, p. 868.
It also brought into the open a tension which underlay the hippie experiment, tension surrounding the very direction the community should take. The hippie community itself was split into two leading groups. On one side, were the hip merchants. They tried to link marketing with an overall philosophy of alternative living. Indeed, they were very serious about the possibility of creating a self-sustaining community, even if their words sometimes smacked of mystification:

> what we are talking about is an evolution of a new culture, a new civilization. We have to find new means of exchange ... I understand that money is energy and it has to flow, it's a matter of channeling.47

This was the language of hip stockbrokership (or Zen finance capital) but it did reflect concerns about the purpose or direction of economic life. On the other side of the Haight community, were the anarchistic Diggers whose precise aim was to knock commerce on the head. The Haight Independent Proprietors (HIP), formed in late 1966 partly as a response to increased police harassment of street people, sought to make it clear that the Haight was successful in terms of commerce as well as lifestyle.48 The Diggers' response was to burn money.

**Guerilla Theatre**

The Diggers were, in one sense, the welfare branch of the counter-cultural state. At the height of the hippie influx they provided a free store and free evening meals in Golden Gate Park. The food for the meals was begged, donated or stolen. Moreover, the Diggers tried to generate an activist consciousness (of sorts) in a

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psychedelically numbed community, handing out politically surrealist mimeographed sheets (The Digger Papers) on Haight Street a couple of times a week. They were critical of, albeit inseparable from, the lifestyle and philosophy of the Haight. Particular ire was reserved for the hip merchants whom they considered to be exploitative.49 They claimed separation from the world of commerce, celebrated the word "free" and publicly testified to their distaste of money:

When donors would offer rates of vicarious approval, they'd take the bills, strike a match, and burn them to the amusement of those eating. The young kids squatting in the Panhandle were hungry and afraid all right, but they were on their own for the first time for no matter how long, and they wanted no material support from members of their parents' world. The burning of the ten- and twenty-dollar bills typified more than anything else, what they felt and what the Diggers believed.50

The problem was, however, that the Digger ideology of "free", together with the money-burning rituals, was fuelled by the economy of the "parents' world". And it also did not square with the distribution of free food or clothes, in that this created the very sort of dependence being challenged.51 Moreover, it suggested a remarkable insensitivity to the needs and desires of the poor, particularly the black poor who lived in the adjacent Fillmore district. Alex Forman, an SDS activist who did some work with the Diggers, has recounted the story of some black women who came into the Free Store one day and asked how much everything was. Upon being told that it was "free" and "to take what they need", the women commenced carrying out piles of clothes from the racks. When reminded that they were told to "take what they need", one replied "We can sell it to make money. We need the money".52

49 see Emmett Grogan, Ringolerio, p. 278 ff.
51 Alex Forman, interview with author, August 16, 1979.
52 Ibid. He also tells the same story in Joan Morris and Robert K. Merton, From Camelot to Kent State, p. 220.
Influenced by some of their members who were active in the Mime Troupe, the Diggers made cultural performance, if not posturing, central to their actions. Even the services they provided were linked to the aesthetic realm: "So a store of goods or clinic or restaurant that is free becomes a social art form. Ticketless theater". Yet despite their sometimes silly approach to social protest, the Diggers were aware, more than most hippies, of the many guises which spatial politics could assume. For instance, they conceptualized a vast range of alternative institutions and services. Their proposal for a Free City included food storage and distribution centres, garages, banks, legal assistance, housing and working space, hospitals, schools, tinkers and gunsmiths, radios, t.v. and computer stations. And, like the Mime Troupe, they saw theatre (public theatre, defined in a general sense) as a spatial form of resistance:

Theater is territory. A space for existing outside padded walls ... Guerrilla theater intends to bring audiences to liberated territory to create life-actors ... This is the theater of an underground that wants out. Its aim is to liberate ground held by consumer wardens and establish territory without walls.

The very word "free" became a code for groups such as the Diggers or the Yippies, signifying a state of being involved in revolution-as-theatre. To the extent that so much in the Sixties revolved around the development of a new language, as well as new modes of communication, then "free" was a central weapon of vocabulary, starting with the civil rights movement. For the Diggers, the significance of the Free Store and free food lay not in the fact that the items lacked a price tag, that the mark of trade was absent, but that this changed the very perception of participants. So they eventually constructed a thirteen foot square wooden frame, put it in the Panhandle every day and hungry hippies would walk through it in

53 "Trip Without a Ticket", The Digger Papers, p. 3.
54 "The Post-Competitive, Comparative Game of a Free City", The Digger Papers, p. 15-17.
55 "Trip Without a Ticket", The Digger Papers, p. 3.
order to attain free food. The very act of moving through this construction would, supposedly, change one's frame of reference. This Free Frame of Reference reflected, in part, the Diggers' desire to confront spatial forms of social relationships and to alter perceptions about going from one side to the other, passing through, moving beyond. But this particular ritual produced space stripped of politics, play-acting devoid of aesthetic radicalism. The Diggers' critique of everyday life within contemporary capitalism raised critical questions but, in the end, was singularly inadequate.

The Digger struggle with the "job-wardens and consumer-keepers of a permissive looney bin" hardly came equipped with a penetrating economic analysis: "Property, credit, interest, insurance, installments, profit are stupid concepts". Their utopia was, in part, the utopia of bourgeois idealism (or stupidity): "Give up jobs so computers can do them". While Digger money burning rituals symbolized a rejection of both the dominant culture and the hipoisie, their alternative of "free" was fed by the surplus of a boom economy. The critique of everyday life dissolved into spectacle; revolution-as-theatre ended up back in the theatre.

The Diggers were involved in a long march outside the institutions, a march designed to weave theatrical spectacle into alternative mechanisms of social reproduction. They were the dispossessed clamouring about the evils of possession, the hip philosophers throwing barbs at the consumerist dynamic permeating hippie culture, the spiritual advisors who confronted youth in the Haight with some of the rawer facts about their social experiment. Neither they nor the hip proprietors, however, could counteract a dynamic of decay which had beset Haight-Ashbury in 1967. Despite

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57 "Trip Without a Ticket", *The Digger Papers*, p. 4.
58 Ibid.
59 Chester Anderson, and his so-called Communication Co., was even more caustic and cautionary about the Haight. Until a split in August 1967, Anderson and the Diggers had been colleagues, sharing a gestetner (see Charles Perry, *The Haight-Ashbury*, p. 180-2, 230).
pressing problems, the Council for a Summer of Love (which included the Diggers) was supremely optimistic:

This summer, the youth of the world are making a Holy pilgrimage to our city, to affirm and celebrate a new spiritual dawn ... This city is not a wasteland; our children will not discover drought and famine here. This city is alive, human and divine...60

By 1967, however, it had become possible to suggest that, in the Haight, love had become a "bartered commodity" and "the fight against organizations of the Establishment has suddenly turned into an Established Organization".61 The critique was folding in on itself. And the Summer of Love, together with the steady gaze of media spotlights, placed almost unbearable pressure upon the community. Moreover, the categorical imperative of drug-taking provided criminal elements with a mass-market to manipulate.62 Beat poet Lew Welch prefigured this crisis, calling on hippies to leave the Haight in tribes before the Summer of Love.63 Some did, others stayed on, only to spark an exodus of sorts in late 1967. "The Death of the Hippie" parade on October 6, 1967, during which the Psychedelic Shop's sign was buried, functioned as the Haight's "goodbye to all that". The parade or demonstration resulted from a feeling that hippies were no longer "doing their own thing" but rather responding to a media image.64 The Haight was not

61 'An Open Letter to the Haight/Ashbury Community' (March 21, 1967), from the Communication Co. (Diggers file, Bancroft SPP).
62 See David E. Smith and John Luce, Love Needs Care (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1971), p. 151 ff. Internal dealing sustained the community in the early days (see Charles Perry, The Haight-Ashbury, p. 272). Helen Perry once argued that in the Haight drugs were never seen as an exclusive way towards change but that on Telegraph Ave by 1966 many were turning to drugs as a way of life [see The Human Be-In (New York: Basic Books, 1970), p. 50]. This, like her argument that there was a meaningful interchange between the white flower children and blacks from the Fillmore district (p. 95), seems fanciful.
63 Lew Welch, "A Moving Target is Hard to Hit" (March 27, 1967), a leaflet from the Communication Company, (Diggers file, Bancroft SPP).
64 Berkeley Barb, September 29, 1967.
completely dead as a hippie venue. Signs of community, however, were few and far between.

In a colourful exchange with remaining hip "leaders" in 1969, Bill Graham boiled over:

What the fuck has this community ever done for itself? ... do you know what you got here? You got a fucking vacuum. For four years, you haven't done shit ... The greatest tragedy for me in the last 20 years, wars aside, is this community, because it could have done so much.65

More pertinent, perhaps, was a poem distributed by a Berkeley street-wise group, the Berkeley Commune, in 1968:

ruling guru greybeard bards
having new fun in yr rolling rock renaissance.
have u passed thru the Haight lately?
have u seen yr turned-on kids?

u promised them Visions & Love & Sharing.
they got
clap, hepatitis, fleas, begging, & the gang-bang.

sure you didn't want to see the scene go that way
but that's how the shit went down.
& i do not hear your "Howl".
i do not see u exorcising demons.66

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66 "An Open Poem to the Prophets and their Apostles" by Persian Fuckers Anonymous and Unlimited, Berkeley Commune file, Bancroft SPP.
Myth and Reality

The sociologist David Bouchier has suggested that the "Counter-culture of the sixties was ideologically unique in the scope of its radicalism, rejecting not just class relations, or bureaucracy, or sexism, or technology, but the very forms of thought and existence which have been created by advanced industrial societies". Similarly, Lewis Yablonsky once argued that "the hippie phenomenon, ... emerges as the first American social movement that totally rejects the American social system". And Murray Bookchin even opined:

In its demands for tribalism, free sexuality, community, mutual aid, and a balanced ecology, the Youth Culture prefigures, however inchoately, a joyous communist and classless society, freed of the trammels of hierarchy and domination, a society that would transcend the historical splits between town and country, individual and society, and mind and body.

Elements of truth in these propositions do not, in the end, add up to much. Only a shallow analysis of counter-cultural perspectives and practices could support such observations. The contradictions have been blurred, the gaps filled in. For instance, the living critique enacted on the streets in the Haight was truncated by a fetishism of style and commodities. The Beat lifestyle and literature revolt was less open to penetration by and accommodation with the dominant culture because their community was smaller and, most importantly, because the cultural commodities were not quite as saleable. An exchange between Alan Watts and Gary Snyder in early 1967 highlights this issue:

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69 Murray Bookchin, "The Youth Culture ...", in *Hip Culture*, p. 60.
Watts: ... I've noticed that, recently, all turned on people are becoming more colourful.

They're wearing beads and gorgeous clothes and so on and so forth ... and it's gradually coming out. Because you remember the old beatnik days when everybody was in blue jeans and ponytails and no lipstick and DRAB ... and CRUMMY!

Snyder: What! (laughter)

Watts: Now, something's beginning to happen.

Snyder: Well, it wasn't quite that bad, but we were mostly concerned with not being consumers then ... and so we were showing our non-consumerness.  

A cursory glance at the different styles of appearance adopted by Beats and hippies did tend to leave the former looking rather dull. *Time* magazine reported that "San Francisco's North Beach was a study in black and white; the Haight-Ashbury is a crazy quilt of living colour". A participant in the San Francisco hippie scene remembers the Haight in 1964 being the epitome of cool: "It was sort of introverted, depressed: black poetry and black clothes ... It was a sort of drab, ugly thing". It thus becomes possible to caricature the Beats as dark, gloomy pessimists and the hippies as colourful, joyous optimists. But if Gary Snyder's memory is accurate, then the Beat style was developed as a way of establishing distance from the consumer society, as a mode of resistance to the glamour of the spectacle.

The Beats did, of course, feel the same sorts of pressures, manipulations and tendencies towards integration that hippies did: there were a lot of fake "beatniks" and there were numerous "weekend hippies"; buses operated in North Beach to give tourists an opportunity of seeing the Beat phenomenon, just as they did later in

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71 *Time* Cover Story, "The Hippies ...", p. 20.

72 Maggie Gaskin, interview in L. Wolff, *Voices from ...*, p. 85.
Haight-Ashbury; police harassment was a factor in the decline of both communities; the Maynard G. Krebbs media image of 'beat' was a powerful negation/absorption of the dissident culture. Cultural radicalism, in short, was prey to the constant attentions of the dominant culture and sometimes reproduced that culture under the guise of social dissent.

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One of the organizers of the hippie rock dance spectacles remarked in the 1960s that "San Francisco is the only city in the U.S. which can support a scene - New York is too large and confused and Los Angeles is super-uptite plastic America".73 Ralph Gleason lambasted Andy Warhol's "eastern cafe society" attempt to appropriate the multi-media momentum of the Trips Festival. "It was all", he suggested, "very campy and very Greenwich Village sick ... a triumph of monotony into boredom".74 Similarly, a San Francisco hippie saw the New York scene as "decadent ... stone cold ... very effeminate".75 Commercialism, he observed, was much more evident in New York than San Francisco.

So, the regional polarities were drawn much as they had been by Kenneth Rexroth in the previous decade. The hippie experience in San Francisco was bright, adventurous and wide-open; it could not be reproduced accurately within the confines of cash-dominated Manhattan dullsville. Unfortunately, this sort of regionalist sensibility thrived on mythology. It drew attention to what was different in San Francisco, only to shield itself from what was the same. To be sure, cultural radicalism was mediated by profound regional peculiarities. Yet, even in San Francisco, American mass culture weighed like a

73 Quoted in Ralph J. Gleason, The Jefferson Airplane..., p. 85.
74 Ibid., p. 35-36.
nightmare on the brains of cultural radicals and delimited the future of their dreams. Liberated territory, after all, is often under siege.
CHAPTER 7

LIBERATED TERRITORY

An intense consciousness of space, of territory, fuelled radical activism in the late 1960s. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Bay Area. Campus spatial politics were still important at Berkeley but, increasingly, the territorial imperative was focussed upon Telegraph Ave. Street-fighting ushered in the last phase of Movement politics, bringing the revolution to home turf. A strategic and analytic fillip was provided by the Black Panthers. Their notion of armed self-defense, along with the theory of internal colonialism and a local community focus, helped influence the direction of radicalism generally. In Berkeley, for instance, a profoundly localist orientation was developing. The site of the revolution was shifting, from Vietnam to Telegraph Ave. While significant concerns regarding the politics of space were being highlighted with ever more dramatic power, Berkeley radicals were also tending to look inward. This was partly reflected in new popular terminology like "liberated territory" or "ghetto self-rule".

Language and Revolution

By 1968 much radical discourse in the Bay Area was filled with spatial images. This was one sign of growing militance, of the turn towards revolutionary ideology. The Diggers' Free City document casually commented: "By now we all have guns, know how to use them, know our enemy, and are ready to defend". This militant

preparedness to defend space also encouraged the flourishing of demands for more space, as with the Free City programme.

The roots of spatial language in the late 1960s extend widely. A search for the origins of or inspiration behind particular terms, phrases and types of speech involves, of necessity, some speculation. The intellectual underpinnings of New Left sloganeering was often not acknowledged by those who were its most ardent practitioners. This does not negate the possible significance of such underpinnings. Rather, it reflects an under-explored, perhaps poorly comprehended, conceptual apparatus. Geographical and architectural studies, urban sociology, gang and military jargon, and, of course, the space programme (so much a part of the American dream since the late Fifties) all gave impetus to left terminology. Moreover, the urban situation itself provided the material basis for radical appropriation of spatial references. The language signified a search for adequate responses to the urban question, as well as an attempt to forge alternative ways of life. Communes, whether in the city or the country, represented a flight from contemporary modes of urban spatial organization.

The direct source of popular terms like "liberated territory" or "liberated zone" was Vietnam (and, to some extent, other guerilla warfare struggles). Such labels were joined frequently by "turf", a mostly gangland territorial designation. And a focus upon streets or parks, or public space in general, owes something to urban life itself as well as to urban sociologists, from Louis Wirth on, who investigated distinctive characteristics of life in the urban milieu.2 The search for derivations, however, should not stop there. Western philosophical theories of time and space probably helped inform radical discourse (which is not to suggest that the language was consciously philosophical but rather to acknowledge possible intellectual debts).3 Gaston Bachelard's study of space and the way people use it might,


3 see, for example, Stephen Kern's study of time and space in western culture at the turn of the century: The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918 (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1983).
for instance, have helped shape the intellectual universe within which radicals wandered, as might the work of American anthropologist Edward Hall.\(^4\) When questioned by me about the origins of spatial metaphors and references, a leading Berkeley radical responded (half-jokingly) that his teachers were influenced greatly by Hannah Arendt's examination of the public realm.\(^5\) And this could well have been one amongst a number of influences. After all, Arendt's analysis of the public domain's social character probably would have meant more to students familiar with vibrant public spaces like Sproul Plaza and Telegraph Ave. Similarly, Erik Erikson's analysis of "inner and outer space" might have helped fashion certain ways of seeing.\(^6\) Given that his study focussed upon gender roles and patterns in boys' and girls' uses and conceptions of space, on male appropriation of "outer" space and female concentration upon inner resources (which is not space at all), it might have spurred (if only through negative influence) later feminist notions of "women's space".

It is undoubtedly coincidental that Erikson conducted his long-range study of inner and outer space at UC Berkeley (up until the early 1960s). Nevertheless, it would seem that spatial discourse was more prominent in Berkeley and San Francisco (particularly Berkeley) than anywhere else in America during the late 1960s. Perhaps this is just because all forms of radical theory and practice were brought into graphic relief there, realized in concentrated form. Perhaps, however, it attests once again to the strength of the Bay Area's regional identity and, more specifically, the local identities of San Francisco and Berkeley. It should not be surprising if Bay Area "exceptionalism" helped generate a plethora of references to space or territoriality. By the same token, spatial concepts were by no means

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found almost exclusively in the Bay Area. A reasonably influential article which concentrated upon the "Space revolution" was published by SDS in 1966. Written by young New Left philosopher Dick Howard, this piece looked at the way in which modern capitalism had smashed geographical boundaries and opened up the possibilities for an era of abundance. While Howard did not use the term space in precisely the same way as Berkeley radicals, his analysis could well have influenced New Left language:

We are entering a new era of history, the age of the 'Space Revolution'. By that I do not mean the conquest of atmospheric space but the conquest of human space; the space revolution has changed the purely human rapports between the Ghanian and the Georgian, the Irishman and, the Indian ... This revolution will engender a change in the world in which we live - not in the physical world so much as in our own proper world, our Liebenswelt - that world which is mine and mine alone, constituted by the space which I make mine by my own physical and mental presences.7

Soon after the publication of Howard's article, SDS's National Secretary Greg Calvert argued, in a speech noted for signalling the transition from protest to resistance, that SDS was involved in the creation of "space", of living, breathing, free space.8 Space, Calvert suggested, was here being used as a radicalizing concept, enabling movement away from a state of being "trapped in the system". It is no coincidence that Calvert's report, announcing a new phase in New Left activism, was delivered initially at an SDS quarterly council meeting in Berkeley. Opposition to the draft was helping shift SDS some distance from "Build Not Burn" strategies towards direct resistance and open confrontation. Berkeley was the ideal venue for the proclamation of that change. As Kirkpatrick Sale puts it "It was not only that the draft issue was hot ... but also, of course, the fact that the meeting was being held in Berkeley".9 This is not to claim

9 Kirkpatrick Sale, SDS, p. 313.
that Calvert's spatial reference was prompted because of Berkeley's influence. After all, the language of space was not particularly prominent there in late 1966. But it is to help set the scene for a movement which frequently resorted to spatial discourse in the years to come. This movement was, of course, simultaneously national, international and local. While the politics of space was keenly felt in Berkeley, it would be foolish to imply that Berkeley's jargon was "exceptionalist" in character. Take, for instance, Andre Glucksmann's observations about Parisienne spatial politics in 1968:

Meanwhile, each moment of the struggle is defined by a concrete relation of forces, in the space occupied by students; it is political space where the demonstrations of the extreme Left attract the mass of students, and the extreme Right may not bring to light its protection by the police. It is also geographical space, small in relation to Paris, minute in relation to France. Every police force in the world makes the mistake of confusing geographical space and social and political space.10

Police control of geographical space, Glucksmann suggests, does not lead automatically to authority over political and social space. The geography, in other words, is crucial but there are other layers of meaning attached to the Latin Quarter. Political and social space is grounded in, yet transcends, geographical space.

