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Photo: April 2011 protest at CPUC hearing on Diablo Canyon. By Luke Hauser.



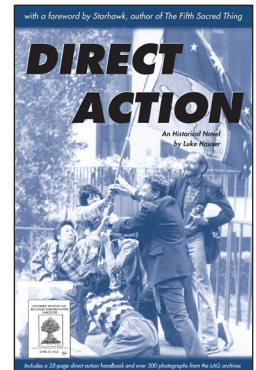
DIRECT ACTION

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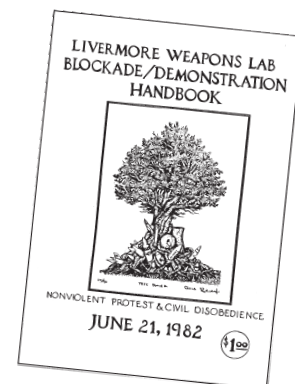


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DIRECT ACTION

an historical novel

by Luke Hauser

GROUNDWORK • SAN FRANCISCO

GroundWork
San Francisco, California

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PUBLISHER'S NOTICE

This is a work of historical, documentary fiction. While the narrative is based on actual events involving real people, the characters and their behaviors and words are either the product of the author's imagination or are used entirely fictitiously. There is no consistent connection between the actions of any character and any specific individual. Any connection between individuals in photographs and the characters in this book is entirely coincidental.

The author researched many sources in an effort to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the information contained in this book. Any responsibility for errors, inaccuracies, omissions, or inconsistencies herein lies entirely with the author, not the publisher. Any slights of people or organizations are unintentional.

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WWW.DIRECTACTION.ORG — more photos and images, additional stories and dialogs, historical documentation, links to grassroots groups, downloadable versions of the study guide, handbook, easy ordering links, and more.

*Dedicated to my friends,
who made this book possible*

I have a dream that one day . . . we shall be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

— Martin Luther King, Jr.



A LAG contingent joined this August 1983 San Francisco march to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech.

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The telephone numbers on virtually all of the posters and flyers reproduced in these pages have changed. Please do not disturb the current users of those numbers. For information on current organizing, contact GroundWork — see page 6 for contacts.

Acknowledgments

Livermore Action Group, Vandenberg Action Coalition, Abalone Alliance, the War Chest Tours, and the many other groups and events mentioned in these pages were collective creations. To write a full list of credits would mean naming every member of every affinity group — and a lot of their friends and family to boot. Not to mention the cops, guards, and other officials who did their part to make these stories possible.

At the sad pain of having to terminate this list arbitrarily, I mention here only those people directly involved in producing the book. For all those who helped via inspiration, interviews, memories, research, laughter, feedback, and encouragement — without you, this book would not exist. I thank you and ask your forbearance that I can't name you all here.

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To the incredibly generous photographers and artists whose names are listed along with their specific graphic credits in the Appendix.

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Foreword

by Starhawk

IN *DIRECT ACTION*, Luke Hauser writes fiction so steeped in reality that he reproduces an era for us, with all of its excitement and frustrations.

Although the 1980s are generally thought of as a kind of dead zone for progressive activism, in the San Francisco Bay Area the early part of the decade was a time of fervent activism around nuclear issues.

Hauser's novel, set in that era, recreates the emotional and political milieu of the anti-nuclear blockades at Livermore Lab, Vandenberg Air Force Base, and the San Francisco Financial District. The nonviolent direct actions of the 70s and early 80s against nuclear power and nuclear weapons were the forerunners of a style of organizing that came to fruition in the blockade of the World Trade Organization in Seattle in 1999. Many of the assumptions about nonhierarchical organizations, the power of nonviolent direct action, and many of the tactics and strategies that inform the global justice movement today were pioneered at that time.

Hauser was one of the organizers of Livermore Action Group, which focused attention throughout the early 80s on Livermore Lab, run by the University of California — one of the two places in the U.S. where nuclear weapons were designed and developed. Livermore Action Group was born when organizing against nuclear power expanded to include nuclear weapons.

New Models of Protest

IN THE 1970s, as nuclear power plants began to be brought online, the dangers of nuclear power were becoming highly evident. The near meltdown at Three Mile Island in the Spring of 1979 increased opposition.

On the East Coast, a group called the Clamshell Alliance pioneered a new mode of organizing in direct actions against the Seabrook Nuclear Plant at Seabrook, New Hampshire. Movement for a New Society, a Quaker-based social action group in Philadelphia, had conducted trainings in nonviolence

and helped mold an organizing style. Instead of a central committee making decisions, the actions were organized by affinity groups, small groups of like-minded people that included both activists willing to risk arrest and those who would offer support. The affinity groups made decisions by consensus, and sent representatives to spokescouncils that made decisions for the whole action.

In California, Pacific Gas and Electric had begun building a nuclear plant on the ocean at Diablo Canyon, just west of San Luis Obispo. Huge public opposition was aroused — especially when it came to light that the plant was being built over an earthquake fault. After a long campaign of legal challenges, the plant was finally ready to be licensed in the summer of 1981. As legal modes of opposition were exhausted, a group called the Abalone Alliance formed, modeled after the Clamshell Alliance. They held rallies and small blockades in the late 1970s, but their major organizing efforts went into a call for an emergency response, to blockade the plant and prevent the operators from loading the fuel rods, once the license for testing was granted.

The Diablo blockade took place in September 1981, and lasted about three weeks, during which nearly 2000 arrests were made. For everyone who took part, the blockade became a life-changing event. Three weeks of collective decision making and shared leadership gave us a strong sense of our own personal and collective power. Getting arrested, confronting authority, surviving custody, and often getting out of jail and returning to the blockade gave us ample opportunities to test our power, courage, and commitment — and come out stronger. While in jail, we used our time to hold workshops, talent shows, and meetings, and to discuss strategy. Reagan was pushing to build up our nuclear arsenal, characterizing the Soviet Union as the “Evil Empire,” and talking about how to make nuclear war winnable. Nuclear



This 1982 Hall of Shame Tour sponsored by Abalone Alliance was a forerunner of later urban actions.

war seemed a real possibility in the immediate future. Our new mode of organizing, combining direct democracy and nonviolent direct action, was so empowering and powerful that some of us decided we should expand and organize in a similar way against nuclear weapons.

The Birth of LAG

AND SO Livermore Action Group was born. LAG, as it was familiarly called, organized its first blockade in February of 1982. It was followed by a larger blockade that June, on the Summer Solstice. In these days of computers and the internet, when international organizing is easy and expected, it seems quaintly archaic to remember that we organized across borders by using regular mail and occasional long-distance phone calls. We had allies in the German anti-nuclear movement, and later developed allies even further afield, in Kazakhstan and Palau, wherever weapons had been tested and toxic residues left behind.

LAG soon acquired an office in Berkeley and a small paid staff — underpaid, but paid. There was always a tension in the organization between the paid staff and those who identified with the affinity groups: between a pull toward some centralization and core leadership, and an outward push into more direct democracy. The tension was mirrored by the emergence of a new group, Vandenberg Action Coalition, which formed to oppose missile testing at Vandenberg Air Force Base in Southern California.

Vandenberg Action Coalition was more “pure” in its devotion to nonhierarchical organizing, with no paid staff, no coordinating council, only representatives from affinity groups and working groups. LAG and VAC planned two actions in 1983 — a fixed-date action in January, noteworthy because almost all of us contracted dysentery from the camp food, and a floating date action that was planned to interfere with the actual testing of the MX.

Arrest at a military base meant federal, rather than state, charges. After the January action, everybody was “banned and barred” from coming back to the base, but most were not charged. Repeat trespassers, however, faced greater risks in the Spring action. We planned a jail solidarity strategy — that we all would stay in jail to keep pressure on the authorities to drop or reduce charges, or at least to insure that second-timers were not treated more harshly. Part of that strategy was to withhold names, to keep them from simply releasing some protesters and singling out others for prosecution.

Hauser’s novel traces the tensions and conflicts as well as the creative interactions between the different approaches to organizing. He recreates the feelings, the issues, the controversies, with great fidelity. The central part of the narrative takes place during the extended jail stay after the June 1983 blockade. LAG planned a jail solidarity strategy which proved vitally important when the courts attempted to give us all (in addition to ten days in jail) a long period of

probation, which would have prevented us from civil disobedience for months or years.

We ended up staying in jail for nearly two weeks. Hauser does an excellent job of recreating the experience: the frustration, the waiting, the high points of mutual support and solidarity and the low points of depression in our unexpectedly long sojourn in custody. He brought back the experience so vividly that I could smell the unwashed bodies, feel the cold and the rough wool of the blankets, and taste once again that inimitable combination of spam and fruit cocktail the guards called, “The Empire Strikes Back!”

THE BOOK continues through the following Summer, culminating in a series of corporate-focused direct actions around the 1984 Democratic National Convention in San Francisco that were precursors of today’s vibrant direct action movement.

Anyone interested in the history of social movements or the antecedents of the global justice movement kicked off by Seattle will find this book fascinating. Hauser tells a good story, and creates characters that live and breathe. But he does more — he brings alive a part of our history that might otherwise be forgotten, and offers its lessons and legacy to the present.

*Starhawk is the author of many books on Goddess religion and grassroots activism, from *The Spiral Dance* to the recent *Webs of Power: Notes from the Global Uprising*. Her writings and teaching schedule can be found at www.starhawk.org*



A die-in protested a lethal toxic spill by Union Carbide, outside corporate offices in San Francisco.

The Narrator to the FBI...

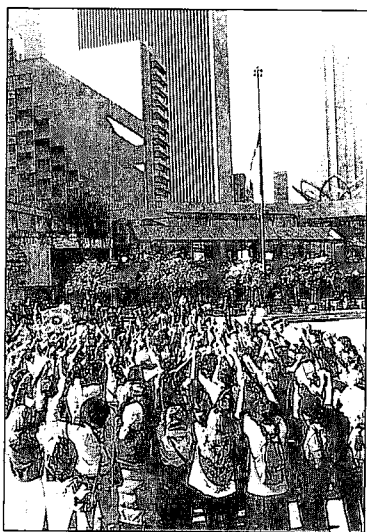
HAVE YOU EVER been part of a news event, picked up a newspaper the next day, and found yourself thinking, “Wait a minute, I was there — that’s not how it happened.”

Well, that’s exactly how I felt when I read our government files, obtained by members of the legal collective under the Freedom of Information Act. To hear the Naval Intelligence Service tell it, all those of us from Livermore Action Group who were arrested at Vandenberg in January 1983 skipped the action. To see police reports on the War Chest Tour period, you’d think we were a bunch of ultra-Bolsheviks conspiring to destroy the American Way of Life, not a loose-knit community of anarchists who had trouble agreeing to show up at the same place on the same day.

Even if I am just a fictional narrator, I’m disturbed. If a government doesn’t do a good job spying on its own citizens, how are we supposed to trust it with spying on the rest of the world?

But I also feel a bit guilty. Do we in the direct action movement have a clear idea who we are, what we are doing, or what our structures are? No wonder the FBI is mystified.

Therefore, as part of my good citizenship merit badge, I undertake to document (both for the government’s sake and for that of posterity) exactly what happened in those troubled times – lest you have nothing more reliable to turn to than police reports and the mainstream media.



BEFORE I BEGIN my somewhat lengthy narrative, here’s a few things I want you to know. First, everything in this book actually happened. The author was present, or interviewed people who were present, at every incident described in this book. Some events and details have been moved to different dates for the sake of the narrative. These changes are documented in the “Fact and Fiction” appendix.