Similarly, the Italian student movement in the late 1960s was described by one commentator as beginning to fashion "political space' inside the university'.11 Such concepts of political space really indicate the critical importance of symbolic power. Struggles to resist or rebel depend upon a host of signs and images which represent symbolically a state of resistance or rebellion. For instance, during a student occupation of a building on the Berkeley campus in 1968, rather flimsy barricades were erected. "Sure it's

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11 Ady Mineo, "The Italian Student Movement", in J. Nagel (ed.), Student Power, p. 121.
symbolic", remarked one protestor, "but what else can we do?" Or another exchange, possibly apocryphal, made the situation seem even more mysterious:

"What's that barricade doing there?"
"It's symbolic."
"Of what?"
"A barricade."

The occupied space was, nevertheless, described as "liberated territory of UC". Liberated territory, no matter how small or apparently insignificant, symbolized potentialities, foreshadowed future battle grounds. That layer of meaning which made it political space also invested it with powerful symbolic resonances. Such symbolism fuelled self-confidence. It also helped generate delusions of revolution.

Free Speech Again

In retrospect, Michael Rossmann describes the major FSM occupation of Sproul Hall as signifying "liberated territory": "Masquerading as a sit-in, an entire society-in-miniature was created in the liberated territory of Sproul Hall ...". Rossman did not, however, see the "open space" of that building as "political" but rather "physical" and "psychological". This sense of "psychological space" shares similarities with concepts of symbolic power but more on the personal level. Rossman's rejection of political space suggests

12 *People's World*, November 2, 1968. This particular occupation was prompted by the University's withdrawal of an invitation to Eldridge Cleaver to teach a new social science course.

13 *San Francisco Express Times*, October 30, 1968.


counter-cultural tendentiousness. So, too, his description of the police car incident as the creation of open space, not just space on campus but "internal open space of live energy", strongly hinted at conceptual sloppiness, symbolism without a concrete point of reference. Indeed, he argues that sometimes open space "may be purely physical" but that "more usually [it] is a matter of consciousness, of seeing differently and newly". Political space, however, has some sort of geographical specificity.

Despite Rossman's subjectivist inclinations, he was one of the main Berkeley figures who dealt with radical developments in terms of space. In 1968, he referred to "the history of our intense and growing territoriality", beginning with the free speech struggle in 1964. He conceived of alternative or parallel institutions like Free Universities, or various community networks, as open spaces (what Evans and Boyte would call free spaces), the Telegraph Avenue and Haight-Ashbury subcultures were seen as "youth ghettos", the campus constituted "home turf" and so on. While his understanding of spatial politics was eclipsed by a promiscuous use of spatial language, he undoubtedly influenced the way in which a number of Berkeley radicals interpreted their struggles. In 1968, when describing an illegal demonstration on Telegraph Avenue against the war in Vietnam two years earlier (April 1966) he argued that "the episode marked the first attempt of the emergent community to claim for its own, by action, a piece of "turf" in the surrounding community". This was a slight exaggeration but the incident did reinforce the strategic importance of Telegraph Avenue to Berkeley radicals. It was one thing to organize on campus but staging an illegal off-campus rally extended the concept of political space beyond the university's boundaries. So, in August 1966, the *Berkeley Barb* could report that the "VDC liberated a street off Telegraph Ave during a street-dance

17 Ibid., p. 71-2.
18 Ibid., p. 144.
20 see Ibid., and Michael Rossman, *On Learning* ..., p. 102 ff.
21 Michael Rossman, "Breakthrough at Berkeley", p. 44.
rally". This was a relatively early, if only partial, application of the term "liberated territory".

Berkeley radicals had been attempting to establish a presence in the wider community before 1966, with the troop train protests, the International Days of Protest, and other anti-war community organizing efforts. Presumably, in Rossman’s view, it was the illegality of the street demonstration in April 1966, which marked a change, signalling a claim to space which no official authority had granted. There is certainly some truth in this. FSM card tables at Bancroft-Telegraph in early 1964 raised no wide-ranging concerns about the politics of space but these same card tables later that year challenged authority precisely because they symbolized an illegal claim to space. Likewise, successful social and political management, even containment, of protest can depend upon a careful assessment of the politics of space. The Berkeley campus administration, however, was not noted for its wisdom in such matters.

In the wake of FSM, there still remained a separation of campus and community, with tight regulations governing off-campus organizations and people. Early in 1966, for instance, the VDC attempted to hold a rally on the steps of Sproul Hall in protest at the resumption of U.S. bombing of North Vietnam. This would have been the second VDC rally within a week, whereas interim regulations stated that an organization could only hold one rally on Sproul Hall steps with university sound equipment per week. The administration was concerned to see the normal functioning of the university guaranteed (free speech regulations stipulated this) but the protestors insisted that the situation itself was not at all normal, that events outside the campus demanded an immediate response. The rally went ahead and three students were cited and ultimately suspended for violating regulations. The time was not, however, ripe for large-scale activism over what for some must have seemed a peripheral free speech issue. But the incident highlighted remaining

22 Berkeley Barb, August 12, 1966.

23 Carolyn Craven, "Berkeley Does It Again", SDS Regional Newsletter vol. 1 no. 7, February 22, 1966; also see Carolyn Craven, "Comments on Berkeley’s Response to the Resumption of Bombing", SDS Regional Newsletter vol. 1 no. 6, February 6, 1966 (SDS file, Bancroft SPP).
questions related to administrative authority over free speech on campus. The administration certainly sensed that there were problems with even a restricted free speech policy. Later in 1966, it signalled the possible rejection of rights to the steps of Sproul Hall.\textsuperscript{24} Ostensibly, there was concern over the apparent disruption of normal university life. Chancellor Roger Heyns revealed plans to make Sproul Hall a teaching centre,\textsuperscript{25} which would have made the Steps and Plaza ineligible for free speech status. And he further attempted to differentiate rights of free speech from rights of assembly:

Because of its value in assembling a crowd, the microphone has become the prize of those whose style and whose purpose is destructive of academic values.\textsuperscript{26}

Accordingly, Heyns floated potential regulations which would shift speakers to less busy spots on campus, restrict rallies to a size which could be communicated to with an unamplified voice and also impose some restrictions on the content of speech.\textsuperscript{27} While these proposals were never implemented, partly as a result of actual student opposition and foreshadowed resistance, they showed that university bureaucrats recognized the centrality of spatial politics. Too much, however, had already been conceded. To take back that which had been won by FSM would have provoked enormous reaction, even if it might also have hindered political activism for some time.

The administration was making some move away from policies of accommodation and playing with the possibility of outright confrontation. In that context, radical students had to at least defend extending free speech areas, and also attempt to undermine remaining regulations. In November 1966, a dramatic confrontation

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\item \textsuperscript{24} James Petras, "The politics of Bureaucracy", \textit{Liberation} vol. XI no. 1, February 1967, p. 22.
\item \textsuperscript{25} \textit{Ibid.}: Jeff Lustig. "Berkeley Student strike", \textit{The Movement}, January 1967.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Roger Heyns, cited in \textit{Ibid.}, p. 22-3.
\item \textsuperscript{27} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 24. A political background to these proposed moves was provided by the massive victory of right-wing Republicans in the state elections and the impending inauguration of Governor-elect Ronald Reagan (who had made no secret of his desire to crush campus radicalism).
\end{enumerate}
was provoked by a mild-mannered protest. Representatives of an off-campus groups, Women for Peace, decided to set up a conscientious objector's table alongside a Navy recruiting table in the Student Union building. Their request for permission was rejected. The University, through its special relationship with the Government, could allow the Navy table but Women for Peace had to remain off campus.28 The objector's table was established but, when confronted by a campus policeman, the woman staffing it left. Picketers at the Navy table were also challenged and, when one student was arrested, around seventy began a sit in. The assembly was declared unlawful. Alameda County Sheriffs had been called in and they moved aggressively through the crowd, singling out six "non-students" for arrest (including Mario Savio, Jerry Rubin and one of those suspended for his part in the illegal VDC rally earlier that year). They were charged with trespassing and unlawful assembly. Here again divisions between student and non-student, spatial barriers between the campus and the community, were being held onto desperately by the administration, when such artificial separations no longer had any legitimacy within Berkeley's radical movement.29 A meeting of 3,000 students called a strike but, despite a significant degree of student participation, poor or hasty organization produced no victories or, as Michael Rossman put it, gained "no space".30 Nevertheless, in a leaflet prepared for the Strike Committee, Rossman wrote specifically of the territorial imperative:

Direct action against the Administration can only create us the space we need for freedom, as it has done. But the Administration cannot be forced to build for us what we need in that space. The task is ours.

We can defend that space.31

29 Michael Rossman, "Breakthrough at Berkeley", p. 44.
Internal Colonialism and Self-Determination

In its final issue for 1966, the Berkeley Barb displayed a cover photograph of a man, in quasi-military garb, taking aim with a rifle. The headline read "The Spirit of 1967?" and the photo was accompanied by an ironic paean to patriotic rifle workshop:

My rifle and myself are the defenders of my country. We are the masters of our enemy. We are saviours of my life.

So be it, until victory is America's and there is no enemy, but peace.32

This was no exhortation to armed rebellion but rather a signal: that, on the one hand, the state might increase its active repression of dissident forces and, on the other, radicals may just have to ponder the possibilities of urban guerilla warfare. Indeed, 1967 was the year when some New Leftists in Berkeley began "playing with guns".33

The local New Left had not only experienced violence through street confrontations. In March 1966, the San Francisco headquarters of the Du Bois Club was blown up by a bomb and a month later the VDC headquarters in Berkeley was virtually destroyed in a bomb attack. Armed struggle, in one form or another, was a growing possibility. While the over-riding context was still Vietnam, one group based in Oakland - the Black Panthers - gave particular impetus to New Left revolutionary dreams. Formed in October 1966, by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defence (BPP) quickly gained a name for itself by organizing armed street patrols in the Oakland ghetto district.34 These patrols reflected a desire to confront police intimidation and assault in the ghetto and, on the ideological plane, to announce a policy of

community self-determination. The ten point Platform of the Party began: "We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black Community".\footnote{"Black Panther Party Platform and Program", in Philip S. Foner (ed.), \textit{The Black Panthers Speak} (New York: J.B. Lippincot, 1970), p. 2 (Point One).} This demand for self-determination translated directly into a justification of "self-defense groups that are dedicated to defending our black community from racist police oppression and brutality".\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 3 (Point seven). For a brief assessment of problems with ideology of self-defence see April Carter, \textit{Direct Action and Liberal Democracy} (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1973), p. 85-6. A more sympathetic appraisal of the self-defence strategy is contained in Charles A. and Betty Lou Valentine, "The Man and the Panthers", \textit{Politics and Society}, vol. 2 no. 3, Spring 1972, p. 279 ff.} Self-defence groups were laying a claim to authority over the space of the ghetto (although direct references to space did not pepper the Panther's discourse) and reinforcing that claim with guns. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the Californian legislature would seek to deny such territorial jurisdiction to a dissident, even revolutionary, group. And it is scarcely coincidental that the Assemblyman who moved to restrict the Panther's patrols was local conservative Republican Don Mulford. He introduced a bill which made the bearing of loaded arms within city limits illegal. In a different context, such a bill may simply have been designed to make the city streets safer. Mulford, however, was reflecting the fact that conservative interests in Oakland felt threatened by the Panther's community profile. As Huey Newton explained:

\begin{quote}
If we used the laws in our own interest and against theirs, then the power structure would simply change the laws. Mulford was more than willing to be the agent of change.\footnote{Huey P. Newton, \textit{Revolutionary Suicide} (New York: Ballantine 1973), p. 163.}
\end{quote}

Mulford had, as noted earlier, introduced a bill in 1965 which drew a sharp distinction between students and non-students, making the latter subject to arrest for refusing to leave campus. This bill enabled the "trespassers" to be arrested during the Navy fracas. Mulford was thus schooled in the art of legislative power designed to
control spatial access and diminish the scope of activism.\textsuperscript{38} Paradoxically, however, the Panther reaction to Mulford's bill gained them more publicity in the Bay Area and nationally than they might otherwise have attained. On May 2, 1967, a group of mostly armed Panthers stood with Bobby Seale on the steps of the State Capital at Sacramento as he read an "Executive Mandate" of the Party which protested the discriminatory nature of the legislation and called on blacks "to arm themselves" for defensive purposes. Huey Newton acknowledges that the Panther's written message was overwhelmed by the display of guns.\textsuperscript{39} The Panthers had achieved notoriety and this type of publicity, more than their populist communitarianism, shaped their image over the years to come.\textsuperscript{40}

In Panther ideology, the Black ghetto communities were not simply isolated enclaves but together constituted a black colony within the American nation. The Party put forward a version of the internal colonialism thesis,\textsuperscript{41} in which the analysis of colonial domination and exploitation was applied to the colonial power itself:

\textsuperscript{38} see Bob Avakian, "Oakland's Chief Pigs: the Kaiser Clique", \textit{The Black Panther}, December 7, 1968. Avakian outlines Mulford's role in increasing police power, including the introduction of a bill which made assault upon a police officer a felony rather than a simple misdemeanour. This bill, which changed California's Penal Code, allowed police to lay charges of felony assault rather indiscriminately.

\textsuperscript{39} Huey P. Newton, \textit{Revolutionary Suicide}, p. 167.

\textsuperscript{40} Undoubtedly provoked by police harassment, the Panthers, nonetheless, were not reticent about violence. The police murder of young Party member Bobby Hutton, coupled with the arrest, harrassment or gaoling of BPP leaders, gave the Panthers a (somewhat justified) siege mentality. On the persecution of the Panthers, see Gene Marine, "The Persecution and Assassination of the Black Panthers as Performed by the Oakland Police under the Direction of Chief Charles R. Gain, Mayor John Reading, et. al.", \textit{Ramparts}, June 29, 1968, p. 37-46. Later negative publicity and damaging (but probably accurate) rumours cast a dark image on the Oakland Panthers (see, for instance: Anita Frankel, "Panthers Under Fire ...", \textit{Seven Days}, February 24, 1978, p. 6-7).

... we are dealing with community imperialism, a process whereby certain interests within the white community ... [exploit] the Black community. They have turned the Black community into a market just as other colonies ... are turned into markets by the exploitive interests in the Mother Country.\textsuperscript{42}

Yet the Panthers hardly offered a sophisticated theory of internal colonialism. Flitting uneasily between black nationalism and Marxist-Leninist Mao Tse Tung thought, they never developed a particularly coherent or satisfactory philosophy.\textsuperscript{43} They did, however, stress a communitarian approach which adapted neatly to some New Left thinking about community. For instance, one Bay Area radical, who worked with the Panthers, has expressed the opinion that the most important thing they taught him was to struggle within his own community.\textsuperscript{44}

While quickly developing into a national organization, the Party remained very much tied to local or regional circumstances. The language employed was not specifically spatial, although the very concepts of internal colony and community self-determination contained spatial connotations. And the logic of other nationalist ideology led directly to urban guerilla strategy:

So we are now engaged openly in a war for the national liberation of Afro-America from colonial bondage to the white mother country. In our epoch, guerilla warfare is the vehicle for national liberation all around the world.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{42} The Black Panther, October 26, 1968.

\textsuperscript{43} see James Boggs, Racism and the Class Struggle (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 182-6; Adolph L. Reed Jnr provides a brief scathing critique of the Panthers in "Marxism and Nationalism in Afro-America", Social Theory and Practice vol. 1 no. 4, Fall 1971, p. 34-5. Reed refers to them being "long on symbols and short on substance". But he also argues they "are avowedly, if not religiously, anti-nationalistic" which is only applicable to black cultural nationalism (the very theory of internal colonialism implies some form of political nationalism in the struggle for liberation). Also see Robert H. Allen, Black Awakening in Capitalist America (New York: Anchor 1969), p. 274 ff.

\textsuperscript{44} Gene Dennis, interview with author, May 11, 1979.

\textsuperscript{45} Eldridge Cleaver, "The Land Question ...", p. 70.
Yet, as Marxist critic James Boggs argued, the Panthers did not attempt to cultivate genuine alternative or parallel organizations which could be "bases for expanded struggle". Rather, the focus upon community programmes pushed them towards offering social service provisions, such as a free breakfast project. The problem with this approach, Boggs suggested, was that it did not generate black community control demands for state support (subject to black community control) but rather filled in social welfare gaps for the state. A genuine revolutionary strategy would, instead, have involved the Panthers in developing "de facto parallel power structures" which would ultimately have represented "the urban equivalent of liberated areas". Boggs probably overestimated the potential value of these supposed "liberated areas" and possibly underestimated the part which a Free Food Programme could play in radicalizing the people (or at least some of the people). The Panthers believed that such a concrete example of community support could show what a phrase like "for a people's community socialism" actually meant in practice. Moreover, Newton argued that the community programmes "were aimed at one goal - complete control of the institutions in the community".

The populist communitarian tendencies of the Panthers crystallized around the demand for community control of police. This idea, while supported by many white radicals (including those in the Peace and Freedom Party), was seen as problematic by a number of others, particularly members of SDS. To the Panthers,

46 James Boggs, *Racism and the Class Struggle*, p. 184 (his emphasis).
47 For Panther writings about the Party's community projects, see Philip S. Foner (ed.), *The Black Panthers Speak*, p. 176-181.
50 Huey P. Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide*, p. 185. While the community programmes grew naturally out of the Panther's Platform and Program (point 10 of which began "We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing ..."), they really became strategic focal points in the early 1970s.
51 Originating in Berkeley, the Peace and Freedom groups and Party (PFP) were formed specifically to offer electoral alternatives. A coalition of diverse radical forces, the PFP (which had formed an alliance of sorts with the Panthers) put forward Eldridge Cleaver as its Presidential candidate for the 1968 election.
police in the black community constituted an "occupying army". Community control of police was thus one way of resisting colonialism, of establishing an institutional basis for "power to the people". Or, as Bobby Seale put it:

We want to have control over the people who patrol our neighbourhoods. We want to decentralize the community imperialists. We want to put socialism into practice, even if it is only on a community level at first.52

One critic has suggested that this could lead to little more than a type of domestic neo-colonialism, an altering of the power structure at its margins.53 Moreover, a significant question remained: what does community control mean in a privileged white area; can it not be seen as a legitimating tool of existing power relationships? The Panther response to this sort of doubt amounted to little more than side-stepping:

the white left ... can't understand why we want to decentralize the pig departments. They say this might create Fascist control of some areas. The fact is that Fascism exists in some areas already.54

Further, along with their white allies, the Panthers tried to draw an analogy between white radical enclaves and black communities, suggesting an essential affinity:

When forces struggling for social change emerge in the white community, the role of the police as colonial enforcers expands to include the intimidation and breaking up of the movement. This is what the campus community in Berkeley has experienced, on an escalating basis, in the past five years ... This police role is

52 Bobby Seale, interview in Berkeley Barb, August 8-14, 1989.
53 Adolph L. Reed Jnr., "Marxism and Nationalism ...", p. 18.
analogous to the role of a colonial power controlling the population of a country.55

The internal colonialism thesis can be taken only so far. Nevertheless, as a symbol or metaphor, this notion of police power in Berkeley being an extension of internal colonial domination fitted, as we shall see, the growing mood of white radicals. It gave further fuel to concepts of discrete zones or territories, some of which were liberated. Thus the proposal for community control referred to "separate and independent police departments for the indigenous communities" within Oakland and Berkeley: "in Oakland, one for the black community (including the Chicanos) and one for the white community; in Berkeley, one for the black community, one for the campus community, and one for the remainder of the city".56 The assumption here is that these cities were neatly divisible into coherent communities with specific needs.57 Even if this were true, such demands reflected more than a populist local orientation. They were profoundly localist and as such fractured any sense of social liberation. It is one thing to fight for community control of an oppressed ghetto area but quite another to translate that into a series of community control programmes which, in the end, may break up a larger ideal of community.

In short, visions of community were collapsed into specific geographic domains. As argued earlier, this sort of geographic specificity is very important in establishing a genuine communitarian spirit. But so, too, are policies and programmes which see beyond small town America. After all, there is some truth in Martin Oppenheimer's assertion that the New Left search for community could represent "a kind of left-wing Goldwaterism which sees the village or small town or ghetto neighbourhood as virtuous,

56 Ibid.
57 see also Michael P. Hancock and Vella Garcia Hancock, "Community Control of the Police" (unpublished paper, Community Control of Police file, Bancroft SPP): "Central to the Community Control model is a redefinition of neighborhoods as geographical entities, characterized by distinctive social, economic and racial make-up" (p. 10).
dealienating, a town-meeting sort of place ...".58 Demands for community control of police helped inspire such all-to-easy dismissals of *Gemeinschaft* yearnings.

In 1969 Eldridge Cleaver advocated the "need to develop a concept of urban geography" which applied to revolutionary processes within American society.59 He poured scorn on those who saw Third World evolutionary strategies (like Debray's theory of guerilla warfare)60 as directly relevant to modern urban industrial conditions. Urban guerillas must, he advised, examine their own "terrain". Spatial politics, in other words, had to adjust to different social conditions. This, indeed, was a local extension of community self-determination: far from being an abstract general process, social revolution began within specific communities with particular structures and needs. Cleaver's own revolutionary romanticism was, however, displayed prominently. Indeed, after Cleaver effectively abandoned the Party, Huey Newton (in somewhat opportunistic fashion) accused him of having taken it down an adventurist road, of turning it into a revolutionary cult, of celebrating the gun and thus, in the end, alienating the black community.61 Newton stressed community focussed campaigns and was consequently accused, by some white radicals of creeping reformism.62 Yet for all their militant, even revolutionary, gusto the Panthers had always been, in essence, a community organization. Even though the Party became national, the local focus was most significant. The black "colony" was, more often than not, the Oakland or Chicago or New York ghetto district. While the Panthers' demands had a national flavor and


appearance, they were grounded (sensibly enough) in local conditions. To some extent, they knew "the terrain" alluded to by Cleaver. Indeed, despite alliances with some white radicals and a high national profile, they never escaped it. There is a sense in which community, as a concept, hemmed them in, restricted their focus. Nevertheless, if only for a brief period, they gained some authority within the Oakland black community and even more amongst Berkeley radicals. An increasing turn towards "revolutionary" strategy, while also evident in the national arena, was partly propelled in the Bay Area by the Panthers and by police action directed against them. Some white New Leftists took to heart Huey Newton's message: "when we're attacked and ambushed in the black colony - then the white revolutionary students and intellectuals and all the other whites who support the colony should respond by defending us, by attacking the enemy in their community".

While friendly critics, like Todd Gitlin, expressed doubts about a wholesale adoption of Panther strategy and rhetoric, for many they represented the vanguard of the revolution. And this turn towards "revolutionary" ideology and planning required, so it was thought, a new organizational medium, one based in the radical community but a small self-sufficient part of it: the collective or affinity group. Just as the Panther concentration upon community could actually sponsor a retreat to community, so too the New Left celebration of revolution partly presaged a strategic withdrawal to small collectives composed of trusted comrades. In Berkeley, to some extent, the radical community was beginning to show signs of self-absorption. Even as they dreamed of international revolution, many sought solace in their affinity group.

63 Clayborne Carson has questioned whether the Panther's cultivation of local leadership (borrowed from SNCC strategy in the south) was a workable policy in urban areas. He does not suggest a viable alternative. On the relationship between SNCC and the Panthers, see Carson's In Struggle ..., p. 278-286.


66 see Harold Jacobs, The Personal and the Political ... p. 255.
Barricades for the Revolution

The first major concrete signal of a shift in strategic direction for Berkeley's radical community came with Stop the Draft Week (STDW) in October 1967. Nancy Zaroulis and Gerald Sullivan suggest, in their study of protest against the Vietnam war, that STDW activism in Oakland "provided, for a few days, an unpleasant vision of Che Guevara's guerilla tactics transferred to urban America".67 This supposed guerilla warfare was, however, evident on only one day and marked what was, in all probability, a necessary turning point.68 Amongst other things, STDW suggested strongly that elements of the anti-war movement were willing to go beyond passive protest and peaceful resistance, were ready to bring the war home "by any means necessary" (to use an increasingly fashionable phrase of the time).

Organized by a coalition of Bay Area groups and individuals, including Berkeley activists, San Francisco SNCC workers and the Resistance,69 STDW was aimed at stopping the operations of Oakland's Northern Californian Induction Centre. The ostensible aim, however, was less important than the symbolic politics. The anti-war movement was hardly likely to bring military conscription in northern California to a grinding halt but, in its attempt, could highlight future directions and potentialities. The actions began

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69 The Resistance was founded by a small group of Bay Area radicals in March 1967, and soon became a national movement. Anti-draft work had become a focus for some Berkeley radicals at a time of apparent hiatus in local movement activity: "Berkeley radicals have been community organizing for three years. But at the beginning of this academic year they felt they had little to show for their efforts. They had not radically changed the University, the peace movement seemed to me in a shambles, and although the community had all the right sentiments they appeared to be turned off politics". (Frank Bardacke, "Stop-the-Draft Week", p. 476). On the Resistance, see Michael Ferber and Staughton Lynd, *The Resistance* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971).
peacefully enough, with a sit-in at the Induction Centre on Monday October 16 which resulted in over 100 arrests. The following day, thousands marked on the Induction Center following a teach-in at the Berkeley campus which Alameda County Court had declared illegal due to the expected advocacy of unlawful activities. Surrounding the Center and, once again, sitting-in, the protestors were confronted suddenly by the Oakland police. Clubs, tear gas and mace were used in a brutal assault upon the crowd which left around fifty seriously injured. One participant remarked: "Only now do I understand the Black Power men who say 'guns, not words' ...".70 Two days of comparatively peaceful protest at the Centre ensued, prompting prominent activist Marvin Garson to wonder why the momentum had been lost.71 But by Thursday planning for militant street action (which had really been the organizers' intention all along) began to take form:

8 groups would form, four to mass around the induction center, one each for the four key intersections surrounding the building. When the cops advanced, people would retreat by slowly moving backward. Under no circumstances was anyone to sit down. Mobility was the word. No sitting, no running. Be flexible, improvise, don't attack the cops but be aggressively defensive.72

On the Friday morning between five and ten thousand protestors had gathered around the Center. The front line troops wore helmets and carried pickets that doubled up as shields. What occurred, in the whimsical words of Marvin Garson, was "a real, honest-to-goodness riot, complete with street barricades" but "in many respects a peaceful, friendly, non-violent riot".73 Slogans were splashed on walls and pavements. Garbage cans, news racks, potted trees, benches, private cars (with tyres deflated) and overturned government cars were hurled or pushed into service as barricades.

73 Marvin Garson, reporting in the Los Angeles Free Press vol. 4 no. 43, October 27 - November 2, 1967.
The barricaded streets constituted "liberated territory". Police were able to escort buses with inductees through the crowd but, despite this apparent failure, the protest represented a significant symbolic victory. Downtown Oakland had been "occupied" for four hours, was turned into (so it seemed) a "liberated zone" and there was not even any particularly hostile reaction from the city's citizenry. When the protest was officially declared a riot, and there was a threat of National Guard intervention, the crowd dispersed. For Zaroulis and Sullivan the "triumph" of this event "was intoxicating but short-lived". But this is a misplaced interpretation. The impact of Stop the Draft Week upon the New Left as a whole, and Berkeley radicals in particular, was profound: "For seven years we've been sitting down ... Everyone in Berkeley today knows that we'll never sit down again".

When, a few weeks later, two students were suspended from UC Berkeley for their participation in the illegal STDW rallies on campus, over 2,000 students occupied Sproul Hall. A Liberation News Service Report captured, in somewhat exaggerated form, the atmosphere: "Students at the University of California at Berkeley moved into the vanguard once again, storming Sproul Hall, the Winter Palace of the Berkeley administration, and milling the hell out of the place". From sit-in to "mill-in": strategic spatial politics was adjusting to a new radical sensibility. The building represented "liberated territory", "liberated coffee" was served on the third floor,

75 "The Promise ...", New Left Notes.
77 Marvin Garson in Los Angeles Free Press, October 27 - November 2, 1967. STDW resulted in conspiracy charges being directed against seven activists (including one, Frank Bardacke, who was not an organizer but just happened to be around). They were later acquitted, although at the time their trial was seen by some to be as important as that of the Chicago defendants. On the Oakland Seven and their trial see: Terrence Cannon and Reese Erlich, "The Oakland Seven", Ramparts April 1969, p. 35-37; Frank Bardacke, "The Oakland 7", in M. Goodman [e.d], The Movement ..., p. 480-5; Art Goldberg, "Nobody there but us Scapegoats", Berkeley Barb, January 3-9, 1969; Charles Garry and Art Goldberg, Streetfighter in the Courtroom: the people's advocate (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1977), p. 153-180.
students moved in and out of offices, from floor to floor, an Agit-Prop group provided entertainment and writer Paul Jacobs conducted a seminar on the main floor.\textsuperscript{79} The emphasis, as with STDW, was on movement. Fantasies of revolution were being fed by potentially potent forms of resistance and rebellion. Berkeley, the radical heart of a radical region, had become a strategic enclave, a guerilla base, a zone of preparation for ever more militant displays.

When Michael Rossman alluded to the Berkeley radical community's territorial consciousness, he was acknowledging the extent to which spatial politics was mediating ideological and tactical considerations to an unprecedented extent.\textsuperscript{80} Telegraph Avenue, in particular, served as a beacon signalling the ascendance of street politics. Increasing numbers of "non-student" street people flocked there (including exiles from the Haight), adding to the already sizeable community of dissidents in the south campus area. These street people were not, in the main, starry-eyed hippies. They tended to be a more militant, more politically grounded, subcultural breed. Nevertheless, their style of rebellion was shaped by street-wise surrealism rather than Marxist orthodoxies. They may have been classic lumpenproletarians but this "scum, offal, refuse of all classes"\textsuperscript{81} was, so sections of the New Left thought, shaping up as an agent of change.\textsuperscript{82} They were, in particular, leading the fight for space or at least defending and consolidating a specific territory. Telegraph Ave was \textbf{theirs} and the local police force was a potential


\textsuperscript{80} Michael Rossman, \textit{The Wedding ....}, p. 315-19.\textsuperscript{\textsection}


\textsuperscript{82} This was not an entirely new development. The idealization of those outside the system, marginalized in one way or another, was a characteristic feature of the early New Left. The writings of Norman Mailer ("The White Negro"), amongst others, encouraged such a view. Generalizations about the street people in Berkeley (including classifying them as lumpenproletarians) are risky because seasoned political radicals who frequented Telegraph Ave often shared the same styles of dress, behaviour, speech and so on.
occupying army (here the Panther influence was manifest). Riots along the Avenue in 1968 highlighted this development.

On June 28, 1968, a rally on Telegraph, organized to express solidarity with French students and workers, was declared illegal about an hour before it was scheduled to end. But the police did not succeed in dispersing the protestors - barricades were erected, bonfires lit, cars rolled onto intersections, rocks thrown, street lamps smashed. The police responded with tear gas, driving the demonstrators back to the campus. The following night a further rally, beginning on campus and then proceeding down Telegraph to the site of the previous night's conflict, also erupted. The police hemmed in the protestors with the aid of gas and systematic beatings ensued. But rocks were still thrown, windows smashed and even one Molotov cocktail was hurled at a line of highway patrolmen. A state of emergency was declared early the next morning and the south campus area placed under curfew between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. Fairly soon the curfew extended to the entire city and, in the language of the times, Berkeley was "occupied territory".

The militant defiance of the protestors (who actually acted against tactics devised by the rally's organizers, the Trotskyist Young Socialist Alliance) engendered descriptions of the riot as "a turf battle", "a struggle for ghetto self-rule", the claiming of territory by a new nation. The term "turf" was basically appropriated from gang jargon, "ghetto self-rule" from the Black Panthers, and Third World Revolutionaries (along with the Panthers) provided the central impulse behind the nationalist metaphor. Vanguards of the revolution had thus been nominated and were lining up in Berkeley much as they did from policy statements soon to be drafted by the Weatherman faction of SDS. This does not mean that urban gangs


constituted a vanguard but the Panthers and Third World revolutionaries supposedly did and, increasingly, working class youth was seen to be a critical agent of change. It is thus no accident that New Leftists began to borrow working class youth argot and style. Even the gang subcultures could be seen as embodying a state of being outside the system. They controlled their turf, defended it against various threats. The same, of course, was true of the Panthers. The language of Berkeley radicals thus suggested strongly a debt to, if not an idealization of, outcast styles of rebellion.

Yet something else about this use of language was significant. It reflected a localization of struggle. In other words, the use of spatial metaphors such as turf or ghetto self-rule tended to reflect a politics of community self-interest. For some of the protestors or "rioters", the central issue was free speech, the right to assembly. For many street people, however, the key question was "ownership and control ... There was a street to be taken." 86 A leaflet handed out at the time attempted to stem the flow of grandiose claims: "We have not yet liberated Telegraph Ave, let alone the larger community".87 Not yet, perhaps, but to Michael Rossman it was "an episode in a struggle for ghetto self-rule".88 New terminology reflected shifts in political consciousness. Amongst those involved in the riot, there was "a new sense of defending their territory against an enemy who did not belong there".89 Community consciousness was inflating quickly into something else - nationalism. Even if the internal colonialism theory (and consequent strategic planning) had some merit in relation to black communities, it would seem particularly inappropriate as an explanation of student and street people enclaves or so-called "youth ghettoes". Nevertheless, it was argued, the Berkeley radicals were "already a kind of nation"90 and their rebellion could thus be seen as integral part of the international and internal anti-colonial uprising.91

86 Kathy Mulherin, "Berkeley Kids ..." (her emphasis).
87 Barricade, cited in Ibid.
89 "We Want the Street", The Movement, August 1968 (emphasis in original).
90 Kathy Mulherin, "Berkeley Kids ...".
91 Arlene Eisen Bergman and Joe Blum, "Don't Follow Leaders ...".
These rather overblown ideas about Berkeley's role were accompanied by a strategic reliance upon affinity groups:

Affinity groups, sometimes called cell groups, have grown partly as a reaction against the old-time elitist, dull organizations. In Berkeley, they were the form most adapted to street battle. Small groups of close friends developed trust and solidarity necessary for illegal street action and meaningful political discussion.92

Simultaneously affirming the struggle for ghetto self-rule (or national self-determination) and the virtues of the small group, Berkeley radicals were tending to render the very concept of community incoherent. Within white radical enclaves, ideas of community control or local power could even reflect a restrictive, inward-focussed, view of human emancipation. Community, in a sense, could be defined in an increasingly narrow fashion, depending upon whether your affinity group was friendly with the one down the block.

In the wake of the street battles, a report from the Berkeley City Manager revealed just how important the politics of space had become. At one stage, his report stressed the role of outsiders:

... the perpetrators of this mounting violence were not "kids" on a spontaneous binge, they were not "students"; and, typically, they were not even residents of Berkeley. They were organized; their activities were planned; they were typically in their mid-twenties or older; they were largely outsiders; and some of them were extremely dangerous.93

The outsider was alien, an unwanted presence, an illegitimate participant in the affairs of a community to which he or she did not really belong. So figures can be produced (and were) to substantiate the claim that outsiders (wherever outside might be) were responsible. As noted in an earlier chapter, this concept of outsiders

92 Ibid.

is a useful part of the ideological armour which a ruling group can display if its mechanisms of control, including the management of social space, are being challenged. More important, however, than this standard tool of defining legitimacy was the Manager's interpretation of the reasons behind the initial rally on Telegraph.

The protest organizers had insisted upon a particular site for the rally (the Telegraph-Haste intersection, three blocks from the campus entrance at Bancroft-Telegraph) because "it was the most favourable for the expression of free speech".\(^{94}\) The City Council had offered a different area which was a short walk away from Telegraph. This was reminiscent of the University administration's attempts to propose all sorts of free speech areas other than Bancroft-Telegraph and, later, the Sproul Hall steps. Freedom to speak does not just depend upon the ability to speak but also upon the concrete circumstances underpinning that supposed freedom. If the circumstances are such that the capacity to communicate effectively is impeded by, for instance, a poor venue then it is (at least so some degree) a circumscribed freedom. Berkeley's City Manager, however, imputed a sinister design to the rally organizers':

> When I say that the purpose of the rally was ostensibly to express support for the French students, I mean that the **purpose** of the rally was completely secondary to the central concern. The primary concern was the **location** of the rally, because it was the location that was counted on to generate the presence of the non-political groups in the area and their involvement in any potential conflict with the police.\(^{95}\)

He had a point, of course. Location was critical and, to a certain extent, the ostensible purpose of the rally was all but forgotten once the rioting began. But the suggestion that this was essentially a "contrived affair"\(^ {96}\) in which free speech and solidarity with the French dissidents were explicit factors which shielded a more

\(^{94}\) Ibid., p. 3.

\(^{95}\) Ibid., p. 2 (his emphasis).

\(^{96}\) Ibid., p. 15.
important confrontational strategy is only partially correct. The crucial point is that issues were multiplying to the point where, as a Berkeley Commune leaflet produced towards the end of the year stated, "the issue is not the issue".97

The Berkeley Commune was the key point of organization for the street people along Telegraph. Arising at the time of the June riot, it started out with little more than a table in front of a book-shop but quickly sought to co-ordinate and even impose some organizational discipline upon the disparate and transient street people.98 The commune upheld a localist orientation but placed it in the context of a supposed internationalist perspective:

'Free Speech' and 'Free Assembly' are bullshit issues ... we are fighting for our lives - for free streets on which we can have life-style we create as an alternative to the amerikan way of death ...