Names of affinity groups and clusters are all real. However, actions, dates, and details that are attributed to a specific AG or cluster are often fictional.

Narrator is seventh from the left in the thirteenth row.

Why a novel? The decision was reached after frustrated attempts to write a history book, a set of dialogues, and an anthology of articles from Direct Action newspaper. As each of those methods came up short, it became clear that only a living re-creation of the events and actions could do justice to the many-colored tapestry that was LAG.

Unfortunately, no one was available to create a living tapestry on such short notice. So we decided to do a novel instead. One with lots of pictures.

ALL OF THE photos and graphics except scenic shots and murals are from the early 1980s. Many are from the LAG/Direct Action archives. Others were loaned specially for this book, and are printed here for the first time. A detailed list of photo credits appears in the Appendix.

As closely as possible, photos are matched with the correct action. It is likely that some are misplaced.

The photos document the actions, not the individuals who happen to be pictured. Any connection between anyone pictured in a photograph and any fictional character in this book is coincidental. No photo should be taken as indicating that a specific individual was even present at the action to which the photo is (perhaps erroneously) linked, or is in any way connected to any fictional character.

WHILE THIS BOOK describes real events involving still-living people, it is not biography. The characters are fictional composites of the actions and words of innumerable individuals. The dialogues have been put in the mouths of fictional characters based on dramatic needs, not biography. No actions or words should be attributed to any specific individual based on the text.

To be totally clear — *all* of the characters are fictional. Even me — Jeff Harrison, the narrator of this tale. I'm a composite, and have been placed into situations according to dramatic needs, not the biography of the author.

Overall, it's worked out well. I saw a lot of amazing things, including actions the author only heard tell of. And I had the pleasure of working with as fine a bunch of characters as have ever gathered between covers.

Still it must be admitted that the strain of appearing in every scene,



Narrator Jeff Harrison blends in with his surroundings at the October 1983 financial district action in San Francisco.

dealing with obsessive rewrites, memorizing last-minute dialog, and humoring an, shall we say, “eccentric” author, only to watch my favorite parts of a chapter end up on the cutting-room floor — all this has taken its toll. While I never wavered in my commitment to this project, I have nonetheless resolved to take a long break from this sort of work.

AT THIS point, the perceptive reader might venture the question: Why, if he claims to hew so closely to history, has the author chosen to merge his actions and most private thoughts into a fictional narrator? Is it a misplaced sense of residual Midwestern modesty? A quasi-religious veneration of the anonymity of the Medieval artist? Or perhaps simply a concern for personal privacy?

The answer, of course, is “D” — all of the above. Most of all, the awareness that this book is the result of many people’s work, thinking, and creativity. It would be impossible to name everyone whose actions, words, misadventures, and love lives fill these pages. So the author opted to name none, including himself. If ever there existed a collaborative creation, it was LAG.

And so we reach the end. Or perhaps the beginning. While you glance at a background-history sketch, I will retire to the makeup room to prepare for my entrance in the sixth paragraph of the Prologue.

Bon voyage, dear reader.

— *Jeff Harrison, Narrator Emeritus*

P.S. — the direct action handbook, which is edited from the Diablo Canyon, Livermore, Vandenberg, and International Day handbooks, immediately follows the text. Skim this fairly early. There will be a pop-quiz.



The LAG office was located in the present site of the Northern California Land Trust, 3126 Shattuck Avenue in South Berkeley. The adjacent Long Haul is a key organizing hub for Food Not Bombs, People’s Park, and other grassroots projects in Berkeley and Oakland. La Peña and the Starry Plough are across the street.

The United States c. 1982

A Brief Overview

Ronald Reagan was sworn in as president on January 20, 1981, with George Bush the Elder as vice president. The ensuing years saw skyrocketing military budgets, massive social service cuts, and a catastrophic surge of homelessness that still persists.

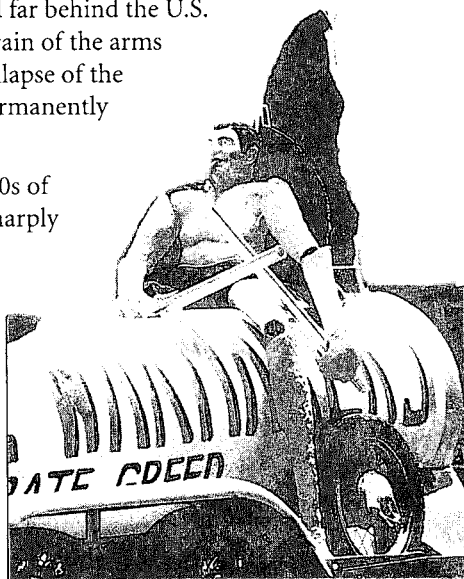
The 1980s were the New Cold War era, with hundreds of billions of dollars spent on developing new conventional and nuclear weapons. The USSR tried to keep pace, but contrary to Reagan's rhetoric always trailed far behind the U.S. in weapons technology. The strain of the arms race helped bring about the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, while permanently weakening the U.S. economy.

California, after the liberal 1970s of Governor Jerry Brown, went sharply Republican in 1982. The prison industry and law enforcement boomed. The urban tax base was destroyed via "Proposition 13," which slashed the corporate property taxes that had underwritten social services and education.

The onset of "Reaganism" was a harsh and abrupt cultural shift. Traditional political forms such as rallies, pickets, and chanted slogans appeared ineffective in mobilizing opposition. This created an opening for groups like LAG that combined feminist process with direct action, the personal with the political.

The development of Abalone Alliance, LAG, VAC, and the California direct action movement was a synthesis of the nonviolent activist legacy of the Civil Rights and Vietnam eras with a West Coast emphasis on personal awareness and growth.

The 1970s had seen the development of the Women's Liberation movement, Gay Rights organizing, New Age consciousness movements, and an explosion



Reagan straddles the nukecycle for a ride through downtown San Francisco — July 16, 1984.

of alternative healing and psychology trends. Cumulatively, these movements helped create “feminist process,” a loose term for consensus, nonviolence, and small-group, non-hierarchical structures.

The anti-nuclear direct action movement blossomed first on the upper East Coast, leading to late-1970s mass actions at Seabrook nuclear power plant in New Hampshire. California saw actions at Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant from 1976 to 1981. The 1981 protest resulted in 2000 arrests and helped delay licensing of the plant for years. Following that action, Livermore Action Group began meeting in Fall 1981, with its first action at Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab on February 1, 1982. Chapter One of this novel picks up the story at that point.

Culturally, flash and polish were the order of the day — Madonna, Prince, Michael Jackson, Bruce Springsteen, and Van Halen ruled the music charts. The avant-garde included Talking Heads, Gang of Four, Herbie Hancock, and The Clash. Rap evolved around 1980, but didn’t break into the mainstream until 1984 with Run-DMC’s first album. Punk arose in the malaise of the late 1970s and took solid root in the 1980s, but was still mainly underground music. Reggae had been popular in the U.S. since the mid-1970s. South and Central African music made their first significant inroads into the U.S. market around 1980, a harbinger of the growing interest in “world music.”

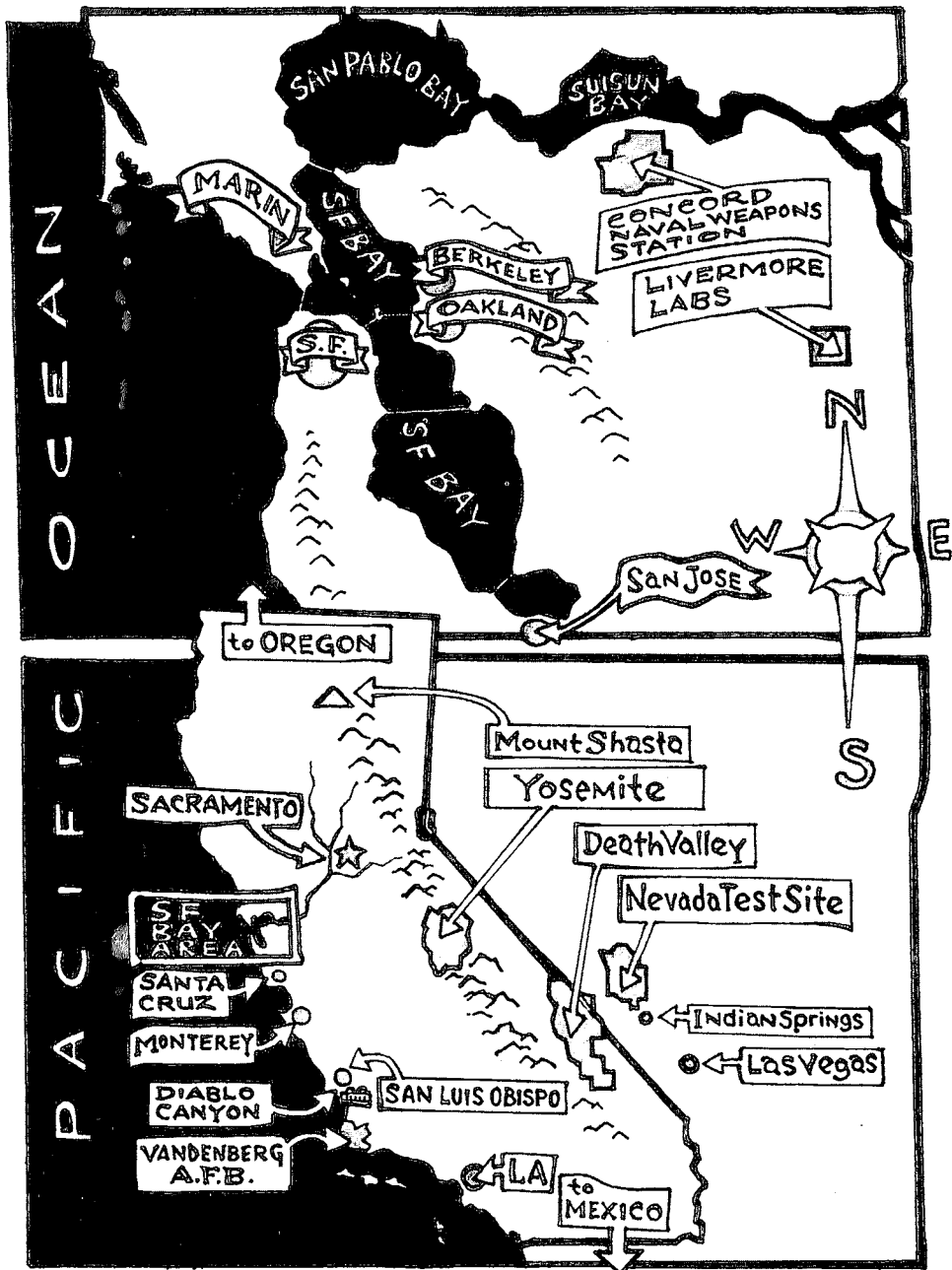
Direct Action newspaper (1982-1986) was produced with electric typewriters, photocopy machines, and gluesticks. Personal computers were so rare that no one working on the newspaper had one. Email, the internet, faxes, and cell phones were years away.

Some people had answering machines, but they weren’t ubiquitous. Communication mainly meant seeing people in offices, at meetings, or at actions. A majority of LAG organizers lived in Berkeley or North Oakland, many within walking or biking distance of one another.