We must also be clear that we are not here to protest events somewhere else. Chicago or Paris or Oakland are merely other reflections of the struggle we are waging everywhere we live. And wherever we choose to meet, wherever we choose to be, we must now declare liberated. Liberate Berkeley will be fact not slogan.99

Strategic considerations, however, dictated a guarded retreat. Rather than living off memories of the recent street battle, the Commune advised: "Let us withdraw into our families and work in

97 'A Little Treatise on Dying', (Berkeley Commune file, Bancroft SPP). Also see Wini Breines, Community and Organization .... p. 18 ff., where she discusses implications of the slogan "the issue is not the issue" but does not attribute it to the Commune.

98 Paul Glusman, "Berkeley: Street People Fend for Themselves", San Francisco Express Times, August 7, 1968; also see "Anarcho-Cynics on the Thin Fine Line", The Movement, September 1968. The Commune saw itself as connected to the Motherfuckers, a radical collective on New York's Lower East Side. The chief figure in the Commune was an Iranian - hence the group was sometimes known as the Persian Fuckers (see Thomas Farber, Tales for the Son of My Unborn Child: Berkeley 1966-1969, New York, E.P. Dutton and Co., 1971, p. 67-74).

our affinity groups so that at the next confrontation we act with coherence and power".100

The mid-year incident had been defused when the City Council permitted a July 4 rock concert on Telegraph to proceed. But there were other street battles that year in Berkeley. In September, for instance, the Avenue could be described as "a quiet police state" or "under a state of siege", following the imposition of curfews, systematic police patrols and the declaration of a state of civil disaster.101 Yet Telegraph avenue would not go away, could not be controlled and patrolled out of existence. Even while occupied by enemy forces, it remained symbolic of liberated territory.

100 Barricade, vol. 1 no. 3 (Berkeley Commune file, Bancroft SPP).

101 San Francisco Express Times, September 11, 1968; also see Marvin Garson, "Confessions of a Mescaline Eater", San Francisco Express Time, October 16, 1968. Garson refers to riots "becoming a permanent institution on Telegraph".
By late 1968, revolutionary ideology and strategy permeated Movement politics. In 1969, the National Office of SDS effectively collapsed as two warring factions, centred around Weatherman and Progressive Labor (PL), fought over the correct line on revolution. The high points of struggle in the Bay Area were student protests at Berkeley and San Francisco State, and the People's Park battle in Berkeley. The student struggles revolved around demands for community access to and control of education. The ideological framework within which student leaders operated was borrowed, to a large extent, from the Black Panthers. While such campus conflict raised community issues directly related to the politics of space and further cemented the Bay Area's vanguard role, it was the explosive People's Park episode which captured the essence of spatial conflict in the 1960s. It brought into focus key questions regarding the ownership, control and purpose of space. It also helped reinforce parochial or provincial tendencies. The Berkeley Liberation Program placed spatial politics at the top of the revolutionary agenda and projected a strategy which would make Berkeley a self-contained enclave. Not only was Berkeley different from America, not only was it at the forefront of radical politics nationally, not only was it the base for revolution but it was also destined to be an island of socialism in the belly of the beast. The Program was perhaps the logical culmination of a radical political style mediated by a potent awareness of place.
Towards the Revolution

As the revolutionary drums rolled in Berkeley, a provincialist spirit took hold. This was not reflected in all radical literature coming out of the city and many leftist organizations consciously distanced themselves from the local scene. A group like Progressive Labor (PL), which was helping destroy SDS nationally and dominated Berkeley's chapter, espoused a doctrine of revolution drawn up in a different time and for a different place. Berkeley held no special charm or magic for it, except as a possible organizing base. PL and other more orthodox Marxist-Leninist sects, like the Spartacist League, were quite removed from Berkeley's predominant radical political culture which still thrived upon loose organization, spontaneity, the politics of the moment. References to space scarcely appeared in their propagandistic tracts, possibly because it seemed to have little to do with class. It would not have occurred to them that class segmentation in capitalist society was also spatial segmentation, that the politics of space possessed more resonances than street people could articulate. Nevertheless, because the more hard-line Marxists were not immersed in the world of Berkeley radicalism, they saw through some of its ideological gloss. "Part of the problem", reasoned the Bay Area Spartacist League, is that "the [Berkeley] radical movement is too tied to the campus and its own 'community issues'".¹ That was part of the problem, yet it was also part of the solution. Berkeley's vanguard role had induced an intense local consciousness which was beginning to feed fantasies of revolution in one city, if not one street. A concentration upon local conditions and issues (fighting on your own terrain) does not automatically lead radicals in that direction. It all depends, and depended, upon a simultaneous awareness of locale and avoidance of localism.

¹ "The Park and the Revolution", Bay Area Spartacist League (UC Archives, People's Park file).
The Bay Area Revolutionary Union, an SDS splinter group, perceived essential contradictions running through Berkeley radicalism since FSM, "contradictions between serving the people or serving the narrowly defined (and often false) privileges of students and street people". There was some truth in this. "The people", however, could just be an amorphous blob of clashing interests and diverse ideologies, whereas our people (although frequently referred to as the people) constituted the Movement's soul. The very concept of "serving the people" came from Maoist ideology via the Black Panthers. The Revolutionary Union was not the only local (or regional) group which had adopted at least some of the Panther's logic, rhetoric and style. Much of the local New Left (including those people supposedly trapped on campus or in the community) was influenced profoundly and directly by them. For instance, if the Panthers came onto the Berkeley campus they, to use the words of Frank Bardacke, "held a lot of weight".

An Oakland-based New Left publication, John Brown Speaks, stressed the role of blacks: their struggle was the central concern, they formed the vanguard. The role of whites was "strategic supplementation and defense of" black liberation. The very idea of a "white guerilla movement was spurned as romantic fantasy". This was in 1968, prior to the Berkeley street battles. Less than a year later, John Brown Speaks would be advocating something very similar to a white guerilla movement, even if couched in terms of

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2 While essentially Marxist-Leninist in focus, the Bay Area Revolutionary Union tended to be a little less dogmatic or orthodox than some other sects. It did arise out of the New Left, whereas other sectarian groupings tended to be or to come from "old left" organizations. Thus it perceived a special role for youth and was, indeed, part of the Revolutionary Youth Movement faction (RYM11) during the SDS leadership battles in 1969. see Kirkpatrick Sale, SDS, p. 566 (Sales does mostly refer to it as the Radical Union but, in all probability, he was was confusing two distinct groups - the Revolutionary Union and the Berkeley Radical Students' Union).

3 "The Battle of People's Park", Revolutionary Union publication, (SDS papers, SHSW, University of California Locality File), p. 2.

4 Frank Bardacke, interview with author.


"self defense". This sort of shift in temperament registered nationally. Underpinning general developments, however, were local circumstances and conditions. Ideological battles over the correct revolutionary line were being staged in the national arena by SDS. Meanwhile, signposts for the revolution pointed to the Bay Area.

Early in 1969, a journalist exposed what he saw as plans to form a revolutionary party. An instructor at the Midpeninsula Free University supposedly listed "a frightening set of action plans" at a Maoist gathering held in his Palo Alto home. For instance, certain business and community leaders were to be assassinated during the revolution (which was given a target-date of 1973). Although this sounds like journalistic sensationalism, revolutionary times had arrived, even in Palo Alto. Max Crawford's amusing semi-autobiographical novel The Bad Communist paints a picture of radicalism in Stanford-Palo Alto moving onto an ultra-left limb in the early 1970s, flirting with terrorist tactics and seeing the revolution around every corner.

Campus radicalism had been slow to develop at Stanford, mostly because of the elite background of the students, but by the late 1960s a significant group of mainly graduate students were focussing their concerns upon Stanford's role as a linch-pin of the military industrial complex. The political direction of Stanford radicals seemed far from provincial. After all, they were struggling against imperialism.

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9 Mac Crawford, The Bad Communist (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979). Jim Schoch, a Stanford activist at the time, cannot remember any particular year being nominated for the revolution but does recall his group envisioning "full-scale war" within ten years (interview with the author, August 1979).
10 "Stanford: The Factory Comes to Valhalla", Leviathan, March 1969; Jim Schoch, interview with author. On Stanford's role in American imperialism, see the SRI booklet (New Left Collection, HIWRP); Steve Weissman, "Demons and Demonstrators at Stanford", Leviathan, March 1969; various issues of The Midpeninsula Observer, for instance November 18-December 1, 1968 and January 22-February 5, 1969. The Stanford Research Institute (SRI) was the main body under attack from local radicals. It had direct connections with defence contractors, conducted research into chemical and biological warfare, and participated in economic development and political counter-insurgency programmes in various Third World nations.
Nevertheless, they concentrated almost exclusively upon Stanford's role in imperialist ventures and possibly over-estimated the university's significance in expansionist policy formation and practice. They did show the way in which the war in Vietnam could become a significant local issue but they also tended to ignore factors which were not directly related to imperialism:

Everything was refracted through the lens of ... imperialism ... We would not allow anyone to talk about capitalism unless they coupled it with imperialism ... We bent the stick too much in one direction and it gave us a one-sided theoretical and strategic understanding of what we were about.

There was a battle over territory in 1968, when a local lawyer and land-owner refused to lease a building to the Midpeninsula Free University. The Ad Hoc Committee for the Liberation of Downtown Palo Alto (someone had a sense of humour) sponsored a rally which ultimately "liberated two buildings and took over the street twice". The conflict resulted in a degree of interest in the whole question of property ownership and space in Palo Alto but, in general, radical activism was mostly directed against Stanford University's participation in imperialist policies and programmes. Elsewhere in the Bay Area, the politics of space was a much more critical issue.

Part of the problem for Stanford radicalism, as noted in an earlier chapter, was the structural separation of the Stanford campus and Palo Alto, a separation which actively discouraged students from participating in local community politics. Moreover, distance from

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11 Jim Schoch, interview with author.


13 Jim Schoch, interview with author.


15 *Peninsula Observer*, November 18 - December 1, 1968.
Berkeley and San Francisco also helped sponsor a degree of insularity.\footnote{16}

**Self-Determination and the University**

While the Black Panthers did not play a direct leadership role in Bay Area student protests, they greatly influenced the ideological dimension of two important student strikes towards the end of the 1960s. These strikes, at San Francisco State College and Berkeley, revolved around issues of self-determination and community control. Panther communitarian ideology was, in a sense, being translated into campus radicalism. The strike at S.F. State, beginning in November 1968, was organized and conducted by the Black Students Union (BSU) in coalition with the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF). At Berkeley the strike began two months later and was led by the local TWLF. For once, Berkeley's struggle tended to mirror that of S.F. State. Indeed, student leaders at State (both black and white) saw themselves as the vanguard of national campus activism. And SDS national conventions around that time reinforced such a perspective.\footnote{17} The S.F. State and Berkeley strikes generated massive disruptions, police "occupation" of campuses and numerous battles and arrests. Following a request by UC's Chancellor, Governor Reagan even declared a state of extreme emergency in Berkeley. Yet the conflict at S.F. State was particularly volatile. The College was actually closed down at one stage but recommenced operations under stringent emergency regulations which severely restricted freedom of speech and threatened sympathetic faculty strikers with instant dismissal. At the time, the S.F. State conflict seemed singularly significant:

\footnotetext[16]{Jim Schoch, interview with author.}
\footnotetext[17]{Alex Forman, interview with author, August 16, 1979; *The Daily Gater*, January 9, 1969.}
No previous American university struggle has been so long, violent and bitter as the strike now being fought at San Francisco State College. None has sent shock waves through so much of the society, or created as deep a polarization. Only in American colonies and dependencies abroad, or in the history of American labour before the present generation of students was born, are there equals to this conflict. At S.F. State, history has not merely moved, it has leaped.18

This observation tended towards overstatement but it contained an essential truth. The conflict at S.F. State was not simply a local phenomenon. It had national implications regarding, firstly the form and content of education and, secondly, the role which an urban college campus should play within society. In both strikes, the explicit focus was upon educational matters but such concerns were placed within an overall social context. Ostensibly, the TWLF and BSU were advocating campus reforms. In reality, however, their demands broke through the walls of the College or University and sought to highlight educational issues which related to the community - not community in the abstract, not any community, but black and Third World communities. Like the Panthers, the BSU and TWLF did not speak a language permeated with spatial imagery. For them, the politics of space was quite specifically the politics of community.

Lasting around four and a half months, the strike at S.F. State arose out of non-negotiable demands for self-determination initially

18 Martin Nicolaus, "S.F. State: History Takes a Leap", New Left Review, 54, March-April 1969, p. 17. One reason for the strike's significance was S.F. State's status in California's higher education system. Colleges like S.F. State were on the second tier of a three tier system (with major universities on the first tier and junior colleges on the third). Many State students thus came from working class or ghetto backgrounds. It was perhaps a paradox that BSU leaders were basically from the middle class (Alex Forman, interview with author).
formulated by the BSU. The crucial issue concerned a demand for the establishment of a Black Studies Department which would have an autonomous role within the College, including "the sole power to hire faculty and control and determine [its] destiny". Related to this was a demand, coming from the TWLF, for a School of Ethnic Studies in which "each particular ethnic organization would have "authority and control of the hiring and retention of any faculty member, director, and administrator, as well as the curriculum in a specific area of study". Similarly, TWLF demands at Berkeley centred upon the creation of a Third World College and "Third World Control Over Third World Programs". Questions of relevance abounded. Courses, degrees, study itself should be relevant to, and serve the interests of, the underprivileged communities. Concepts of an education which transcended the particular could be sacrificed easily in a fight for relevance. Much education was, however, already tied to the particular needs of corporations or policy institutions rather than the needs of the poor or those with little access to political and economic power. So BSU and TWLF insistence upon relevance should be placed in the context of systematic deprivation, discrimination and exclusion. Kay Boyle, a white teacher sympathetic to the students, saw their struggle as vitally connected to a general project of social transformation:

Initially, there were ten demands from the BSU and then five additional ones from TWLF. These became the fifteen TWLF demands. Other demands included the withdrawal of disciplinary action against BSU students, the retention of a dismissed member of staff (George Murray, Panther Minister of Education) and the admission of all black students (for the TWLF it was all non-whites) who applied in the Fall of 1969. The demands are reprinted in William Barlow and Peter Shapiro, An End to Silence: the San Francisco State Student Movement in the 1960s (New York: Pegasus 1971), p. 326-7. Stanford's Black Student Union had earlier won a victory but their demands were limited to increases in the numbers of black students and staff, as well as greater decision-making power for them within the University (I.L. Horowitz & W.H. Friedland, The Knowledge Factory, p. 285).

Ibid., p. 326. This had been an issue for three years on campus but the College administration would not agree to the creation of a Black Studies Program.

Ibid., p. 327.

Black students were not for a moment asking the indulgence of a mystical experience of their black cultural past, but for the relevant knowledge of how to give substance to their people's desperate political needs.23

This focus upon the needs and desires of the black or Third World communities was, to use the words of Martin Nicolaus, the "genius" of the strike.24 Rather than pushing narrow campus concerns, the strike leadership connected educational issues to local communities (such as the Latino Mission District or the black Hunter's Point ghetto). But in doing so, they were to some extent continuing (or seeking to extend) S.F. State's special contribution to local (and even national) educational programmes in the 1960s. This contribution was grounded in three separate but related projects: the Tutorial Program, the Community Involvement Program and the Experimental College.25 The Tutorial Program, which began in 1964, involved students going into local ghetto neighbourhoods and teaching children to read. The Community Involvement Program or "Work-Study Pilot Project" went beyond this and even encouraged community organizing, such as assistance with the formation of Tenants' Unions. While these projects were accredited parts of the College, they hinted at parallel organizational forms. And those behind the establishment of The Experimental College in the middle of the decade were heavily influenced by theories of parallel organizations or counter-institutions.26 The Experimental College was not, strictly speaking, a free university because it was funded by and lived within S.F. State. It was thus part of the institutional framework (as a Black Studies Department, even an "autonomous" one, would be). This might, of course, have compromised its

24 Martin Nicolaus, "SF State ...", p. 22-3.
26 Ibid., p. 80.
experimental status but, for a time, this College offered an educational alternative very similar to the Free Us and even produced its own "underground" newspaper called *Open Process*. A course offered early in the College's life was on Black Nationalism. Around the same time it was running the Black Students Union formed and began campaigning for further courses in black culture, history and identity.

The historical context within which the student strike took shape was thus highly significant (even if, as the conflict developed, it was quickly forgotten). Here, after all was a College which offered opportunities and gave credit for both community involvement and educational innovation. Had the College administration suddenly withdrawn these accredited programmes and closed the Experimental College, then an FSM style struggle - in defence of existing space - might have developed. As it was, close to one year before the strike, publication of *Open Process* was suspended (for reasons of supposed obscenity), disciplinary action was taken against BSU students for an alleged assault upon the editor of the official student newspaper and a radical teacher, John Gerassi was dismissed for participating in a consequent student occupation of the administration building. But these issues provided only a minor background to the BSU-TWLF campaign. It was not, essentially, a struggle for free speech. But it was, in part, a struggle for free space because that is what the hoped for Black Studies Department represented - a dissident enclave, a site of resistance, a base for community action within the College itself. Spatial politics remained a mediating rather than a determining factor, since the "space" which black (and Third World) students were campaigning for was purely a symbol of what could be rather than one which signified the potentialities of what is. Indeed, it cannot be assumed that black

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27 Fifty-seven courses were listed in the College's 1967 catalogue, including ones on "Perspectives of Revolution" and "The New Left", as well as non-political courses on subjects like popular dance or personal awareness. Partly as a result of influence from students in the adjacent Haight-Ashbury district, the latter type of course was coming to predominate.

students would necessarily or automatically have identified a Black Studies Department as their space. That might entirely depend upon the sort of Department it was and also (hardly an insignificant consideration) the type of students enrolled. Nevertheless, the BSU perceived it to be a possible community space on campus (although this style of language was not used) and, as such, its destiny would be determined by black students and staff. In essence, this was the ideology of community self-determination transposed from the ghetto to the campus. A Black Studies Department would not, in other words, be an institutional framework granted by the College administration but would, on the contrary, represent an act of community self-determination on campus. BSU and TWLF demands, if met, would have necessitated a dramatic shift in the power relationships and resource allocations within the College".29 Moreover, relevant Black Studies programmes could supposedly serve as inspirations to action:

Just as the system could try to emasculate black power by turning it into a form of neo-colonialism, it will certainly try the same thing with Black Studies ... a relevant Black Studies Department must be a home for the black revolutionaries...

The function of Black Studies must be to create enemies of oppression, enemies of exploitation. This is a revolutionary task.30

And this was also seen to be the meaning behind the TWLF strike at Berkeley:

The intensity of the reaction to the demand for an autonomous TW College is important because the granting of the College would not simply be an

29 Barlow and Shapiro, An End to Silence ..., p. 314.

'educational reform'. The College would be utilized by oppressed TW people to aid their struggle for liberation. It would be a **pocket of independent TW power** inside the body of the multiversity. It would be an 'educational reform' with revolutionary content.\(^{31}\)

The concept of a revolutionary reform (probably borrowed from Andre Gorz\(^{32}\), together with the notion of "a pocket of independent ... power", pointed towards the sort of counter-institutional strategy advocated by Rudi Dutschke. Dutschke spoke of the "long march through the institutions", the steady subversion of institutional domination from **within**.\(^{33}\) The BSU and TWLF struggles reflected this sort of strategic orientation but they were also, and more explicitly, connected to the fight against internal colonialism.\(^{34}\)

For BSU leaders, Black Studies was both an educational tool and a means for creating radical leaders in the community: "We see ourselves as being basically servants of the community ... We will return to our community and by our struggle we will achieve liberation for our people".\(^ {35}\) Hence the BSU and TWLF at S.F. State were involved with various community groups and organizing projects.\(^ {36}\) Moreover, this in turn generated some important support for the strike within the outside community which clearly signalled the social import of student demands.\(^ {37}\) A "mutual aid agreement"

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31 Rip Off, February 28, 1969, published by Berkeley Radical Student Union, (SDS papers, series 3 no. 20), my emphasis.