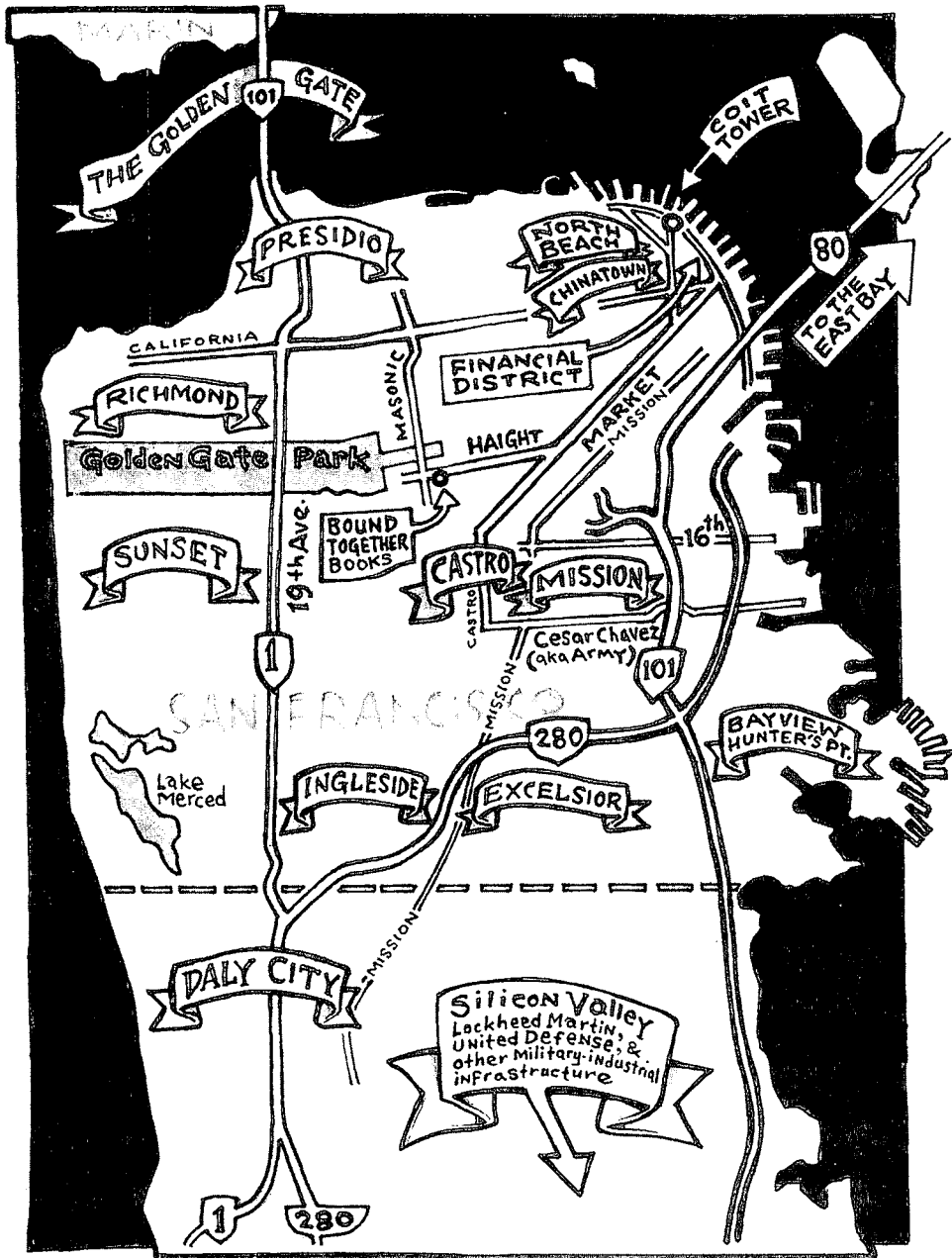
Bay Area rents already rivaled Manhattan, but were not yet extortionate. Many activists and artists worked part-time and still managed to live in Berkeley or San Francisco. Berkeley had a much higher percentage of tenants and (not coincidentally) working-class people than it does today.

Southside Berkeley, around Telegraph Avenue, was a bohemian neighborhood of cheap apartments and post-college noncareer types. Today, after nearly two decades of soaring rents, it consists mainly of UC-Berkeley students and home-owners.

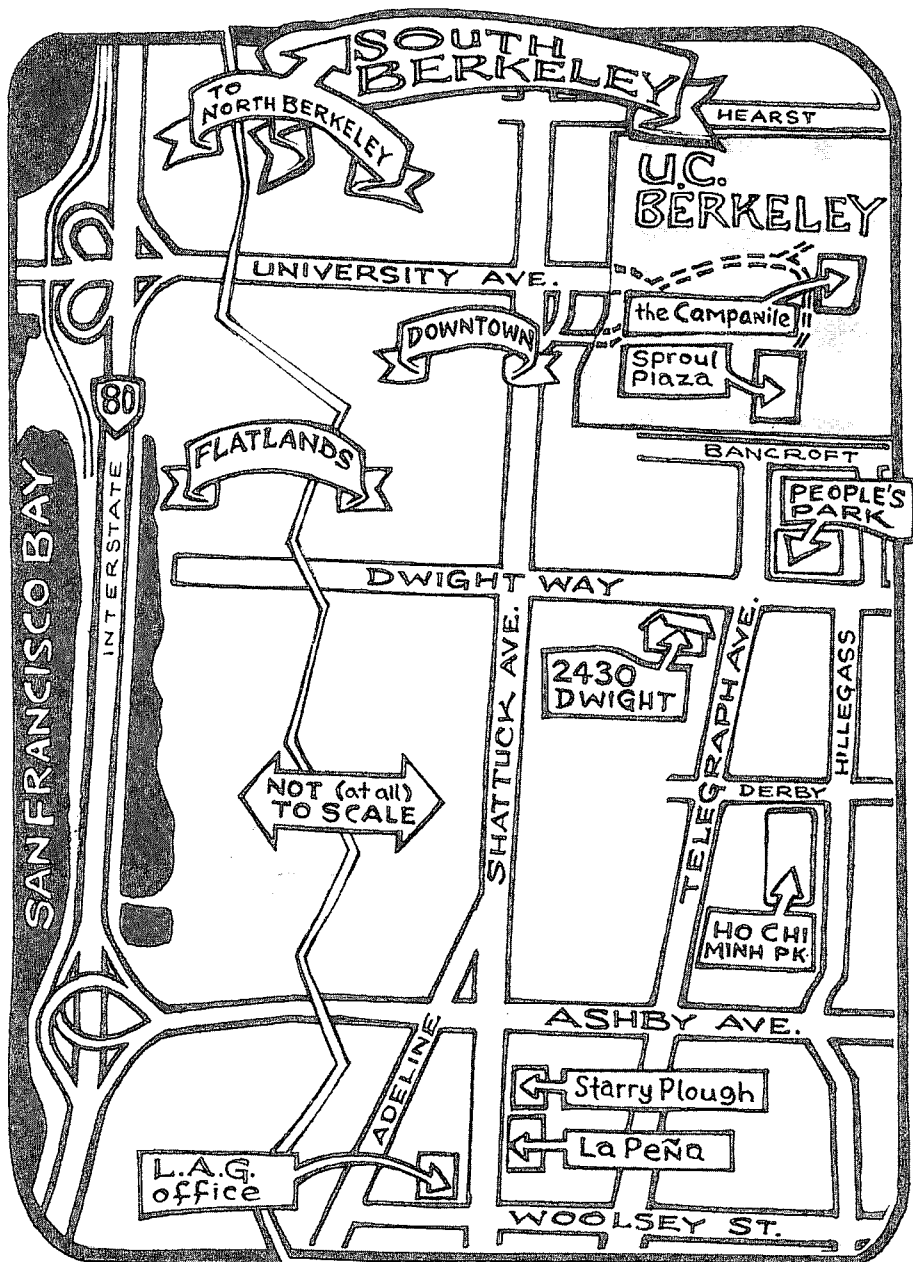
It is doubtful that anyone will ever be nostalgic for the 1980s.



Bay Area maps on next page. Map of Livermore Lab in Handbook.
 San Francisco Financial District, see beginning of Chapter Five.
 Maps on these pages by America Narcoleptic.



California was home to numerous Native American tribes for thousands of years, and was then a Spanish and Mexican province, before being seized by the United States in the mid-1800s. Discovery of gold in 1849 built San Francisco into a booming port city where alternative and radical ideas found a home. Maps by America Narcoleptic.



A quiet college town from the late 1800s through the 1950s, Berkeley got on the map in the 1960s with a series of protests including the Free Speech Movement, huge anti-Vietnam marches, and the fight for People's Park. More recently, Berkeley has been a pioneer in community recycling and in building an audience for world music in the United States. Most of the city is residential, a mix of houses and small apartments.

Dramatis Personae

Ages are circa mid-1983

Alby (24) In Red Menace AG and Change of Heart Cluster. Anarchist but active in LAG.

Angie (24) Works as part-time secretary, volunteers in LAG office. Works on Direct Action. Pagan, member of Change of Heart Cluster. Lovers with Jeff later in book.

Antonio (50) Professor of creative writing at Laney Community College, Pagan, in Lifers AG and Change of Heart cluster. Works on International Day.



The LAG-a-Tron tested for radiation at the 1984 Democratic Convention in San Francisco

Artemis (45) Pagan, in Matrix AG. Works as a cook, and on Peace Camp kitchen.

Belinda (40) In Spyderwomyn AG and Feminist Cluster. Co-parent with Doc.

Caroline (28) LAG staffer 1982-1983, then involved in Central America support work, goes to Nicaragua. Holly's best friend.

Claude (42) Artist/muralist, leftist. Active since 1960s.

Claudia (32) LAG cofounder and staffer 1982-1983. Active in women's movement.

Craig (29) LAG cofounders, office staffer 1982-1983, active in Overthrow Cluster.

Daniel (35) Ex-professor at Cal, LAG staffer from mid-1983. Works on International Day.

Doc (40) Hippie, Pagan, Enola Gay AG, Change of Heart. Co-parent with Belinda.

Flint (32) Anarchist, no interest in LAG, considers even War Chest Tours to be too tame.

Hank (30) Electrician, restores pinball machines. In Spectrum AG with Jeff, later joins Overthrow Cluster. Builds nukecycle.

Holly (30) LAG staffer 1982-1983, later cooks for a cancer patient. Works on International Day, peace camp, Direct Action. Lovers with Jeff.

Jacey (28) Anarchist, works on War Chest Tours. Not active in LAG.

Jeff (29) Narrator. Apartment repairman, works on Direct Action, in Change of Heart Cluster. Studies history. Has read Marx and Lenin, but sympathetic to anarchist views.

Jenny (24) Roommate of Angie, partner with Raoul. Office staffer from mid-1983, works on Direct Action. Anarchist, works on War Chest Tours.

Karina (23) Lover/housemate of Sara, lover of Alby and Walt. Pagan, in Noah's Ark AG and Change of Heart Cluster. Office staffer from mid-1983, works on War Chest Tours.

Lyle (30) In Overthrow Cluster, goes to Santa Rita jail with Jeff.

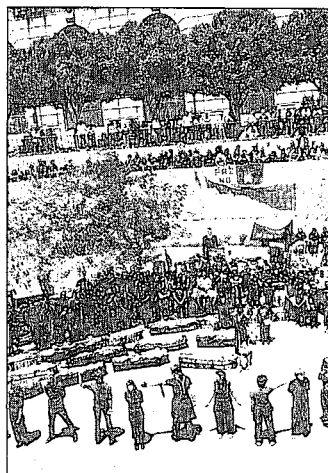
Maria (34) In Spirit AG. Uses a manual wheelchair. LAG staffer from mid-1983.

- Melissa** (39) Christian, in Spirit AG, pacifist. Active since 1960s. Focused on Livermore.
- Moonstone** (31) Hippie, Pagan. In Deadheads for Peace and Change of Heart Cluster.
- Mort** (30) Solar physicist, Marxist. In Overthrow Cluster, works on Direct Action.
- Nathaniel** (52) Staffer for American Friends Service Committee. Jeff's nonviolence prepper, pacifist, active since Civil Rights movement in early 1960s.
- Norm** (39) Joins LAG for 1983 Livermore, volunteers in office, works on peace camp.
- Pilgrim** (65) Active since 1950s anti-nuclear movement. Starts book with about 30 arrests and adds a dozen more. Cofounder of LAG, focused on Livermore.
- Raoul** (25) Printer, partner with Jenny. Anarchist, works on War Chest Tours.
- Sara** (26) Lovers with Karina. Jewish and Pagan, in Change of Heart Cluster. Anarchist, but stays active in LAG. Works on Direct Action.
- Sid** (19) Lives at Urban Stonehenge. Arrested at Livermore, but main focus is San Francisco actions. Anarchist critic of LAG, works on War Chest Tours.
- Tai** (23) Graffiti and poster artist, active in Overthrow Cluster.
- Walt** (31) Lawyer, does pro-bono work for protesters. In Change of Heart Cluster.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

for detailed glossary, see Appendix

- AG** Affinity group, "A-G"
- BARF** Berkeley Anti-Reagan Festival, "barf"
- Bay Area** Short for "San Francisco Bay Area"
- BCA** Berkeley Citizens Action, "B-C-A"
- Cal** See UC
- CD** Civil disobedience, "C-D"
- CISPES** Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, "sis-pes"
- East Bay** East side of San Francisco Bay, includes Oakland and Berkeley
- ERN** Emergency Response Network, "E-R-N"
- LAG** Livermore Action Group, "lag"
- RPF, RWP** Revolutionary People's Front, Revolutionary Workers Party
- Telegraph** Telegraph Avenue, main drag of Southside in Berkeley, also called "The Ave"
- UC** University of California at Berkeley, also called "Berkeley" or "Cal"
- VAC** Vandenberg Action Coalition, "vac"



U.S.-funded death squads execute Salvadoran dissidents. Street theater sponsored by CISPES, San Francisco, July 17, 1984.

*Oh, you may be sure this drama is no work
of fiction, no mere novel. It's all true, so
true that each of us may recognize its
elements within ourselves.*

Balzac, Père Goriot

Prologue / 1984

Monday, January 23, 1984

HALF A DOZEN soldiers, tugging at their uniforms and whispering among themselves, approached the band of peasants huddled against an alley wall. One soldier gestured sharply. "Let's get going."

The peasants conferred hurriedly, then gathered their small bags of supplies and followed the soldiers toward the street. As they reached the corner, two soldiers began arguing over whether to proceed or not. "We're too early," one insisted. "We'll ruin it for the others."

A peasant woman stepped toward them. "My watch says it's only ten till eleven. I think we should wait."

WE WERE IN an alley off of Fifth Street in downtown San Francisco, twenty of us from Change of Heart Cluster masquerading as soldiers and peasants. It was a brisk but sunny Winter day, actually warm if you could keep out of the shadows of the old South-of-Market office buildings.

People were pacing around, reiterating plans in clipped voices. We stayed back in the alley, trying to be inconspicuous. We weren't sure if the police had learned of our action, but we didn't want to get nailed before we even got started. Hopefully we were close enough to the cable car turnaround that the cops would assume we were going to do street theater for the tourists.

I was trying to talk Jenny into switching helmets with me. Jenny was a year out of college, five years younger and a head shorter than I was. She pulled her frizzy brown hair back in a knot that emphasized her pale cheeks, making her look more like a member of an Ivy League equestrian team than a Salvadoran death squad. "Try this helmet with a visor," I urged her. "It'll make you look more cold-blooded."

"My helmet's too small for you," she answered in a concerned voice.

"That's okay, my whole uniform's too small." The theatrical aspects of the

action were lost on me. Chalk it up to my Indiana roots — I just wanted to get the job done. How I dressed wasn't a major concern.

But theatrics were the order of the day. Doc, a forty-year-old hippie with a tanned, weathered face and dark blue eyes, approached us dressed in peasant garb: old blue jeans, a weather-beaten jacket, a red bandanna around his long graying hair, and a couple of dirt smudges on his face to show he'd been out in the coffee fields. "Hey Jeff, Jenny," he greeted us. "Has anyone talked to the other clusters today?"

We shook our heads. Sixty people from Livermore Action Group and a couple of Central America solidarity groups had joined in calling the action. Somewhere nearby, Overthrow Cluster and the solidarity activists were preparing for a second target, while a faith-based cluster was heading for a third site. At exactly eleven o'clock, all three clusters would converge on their targets, located on different floors of the Flood Building at Powell and Market.

Out on the Fifth Street sidewalk, shoppers and office workers hurried past, intent on their missions. "They're so dedicated to their shopping," I said, thankful for living in slower-paced Berkeley. "It looks like a religion."

"My sister is like that," Jenny said. "A cup of coffee and a charge card."

Doc laughed. "Get out of her way!"

Someone called out: "It's five till." Conversation ceased. Without another word we surged out of the alley and up Fifth Street toward Market, nervously laughing at our own spectacle and downtown's complete indifference to us.

"10:58" read the clock in the store window on the corner. We stayed on the south side of Market, steering clear of the police over by the cable cars. Jenny pointed. "That's it, the Flood Building." The twenty of us furtively slipped across the four lanes of Market Street, dodging taxis, buses, and bicycle messengers. We ducked under the portico of the old ten-story office building that rose above a Woolworth's. There was no sign of the other clusters.

I looked at Jenny. "Should we go ahead?"

"It's better than waiting here!" We headed through the doors into the marbled lobby.

There was no sign of building security. Two elevators arrived simultaneously. Ten people crammed into the first one, but the rest of us had to wait while several business-types disembarked from the second and gave us the once-over. We slipped past them. "Fifth floor, push it quick!"

The doors slid shut, and silence fell over us. The elevator reminded me of going to the orthodontist with my younger brother to get our braces tightened. Afterward we'd go downstairs to the lobby and play pinball. Probably there'd be no pinball today. I thought about my brother, still living back in Indiana, and wondered what he'd say about this elevator ride. Probably the same thing he said when I moved to California: "Have you stripped *all* your gears?"

The doors slid open. Whispers from our comrades greeted us as we stepped out. "Shhh! This way!" We tiptoed down the shiny waxed floor. The

block-long hallway was punctuated by translucent glass doors bearing names of law firms, corporate branches, and government bureaus. Jenny pointed apprehensively at the silhouettes moving like ghosts behind the glass, but none of the doors opened.

Ahead, some of the peasants were gesturing excitedly at room number 508: *Consulado General de El Salvador*. Our destination. Doc tried the handle. It turned with a loud squeak and we burst through the doorway.

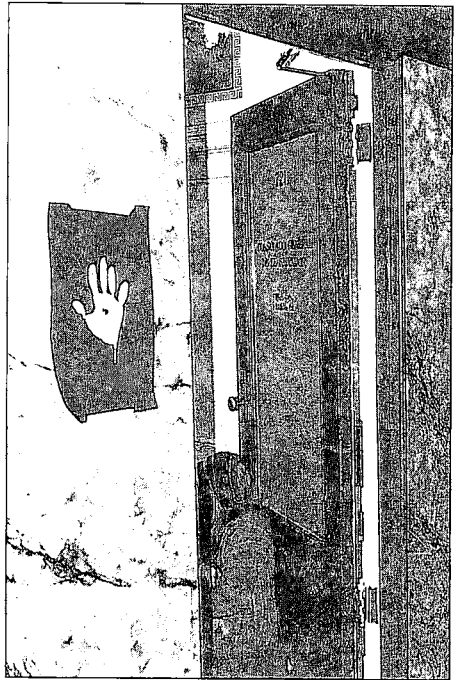
We hadn't fine-tuned the details of our entry. I grabbed Doc's arm and pushed him against the desk of the bewildered receptionist. Other peasants followed. We butted them with our cardboard rifles, herding them into the center of the little front office. The receptionist, a middle-aged woman with reddish skin and gold-frame glasses, backed away. From the next room, two secretaries gaped at us.

"This is what you get for rebelling against the government of El Salvador," yelled one of the soldiers. We pulled out squeeze bottles filled with red paint and began drenching the peasants, who collapsed in a groaning heap. Some lay writhing in the middle of the floor. Others dragged themselves into the second office and sprawled across the desks of the secretaries, who retreated to the far end of the room.

From a side office, a business-suited man stuck his bald head out of the door. "Don't worry, sir," I called to him. "These peasants won't trouble your puppet government anymore!"

Several of the peasants began clawing their way across the floor toward the official, who glared at them, then retreated into his office and slammed the door.

The moaning and groaning tapered off as Sara and Karina stood up. Karina, at twenty-three the youngest in our cluster, stood resolutely in front of the receptionist's desk. Her small shoulders were thrown back, and her wavy black hair cascaded over them.



The San Francisco Consulates of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras were occupied in protest of their governments' complicity with Reagan's wars in Central America.

Sara, straight brown hair framing her serious face, produced a white plastic bottle filled with a quart of Karina's own blood. The color seemed to drain from Sara's cheeks, and her eyes grew wide as she held the bottle in front of her.

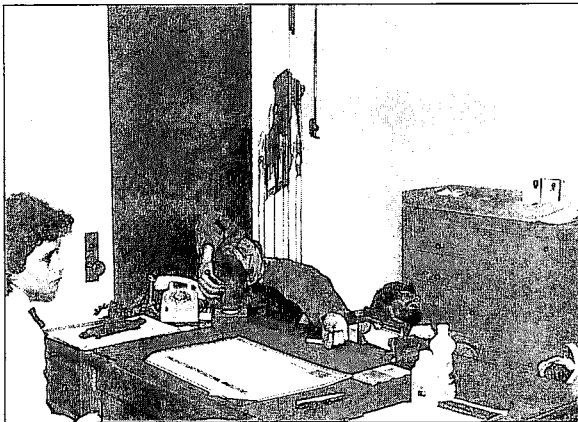
I felt queasy. Paint was one thing. But blood? I leaned against a door frame. The peasants propped themselves up on their elbows to watch. Sara snapped the lid off the bottle. She took a long, hesitant look at Karina, her mouth hanging slightly open. Then she flung the blood. Most of it splattered on the wall, but some hit Karina, who slumped onto the desk, smearing the dark liquid over files and telephones.

Finally Karina slumped to the floor. The rest of us took a breath, and an awkward silence ensued. Jenny leaned over to me and Alby. "Did anyone tell the secretaries that this is a nonviolent action?"

"Yeah," Alby announced, "This is a nonviolent action. *Es una acción no violenta...*"

One of the secretaries, a young woman with shiny brown hair, buried her face in her hands and started crying. Jenny went over and gingerly tried to reassure her. People attempted to explain the action to the other two office workers — our opposition to the collusion of Central American governments with Reagan's bloody war on the people of El Salvador and Nicaragua. But the secretaries seemed more concerned with rescuing files from the paint and blood.