36 Ibid., p. 97-8.

between striking oil workers at Richmond's Standard Oil plant and S.F. State students and teachers further magnified the campus-community connections stressed by student leaders.\(^{38}\) It also gave some flesh to the class analysis proffered by major strike supporters on campus (in particular SDS),\(^{39}\) as did, to some extent, an alliance with striking faculty members.\(^{40}\)

Self-determination was not just an ideological handmaiden of ghetto rebellion. Indeed, it could be (as with Panther communitarian commitments) appropriated by white students for their own purposes. A leaflet supporting the TWLF strike at Berkeley made the lessons for and role of white students clear:

The principle of self-determination is at the heart of the TWLF demands... White students, while supporting the strike, can begin to take control of their education away

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39 Whether emanating from the dominant PL faction within SDS or the independent caucus, class analysis was a central concern. The struggle against racism was seen to be inseparably linked to the struggle against class domination. SF State College was an instrument of class oppression and exploitation. See, for example, the *SDS Independent Caucus Position Paper* by John Webb *et al.* (Alex Forman, private collection) and 'The Politics of the Strike Committee: an SDS position', *SDS Regional Newsletter*, January 1969 (SDS file, Bancroft SPP).

40 While faculty members of the local American Teachers' Federation were striking over their own grievances, those were connected to the larger dispute and a number of teachers joined students on the picket lines. For sympathetic appraisals of the strike by State teachers see Kay Boyle, *The Long Walk* ..., p. 1-96 and Leo Litwak and Herbert Wilner, *College Days in Earthquake Country* (New York: Random House, 1971). A mostly antagonistic, although thorough, account is given in Robert Smith, Richard Axen, De Vere Pentony, *By Any Means Necessary: The revolutionary struggle at San Francisco State* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 1970). Some faculty commentators remained simply puzzled or worried: see, for instance, Mervin B. Freedman, "Urban Campus Prototype", *The Nation*, January 13, 1969, p. 38 ff.
from the ideologues who pose as professors and administrators.\textsuperscript{41}

Just as struggling on behalf of blacks earlier in the decade had alerted white students to their own conditions of existence on campus, so too the battle for self-determination would flow over into general campus revolution. This sort of ideological orientation was, however, highly problematic. In short, the symbolic currency of self-determination was tending to be cheapened. And, in the end, the all-or-nothing demands on both campuses mostly produced nothing.

A struggle concerning leadership of the white student support committee at S.F. State focussed upon the question of whether to establish "liberation schools". One faction, associated with the Experimental College and community programmes, advocated the establishment of such schools or parallel organizations in preference to direct confrontation with the armed might of the state. Campus SDS argued, however, that this avoided the central issues of racism and the class nature of higher education.\textsuperscript{42} So development of parallel or alternative organizations would, supposedly, amount to an admission of defeat. Yet "liberation schools" may have represented, actually and symbolically, a base for future struggle. The autonomous Black Studies Department, along with the Third World College, remained at the purely symbolic level and both strikes had fizzled out by April 1969.

Martin Nicolaus tried to capture the essence of the strike at S.F. State in terms of spatial ownership and control:

\begin{quote}
At stake now is more than the question whether $x$ number of students will get fitting degrees. The issue broached, now, is whether or not the [ruling] class shall remain the masters of this patch of earth, or whether this land shall pass to the people.\textsuperscript{43}
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{41} "White Students: Black Demands/Where Do They Meet", Departmental Organizing Committee, Radical Student Union (UC Archives leaflets).
\item \textsuperscript{42} "The Politics of ..." SDS Regional Newsletter.
\item \textsuperscript{43} Nicolaus, "S.F. State ...", p. 31.
\end{itemize}
Todd Gitlin also reflected upon the significance of the struggle in terms of spatial politics: "Black college students ... have begun to bring the street onto the campus". Such language evoked a sense of the times, a feeling that territory was in the process of being liberated. In both campus conflicts, however, spatial dynamics were not particularly prominent and, as already noted, spatial references (apart from community) were used rarely. Black students may have, to use Gitlin's words, begun to bring the street onto the campus and thus raise important questions about the relationship between the university and the community. But it was in Berkeley, where the street already went onto the campus, where walls had been broken down, that the politics of space had come to shape radicalism in the community. The TWLF strike at Berkeley actually shared more with the strike at S.F. State than it did with the political struggles surrounding space which had been gathering momentum within the Berkeley community.

The Street, the Park and Everyday Life

TWLF leaders at Berkeley distanced themselves from the activities of street people during the student strike. They were perceived as harmful to the cause, as directly responsible for much of the violence. And since the battles of 1968, the Telegraph Avenue subculture had become well versed in the politics of street warfare and was able to stage almost impromptu performances at the barricades. Yet some sympathetic New Leftists thought they had to justify the role of street people in theoretical terms. For one writer at the time of the TWLF strike, they were "in a very real sense third world people", white rebel outcasts who had (presumably) adopted

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44 Todd Gitlin, "The Dynamics of the New Left" (Part 2), Motive, November 1970, p. 53.

the mantle of colonial subjects. Hardened but ennobled by life on the street, they had almost come to embody revolutionary spirit and defiance. Their culture spoke of the great refusal, of resistance to cooptation or absorption. Guardians of liberated territory, perhaps they were also the vanguard of the revolution.

This was not, of course, the way all radicals interpreted the position and role of street people. For a significant section of Berkeley's radical community, however, they were crucial allies who enacted in everyday life the slogan "the streets are for the people." They may not have been aware of the particular details about specific issues but for the Berkeley Commune, of course, the issue was never the issue:

because students cannot see the absurdity of their own lives and their own imprisonment, they cannot begin to imagine what the struggle is for ... The function of the student movement is not to make demands on the university, but to destroy the existence of the "student" as a social role and as a character-structure. You MUST DESTROY THE STUDENT WITHIN YOU ... Our goal is not to win concessions, but to kill our masters and create life which is worth living ...47

*John Brown Speaks* also offered a critique of student radicalism: "In the way of effective political gains [in the campus struggles] ... next to nothing has been achieved. About all white radicals have to show for their recent efforts is a few beaten heads and a few arrests ...".48 Taking a leaf out of the Panther's strategic manual, white radicals should practice "self-defense" or "revolutionary survival" and thus learn "the art of the gun". This art (a guerilla aesthetic?) supposedly would engender self-reliance, guard against "cooption", and expose the bankruptcy of American middle class life.49

46 Ibid.
47 "A Little Treatise ..."
48 "Why Learn the art of the Gun?", *John Brown Speaks*, March 13, 1969, p. 1; also see the issues dated February 21 and March 21.
49 Ibid., p. 3-4.
A call to arms had already been heeded by some groups and before long it was *de rigueur* for radical communes in Berkeley to be studying the art of the gun. Conflict over a small plot of land near the Berkeley campus, just off Telegraph Avenue, gave substantial impetus to fantasies of local guerilla warfare. Yet, to some extent, the real significance of this conflict lies elsewhere. People's Park, as the land became known (see Appendix 2), became symbolic of all the struggles around and for space which Berkeley's radical community had engaged in. It respresented, in microcosm, the accumulated goals and desires of a movement which increasingly saw itself as operating within a liberated zone. And it highlighted some of the central social issues engendered by contemporary capitalism. Questions of ecology, urbanism, the quality of life, unalienated labour, ownership and control, colonialism and revolution, relationships between public and private or the personal and the political, leaped onto the agenda. All this, when the land might have been a soccer field? At stake, however, was not a patch of ground but a whole way of life. And this issue will always transcend its subsidiary elements.

The Regents of the University of California and some administrators of the Berkeley campus had been concerned about the role of Telegraph Avenue's radical subculture since 1965.50 It is no mere coincidence that a development plan for the south campus area, initially drafted in 1952, and revised in 1956, suddenly came to life again. Resuscitation of the plan foreshadowed possible future actions against the local radical subculture. Using its powers of eminent domain, the University procured some land in 1967. The large homes which stood there were torn down the following year but, although initially set aside for student dormitories and later for a soccer field, the land lay officially neglected. Unofficially, it was used as a car park and a rubbish tip.51


The University was, in its own small way, using urban redevelopment to try to undercut the material basis of a culture which threatened the dominant order. It was thus operating within a tradition best symbolized by Baron Haussman’s reworkings of Paris in the nineteenth century. Unlike Haussman’s strategy, the University’s plans did not involve a significant assault upon the very form and function of the city. Telegraph Avenue, for instance, was not altered in such a way as to prevent the construction of effective barricades. Nevertheless, this was a minor instance of spatial reconstruction operating, it was hoped, in the interest of the dominant culture. If certain developments had or had not occurred (if, say, a soccer field had been built quickly) this episode might have constituted an unnoticed footnote to Berkeley’s history. But given the implicit intention behind University appropriation of the land, it was perhaps always likely to generate some sort of major struggle.

On April 18, 1969, an advertisement appeared in the Berkeley Barb, announcing "a rural reclamation project for Telegraph Avenue". It was suggested that the land scheduled for redevelopment would become "a cultural, freak-out and rap center of the western world". Inflated eogs were clearly at work here but, beginning two days later, a few hundred people began to create a park on the mud and debris. Within the park, there soon arose Japanese rock gardens, a children’s playground and mobile sculptures. People of all ages and orientations (although they were almost exclusively white) helped in the park and it was seen to be a genuine product of unalienated labour and, as such, a challenge to the dominant culture and its values: "The idea that the people can take an ugly barren lot and convert it into something useful and beautiful strikes at the heart of capitalistic concepts of private property".

53 The idea for a park had been discussed by a small group of people, including local hip merchant Mike Delacour and Yippie Stew Albert. Delacour claims that he had been thinking about turning the plot into a park for many months (interview with author, May 24, 1979).
Some radicals were less convinced. Local SDS, for instance, expressed doubts about the function of a park in revolutionary strategy: "Building a special park for street people and students near the UC campus does not fight against the oppression and exploitation facing Third World and White working class people every day". Perhaps not, but even the Revolutionary Union conceded that there were "progressive aspects of the park". These "progressive aspects" involved community interests being served through the seizure of land, the "nonalienated" and non-exploitative character of labour used in the park's creation and the rejection of University plans to destroy the south campus community. While acknowledging that the park was utopian, the Revolutionary Union argued that it was a genuine people's park precisely because it arose out of the desires and needs of the people. SDS, on the other hand, labelled as "crap" any suggestion that the park was built by unalienated labour. It saw this as an ideological cover which concealed the essential selfishness of students and street people. And when the crisis over the People's Park developed, it saw little more than a ruling class "attempt to sidetrack the movement", except where larger issues of racism and imperialism came into focus.

Factional squabbles about the meaning of People's Park tended to be peripheral features of the central struggle. The spirit of Berkeley's radical community was captured more precisely by a leaflet which reflected the Park's increasing symbolic significance:

A New Berkeley is being planted in the People's Park.
Creating the park has been the most spontaneous and positive event in the emerging showdown between the Industrial-University Machine and our Revolutionary Culture. **We have struggled for Rights, for Space, and now**
we struggle for Land. We need to the Park to live and grow, and eventually we need all of Berkeley ...

We take a Solemn Oath to wage a war of retaliation against the University if it begins to move against the Park.60

By the end of April, University authorities had announced their determination to continue with redevelopment plans for the land. It was, after all, University property and why would the administration permit its unhindered use as a freak-out centre of the western world? A statement issued by Chancellor Heyns in May gave notice that a fence would be put up around the land. Expressing concern over residents' objections to noise and general behaviour in the park, and City Council concern over crime and social order, Heyns decreed that the basic plan for redevelopment was to proceed.61 A playing field would occupy part of the land but, in a luke-warm embrace of participatory democracy, he invited students and members of the community to submit design plans for the remaining area. Any proposals, however, would need to observe certain rules - the land could not be used as a gathering-place or a rallying centre and would not "present police or other control problems".62 This was a barely disguised way of insisting that it not be a public forum which operated as an extension of Telegraph Avenue. And, on May 14, an advertisement from the Chancellor appeared in the student newspaper. It announced the impending development of "playing field space" but encouraged students to send design proposals for the other section of land to the Campus Architect.63 At 4.45 am the following day, a California Highway Patrol helicopter began circling the campus district and 250 patrolmen soon began to disperse people sleeping at the Park. Two hours later a construction crew

60 "Proclamation by Madmen" (People's Park file, UC Archives), also reprinted under the heading "Proclamation" in the Berkeley Barb, May 9-15, 1969 (emphasis included).


62 Ibid., p. 2.

arrived to put an eight foot high cyclone fence around the land. On one level, the University was claiming its rights of ownership. But on another, more fundamental level, it was attempting to assert some control over the campus and over the local radical community. Whereas the park connoted openness, space and movement, the fence signalled closure, blockage, prohibition. It was yet another wall.

At a noon rally in Sproul Plaza on the day the fence went up, the call went to "take the Park" and the crowd of 6,000 turned, marched off the Plaza and onto Telegraph Avenue. Violent skirmishes followed and the Alameda County Sherrifs began firing buckshot and birdshot into the crowd and at spectators on the roofs of buildings. One spectator was fatally wounded, another blinded and by late afternoon over 100 people required hospital treatment. Later that night Governor Reagan re-instituted extreme state of emergency procedures and sent three battalions of the National Guard in to keep order. During the occupation which followed, military reconnaissance helicopters tear-gassed peaceful demonstrators, confrontations and arrests persisted and radicals labelled other vacant lots "People's Park Annexes".

The state of seige added to a symbolic dimension already attached to the park. While radicals, the University and the state of California all appeared conscious of the symbolism in their action, some authorities could not quite comprehend the Park's multiple layers of meaning. Thus the Berkeley Mayor thought it a paradox that citizens were mostly ignorant of a city park development, an "open space", just a couple of blocks south of People's Park. And, he pointed out, another lot just off Telegraph had been set aside for possible development as a park. But this, of course, was not the

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64 see "Rampage", Ramparts, August 1969, p. 54-9


66 Mayor Wallace Johnson (to the Members of the City Council of Berkeley) "Park for Southeast Berkeley", May 19, 1969 (People's Park file, UC Archives).
issue. Or to be more precise, it was only part of an issue packed with different symbolic elements.

The richness of symbolism attested to People's Park's utility as an environmental signifier. The very concept of a "rural reclamation project" suggested pastoral identification within an urban milieu. Romantic tendencies within the New Left and counter-culture were more than hinted at. They were magnified many times and became central ideological weapons. The Park rallied anti-urbanist sentiment, stood for space and tranquility, served as a reminder of days gone by, days sacrificed to the logic of industrial civilization. Many topics which were soon to become major forces galvanizing radical social action were brought into focus. A People's Park Negotiating Committee leaflet stated clearly that the Park was only part of the picture. Long-term community organizing was necessary to deal with a range of issues, including rent control, police control, more parks and urban architectural design.67

One radical organization, the Bay Area Institute, placed People's Park within a regional context of urban blight and environmental destruction:

In the Bay area alone 21 square miles of open space is devoured by asphalt and development every six months - half the size of the city of San Francisco. More industry, more high rise buildings, more Bay fill, more urban renewal, more repression, more pollution. Less space for people. Less space for places like People's Park.68

Similarly, a leaflet advertising an ecology teach-in supporting the Park stressed that it raised issues well beyond immediately apparent ones, issues which drew attention to the fact that "ecology and politics are no longer separate or separable issues".69

Statements of

67 People's Park Negotiating Committee, "To the Park - Torch Light Parade" (People's Park file, UC Archives).

68 Bay Area Institute, "Who can deny the need for this space in Berkeley, near to Telegraph Avenue?" (People's Park file, UC Archives). The Institute comprised a small group of activist-intellectuals, including the environmentalist Barry Weisberg.

69 "The Politics of Ecology: a Teach-In to Support People's Park", sponsored by Berkeley Faculty Union, AFT Local 1474 (People's Park file, UC Archives).
support for the teach-in came from Lewis Mumford, Paul Goodman and Jane Jacobs. This itself is vivid testimony to the potency of the Park. These three writers and critics were amongst the most important commentators on urban problems and solutions in the 1950s and 1960s. They had confronted the pleasures and pitfalls of city life, potentialities for community, and the need for parks and public gathering places. At the teach-in activists, artists and academics spoke of pollution and pesticide poisoning and argued for environmental preservation. One speaker even suggested taking "every shred of university land that's not built" and turning it into parks. Beat poet and environmental activist Gary Snyder went further:

Now it is time for us symbolically to become Indians - people of this land - and take America back from west to east. People's Park is the first piece of liberated territory in America and I hope we keep going and take the whole thing.

First People's Park, then America! Snyder's perspective aligned neatly with that of Berkeley radicals who celebrated the supposedly unique characteristics of their struggle and saw the south campus community as a revolutionary base. The trouble was that People's Park could hardly be regarded as "liberated territory" any more. Even

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70 Ibid.

71 Russell Jacoby sees Mumford, Goodman and Jacobs (along with William Whyte) as archetypal representatives of a dying breed - the public intellectual; see his The Last Intellectuals: American culture in the age of academe (New York: Basic Books, 1987), p. 54 ff. Also see: Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1965), particularly p. 99-121 ("The uses of Neighborhood Parks"). Jacobs points out that parks are prone to "fickle behaviour", are not "automatically anything". She sets out to distinguish between the "real uses" of parks and "mythical uses". The distinction, however, might not be absolute. The "real use" of People's Park was its "mythical use". Also see Paul and Percival Goodman, Communitas: means of livelihood and ways of life (New York: Vintage Books, 1960) and Lewis Mumford's many works on the city, including The Highway and the City (New York: New American Library, 1964).


73 Robert Greenway, cited in Ibid.

74 Gary Snyder, cited in Ibid.
with a fence around it, however, it signified revolutionary potential. And Snyder's call for everyone to become, if only symbolically, "Indians" was reminiscent of Frank Barkacke's widely circulated leaflet "Who Owns the Park?":

A long time ago the Costanoan Indians lived in the area now called Berkeley. They had no concept of land ownership. They believed the land was under the care and guardianship of the people who used it and lived on it ... We are building a park on the land. We will take care of it and guard it, in the spirit of the Costanoan Indians.75

Bardacke, indeed, has argued that the struggle over the Park was not so much a question of space but of land ownership, of property. This, he suggested, was "slightly different".76 A leaflet quoted earlier also implied a difference: "We have struggled for Rights, for Space, and now we struggle for Land".77 Space, in this context, presumably referred to Sproul Plaza, Bancroft - Telegraph and Telegraph Avenue itself. But the distinction between space and land is somewhat artificial and bypasses the symbolic elements of spatial politics. Moreover, it ignores the clear continuities between the battles over Telegraph Avenue and the People's Park struggle. Todd Gitlin, for instance, suggested that different theories of the street shaped conflict in Berkeley - bourgeois theory (the streets as commercial traffic ways), on the one hand, and street people theory (the streets as public space, even public theatre), on the other. People's Park, he argued, actually produced "a new theory of the street ... the absolute negation or transcendence of the street".78 But, even in theoretical terms, the street was not negated. In fact, one of the Park's initiators has observed that Telegraph Avenue was ultimately the central issue: "the Park became a secondary thing; it

75 "Who Owns the Park?" (People's Park file, UC Archives).
76 Frank Barkacke, interview with author.
77 "Proclamation by Madmen".
was actually a struggle over the street". Street, park, space, land - whatever words describe precisely what the struggle was about, it involved, as Bardacke acknowledges, a site "consciously picked as being in the right place". Consequently, "it was a fight over turf ... our territory".