Not a big surprise, I thought. It's their job. Had the planners thought about what it meant for a bunch of mainly White activists to barge in on three Latino office workers? The Salvadoran government certainly deserved protest. But I wondered if we'd picked the best venue for expressing our views.



Protesters staged mock executions, splattering paint and blood around the consulate offices.

The door to the side office opened again. This time it wasn't the bald-headed official who emerged, but a huge, grim-looking bodyguard. He was at least six-foot-six, with harshly-cut hair framing a leathery face. All eyes focused on Goliath. He took a couple of steps toward Sara and Karina. Whether on

higher orders or his own initiative, however, he stopped, folded his arms across his massive chest, and gave them a death stare. Under his icy surveillance, conversations slowly rekindled.

We expected the police to show up right away and bust us, but the consulate officials were reluctant to call them, apparently hoping we would leave without a further scene. As a few people talked with the secretaries, the rest of us made ourselves at home. I found a chair by a window facing a barren courtyard. Somewhere in the building the other protesters were occupying the consulates of Guatemala and Honduras. I didn't see any sign of them out the windows. A few pigeons winged their way around the prison-like courtyard, then soared toward the sky, which was turning as gray as the stone of the building.

My eyelids felt heavy, and a wave of exhaustion passed over me. I had spent the previous night with Angie, only our second time together, and we didn't quite have the sleeping part down yet. Not that I had minded at the time. But now it was catching up with me. A yawn stretched my lungs, the first deep breath I'd taken in the past hour.

It wasn't just lack of sleep that was so taxing. It was my first foray into non-monogamy, the first time I'd slept with anyone else since Holly and I got together a year and a half earlier. Holly and I had an open relationship, so it was all legal. But with the three of us in the same affinity group and working on the newspaper together, it was a strain on everyone.

Angie had decided to do the action with the Quaker AG in the faith-based cluster. Holly sat on the floor with her back to me, talking to Jenny and Sara. Was it coincidence, or commentary on my relationship with Angie? Sweat formed on my forehead. I pushed the window open and inhaled the cold air. What was I doing getting arrested? I should leave before the cops arrive. I wasn't in any mood to spend the night in jail. Just the thought made me feel claustrophobic, desperate to be outside, free.

No, I had to stay for the arrest. Skipping out would feel like breaking solidarity. I looked over at Doc, who was sitting on the floor with several other guys from his affinity group, Enola Gay. Doc and I had met at the first big blockade at Livermore, and we'd been through a lot together. I couldn't just walk out on him.

But would it really matter if one person left? There were probably plenty staying. I felt desperate for time alone. I hadn't had an evening to step back and reflect for weeks. Every waking thought was absorbed in immediate problems.

Of course, what else mattered? Who could guarantee a future? The U.S. government was starting to deploy the new Cruise and Pershing II missiles in Europe. The Soviet Union had responded by putting their nuclear forces on alert. One false move and we could all be annihilated. The future, whether it was the ultimate destiny of the human race or something as mundane as the upcoming baseball season, seemed hypothetical, almost illusory.

My attention was called back to the present by a few supporters who brought us news from the other two consulates. The cluster in the Guatemalan consulate had taken over the phone and called in a live report to KPFA, and Melissa talked directly with the Guatemalan ambassador in Washington.

Down at the Honduran Consulate, the religious cluster site, the police were called right away. A couple of people tried to slow down the arrests by chaining themselves to the radiator. The police threatened them with extra charges while they waited for bolt cutters, and then roughed them up while cutting them loose.

I glanced over at Karina and Sara. Would they get extra charges for the blood? In a way, it was their action. The two of them had initiated the protests after it became clear that LAG as a whole was never going to come together on a Winter action. At first, I was upset that they were planning the consulate occupations autonomously, instead of working to get LAG to sponsor it as part of a larger action. After a thousand arrests at Livermore each of the past two Summers, it was hard to get excited over a protest this size. But the way people were tearing LAG apart over what to do next, you had to wonder whether we'd ever consense on anything again. So when they invited me to join the action and loaned me a soldier's outfit, I jumped on the bandwagon.

But now I wanted out. Escape. It wasn't too late. Tell people I wasn't feeling well and split.

I might have done it, but at that moment a commotion erupted out in the hall. A shock ran through the room. The guys from Enola Gay swung into an arc to meet the police. The rest of us took up positions behind them.

Instead of cops, a small squadron of reporters came barging through the doorway. Flashbulbs popped. Karina sprawled photogenically across the desk, her blood now congealed into a dark brown paste on the folders and telephone.

It was great to get press coverage. But figuring we'd be arrested right away, no one had prepared a statement. Confused, we thrust Antonio, a professor of creative writing, in front of the outstretched microphones. He paused dramatically, ran his fingers through his thick silver hair, then launched into a passionate discourse on nonviolent resistance. His concluding words stuck in my mind.

"We have developed technology to dazzling heights, and with it our economic and military might. Yet we are less secure than ever before. Why? Because we have no vision of a world truly at peace. If we fail to save this planet, it will not be a failure of technology. It will be a failure of vision."

The police arrived a little later, separated the protesters from the reporters, and busted us one by one. Most people stood up, got handcuffed, and were led out the door. But Doc, just ahead of me, refused to stand. Two cops bent over, wrenched his arms behind his back, cuffed him, then looped a baton through the cuffs and lifted until they forced him to his feet. Doc's face contorted in

pain, but he refused to make a sound. With his arms twisted upward he was half-dragged out the door.

I winced. I hadn't even considered non-cooperating. My jaw tightened as an officer loudly informed me that I was under arrest and ordered me to stand. I stood and folded my hands behind my back.

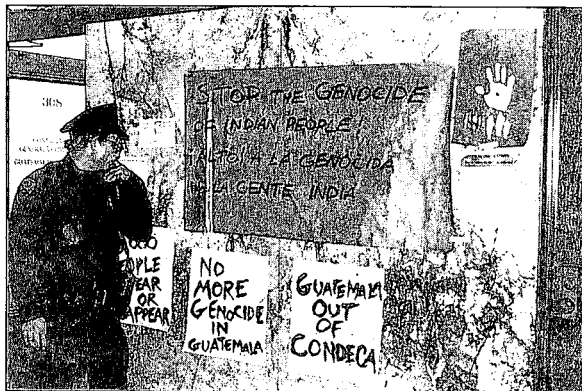
He handcuffed me and marched me out of the offices. The hallway was lined with spectators peering out of the other offices. On the marbled wall outside the consulate door someone had slapped a bloody handprint.

The cops hauled us downstairs, stuffed us into paddywagons, and drove us across town to the Hall of Justice. We were dumped out in the underground garage and herded into a windowless concrete tunnel flanked by a long counter on the left and a row of holding cells on the right.

The women were being directed into the first cell, and I caught a glimpse of Holly sitting on a bench talking with Sara and Karina. I started to call out to her, but hesitated to interrupt, as if sleeping with Angie forfeited my claims to Holly's attention. An impatient cop prodded me along, and it was too late.

Our group of men was steered into the next holding cell, where we found the guys from the other consulates awaiting us. Hank, who was in Overthrow Cluster, a loose network of more traditional lefty types, greeted me at the cell door. He was about thirty, a little older than me, with a stubbly beard and a long black ponytail. He had been in my first affinity group, and was my oldest LAG friend. "Welcome to the luxury suite," he said, gesturing around the cell. The eight-by-fifteen-foot space, three sides concrete and one side steel bars, was made even smaller by the backed-up aluminum toilet at one end.

I found a seat on the floor away from the toilet, and spent the next half-hour talking or reading random sheets of the morning newspaper. Once everyone was in, someone suggested that we do a check-in. We formed a rough circle and went around, each of the two dozen men saying how he was feeling and whether he planned to remain in jail overnight. Most were staying till arraignment, which would probably be the next day. If we spent the night, we might get sentenced to time-served and be released right then.



A San Francisco police officer contemplated posters on the walls outside the Guatemalan consulate.

But I kept thinking of home, of going back to Berkeley and having the apartment to myself. Taking the phone off the hook, making a bowl of popcorn, playing some guitar. Over the next three hours I went back and forth a few times, but when it came my turn for booking and fingerprinting, I knew I was citing out. I said a quick goodbye, signed a citation to appear in court in a month, and was led into a little cage to wait for the elevator. It took forever to arrive and even longer to reach the main floor, but finally the door opened and I stepped out into the lobby. Out! I longed for that burst of energy. Out! That charge of freedom. Out...

But it wasn't quite there. I couldn't shake the feeling that I was deserting people. Plus, I'd have to come back later to deal with the court and a possible return to jail. Not that I wanted back in. There was just no sense of triumph. Only relief.

The stale air was suffocating. I hurried across the lobby and out the steel doors into the cold night. It was sprinkling, and the streetlights glared off the pavement. "Bail Bonds — 24 Hours," flashed the neon. "Coffee to go."

A cold mist drifted past the streetlights as I headed around the monstrous gray jailblock onto Seventh Street, past the empty parking lot, under the freeway. Five blocks to the BART train. Seventh Street was deserted. Or was it? Vague forms lurked in the doorway of an auto repair shop. Was I going to get mugged outside the jail?

I clenched as a man stepped out of a shadowy alley. Should I run back? Or on toward the Greyhound terminal a block ahead? But the man scurried by and jumped into a car. I didn't unclench, grinding my teeth as I hustled past the Greyhound station, past porn shops and Burger Kings, on through the shabby fringe of downtown. Enshrouded in the misty rain and dismal shadows of Market Street, I clutched my jacket tighter and hastened on toward the benign sterility of the BART station.

Sunday, February 26, 1984

"HAS ANYONE seen the rest of the AIDS vigil story? I had it here a minute ago." Sara poked around the litter-strewn worktable.

"Oh, no," I said. "If it's lost in this room, forget it. We might as well re-xerox it." Hundreds of scraps of paper, everything from hand-scrawled notes to finished copy, cluttered three tables and most of the funky living room where we were pasting up our monthly newspaper, *Direct Action*.

"No, it has to be here someplace. I was just getting ready to paste it down." Around the tables a half-dozen people were bent over layout boards in various stages of progress, while on the floor in front of the window several more people spread out their pages in the last patch of afternoon sunlight. Nigerian pop rolled out of a cassette player on the mantel of the old South Berkeley house.

It was Sunday afternoon, and we had a long way to go if we were going to finish by Tuesday night. Hopefully the toughest decisions were behind us. We'd reached an uneasy peace over which actions would get top billing, and with luck we could avoid further arguments until after the paper was at the printer.

People were pasting up various two-page boards. My task was keeping an overview of what stories were going on each page. I had a pretty good handle on it, but I was glad Holly was coming by later. Sure, there was a simmering tension over my relationship with Angie, and our communication hadn't been the best lately. But as far as Direct Action, Holly was the person I most counted on. I trusted my own thinking more when we thought together.

Mort looked over my shoulder at the story list. "What happened to the plan to cut down to twenty pages?" he asked. Mort was one of my closest friends of the past two years, a thirty-year-old transplanted Brooklynite with dark freckles on his reddish skin, set off by a brown Lenin-esque goatee. The tail of his button shirt hung out of his jeans, which were brand new and a couple of sizes too large. He flipped through the story list. "Don't we ever say 'no' to anyone?"

"What else can we do?" I humored him. "It's hard enough getting people to write for free without cutting their articles. Besides, we have more room for the international section." I pulled a sweater over my head, rolled the sleeves above my elbows, and picked up a folder from the table. "Holly wants to design the Eastern Bloc pages. Why don't you start on the Middle East board?"

Mort mumbled an okay. I went back to making a list of who was working on which pages. Around the room, which was ringed with several old couches and a broken TV, low conversations and jokes mingled with the Nigerian music.

Over by the mantel, Melissa was surveying the page on the Democratic Convention with a perturbed expression. We'd learned the previous Fall that the Democrats had chosen San Francisco for their 1984 convention, and Direct Action was covering the several coalitions that were forming as everyone in the Bay Area scrambled to influence or protest the Democrats.

Melissa scowled as she read. She was a tall woman in her late thirties, with short hair that showed streaks of gray against her olive forehead. Melissa had been involved in protests since the late 1960s and was one of the founders of LAG in early 1982. Even after two years of working with her, I was still slightly in awe. She looked up as I approached. "I don't see why we're giving the Convention so much attention," she said. "We're just legitimizing the Democrats by protesting them."

Should I answer? We'd discussed it before, with little to show for the effort. Let her have her say-so and move on.

Mort wasn't so diplomatic. "We can't ignore the Convention, or we'd be totally marginalized," he said as he situated his layout board.

"We'd be doing our own work, instead of getting distracted by the Democrats," Melissa answered.

I'm going to be in San Francisco protesting. What's the point in pacifism if we only protest when we think we're safe?"

Melissa tried to answer, but Mort talked over her. "We should be talking about the real issue — how to protest the Democrats without helping to re-elect Reagan."

Sara twisted a strand of hair around her finger. "I think we should forget the Democrats and focus on corporations and how they corrupt elections."

"Great," Mort said, "as long as we're not criticizing voting altogether."

"Why not?" Karina interjected as she came back from the kitchen. She tossed back her dark hair. "Most people don't even bother to vote."

"That's not the point," Mort sputtered. "Everyone knows that national elections are a joke. But people still equate voting with democracy."

"Liberals do," Karina said.

Mort threw his hands in the air. "If we want to have *any* effect in the real world, we might have to learn to work with people outside our privileged little radical ghetto. We're not going to change anything alone. We need to be part of coalitions if we're going to accomplish anything."

Karina turned away. Melissa was still looking at the Convention pages and shaking her head. I hesitated, then asked, "You don't want LAG to do *anything* around the Convention?"

"Not if it means people running around in the streets. Besides," she said in a lower voice, leaning toward me, "Without the support of the whole group, a protest at the Convention would be divisive for LAG."

She'd hit my weak spot. Why do an action if it was going to rip the group apart? But the Democrats were coming to town. If we didn't respond, LAG was superfluous, a quaint anti-nuke group with no relevance to the wider struggle.

The front door opened, and a gust of cold air stirred the papers on the worktable. A cat stepped inside, took one look at the chaos, and scurried back out the door.

A moment later Holly appeared. She hesitated in the doorway, unwrapping her scarf. Thick red-blonde hair fell over her wool sweater. Her skin was pale from the cold. I set down my gluestick and walked over to her. Holly was thirty years old, tall, and self-possessed. As she pulled off her knit gloves, she looked at me and smiled slightly, setting off a memory of meeting her two years before — her warmth, her poise, her radiance.

I welcomed her as she stepped into the living room. She hugged me, but I sensed a reserve. Was it about our relationship, or was she just bracing for the onslaught of questions and information?

"Hey, look who's here," Mort said. "Just in time to figure everything out."

Holly loosened up as people welcomed her. I gave her a quick overview of our progress. She nodded and picked up the Eastern Bloc folder. I sensed that she didn't want to go over the whole story list, so I spared her that detail. Maybe we'd talk about it later.

Mort put on a tape of South African music. As the guitars picked out the opening rhythms, people settled back into their work. Holly took her layout board and sat on the floor next to Sara and Karina. The three of them talked in low voices about the upcoming court appearance for our consulate actions. Most people had stayed in jail overnight, then cited out the following morning. We all got the same court date, and there were no extra charges against people for throwing blood or chaining themselves to the radiator. Sounded routine, but if we got any additional jail time, I'd have an extra day to serve for leaving early.

A while later, as I was putting the finishing touches on my layout, Sara suggested that we make a list of what remained undone on each page. Before we got far, though, I was interrupted by the telephone.

It was Moonstone, just returned from the protest at Diablo Canyon, where a nuclear power plant was being built. He tried to tell me about hanging a banner and then getting inside the fence at the construction area. But I persuaded him to save his thoughts and write a story. "Keep it short," I said, "and we'll squeeze it in somewhere."

"Cool," Moonstone said. "One other thing. I saw Angie down there."

"Angie?" I pressed the phone closer to my ear. "How was she?"

"She was doing great. She said to give you a kiss." He smooched into the phone. "I'll get the Diablo story to you by tomorrow night."

I hung up and stood there for a minute. I hadn't seen Angie in a week, the longest we'd gone since we started sleeping together. Usually she was right in the thick of newspaper layout. I remembered working late with her one night before we became lovers, keeping each other awake until three a.m. with rambling conversation and repressed desire. If only we could return to those days...

Back in the main room, production was wrapping up. Sara showed me the "to do" list, then she and Karina headed out. As Holly packed up proofreading to take home, Mort and I walked out onto the porch. "Do you and Holly need a ride?" he asked. "It's past eleven."

"No," I said, looking up at the stars shimmering through the hazy fog. "We're going to walk."

"Okay," he said as he parted. "See you tomorrow at Coordinating Council."

Holly and I crossed Ashby and turned up Russell, a shadowy street lined with trees. She slid her arm around my waist and I looped mine around her shoulders. Holly was nearly as tall as me. I leaned my head toward her and felt her thick hair brush my cheek.

Other than bed, it was our first time together in several days, and it felt good to settle into our accustomed gait and stroll the familiar South Berkeley streets.

Low branches arched over our heads in a leafy canopy. We walked a block

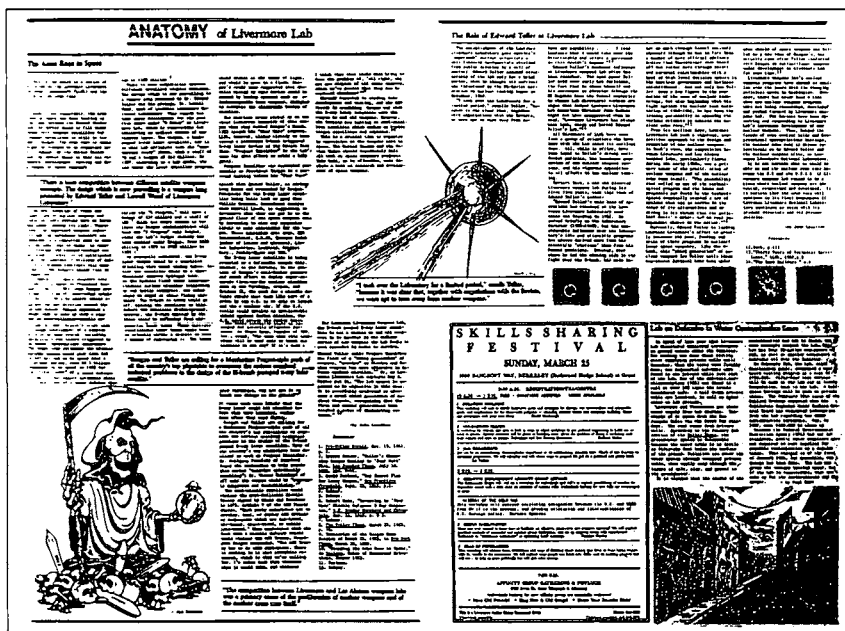
in silence. Then Holly sighed. "I hope we get the paper done by Wednesday morning," she said quietly. "I want to go back out to the peace camp. We need more people. Can you come out this weekend?"

"Maybe," I hedged, thinking of how much work I needed to get done. I rubbed her shoulder. It was a sore point with Holly that I'd spent so little time at the Livermore peace camp, which opened a couple of weeks earlier on farmland about a mile from the Lab.

Holly stayed outside while I went into a corner store for a candy bar. As I waited in line, I chided myself for not supporting her more on the peace camp. It was the first thing she'd really been excited about since quitting the LAG staff the previous Summer. Was I really so busy that I couldn't spend a night or two out there? Lucky that Holly and I still shared the newspaper. We weren't connecting on much else.

Even though Holly and I hadn't discussed it much, I sensed that my relationship with Angie was pushing us apart. What I saw as a passing fling seemed to be weighing more heavily on Holly, which made me feel guilty and also a little scared that she might leave.

Ironically, our sex life had improved since I started sleeping with Angie, in quality if not in quantity. It seemed to me that Holly was less interested in sex than when we first met, but maybe she was responding to my ambivalence. We didn't talk about it much, and I tried not to see it as a problem. But sometimes



"Anatomy of Livermore Lab" focused on the role of the Lab in driving the arms race.

after we made love, I'd roll over on my back, relieved — we're still here, together.

When I met her outside the store, I must have given her a searching look, because she tilted her head and looked back at me quizzically. Realizing she wasn't having similar thoughts, I tried to let it go. She took my hand, and we headed back down Russell Street. We stopped to admire a spot-lit cactus garden lined with glittering white stones, and talked about urban gardening, one of her favorite topics, the rest of the way home.

We were living in the building where I had my part-time maintenance job, a big three-story apartment complex on Dwight right off of the main strip of Telegraph Avenue. Being near the Avenue and People's Park, the neighborhood was a little downbeat, but it was close to the campus library, various book and record stores, and most importantly for political activists, cut-rate xeroxing.

Our apartment was on the third floor, a two-bedroom box with white walls, tattered gold carpet, and a motley collection of reclaimed furniture. Scattered around the living room were a dozen well-tended houseplants, with an eight-foot-tall philodendron tumbling out of one corner. The walls were covered with collages of Medieval and Renaissance art prints. The *pièce de résistance* was the west wall, where a sliding-glass door opened onto a little balcony with an incredible view across the Bay toward San Francisco and the Golden Gate.

We pitched our coats on the old recliner next to the door. I got out a bag of peanuts and filled up my pipe while Holly heated water for tea. I put on a tape of folksongs by Ferron, then sat down at the table and flipped open a book on Roman sculpture.

She poured herself a cup of tea and sat down at the table next to me. "Guess what?" she said. "Caroline sent me a letter from Nicaragua. She was part of a construction brigade that built a schoolhouse in two weeks. She talked about how much people give of themselves, because they believe they're building a new society."

I closed my book. "Sure sounds different from here. Do you think we should print her letter in *Direct Action*?"

She weighed the idea, massaging a knot in her shoulder. "No, we can't add another story now, even a short one. We have to stick with the list. That makes me so tense, the way we're always adding stories, it gets so frantic —"

She caught herself and cleared her throat sharply. "I was getting into it again! Let's talk about something besides LAG." She yawned, then smiled at me with red eyes. "What I should really be doing is sleeping."

I was going to stay up and play guitar, but I followed her around as she got ready for bed, then slipped off my jeans and T-shirt and got under the covers with her.