The Berkeley Liberation Program

On May 30, in a display which marked the real end of the state of siege, twenty or thirty thousand people marched peacefully through the streets of Berkeley to the Park. The fence remained, the National Guard was soon withdrawn but, already, Berkeley radicals had begun to devise strategies for carrying the struggle forward. The most prominent manifesto created during the crisis was The Berkeley Liberation Program (see Appendix Four). Composed by a group which included Tom Hayden and local Yippie Stew Albert, the Program advocated making the city "a zone of struggle and liberation", through the formation and "control" of "a genuine community". It played upon humanist sympathies within New Left thought but most of all paraded a disciplined (albeit counter-cultural) and aggressive temperament influenced, in no small measure, by the Black Panthers. Thus, it argued for a movement that was personally humane, that served people's spiritual as well as material needs, and that advanced the cause of participatory democracy. At the same time, it called for an increase in "combativeness", suggesting Berkeley radicals must "develop, tighten and toughen their organizations; and transcend their middle class ego-centred life

79 Mike Delacour, interview with author.

80 Frank Barkacke, interview with author. An attempt to crate a People's Pad (for street people) in abandoned buildings scheduled for redevelopment also went sour. The buildings had been cleared of their former poor black tenants and, for Todd Gitlin, the whole People's Pad project smacked of "unconscionable imperial arrogance" ("The Dynamics of ..." (Part 2), p. 54-5; and see his The Sixties, p. 361). Frank Bardacke also recalls it as a general disaster ("was that a ... mess", interview with author).
styles". This, essentially, was a demand for more revolutionary collectives or affinity groups. The problem, however, was that those very organizational forms could reinforce the very thing they were supposed to stamp out:

At the time people were into collectives. You couldn't do anything individually, so some strong individuals got a lot of people on their side and called themselves a collective.

Indeed, beneath the democratic rhetoric, the therapeutic gloss and the internationalist sympathies, there lurked within the Program a populist sentiment which reeked of narrow provincialism and even hinted at mechanisms of social control. Most of all, it represented the apotheosis of a particular style of spatial politics which placed Berkeley at the centre of radical upheaval and saw everything in those terms. By the mid-Sixties a parochial tendency within Berkeley's radical community was generating some comment. Immediately following People's Park this was more than a tendency. For some influential activists, it was an immanent predisposition. As a consequence, Berkeley radicals had to reassert continually their presence in, or support of, struggles outside the local arena.

Direct spatial references permeated the Program: "strategic free territory", "zone of struggle and liberation", "free space" for women, schools as "training grounds for liberation". In particular,

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81 Mike Delacour, interview with author (my emphasis): Berkeley's most famous collective was the Red Family, which included Tom Hayden (see Hayden, Reunion, p. 420-425). Frank Bardacke recalls the Red Family living "in a very, very nice house" and taking "themselves somewhat too seriously ... They conceived of themselves as the vanguard of the Berkeley movement" (interview with author).

82 SDS organizers and leaders, as explained in chapter 4, held to this view but even some within Berkeley were chastizing inward-focusing tendencies: see S. Were, "Seeing with the Other Eye", Berkeley Barb, February 4, 1969.

83 Michael Lerner maintains that most Berkeley radicals rejected the Program by June 1969 and that it "was quickly dropped and forgotten": Michael P., Lerner, "Youth Culture and Social Revolution", in David Horowitz, Michael P. Lerner and Craig Pyes, Counterculture and Revolution (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 188. Lerner's claim is exaggerated. Its impact was greater (even if only in small circles of friends) and longer-lasting than he allows for.

84 see T. Klaber, "Gathering of the Tribes", Berkeley Barb, September 5-11, 1969.
Berkeley itself would undergo a process of radical urban transformation. Space would be "opened up" for public or communal use. Telegraph Avenue, unsurprisingly, would be a focal point for this urban revolution, a redesigned utopian enclave distributing business profits to the community. Many of the ideas reflected deeply felt anti-urbanist sensibilities which jelled at the time of People's Park. In the Program, there are a number of half-baked design proposals which suggested that more enthusiasm than thought had gone into their conception. And yet, in an incoherent and even laughable fashion, the Program drafters were drawing attention to significant problems in the urban milieu, problems revolving around the organization and control of space in everyday life. Spatial politics converged with personal politics: "The revolution is about our lives". Our lives, it could be said, referred only to those in the Movement and a more uncharitable interpretation would see it as applying only to a specific sort of Berkeley radical.85 This is partly true. By the same token, the Program recognized everyday life as a crucial element of contemporary radical strategy. Moreover, perhaps the constant references to "our" and "we" are partly justifiable. Writing in defence of the Program, one commentator implied that it reflected Berkeley's unique status: "Berkeley represents probably the only place in America where white revolutionaries live in a territory in which it makes sense to say they are the people ..."86

Criticism of the Berkeley Liberation Program focussed upon the notion that "a zone of struggle and liberation" could be established in the south campus area. One writer accused the authors of "ghettoizing" the radical base by setting up a mythical regional enclave. This, it was suggested, was a crude imitation of the Panther's ten point programme, the difference being that the Panther's had to operate within the ghetto.87 To many, including orthodox Marxists, Berkeley liberation was a mere fantasy based upon

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the false belief that islands of socialism could be created in the Mother Country. "This whole enclave idea", wrote Communist Party member Bob Kauffman, "is an escapist diversion" which drew people away from concrete struggles such as tenancy rights or rent control. More interesting, however, was a critique of radicalism in Berkeley written a couple of months after publication of the Program. To some extent, it was a self-critique because one of the authors, Tom Hayden, had been one of the prime mover behind the Liberation Program. Hayden, and co-author Frank Bardacke, savaged the insularity of Berkeley radicalism. They identified a series of weaknesses. Firstly, local radicals had not created a range of alternative institutions "like schools, nurseries, day care centers, and our own cooperative stores". This suggested a failure to build living examples of the future society. Secondly, Berkeley radicals were "isolated" from the general community and failed to create alliances with popular movements for social reform. Related to this was "perhaps the most serious example of our self-interested politics" - a "drifting away" from organization against the war in Vietnam. This, they argued, could only be a result of our "white middle class Berkeley chauvinism". Thirdly, there was a predictability, a conservatism, in Berkeley struggles which revealed lack of imagination. Confrontation, they argued, must become "an art", transcending the limited choices of either a peaceful march or street-fighting. And for this to happen, small groups and "small provocative actions" would need to become key components of an increasingly militant "self-defense" strategy ("in an attempt to push our rulers further up against the wall"). Bardacke and Hayden projected a strategy which would continue polarizing the Berkeley community until all the conservatives had left and it was truly a radical bulwark fighting off the national power structure:

In this space we create, we should extend our revolutionary culture and politics as far as our imaginations allow, we should begin to govern our own community as directly as possible, we should create belts of

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affection and support with other movements everywhere, and we should be able to defend ourselves, if worst comes to worst.

The article concluded with two scenarios. One involved the defeat of Berkeley radicalism, partly through a deft piece of spatial management which removed liberal arts education from the Berkeley campus and destroyed what was left of the Telegraph Avenue subculture. The other resulted in a successful socialist revolution, beginning in California (particularly the Bay Area) and spreading throughout America. Short on details about the American revolution, Bardacke and Hayden waxed eloquent when discussing the Berkeley Liberation Front. While beginning with a stringent critique of radical parochialism in Berkeley, they ended up reflecting this very tendency in utopian imaginings. Leading the assault upon Berkeley's middle class chauvinism, they dressed up their own chauvinism in revolutionary garb. According to Barkacke, this article was supposed to represent a beginning. In actuality, he acknowledges, it signalled an end.90

The Peculiarities of Parochialism

All manifestations of provincialist politics in Berkeley did not disappear suddenly. But there was, or at least so it seemed, an increasing awareness of problems associated with parochialism. Even the Telegraph Avenue Liberation Front, which carried forward the ideological foundations of the Berkeley Liberation Program, began to express unease about its project: "As Telegraph Ave has come more and more to be under a state of siege, a tendency to overlocalize our problems has plagued us".91 By "overlocalize", the Liberation Front was referring directly to Telegraph Avenue parochialism: "our community is spread wide [throughout Berkeley] ... The avenue is

90 Frank Bardacke, interview with author.
91 Telegraph Ave Liberation Front, Manual No. 4, October 10, 1969 (Telegraph Ave Liberation Front file, Bancroft SPP).
important as part of a community not as an enclave where we come to fight separate battles".92 The explicit intention behind publication of the Front's Manual reflected the seriousness with which this group approached the politics of space: "We are publishing this manual as a map of self-defense in terrain of increasing political repression".93 The almost apocalyptic urgency of such pronouncements was given substance in one article which discussed training and preparation for the coming onslaught. Stressing awareness of the general physical, medical and dietary requirements of people, it warned that if food gets cut off "You'll need close to one and one-half pounds per man per day to keep going".94 It was not made clear if the food would cease being supplied to the whole of Berkeley or just Telegraph Avenue. Whatever the case, these were revolutionary times and self-determination, self-defense, self-sufficiency and survival made good sense to those who had trouble seeing beyond Telegraph Avenue, as well as to others with less restricted vision.

More sober assessments of Berkeley's radical political culture came from the Radical Student Union (R.S.U.), an umbrella group which included members of the International Socialists as well as SDS. R.S.U. was formed to overcome the ad hoc tendencies or "crisis politics" which Berkeley's movement had exhibited since FSM.95 Apart from the by now standard ideological framework supporting revolutionary politics, its critique might have been penned by national SDS officers in 1965: "'Crisis politics' has consistently failed to involve students in the long range political education which produces committed revolutionaries; and, in fact, has alienated and discouraged many potentially radical students".96 R.S.U. also attempted to widen the focus of action around spatial politics. The struggle to preserve "our own community and culture",

92 Ibid.
94 "Be Prepared" in Ibid.
96 Ibid.
suggested one of its leaflets, has blinded the local movement to attacks upon other neighborhoods - black, Chicano and white working class - conducted by Berkeley's bourgeoisie.97 And in 1970 one R.S.U. member concluded that a localist orientation must be transcended:

[People's Park] marks the historic end of any strategy which holds to the theory of Berkeley as an enclave of radical activity. Its greatest mass movement was ignominiously defeated. Struggles in Berkeley must be seen in the context of California politics and the nation as a whole. Berkeley's traditions of radicalism and reaction help explain its many brush fires. But the myth of Berkeley's uniqueness serves to contain the flames. The contradictions that have created Berkeley's struggles exist around the country. The many struggles here should suggest a national possibility rather than a local peculiarity.98

In similar vein, the Bay Area Institute had argued, at the time of the People's Park confrontation, that the movement should try to build a regional radical strategy, one which moved beyond "the confines of the University" and confronted the "regional dynamics which shape our land and our lives. Our Turf goes beyond the People's Park".99 And members of one faction within R.S.U., associated with the Revolutionary Youth Movement wing of SDS, began to push for an SDS regional organization. Remarking upon the relative failure of R.S.U. to establish itself as a mass radical organization on the Berkeley campus, they observed:

"If our work and our life experience are confined to one environment - one group of people and their particular problems - chances are great that our political perspective will express that limitation. A regional

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99 Bay Area Institute, "Who Can deny ..."
organization could begin to break down such political provincialism".  

Yet in a 1970 R.S.U. publication, a prominent local radical could still celebrate the peculiarities of Berkeley: "while not yet *liberated*, it is a profoundly and distinctly *liberating* place to be".  He then detailed the activities of various collectives or affinity groups in Berkeley. One of these, COPS Commune, upheld the Berkeley Liberation Program as its guiding beacon. So even R.S.U., while attempting to manage Berkeley's "crisis politics" and avoid the pitfalls of parochialism, could not escape the magnetic attraction of Berkeley's radical scene.  

One R.S.U. leaflet, published at the time of People's Park, might have been written by the Telegraph Avenue Liberation Front: "Our stake: space for self-determination; for life, for expanding our community and our movement". This sort of language did not only indicate an increasing preponderance of spatial references in local radical communication. It also manifested the cultural underpinnings of that communication. "Space", by the late 1960s, had come to signify much more than public space. It pointed beyond Sproul Plaza or even Telegraph Avenue. It spoke of a whole way of life. The radical community at that time in Berkeley was constituted simultaneously as a cultural and a political entity. One without the other was seen as meaningless: "A politics which is not rooted in culture is no politics at all". The Berkeley Liberation Program cannot be understood properly unless the counter-cultural mediations in New Left thought and practice are explored. Perhaps more than anything else, it was a perspective shaped by cultural radicalism which encouraged Berkeley radicals to use spatial language. Michael Rossman, for instance, was influenced greatly by

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100 "Revolutionary Youth Movement", July 31, 1969 (R.S.U. file, Bancroft SPP).  
the counter-culture and those who referred to "our space" or "our turf" - were often evoking a sense of cultural togetherness more than political defiance. Or, rather, the political militance was shaped by cultural radicalism. Spatial politics which was not rooted in culture, many surmised, was no politics at all. Berkeley's radical parochialism was nurtured by political peculiarities. Its revolutionary provincialism was sustained by cultural cohesion.
CHAPTER 9

CULTURE, POLITICS AND SOULFUL SOCIALISM

By the late 1960s, counter-cultural ideas greatly influenced sections of the New Left, as the Berkeley Liberation Program testifies. "Free territories", "liberated zones" were conceived of as political and cultural entities but, increasingly, it was the cultural dimension which gave them form and substance. Cultural radicalism had fed into political dissent from early in the decade but, in the first instance, hippies and political radicals mostly kept a safe distance from each other. Towards the end of 1966, this was beginning to change in the Bay Area. And despite the rapid decline of Haight-Ashbury, the experiment with "youth ghettos", free spaces defined culturally as well as geographically, lived on in the minds of some radicals. The Berkeley south campus community, in particular, was seen to embody the values of a new society, to point in the direction of profound social transformation. New ways of living, influenced more and more by counter-cultural perspectives, supposedly prefigured the good society. No-one reflected this type of thinking more than Tom Hayden. One of the Movement's leading figures, he was swept along by Berkeley radicalism in 1969 and 1970. He quickly succumbed to provincialist revolutionary mythology and projected half-baked goals of liberation which were fashioned out of hippie experience as much as New Left ideals. Sixties radicalism was running out of steam and so were many of its prominent theorists and activists.
Radical Style

Radical social movements need a culture of resistance, a style of protest which gives them specific identity. The problem, of course, is that this culture can overwhelm the politics of dissent, eventually burying it under a plethora of rituals, images, gestures and slogans. In some ways this is what occurred with the American New Left in the late 1960s. On the one hand, a significant section of the New Left sought to defend and extend "freak culture" through a somewhat peculiar amalgamation of counter-cultural and political radicalism. On the other hand, a different element, centred on PL but including other "old left" groupings, perceived youth culture as an agent of social and political bankruptcy. For them, true old-fashioned proletarian revolution marked the only way forward. And there were many shades of radical commitment in between and on either side of this great divide. Correct lines proliferated. Inspiration came from the Third World, the Black Panthers, the industrial working class, the rural proletariat, young workers, youth as a whole, the drug culture. Meanwhile, women and gays increasingly discovered their position as agents of change. The revolution was becoming a complex process, so many sought refuge in simplistic formulation.

The ideological tendency which stands out as distinctly New Left in the late 1960s, as carrying forward an earlier experience into more militant times, is that which attempted to establish some sort of relationship between culture and politics. The Revolutionary Youth Movement in SDS (particularly the Weatherman faction) embodied this on a national level, Yippies and Diggers had already established part of its essential framework, and even some old stalwarts from the days of Port Huron were swept along. Without stretching the lines of continuity too far, the cultural-political radicals who spoke the language of youth rebellion and social revolution, everyday life and political struggle, were the genuine heirs of Port Huron (however

much they distorted its spirit). They were, at the very least, living testimony to the attempted fusion of cultural and political radicalism in the late 1960s.

Some commentators have constructed a different interpretative outline, one which sees culture and politics combining throughout the New Left until the last years of the decade. George Vickers, for instance, argues that by the late 1960s, much cultural experimentation was devoid of political content, that the culture and the politics were taking separate roads. This divergence, he suggests, contributed to the Movement's decline:

The separation of cultural and political opposition to the American system not only further fragmented the organizational structure of opposition, but isolated into separate spheres the two elements whose combination in the early sixties had imparted to the New Left a significance beyond that implied in the structural process which generated it.2

This, however, is only a small part of a much more complicated story. New Left leaders and organizers in the early 1960s (up to 1965 and even 1966) were influenced by cultural radicalism but it was not a determining factor. Indeed, there was some explicit antagonism to hip rhetoric and style. An article written by Berkeley activists in 1961 about a vigil protesting nuclear testing manifested a perceived division between culture and politics which was not uncommon. Remarking upon the role of anarchists, Beats and folk music aficionados, they observed an essential solipsism:

Guitars, bongos and songs filled the air, not even in harmony but in different melodies sung at the same time.

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2 George Vickers, The Formation of the New Left: the early years (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1975), p. 132; see, however, Ronald Fraser et al., 1968, p. 264: "As state repression became ever more violent, and hippies were lumped in with the radicals, many in the counter-culture became more explicitly political, until the boundaries between them and the student movement almost vanished". This is a more accurate representation of what occurred but the stress is slightly misplaced - political radicals were influenced, increasingly, by the counter-culture more than the other way around.
What had happened was a withdrawal into the private, subcultural form of rebellion of each of these groups.3

Yet around the same time, Robert Scheer was expressing feelings which were more in tune with some developing aspects of New Left thought:

To speak of society and to ignore the spirit is to forget the real root which is man. Life has been too long politicized by the Left, which has proposed the transformation of life as if it meant the simple change from one set of political terms to another; no we are against the politicization of man. Man's politics must be an extension of their beings, and not the other way around.4

Scheer's time in the early Sixties working amongst Beat culture as a salesman in the City Lights bookstore undoubtedly helped substantiate such a view.5 Indeed, in 1963 he noted the critical significance of cultural rebellion: "the College left that we know about consists of a few thousand cultural freaks ... it is important that the political radical be, in a sense, 'bohemian'".6 The cultural mediations within political radicalism would have been more apparent in the Bay Area than elsewhere. Even so, Scheer overstated the bohemian aspects of a fledgling New Left. It is mostly in the latter half of the decade, particularly after 1966, that political radicals like Tom Hayden began speaking counter-cultural language.