We cuddled together and lay silently, gently caressing each other. Holly

sighed as I massaged her temples. After a while, she leaned her head back and looked at me with soft eyes, her hair fluffed out across the pillow. “We need some non-political time, Jeff,” she sighed, reaching out to touch my cheek. “We need to get away. Let’s go down to Santa Cruz or Monterey soon, okay?”

“Yeah, I’d like that,” I said. “Santa Cruz especially.” I reached up and clicked off the light. “Do you want me to put on some music?”

“No, I think I’d like it quiet tonight. Goodnite, sweetie.”

“Goodnite, Holly.” I curled up around her and kissed her hair. She pressed against me as she drifted off. I closed my eyes and felt her warmth radiating into my chest. Still together. My mind wandered ahead to my guitar, but Holly suddenly rolled over. She looked at me searchingly. “One more thing I almost forgot,” she said. “Did you call Hank about getting his peace camp photos?”

“Yeah,” I assured her. “They’ll be in by Tuesday.”

She pulled the covers up around her neck. “Okay. Goodnite.” She was asleep in a moment. I stretched out on my back next to her, took a deep breath, and yawned. An image flashed through my mind of the days before Holly, the hyper moods I used to get in, obsessing over productivity: numbers of pages read or written, numbers of hours practicing music... How I’d cast off my history studies and musical ambitions to charge into the direct action movement full tilt, ready to take on the world... And how fortunate I’d been to meet Holly. What a difference to have a partner. Someone to share the ups and downs, to hear my ideas and give me sympathetic criticism. Someone to help me keep my head together when things got crazy.

Holly stirred, and I curled around her, feeling her warmth, feeling how lucky I was to be with her. She’d been the center of my life for the past two years, the core of my connection to LAG. How could I be risking our relationship by getting involved with someone else?

Friday, March 2, 1984

WE LEFT THE LAG office about eight, Angie and I, headed for the bank at Ashby and Adeline. The sun was an hour down, the sky sprinkled with more stars than usual. A cool breeze swept into our faces as we ambled down the dusky back street. At the corner a teenager was shooting baskets, and some kids ran past playing cops and robbers.

Angie was ten inches shorter than I, but moved so fluidly that she easily matched my strides. We sauntered down the sidewalk talking nonstop, kidding around, bouncing off each other. With just one night a week together, it didn’t matter if we were joking, arguing, or making love — we did it all in high gear.

We’d seen each other on Friday nights the past two weeks. After Angie got back from Diablo Canyon, she and Holly had a talk, and they agreed that a predictable schedule was better for both of them. I felt like I was dancing on

thin ice anyway, and whatever would put things on more stable ground was fine with me.

Angie had been in good spirits since coming back from Diablo. Angie and the rest of Change of Heart Cluster got the usual four-day sentence. "It's great to know your sentence in advance," she said. "You can plan your life around it."

I put my arm around her shoulders. Angie rubbed her hands together. "The only bad part was, we were so cold in jail," she said. She twisted her neck to extricate her walnut-brown braid from under my arm. "And by the last day, I was getting really bored."

I nodded sympathetically, although I hadn't done any time lately. I'd managed to evade jail for the consulate action, though not without some courtroom drama. In our preliminary hearing a week earlier, we got an ill-tempered judge named Azman who harangued us about damaging private property with our paint-throwing. He brushed aside any attempt to explain our moral or political motives. "That's irrelevant," he said. "You are charged with defacing property. How do you plead?"

Doc, Sid, and I were standing off to one side watching this bastion of judicial impartiality. Sid, a wiry nineteen-year-old who never stood still, had appeared before Azman the previous Fall for LAG's financial district action, and all of his boyish charm failed to move the judge's stone heart. On the contrary, Azman conceived a strong dislike for Sid's courtroom demeanor, a dislike he generously extended to all of us. "I am concerned only with your destruction of property," he droned.

Sid stepped forward and spoke in a high, clear voice. "The action wasn't about property. We were protesting U.S.-sponsored terrorism in Central America."

Azman waved his robed arm. "Your motives are of no importance to me." He scowled down at Sid. "I have no respect for what you do."

Doc and I looked at each other in disbelief, but Sid never missed a beat. "Your honor," he proclaimed, "the feeling is mutual." The rest of us erupted in laughter and further commentary as Azman banged his gavel for order.

Needless to say, we used our one challenge to get rid of Azman. We wound up before a more sympathetic judge who let the prosecutor know that we would be sentenced to "time served" no matter what the charges, since the county jail was overflowing. The consulates wanted to avoid the publicity of a trial, and after making everyone waste another day in court, the prosecutor dropped the charges and we went free.

Angie and I rounded the corner onto Adeline Street across from the Ashby BART station. Headlights and streetlights glared at us as we approached the biggest intersection in South Berkeley. A tired-looking man leaned against the wall of the corner store. "Spare fifty cents for a bite to eat?" Angie stopped and fished a few coins out of her pocket. We waited for the green light, then hiked across the four lanes to Bank of America.

B of A didn't squander its investors' money on architects. The one-story branch office squatted alone and brooding on the hectic corner, isolated from the neighboring buildings as much by its stark facade as by its wraparound parking lot.

We stopped in front of the ATM machines. Angie reached into her bag and pulled out two stencils. I glanced quickly up and down Ashby. "Do you want to be lookout first?" I asked in a low voice.

"We don't need a lookout," she answered in a raspy whisper. "We can see a block in every direction. If we see cops, just act like we're stopping to tie our shoes. It'll go faster if we both do it."

We looked around again, then pulled out the spraypaint. I shook up a can of fire-engine red and began stenciling a neat row of eight-inch replicas of the B of A corporate logo, one per sidewalk square. Angie followed close behind, spraying the words "Blood of Africa" below the logo in glossy black Krylon. I'd done four logos and she had finished three when headlights flashed in the parking lot — a car was coming around the back of the building. I snapped to my feet and stashed the paint in my bag as the front of the car emerged. I gestured anxiously to Angie, who stayed still, kneeling next to her stencil.

A big old Buick cruised out of the parking lot and onto Ashby, paying us no mind. Angie scooted over and finished the last one. "That's enough for here, don't you think?"

"Yeah, let's go."

She tucked her can away and wrapped the stencils in newspaper, then stepped back to admire our job. "There's no hurry now. Nobody can tell it was us who did it."

I still wanted to split. We ducked around the building and headed up Adeline Street toward downtown. Angie took my elbow and slowed me down. I laughed to myself and matched her step. We were hardly graffiti veterans. We had each done a few, but not the weekly forays of some people we knew.

Earlier, while we were at the LAG office cutting stencils, who had stopped by but Sara, one of the spraypaint hardcore. We showed her how we had enlarged the bank logo from a brochure to make the stencil.

Sara's endorsement was important. She carried a can of spraypaint in her daypack at all times, "just in case." And her affinity group had scored the graffiti coup of the season by spraying "Who's Illegal?" in big letters on the Oakland jail, where illegal immigrants were being detained.

Our stencils passed Sara's inspection. "That's a nice idea," she said. "I don't usually go to the trouble of making a stencil."

As Angie and I rounded the corner onto Ward Street, she laughed about it again. "How perfect that Sara would show up right when we're doing our first action together. She probably thinks this is what we do every Friday night."

We passed into a quieter stretch, walking past small houses and shadowy gardens. I was engulfed by a yawn. "God, I haven't sat still all week," I said, yawning again. If it wasn't the strain of trying to be in two relationships at once, it was a People's Convention meeting the same day as a Livermore spokescouncil. How long could I keep it up? Something had to give. But what?

Angie stopped in her tracks and pointed to the ground. On the sidewalk in front of a quaint little cottage someone had painted, in neat red letters, "Be Tasteless."

"Now there's a slogan I can get behind," I said. "People should write on sidewalks more. Send messages to each other. 'Be Tasteless.' That's so perfect."

"Why do you want to be tasteless?" she asked. "Or *more* tasteless?"

"Hey, good taste is a liability," I said. "Why is it an advantage to enjoy only expensive food, or new clothes? Or to appreciate music only if it's played over a thousand-dollar stereo? Why not cultivate a taste for cheap things? Then you can enjoy everything."

Angie eyed my tattered jeans and sweater. "I admire your dedication to your principles," she said, followed by a mischievous giggle that made me laugh, too.

We filtered into downtown Berkeley and made our way to the B of A on Shattuck. Restaurant patrons and moviegoers passed five feet away, but no one paid us any notice as we knelt outside the main entrance and stenciled three logos. When we added one at the corner, though, a well-groomed preppie on his way to the Versatel stopped to survey our design. "How infantile," he muttered, and went on to transact his business.

"Your deposits support apartheid," I answered.

He ignored me, and Angie took my arm and steered me clear. "I don't think you're going to convince him," she said. "Let's get out of here."

I nodded, smiling at my zealousness. We headed up toward Cal. Our plan was to cut through campus, stop on Telegraph Avenue and buy a Patti Smith album, then head on up to College Avenue and do the North Oakland B of A. From there we could catch a bus to Angie's place in central Oakland, where we were spending the night.

"Let's stay away from California Hall," she said. "I see enough of that." Angie worked mornings as a secretary at UC. "And I spend my afternoons volunteering at LAG," she mused. "To think that after college, I swore I'd never work in an office again!"

We crossed Sproul Plaza, site of the Free Speech Movement in the mid-1960s. A campus cop eyed us lazily. Although Cal was no longer a hotbed of

radicalism, I still felt pride in Berkeley's history when I walked across the plaza.

I usually saw Telegraph Avenue in the daylight. At night it seemed dingier, the day's litter congealed in the gutters. Café windows were open to the street. The crowd at Blondie's Pizza spilled out onto the sidewalk, forcing a skateboarder to dismount to get around them.

At the corner, against the backdrop of a neon-lit clothes store, a bunch of teenagers were clustered around several young guys breakdancing to rap music.

We stopped to watch. Angie stuck her hands into the pockets of her button sweater. "I want to dance every day for the rest of my life. That would be magic."

"I thought you were telling me last week that language was magic," I teased her.

"They both are," she answered thoughtfully. "Language, dance, ritual, those are the specific forms. Magic is the broad category. Opening up, breaking loose. That's magic." She mulled it over some more. "Anyway, I'm going dancing with Jenny and Raoul tomorrow night. There's two world-beat bands playing at Ashkenaz. It's been a long time since Jenny and I have gone out dancing together."

As she finished speaking, she pointed at a Bastille-like building on the opposite corner. "Look! We forgot all about the Telegraph branch."

"Oh, yeah..." I was less than enthused, with people everywhere and cops patrolling on foot, not just in cars. "Maybe we should do it later at night."

But Angie was already crossing the street toward the bank. I followed her to the side entrance on Durant. Angie took a quick look up and down the street, then pulled out the stencils. "Come on, here inside the grating." I shook the can of red. She grabbed it from me and started laying down a B of A logo.

I was shaking the second can, still scanning for cops, when a street person wandered over and stood practically on my toes. He looked down at the stencil. "What are you doing? Graffiti?" he asked, wobbling unsteadily.

I got so distracted that I forgot to keep a lookout. Just as Angie took the can of black from me, a patrol car spun around the corner. Headlights raked the wall. My stomach jumped, and I couldn't even get the words out to warn Angie. The lights flashed over us. I grasped for an alibi. But in the general turmoil of the Avenue we must have blended right in, because the cops rounded the corner and cruised on up Telegraph.