Michael Rogin shares Vicker's view regarding the relationship between culture and politics in the New Left:

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6 Robert Scheer, "Notes on the New Left", Root and Branch No. 2, 1963, p. 17 and p. 27. Root and Branch was an early New Left journal based in Berkeley which reflected a strong interest in cultural radicalism. One of the editors was David Horowitz (see Irwin Unger, The Movement ..., p. 77-8).
By the end of the decade the movement was divided between rigid ideology and intense sensation. The tragedies that befell the great spirit of countercultural music, and the divorce of politics from the counterculture, signified that the New Left had come to an end.7

Any division, however, was not so neat. Moreover, which countercultural music from 1965 to 1967 reflected political concerns? Towards the end of the decade, the Jefferson Airplane (amongst others) began singing of revolution but, more often than not, it was generational rebellion being celebrated ('Got a revolution, got to revolution ... This generation's got soul'8). Prior to that, the music of the counterculture conveyed hippie (not New Left) social values.

An essential unity between political and cultural radicalism never existed in the 1960s. Rather, there was a tense association, with exploratory searches and tentative mergers occurring. The Telegraph Avenue scene, for instance, was not automatically infused with political radicalism. It took some time to grow into that space or territory fought for in 1968. The hippie street people were initially suspicious of political radicals. Likewise, the politicos saw hippies as apolitical. Yet these two distinct groupings were thrown together in the one area - Telegraph and the south campus - and gradually a close association, "a symbiotic relationship", developed.9 The community which grew on and around the Avenue hardly provided evidence of a solid dividing line between culture and politics. On the contrary, cultural and political radicalism intermingled to such an extent that a curious hybrid took form. "Rigid ideology and intense sensation", to use Rogin's words, frequently converged. The counter-cultural Marxist-Leninist, while

8 The Jefferson Airplane, "Volunteers'", from the 1969 album *Volunteers*.
not a product of purist ideology, was by no means a rare species in 1969.\textsuperscript{10}

Tom Hayden was one of those early New Left leaders who maintained a certain philosophical consistency throughout the Sixties, even while the language he spoke was adjusting to new milieu, new objective circumstances. In 1961 he called for a "radicalism of style" which "involves penetration of a social problem to its roots, to its real cause ... [it] demands that we oppose delusions and be free ... It demands that we change our life".\textsuperscript{11} Radical style was, therefore, founded upon an existential engagement with the politics of liberation. Around a year later Hayden instructed: "Leave the isolated world of ideological fantasy, allow your ideas to become part of your living and your living to become part of your ideas".\textsuperscript{12}

The personal was beginning to develop a political form. At the June 1963 National Convention of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), he suggested that the "new rebels" were more concerned with local autonomy than national organization and were, indeed, "open to new thinking only insofar as that thinking is directly applicable to their local action problems and to their local situations".\textsuperscript{13} These two "anti-ideology" positions articulated by Hayden - involving, on the one hand, a heightened subjectivity within political discourse and, on the other, a commitment to local insurgency - provided the kernel of an ideological position which was to become explicit much later and in an environment very different from his SDS base in the east. The

\textsuperscript{10} As Russell Jacoby has argued, a politics of subjectivity lived alongside a politics of objectivity (the one focussing upon self and everyday life, the other upon "objective" historical processes gleaned from old left bibles): "The flip from the politics of subjectivity to objectivity is not simply sequential and chronological: they co-exist and continuously reproduce each other. This suggests, in fact, the inner connection between the two phases". ("The Politics of Objectivity: notes on the U.S. left", \textit{Telos}, 34, Winter 1977-8, p. 78). Jacoby does not, however, discuss the ways in which this "inner connection" was revealed quite dramatically by some organizations and individuals who, in actuality, constructed one ideological framework out of "two phases".


\textsuperscript{12} Tom Hayden, "Student Social Action: From Liberation to Community" in \textit{Ibid.}, p. 289.

\textsuperscript{13} Tom Hayden, Pine Hill, New York (June 1963) - SDS tape (517/A3), SHSW.
Berkeley Liberation Program fused localism and personal politics and this fusion had Hayden's signature written all over it.

Hayden personally embodied continuities and transformations in American New Left history. From the *Port Huron Statement* to the Berkeley Liberation Program, he sought different ways to unite the personal and the political. Fairly late in the piece, however, counter-cultural style, thought and language began to shape his political perspective. The Liberation Program called for a "soulful socialism". This very concept of "soulful socialism" combined hip and New Left formulations and hinted at the presence of a therapeutic consciousness in many attempts to develop new types of political activism. The essential values of participatory democracy remained but the words were different:

We will experiment with new ways of living together such as communal families ... We have had enough of supposed vanguards seeking to manipulate mass movements. We need vanguards of a new type - people who lead by virtue of their moral and political examples: who seek to release and organize energy ...

The Program pledged to "create our revolutionary culture everywhere" and to "protect and expand our drug culture".

Bardacke and Hayden's later critique of Berkeley radicalism's insularity or "middle class chauvinism" still upheld the cultural dimension of revolution, even though it dismissed "certain self-centred 'cultural revolutionaries'". Problems with these cultural revolutionaries revolved, supposedly, around the fact that they had a profound insight about the need to change personal psychology and personal life but did not make the necessary connections between the personal and the political. But at least, Bardacke and Hayden acknowledged, they do start at the right point: "experiment with drugs, new sexual and human relationships, disregard for the Man's private property, are part of the process of ripping off the bourgeois in ourselves." They accused many SDS members of adopting "a
distorted proletarianism" in which, so as to establish working class credentials "we have to cut our hair, stop smoking pot, deny who we are".  

Soon after, Hayden argued that the trial of the Chicago eight was essentially a trial against "a new life style beyond that of capitalist America", a lifestyle which elevated psychological and cultural factors to a position of prominence. Jerry Rubin also referred to the Chicago case in similar terms: "Our culture was on trial because our culture attacked the convention in Chicago ..." It was a short road from this stress upon youth culture to theories which equated youth with class. Hayden decided that "the phrase 'generation gap' is a euphemism for the new location of the class struggle".

Free Territories

Because youth had formed hippie or subcultural "ghettos" like those in Haight-Ashbury or Berkeley's south campus area, theories of radical enclaves or liberated territories frequently focussed upon generational aspects of rebellion. Todd Gitlin wrote of "white post-scarcity ghettos", particularly those in university towns, which "develop working conceptions of liberated space, physical space, and the possibilities of human consciousness". Such ghettos, he added, were not simply geographical entities. Movement media institutions (like underground papers) functioned in a similar

16 Ibid.


18 Jerry Rubin, We Are Everywhere, p. 190.

19 Hayden, Trial, p. 152; also see Richard Flack's discussion of youth as an agency of change in his Youth and Social Change, p. 47-102. The most influential treatment of youth as a class was written by John and Margaret Rowntree: "The Political Economy of Youth", Our Generation, May-June-July 1968, p. 171ff.

20 Todd Gitlin, "The Dynamics of the New Left" (Part 2), Motive, November 1970, p. 54.
fashion.\textsuperscript{21} This was counter-institutional theory but the cultural or even generational component of "liberated space" was highly significant, suggesting that spatial politics was increasingly mediated by lifestyle concerns. For Hayden, indeed, the politics of space was inextricably connected to youth rebellion. "Free territories", or local areas wherein the revolutionary social order could be dramatically prefigured, were places of cultural experimentation as much as (if not more than) political units.

In his book \textit{Trial}, Hayden argued for new principles which would underpin any transformation of American society. The first principle was borrowed directly from the Black Panthers: "self-determination of our internal colonies".\textsuperscript{22} The second involved "the creation of Free Territories in the Mother Country".\textsuperscript{23} These "Free Territories" were locales or enclaves which carried forward the cultural revolution and also gave it political content. White radical ghetto communities such as those in Berkeley or Haight-Ashbury (and elsewhere) provided the example:

\begin{quote}
The importance of these communities is that they add a dimension of territory, of real physical space, to the consciousness of those within ... Until recently people dropped out in their minds, or into tiny bohemian enclaves. Now they drop out collectively, into territory.\textsuperscript{24}
\end{quote}

The ruling class, Hayden argued, sought to destroy these ghettos through various types of urban renewal projects. In the face of such establishment attack, they must be maintained as revolutionary examples, as liberated zones. Indeed, Hayden opined, if the revolution is to happen at all, it will start in these radical enclaves.\textsuperscript{25}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{22} Hayden, \textit{Trial}, p. 158.
\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 159-60.
\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 160.
\end{flushright}
Hayden's "Free Territories" were centres of cultural experimentation which would transform "all traditional social relations": the nuclear family would be superseded by communal living arrangements, women would have independent communal space, work would be done for and controlled by the community.26 This sort of utopian planning is not too different from standard anarchist or socialist communal thought. But there was more:

Drugs would be commonly used as a means of deepening self-awareness. Urban structures would be destroyed, to be replaced with parks, closed streets ... Music and art would be freed from commercial control. At all levels the goal would be to eliminate egoism, competition and aggression from our personalities.27

Hayden did not appear to realize that it was "urban structures" which had facilitated the growth of dissident and counter-cultural communities. The very dynamics of urban life can actively encourage, or at least create room for, subcultural groupings.28 Specific sorts of urban structures do tend to prevent the construction of community. In the same way, specific sorts of rural isolation can close off radical options. But for some radicals, even thoroughly urbanized ones, anti-urbanist sentiment was triumphing. Mostly they were counterculturalists who seemed to have rejected the world of politics

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26 Ibid., p. 161. Feminist thought had been exerting a profound influence upon some male radicals, hence Hayden's support of "women's space". Feminists were also borrowing directly from New Left and black liberation thinking about space and organization. So an editorial in the San Francisco feminist paper It Ain't Me Babe strongly supported the idea of affinity groups and Robin Morgan defined women "as a colonized people". (It Ain't Me Babe, August 6, 1970; Robin Morgan, Going Too Far, p. 160-162). While feminism was beginning to have strong impact upon Bay Area radicalism, the Bay Area was not really in the vanguard of women's liberation (Carol Hatch, interview with author, June 19, 1979: "It felt much more like it was being relayed from other parts of the country").

27 Ibid.,

28 see Claude S. Fischer, "Toward a Subcultural Theory of Urbanism", American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 80 no. 6, May 1975, p. 1324-1328. Fischer puts forward the following propositions: 'The more urban a place, the greater its subcultural variety ... the more intense its subcultures ... the more numerous the sources of diffusion and the greater the diffusion into a subculture ... the higher the rates of unconventionality'. But his elaboration is rather mundane, being based mostly on population concentration. Other factors, including spatial arrangements, are much more important than he allows for.
(whether or not they actually had). Hayden, however, was not like that. He was, first and foremost, a political radical whose memories of community organizing and anti-war campaigning had not faded. Thus, his Free Territories would be "internationalist": "Cultural experiment without internationalism is privilege, internationalism without cultural revolution is false consciousness". The Territories would also be bases for constant struggle, as well as "centers of self-defense". And at the core of these bases or zones were collectives which would foster revolutionary activity and help cultivate an entire way of life.

It must be stressed that these Free Territories were essentially **youth** enclaves or, at the very least, communities partly constructed by youth culture. Hayden's blueprint, in essence, was for a youth revolution, even though he saw this as something closely connected to Third World liberation. Yet the NLF, amongst other revolutionary vanguards, was not constituted as a generational unit. He almost realized the fundamental inconsistency: "We are constantly in danger of escaping into a cultural revolution of our own, a tiny island of post-scarcity hedonism, pacifism and fantasy far from the blood and fire of the Third World". One possible way of bypassing such a dilemma was to see struggles fomented within the Free Territories as instances of Third World liberation. Thus, in a different context, he wrote that "Berkeley has become a mini-Vietnam". The analogy is not entirely bizarre but, for Hayden, it was a way of establishing an

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29 Hayden, *Trial*, p. 161. The correct line, presumably, lay somewhere between the Ho Chi Minh trail and the Golden Triangle!


35 David Lodge, amongst many other commentators, has used such an analogy in an essay on People's Park: "In retrospect, the whole episode of People's Park seems like a grotesque parody, in microcosm, of the Vietnam War. All the elements were there ...": "The People's Park and the Battle of Berkeley" (1969) in his *Write On: occasional essays '65-'85* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1986), p. 26-7.
international framework within which the cultural experimentation of young people was accorded some legitimacy. Wary of abandoning Third World struggles and yet determined to embrace youth culture, Hayden was constructing an ideological hotchpotch. He was not the only one. Take, for instance, Jonah Raskin's observations about Eldridge Cleaver:

In 1968-70 Eldridge Cleaver was my hero ... But now the Eldridge of exile ... seemed confused in his political thinking. With one hand he reached for dialectical materialism, socialism, internationalism, and with the other hand he reached for Tim Leary, hippie heads, the LSD guerillas of the Weather Underground. Something had to give. He was torn in two directions.36

The key concept in Hayden's analysis - Free Territories - cannot be explained apart from his Berkeley experience. The politics of space, so sharply focussed in Berkeley and even the Bay region as a whole, affected him profoundly.37 But in the late 1960s it was cultural radicalism which tended to define the nature of this spatial politics. The roots of "Free Territories" and "soulful socialism" can, in fact, be found in Haight-Ashbury almost as much as Berkeley.

The Bay Area Be-In

The cultural and political strands of sixties radicalism seem to have been much more closely connected to each other in the Bay Area than other regions.38 For example, Jerry Rubin's personal


37 In his autobiography, he notes that "To be in Berkeley was to feel yourself at the center of history being made". (Reunion, p. 331). Perhaps surprisingly, neither the Berkeley Liberation Program nor Trial rate a mention in Reunion.

38 Irwin Unger, The Movement ..., p. 77.
development (to coin a therapeutic phrase) was, in the mid-Sixties, bound up with the growth of a hippie subculture in the Bay Area. The transition from VDC activism to Yippie absurdism should be seen in that context. Haight-Ashbury had intervened and shifted his inclinations. He was then caught up in a process of exploring possible links between cultural and political radicalism, a process which Michael Rossman alluded to as "the wedding within the war". If there was a formal wedding ceremony then it was (or was intended to be) the Human Be-In.

The explicit intention behind the Human Be-In at Golden Gate Park in January 1967 was to bring together Berkeley's political activists and hip community, San Francisco's "spiritual generation" and other "contingents from the emerging revolutionary generation all over California". They were to express a "union of love and activism previously separated by dogma and label mongering". The dividing line here, was not merely seen to be between the cultural and the political but also between the Berkeley and San Francisco scene. Even the counter-culture was regionally variegated - the hip community in Berkeley, reared alongside political activism on the campus, possessed an ambience different to that of the love children in the Haight-Ashbury. But all the variations on a theme embracing alienation and rebellion could supposedly be united through the spectacle of a Be-In.

Luminaries like Rubin, Timothy Leary, Allen Ginsberg, together with rock bands the Grateful Dead, Big Brother and the Holding Co. and Quicksilver Messenger Service led this celebration of the "new concert of human relations being developed in the youth underground". It would be fair to suggest, however, that the cultural style of the Be-In - the chanting of mantras, the clothing and personal decoration, the music, the "Let it go, whatever you do is beautiful" philosophy - far outweighed the politics of the occasion.

39 Michael Rossman, The Wedding ... Rossman writes about his own wedding but he also uses the phrase which forms the title of his book as a direct reference to the relationship between cultural and political radicalism.


41 Ibid.

It actually did not represent a joining of the activist and the hippie as much as a super-imposition of the hip mode on the thought and lifestyle of some political radicals. Thus Charles Perry has observed that "the speakers from the platform were curiously irrelevant, a slightly absurd center to things - if a center was even necessary". Allen Ginsberg found the Be-In "groovy" but also wished "it had been more political". He looked towards a fusion of hip consciousness and political strategy but, in his own work, tended to stress the importance of radical style. When, just prior to a VDC march in 1965, he wrote about the need to convert protest marches into spectacles he was reflecting an incipient counter-cultural tendency to turn everything into a "happening". He was also, of course, acknowledging the extent to which radicals had to perform on a stage cluttered with television lights, cameras and news reporters. The problem was that the media could then establish the essential framework within which the news occurred, spotlighting image and style as against meaning and substance. What happened to the Haight-Ashbury community itself is a strong example of the media's ability to influence, even mould, social situations through particular types of publicity. The Haight left itself open to that process precisely because so much of it was spectacle and performance. But even political radicals were tempted by the excesses of radical style and sometimes resorted to essentially counter-cultural means of communication.

At the meeting which called off the 1966 Berkeley student strike, there was a harbinger of the increasingly powerful role which cultural radicalism was to play within the Movement. Following a half-hearted attempt to sing the Internationale, the gathering

47 see Todd Gitlin's *The Whole World is Watching*, for a detailed analysis of this process.
launched into an undoubtedly stirring rendition of the Beatle's "Yellow Submarine". This, in a sense, was symbolic of a shift from the old politics to the new politics. More importantly, it was one of the first concrete indications that certain forms of political radicalism, particularly student protest, were going to be influenced profoundly by youth culture. James Petras argued that the Submarine episode represented a movement away from serious political activism to "a fantasy of utopian escapism". But perhaps it just reflected a tentative exploration of the possible links between cultural radicalism and political protest. Mario Savio claimed at the time that there was no longer a division between hippies and politicos and many others involved in the strike spoke about the birth of a new style, a "new community". A Strike Committee leaflet, penned by Michael Rossman, reflected this feeling:

... Last night we celebrated the growing fusion of head, heart and hands; of hippies and activists... And so we made a resolution which broke into song; and we adopt for today this unexpected symbol of trust in our future...

The "new community" was taking its cue from youth culture. As with the Be-In, cultural style proved a more potent force than political vision. Yet, up to that point, the very identity of cultural and political radicals had been shaped, in part, by different perceptions of community. If a genuinely new community was taking root, then it was the political activists more than the hippies who were adjusting their vision, modifying their rhetoric and thinking anew about what was meant by the very term "community".


49 Keith Lampe, reply to James Petras in Ibid., p. 27; Michael Rossman, The Wedding ..., p. 161.

50 Mario Savio, quoted in Berkeley Barb, December 9, 1966; also see Louis H. Rapoport, "The Strike: Student Power in Berkeley", Evergreen Review, 46, April 1967, p. 80 and p. 82.

51 Yellow Submarine leaflet reprinted in Rossman, The Wedding ..., p. 162.
New Left Ideals, Hippie Experience

Hippies claimed community through the common use of cultural objects, generally in clearly defined geographical areas like the Haight, the East Village and Telegraph Ave. The New Left, on the other hand, used notions of community, in coalition with the idea and practice of participating democracy, to promote the reorganization of political life. Of course the New Left really had a few distinct conceptions of community. Firstly, it functioned as a philosophical rubric governing everyday life, combatting isolation from the mechanisms of political and economic power. Then it gained specific geographic and social reference points. SDS's community organizing efforts embraced a definition of community as a geographically delineated area (generally poor working class areas) ripe for social activism. The New Left's self-definition as a community operated on a different level entirely, serving as an article of faith with few roots in geography. "Community" had a particularly profound ideological role in New Left discourse when it referred at one and the same time to a philosophical principle, a physical site and a self-definition. Berkeley's south campus, that "liberated territory" of the Berkeley Liberation Program, provided such a symbol. It is essential, however, to perceive the role of the hippie view of community in this situation. For, by the late Sixties in Berkeley, there is a great deal of political organizing in defence of a community defined primarily through its cultural identity. Constant reference was made to "our" music and "our" drugs, suggesting that the common possession of a set of cultural goods amounted to social and political cohesion. New Left ideology was speaking through counter-cultural style. It became difficult, however, to distinguish between the ventriloquist and the dummy.

During a discussion in early 1967, Allen Ginsberg tried to convince a disbelieving Timothy Leary of the genuineness of political radicals. Ginsberg was one of those within the counter-culture who could identify at some level with the political left and its heritage, but
it can be seen that even he structured that identification in terms of cultural experience:

... they are conscious of the fact that they don't want to be messiahs - political messiahs. At least, Savio [Mario Savio] in particular. Yesterday, he was weeping. Saying he wanted to go out and live in nature.

Leary: Beautiful.

Ginsberg: So, I mean he's like basically where we are: stoned.52

If one could establish a common experience (being stoned) or desire (wanting to live in nature) then vast differences in philosophical outlook could possibly be ignored. The psychedelic consciousness which supposedly enables perception of the fundamental "unity of the cosmos"53 actually functions in a similar way - to expunge social conflict from the realm of human contact. Thus all people can become "groovy" or "beautiful" because all social relationships are flattened into a binding experience, "the trip". In this context, political mediations are neither seen nor heard. A spectacle like the Be-In could ride over divisions within the Movement, partly because the cultural means of expression, like rock music, were more powerful objects of worship than ideology. Indeed, the cultural tools themselves became ideological, shaping the very "common sense" of youth.

Similarly, when the counter-culture's stress upon lifestyle was taken up by sections of the New Left and translated into a revolutionary ideology, the cultural symbols of rebellion frequently proved more potent than any political vision. This is not to reproduce an essentially false "absolutist" distinction between culture and politics but rather to acknowledge that the political content of lifestyle rebellion was attenuated by a focus upon music, drugs, personal appearance or even household living arrangements. Some "political" communes, for instance, became totally involved with their


53 Daniel Foss, Freak Culture, p. 133.
own development\(^{54}\) and thus telescoped social liberation into the everyday life of the commune. A movement which hypostatizes the realm of personal sensibilities and cultural innovation is destined to flit from utopian dreams of promise to existentialist feelings of despair. Thus the disastrous rock concert at Altamont (only 30 miles from Berkeley) in December 1969, had a shattering impact upon Bay Area radicals. The hope of Woodstock suddenly became the tragedy of Altamont.\(^{55}\)

Even the concept of "liberated territory", signifying a simultaneously embattled but free community, spoke of both utopia and desperation. Liberated territory was, indeed, a romantic projection which revealed its limits at the very time when it took root as strategy rather than metaphor.\(^{56}\) The lesson of People's Park, argued Michael Lerner, should have been obvious:

They made their point loud and clear: no dual authority in Berkeley. And, yet, Hayden still suggests that the movement concentrate on building "liberated territory" which will become a center of revolutionary activity for the rest of the country ... Just at the point when it is most crucial to reach out, Hayden emphasizes looking inward.\(^{57}\)

Hayden, no doubt, would have argued that he was reaching out by looking inward. His gaze, however, was transfixed. No matter how many qualifications or adjustments of doctrine he made, Berkeley seemed to be exceptional. The war had come home and domestic chores could thereby be justified. During a speech early in 1970 he

\(^{54}\) Michael P. Lerner, "Youth Culture ...", p. 185.

\(^{55}\) Sol Stern, "Altamont ...", in Ramparts (ed.), Conversations with the New Reality, p. 46. Altamont disintegrated into an orgy of violence and destruction when the Hell's Angels, acting as semi-official guards, ran amuck. This made Warren Hinckle's words in 1967 somewhat prophetic: "The Hippies have shown that it can be pleasant to drop out of the arduous task of attempting to steer a difficult, unrewarding society. But when that is done, you leave the driving to the Hell's Angels". ("The Coming of the Hippies", originally published in Ramparts, reprinted in Ramparts (ed.), Conversations With the New Reality, p. 27.)

\(^{56}\) see Michael P. Lerner, "Youth Culture ...", p. 187, and Gitlin, The Sixties, p. 361.

\(^{57}\) Ibid.
predicted that Berkeley would soon "be organized more than it ever was before ... I mean every home with a gun in the cellar, medical facilities in the bathroom and a communications network for when the establishment cracks down on your right to meet".\textsuperscript{58} Filled with apocalyptic dreams and paranoid imaginings, his vision was folding in on itself. Revolutionary socialism in one home is perhaps the logical product of an extreme localist tendency grounded in cultural radicalism.

\textsuperscript{58} Tom Hayden, quoted in the \textit{Berkeley Barb}. March 13-19, 1970.
CONCLUSION

FELICITOUS SPACE AND RADICAL STRATEGY

In their search for and discovery of what Bachelard has termed "felicitous space" - "space that may be grasped, that may be defended against adversary forces" - Berkeley radicals soon began to attach "imagined values" to the street, the park, the commune, the south campus, the whole city, even the entire region.1 These values strengthened community identity but also fuelled occasionally bizarre dreams of revolution. Yet the lesson of People's Park was not, necessarily, that no form of dual authority would be allowed to exist but rather that it required more than a conjuring trick. The notion that centres of alternative power can function alongside major institutions or even inside them was not destroyed by the National Guard in 1969. A long march through the institutions was never meant to be a gallop down Telegraph Ave. Perhaps more important than any immediate lessons from the struggle over People's Park were long-term implications and issues. It signalled possibilities and hopes, as well as defeat and withdrawal. It gave notice that a decade of radicalism was drawing to an end but precursed many of the central concerns placed on the agenda by so-called "new" social movements in the 1970s and beyond.2 In that sense, while liberated

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territory may not have been real it was an imagined potential worth exploring. Such exploration, indeed, made the Movement what it was:

precisely a movement, a process, a piercing through the shell of advanced capitalism and traditional socialism, a not yet and a to-be. It has been a project of discovering and inventing liberatory forms of expression, experience, organization, and struggle in a system of technically prefabricated and administered life.3

It has been claimed that a focus upon "turf" or "territory", upon forming separatist bases within the city, gives to the city a strategic importance, which due to business decentralization and multinational power, is questionable.4 On the other hand, radical experience in the 1960s does seem to highlight the critical role of cities "as a primary locus of radical action".5 This action, rather than being focused upon relationships at work, can confront social relationships generally and the material circumstances shaping them. It also tends to reinforce the very nature of American municipal politics which fragments "broader class interests" by fostering territorial or ethnic enclaves.6 But this fragmentation does not necessarily mean the death of class politics. Perhaps it points to new strategic orientations which give some priority to territory over (but not as against) class. The problem with "liberated territory" was that it applied only to small


6 Roger Friedland, Frances Fox Piven and Robert R. Alford, "Political conflict, urban structures and the fiscal crisis", International Journal of Urban and Regional Research Vol. 1, No. 3, 1977, p. 462. In contrast to western Europe or, for that matter, Australia severe fragmentation occurs in American municipal politics precisely because the system lacks national political parties with a solid class base and strong trade unions. Also see Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, "The Urban Crisis as an Arena for Class Mobilization", Radical America, Vol. 11, no. 1, January-February 1977, p. 9-17.
and ultimately ephemeral enclaves which were given a primarily generational or cultural identity. It promised social liberation but spoke to the few who already belonged. This, too, is partly a problem which confronts any radical approach to the politics of space. There will always be temptations to retreat into well-defined areas of communal comfort, to seek solace in felicitous space, to uphold regional peculiarities as national verities, to glamorize the local arena, and to see the death throes of capitalism in every minor provincial victory. But there may also be tendencies to discount the importance of local conflicts, to impose national perspectives upon regional circumstance and to perceive the politics of space as peripheral to the class struggle.

Hayden's dream of "Free Territories in the Mother Country" was, on one level, ideological claptrap. On another level, it resonated with the history of radicalism in the Bay area, particularly Berkeley, during the 1960s. There was something special, something exceptional, about radical activism in that region. Hayden recognized this early in the decade and later on tried, unsuccessfully, to construct a theory of social change out of it. No blueprint, however, flows automatically from Sixties radicalism in the Bay Area. Nevertheless, a distinctly important spatial politics was at work there. Firstly, a regional and/or local identity, historically grounded in the experience of political and cultural radicalism prior to the 1960s, developed in the Bay Area. Moreover, battles over space and for community, from FSM to People's Park, helped give this identity substance. Berkeley and San Francisco, in particular, came to represent free space. And it would be fair to guess that without Sproul Plaza, Telegraph Ave, People's Park and Haight-Ashbury, the 1960s would have been very different. These were vital arenas which symbolized dissent and were concrete testing grounds for a new politics and a new way of life. They were, in part, living critiques of capitalism's assault on public space, critiques rendered somewhat incoherent by a variety of factors, including excesses endemic to cultural radicalism and an uncritical absorption of Black Panther ideology, but valuable nonetheless.
Even in the 1970s, some local radicals still saw People's Park as emblematic of a process whereby Berkeley was created as different, as a sanctuary, a refuge, a liberated space:

In the long succession of historical events from the Free Speech Movement to the present, People's Park represents the establishing of turf, creative building of an institution of our culture, and the autonomy of our community from established institutions of government.7

When this was written, the fence was still in place. Self-confident appraisals of recent history often look ludicrous in retrospect. Yet, as already explained, what the Park stood for was far more important than what the Park was.

In May 1972, the fence was torn down during a protest against the American mining of Haiphong harbour and bombing of North Vietnam. It remains, to this day, a piece of land called People's Park. As a park, it is hardly memorable. As a symbolic entity, it conveys the sense of many experiments with and struggles surrounding the politics of space in the 1960s.

APPENDIX TWO

SPATIAL DIALECTICS: SPROUL HALL, SPROUL PLAZA, THE STUDENT UNION, TELEGRAPH AVE AND PART OF THE SOUTH CAMPUS COMMUNITY
Source: Enlargement from San Francisco street map (California State Automobile Association).
APPENDIX FOUR  THE BERKELEY LIBERATION PROGRAM

THE PEOPLE OF BERKELEY PASSIONATELY DESIRE HUMAN
SOLIDARITY, CULTURAL FREEDOM AND PEACE

Berkeley is becoming a revolutionary example throughout the world. We are now under severe attack by the demons of despair, ugliness and fascism. We are being strangled by reactionary powers from Washington to Sacramento.

Our survival depends on our ability to overcome past inadequacies and to expand the revolution. We have not done enough to build a movement that is both personally humane and politically radical.

The people of Berkeley must increase their combativeness; develop, tighten, and toughen their organizations; and transcend their middle-class, ego-centered life styles. We shall resist our oppressors by establishing a zone of struggle and liberation, and of necessity shall defend it. We shall create a genuine community and control it to serve our material and spiritual needs. We shall develop new forms of democratic participation and new, more humane styles of work and play. In solidarity with other revolutionary centers and movements, our Berkeley will permanently challenge the present system and act as one of many training grounds for the liberation of the planet.

1. We will make Telegraph Avenue and the South Campus a strategic free territory from revolution.

Historically this area is the home of political radicalism and cultural revolution. We will resist plans to destroy the South Campus through University-business expansion and pig assaults.
We will create malls, parks, cafes and places for music and wandering. Young people leaving their parents will be welcome with full status as members of our community. Businesses on the Avenue should serve the humanist revolution by contributing their profits to the community. We will establish cooperative stores of our own, and combine them within an Avenue cooperative.

2. **We will create our revolutionary culture everywhere.**

Everyone should be able to express and develop himself through art-work, dance, sculpture, gardening and all means open to the imagination. Materials will be made available to all people. We will defy all puritanical restraints on culture and sex. We shall have media - newspapers, posters and leaflets, radio, TV, films and skywriting - to express our revolutionary community. We will stop the defiling of the earth; our relation to nature will be guided by reason and beauty rather than profit. The civilization of concrete and plastic will be broken and natural things respected. We shall set up urban and rural communes where people can meet for expression and communication. Many Berkeley streets bear little traffic and can be grassed over and turned into people's parks. Parking meters will be abolished and we will close areas of downtown and South Campus to automotive traffic. We shall celebrate the holidays of liberation with fierce dancing.

3. **We will turn the schools into training grounds for liberation.**

Beneath the progressive facade of Berkeley's schools, students continue to be regimented into accepting the existing system. The widely-celebrated integration of the schools is nothing in itself, and only perpetuates many illusions of white liberalism. The basic issue is creating an educational system in which students have real power and which prepares the young to participate in a revolutionary world. Students must destroy the
senile dictatorship of adult teachers and bureaucrats. Grading, tests, tracking, demotions, detentions and expulsions must be abolished. Pigs and narcs have no place in a people's school. We will eliminate the brainwashing, fingernail-cutting mass production of junior cogs for tight-ass America's old age home war machine. Students will establish independent educational forms to create revolutionary consciousness while continuing to struggle for change in the schools.

4. **We will destroy the University unless it serves the people.**

The University of California is not only the major oppressive institution in Berkeley, but a major brain center for world domination. UC attempts to kill radical politics and culture in Berkeley while it trains robots for corporations and mental soldiers to crush opposition from Delano to Vietnam.

Students should not recognize the false authority of the regents, administration and faculty. All students have the right to learn what they want, from whom they want, and in the manner they decide; and the right to take political action without academic penalty. We will build a movement to make the University relevant to the Third World, workers, women and young people searching for human values and vocations. Our battles will be conducted in the classrooms and the streets.

We will shatter the myth that UC is a sacred intellectual institution with a special right to exist. We will change this deadly Machine which steals our land and rapes our minds, or we will stop its functioning. Education can only begin when we're willing to close the University for what we believe.

5. **We will struggle for the full liberation of women as a necessary part of the revolutionary process.**

While the material oppression of women varies in different classes, male supremacy pervades all social classes. We will
resist this ideology and practice which oppresses all women. As we struggle to liberate ourselves, many of the problems of inequality, authoritarianism and male chauvinism in the Berkeley movement will be overcome.

We will create an unfettered identity for women. We will abolish the stifling masculine and feminine roles that this society forces on us all. Women will no longer be defined in terms of others than themselves - by their relationships to men and children. Likewise, men will not be defined by their jobs or their distorted role as provider. We seek to develop whole human beings and to bring together the most free and beautiful aspects of women and men.

We will end the economic oppression of women: job discrimination, the manipulation of women as consumers, and media exploitation of women as sexual objects.

We demand the full control of our own bodies and towards that end will establish free birth control and abortion clinics. We will choose our own sexual partners; we will eliminate the demeaning bustling scene in Berkeley which results from male chauvinism and false competition among men and among women. We will not tolerate harassment in the parks, streets, and public places of Berkeley.

We will resist all false concepts of chivalry and protectiveness. We will develop self-reliance and the skills of self defense. We will establish female communes so that women who so choose can have this free space to develop themselves as human beings.

We will end all forms of male supremacy by ANY MEANS NECESSARY!

6. **We will take communal responsibility for basic human needs.**

High-quality medical and dental care, including laboratory tests, hospitalization, surgery and medicines will be made freely
available. Child-care collectives staffed by both men and women, and centers for the care of strung-out souls, the old and the infirm will be established. Free legal services will be expanded. Survival needs such as crash pads, free transportation, switchboards, free phones, and free food will be met.

7. **We will protect and expand our drug culture.**

We relate to the liberating potential of drugs for both the mind and the body politic. Drugs inspire us to new possibilities in life which can only be realized in revolutionary action. We intend to establish a drug distribution center and a marijuana cooperative.

As a loving community we shall establish drug information centers and free clinics. We will resist the enforcement of all drug laws in our community. We will protect people from narcs and burn artists. All drug busts will be defined as political and we will develop all necessary defense for those arrested.

8. **We will break the power of the landlords and provide beautiful housing for everyone.**

Through rent strikes, direct seizures of property and other resistance campaigns, the large landlords, banks and developers who are gouging higher rents and spreading ugliness will be driven out. We shall force them to transfer housing control to the community, making decent housing available according to people's needs. Coordinated housing councils will be formed on a neighborhood basis to take responsibility for rents and building conditions. The housing councils will work with architects to plan for a beautiful community. Space will be opened up and living communes and revolutionary families will be encouraged.
9. **We will tax the corporations, not the working people.**

The people cannot tolerate escalating taxes which are wasted in policing the world while businessmen are permitted to expand their profits in the midst of desperate social need. Berkeley cannot be changed without confronting the industries, banks, insurance companies, railroads and shipping interests dominating the Bay Area. In particular, University of California expansion which drives up taxes should be stopped and small homeowners should no longer pay property taxes. We will demand a direct contribution from business, including Berkeley's biggest business - the University, to the community until a nationwide assault on big business is successful.

10. **We will defend ourselves against law and order.**

America's rulers, faced with the erosion of their authority in Berkeley, begin to take on the grotesque qualities of a dictatorship based on pure police power. States of emergency, martial law, conspiracy charges and all legalistic measures used to crush our movement will be resisted by any means necessary - from courtroom to armed struggle. The people of Berkeley must arm themselves and learn the basic skills and tactics of self defense and street fighting. All oppressed people in jail are political prisoners and must be set free. We shall make Berkeley a sanctuary for rebels, outcasts and revolutionary fugitives. We shall attempt to bring the real criminals to trial; where this is impossible we shall implement revolutionary justice.

11. **We will create a soulful socialism in Berkeley.**

The revolution is about our lives. We will fight against the dominating Berkeley life style of affluence, selfishness, and social apathy - and also against the self-indulgent individualism which masquerades as "doing your own thing". We will find ways of taking care of each other as comrades. We will
experiment with new ways of living together such as communal families in which problems of income, child care, and housekeeping are mutually shared. Within the Berkeley movement we will seek alternatives to the stifling elitism, egoism, and sectarianism which rightly turns people away and creates organizational weakness. We have had enough of supposed vanguards seeking to manipulate mass movements. We need vanguards of a new type - people who lead by virtue of their moral and political example; who seek to release and organize energy instead of channeling or curbing it; who seek power not for themselves but for the people as a whole. We firmly believe in organization which brings out the leadership and creativeness existing in everyone.

12. **We will create a people's government.**

We will not recognize the authority of the bureaucratic and unrepresentative local government. We will ignore elections involving trivial issues and personalities. We propose a referendum to dissolve the present government, replacing it with one based on the tradition of direct participation of the people. People in motion around their own needs will become a decentralized government of neighborhood councils, workers councils student unions, and different sub-cultures. Self-management in schools, factories, and neighborhoods will become commonplace. Locally chosen "people's mediators" will aid those desiring to settle disputes a without referring to the illegitimate system of power.

13. **We will unite with other movements throughout the world to destroy this motherfucking racistcapitalistimperialist system.**

Berkeley cannot be free until America is free. We will make the American revolution with the mass participation of all the oppressed and exploited people. We will actively support the 10-point program of the Black Panther Party in the black
colony; all revolutionary organizing attempts among workers, women, students and youth; all Third World liberation movements. We will create an International Liberation School in Berkeley as a training center for revolutionaries.

We call for sisters and brothers to form liberation committees to carry out the Berkeley struggle.

These committees should be small democratic working groups of people able to trust each other. We should continually resist the monster system; our emphasis should be on direct action, organizing the community, and forming a network of new groups. Together as a Berkeley Liberation Movement, the liberation committees will build people's power and a new life.

Sisters and Brothers,
Unite for Survival,
Resist and Create,
Fight for a Revolutionary Berkeley,
With your Friends, your Dope, your Guns,
Form Liberation Committees,
Carry Out the Program,
Choose the Action and Do It,
Set Examples and Spread the Word.

POWER TO THE IMAGINATION

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE

PROGRAM WRITTEN BY SEVERAL BERKELEY LIBERATION COMMITTEES
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