Meanwhile, the street person had bent over to read the "Blood of Africa" bit. As Angie sprayed a circle-A signature next to the stencils, the guy stood up, right in my face. "Oh, it's politics, huh?" He stuck out his hand at me. "That's good, politics." We shook on it, and he sauntered away.

Angie and I strolled away as casually as we could, silent till we were two blocks down Telegraph. Finally we stopped in front of Moe's Bookstore and burst into laughter. I leaned into her, and she clutched me until the tremors

subsided. Finally with a yawn she released me. I looked at her expectantly. She lay her head against my shoulder. "Carry me home," she ordered.

"We still have North Oakland to do."

She slumped. "I don't think I have the energy to walk all the way up there. It's already going on ten. Let's head home." She was rocking back and forth, still leaning on me.

"Okay," I said. "But wait — we forgot to get the Patti Smith album. We should go back for that, shouldn't we?"

"Sure," she said, rocking herself upright. "And we can check out our graffiti. Come on, we'll return to the scene of the crime."

Friday, April 6, 1984

THE NEXT several weeks passed in a blur of meetings, mailings, and answering machines. Somewhere I gave up hoping the April actions would pull LAG back together and started hoping simply that the April actions would be over. The Livermore demo was going nowhere. We'd be lucky if there were a hundred arrests. And the San Francisco action, despite a core of committed affinity groups, might be even smaller. I had to admit I didn't want to get busted myself. If it weren't for feeling responsible for the Livermore action, I might not even go to it.

I stuck around the office that afternoon especially to talk with Jenny about Convention actions she was part of. But there was plenty more going on. Angie and Norm were making phone calls for Direct Action. Sara and I put together a mailing about the April actions, while awaiting a flyer that Holly was dropping off.

Angie must have figured I'd be nervous that Holly was coming by, and had been teasing me all afternoon. She'd unfasten a couple of her shirt-buttons and lean over the table, or drop her pen into my lap and artfully pick it up.

I kept thinking of Holly. It wasn't a good moment to rock the boat. Earlier that afternoon, when she left for work, Holly left me a note saying she wanted to talk that evening. She'd been pretty quiet the past few days, as if she were making up her mind about something. An ultimatum? A decision to move out of our apartment? That's what I was afraid of. What would I do? Live with Angie? Too scandalous. Besides, we'd probably chew each other up. Live with another friend? But who could move on such short notice? Sublet to a stranger? Just the thought made me feel like I was growing old alone.

I wondered where she was. Holly — a former LAG staffer — didn't stop by the office much anymore. I knew that the commotion and clutter depressed her. And today, at the end of the week, the place was in peak form. The clutter started ten feet high, cascaded down the wall in a torrent of posters, flyers, and newspaper clippings, sprawled across the worktables that

filled our fifteen-by-forty-foot space, and climbed back up the opposite wall.

Above this sea of paper, reaching up to the ceiling and spanning most of the north wall, was a mural left from the days when the storefront office had been Congressman Ron Dellums' community center. On the left side of the mural were arrayed The People: workers, farmers, artists, and children in deep Earth tones. On the right, surrounded by snarling metal dogs and fiery nuclear explosions, huddled a menagerie of generals, government officials, corporate executives, and their ilk. In the center, a ferocious conflict lit the wall in jagged patches of color. And judging from the shocked expressions on the faces to the Right, the struggle was going well for The People.

Meanwhile, back on ground level, business was getting done. Sara polished off a stack of envelopes and took them down to the mailbox. Norm finished his last phone call and handed the list to Angie. "I'm going to the Plough for a beer," he announced.

Angie and I had been hoping to go across the street to the Starry Plough, too, to eat home fries and hang out in one of the side-booths. But both of us were running behind, so we had to content ourselves with a furtive session behind the file cabinets under the loft. It made me nervous, knowing that Holly might show up. But I craved time with Angie.

She didn't seem quite so urgent. When I tried to kiss her, she pulled up my T-shirt and gave me a raspberry on the stomach. I laughed, but it faded quickly. It was Friday, our usual night together. But this weekend Angie had

decided to go on a solitary retreat, at a hostel in an old lighthouse down the coast. "I need time alone to think," she told me. "It's nothing ominous. I'm not going to leap into the sea. I just need some time to myself."

So much for our night together. So much for commitment. I laughed dryly. Commitment? Maybe I better not give that speech.

She tried to tickle me, and I used it as an excuse to wrap my arms around her from behind and hold her tightly. I leaned down and kissed her cheek. She turned her head to kiss me in return, biting my lip, and sending a pulse through my body. I eased my grip. She slid around to face me, kissing me



One of only two known photographs of the inside of the LAG office on Shattuck Avenue.

again. But as I tried to press her to me, she slipped away, gave me a squeeze on the butt, and headed back to the front of the office.

I tucked in my shirt, feeling a flush of embarrassment and frustration as I emerged from behind the file cabinets. Angie was pulling on her sweater. There she goes. I wanted to walk her out, but her breezy tone convinced me not to. Oh well, I thought, at least she'll be gone when Holly arrives.

But politics is never that simple. As she was saying goodbye to people, Angie mentioned that she might not be in the office Monday because of jury

duty. Karina, previously absorbed in her work, turned around and spoke lightly. "How could you be on a jury? It just legitimizes the system."

Angie responded with exaggerated patience. "That's like saying that voting props up the system."

"Well, it's true. What do we really accomplish? If the corporations want an election badly enough, they'll buy it. All we do by working on elections is drive up the price. For us, it's our lives, our time, and our energy. For them, it's just more money."

"Right, and they pass the cost along to us, anyway," I said, hoping to ease Angie out of the discussion and on her way.

Angie picked up on the escape, but not without a final word. "As long as there's an election, it's stupid not to vote against Reagan."

Karina tried to answer, but Angie blew a kiss to me and was gone.

Karina shrugged and turned back to her work. I envied her nonchalance. With Angie gone, I breathed easier, but I felt flat as I cleared off the table. Without seeing her on Friday night, the weekend seemed pointless.

The office door swung open. I looked up, expecting Holly, but in bustled Jenny, back from a xerox run. With a brusque nod to me and Karina, she went straight to her desk. I could tell by the way she was shoving things around on

**STOP
BUSINESS
AS USUAL
wed July 8**

elections-Democratic Convention '84

Democratic War Chest Tours
Through S.F. Financial District
Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday
July 16th, 18th and 19th 1984

Come to the financial district and tour the corporations and see industries that finance and control the Democrats - walk behind the myth of the Democrats as the party of peace and of the common man, as you explore with your hands the crimes of the multi-nationalists with and their ties to the Democrats. Learn in Guerrilla classes, nonviolent non-violent direct action, creative process and fun as we tentatively march through the financial district and reclaim the streets.

STARTING TIME: SOON

PLACE:
MONDAY: BANK OF AMERICA,
CALIFORNIA & KEARNY
WEDNESDAY: ENBARCADEROCENTER
PLAZA, MARKET AT STUART
THURSDAY: MOSCONE CENTER

A CALL TO ACTION:
In the Financial District war, destruction, and poverty are caused in part by greed and as the oppressor of our lives. These corporations are robbing our future. Notice as usual - the spectacle of the Democratic Convention puts a mark on this, diverting our attention to the individual who says that peace is democracy. Reunite as usual.

Let's peacefully reclaim the streets, and replace the overwhelming conservatism, and control of the Financial District and the Democratic Convention with courage, creativity and life!

A call for actions and activity in the Financial District for unions, individuals, and fronts. Do non-violent direct action, direct dialogue, meetings, leaflets, talk to people, occupy, join the Democratic War Chest Tour (crisis lines, responses) - bring banners, musical instruments, leaflets, signs, friends... **DO SPEAKING!** - **no monitors!**

Flyer for the War Chest Tours at the Democratic Convention in San Francisco, July 1984. Organizing went on all Spring.

her desk that she wanted to finish her work and get out. But I needed to talk with her.

Jenny, the cornerstone of the current LAG staff, was involved in planning a Democratic Convention protest called the War Chest Tours, aimed at showing that the same corporations funded both the Democrats and the Republicans, that it was all one corrupt system. Although the organizers included a lot of anarchists who weren't part of LAG, I figured they'd want the Tours to be LAG-sponsored, to take advantage of our name-recognition.

Which was exactly what I wanted. They'd organize the War Chest Tours, while others of us would work on People's Convention or the Central America march. We were all in the struggle together, and LAG was the thread that bound us.

After all, wasn't that the point? I thought of my college and post-grad years, frittering away time on little projects, waiting for something like LAG to come along — something that united us in our struggle to change the world.

Jenny looked up at me nervously, strands of curly hair escaping from their tight bun. I broached the subject carefully. "It's a great idea, the War Chest Tours," I said. "I really like the focus on corporations."

"On the whole financial district," she said. She scooped up a stack of papers from her desk, crammed them into a drawer, and forced it shut. "We'll do die-ins and disrupt offices and traffic, that sort of thing. It'll be affinity group autonomy, so it'll be harder for the police to control."

"Unless they bust everyone," I said. It felt a little paternal, but it wasn't the first time that I worried over what Jenny was getting into. Partly because she and Angie were such good friends when we met, and partly because Jenny reminded me of my younger sister, with keen brown eyes and an anxious smile. "They might just sweep up everyone who looks suspicious. Or bust the organizers and charge you with felonies."

"Well, we can't hold back because they might arrest us," she replied. "But getting arrested isn't the point. The goal is to disrupt the financial district for as long as possible."

"Sounds good to me, but I can picture how people like Melissa are going to react. Even if you say it's nonviolent, it's hard to see LAG consensing on roving street demonstrations."

Jenny stopped shuffling papers and looked at me. "Well, then that's LAG's problem!"

It wasn't the kind of thing I expected to hear from a LAG staffperson. She must have read the surprise on my face. "It's not an attack on LAG. But we can't let the Democrats walk in here and not do anything. If LAG doesn't want to call an action, other people will. And I know where I'll be."

The phone rang. Jenny turned to answer it. Frustrated, I stepped aside. Hopefully I'd get more of a chance to talk with her when she got off the phone.

I tried to refocus on the mailing. I wondered where Holly was with the

flyer. I hoped she hadn't gotten depressed and forgotten about it. Should I try to call her?

Before I could decide, the office door burst open and Raoul and Sid barged in. "Ho! It's Friday night!" Raoul hollered. "Come on, the revolution is on vacation. No more work on Friday night." Raoul, Jenny's lover of the past nine months, was twenty-five, a bearish guy with drilling eyes behind black-rimmed glasses. He ambled over toward where I was standing.

"Opening Day," he intoned. "Oakland A's versus Detroit Tigers." He went into a slow-motion windup and fired an imaginary curveball. "Home opener, a week from Tuesday. Jenny and I are going, plus a couple of guys I work with at the print shop. Wanna go?"

It was here — the baseball season I'd thought would never arrive. Through the interminable Winter, ever since the U.S. and the Soviets put their nuclear forces on alert, I couldn't see more than a week or so into the future. One false move... I didn't see how the world could survive another day, let alone make it until baseball season. But now Spring training filled the sports pages, and opening day was just around the corner.

Still, when I thought of my calendar, I had to be realistic. "I should wait and see if I have time. Think the game will sell out?"

Raoul dished up another curveball. "Sure, on opening day. 45,000 people."

"45,000?" I shook my head. "That's more people in one afternoon than we get in a year of demonstrations."

"Well, it's a better spectacle," he said.

Sid loped over, vaulted off Raoul's shoulders, and bounced up in front of me. He looked like a beanpole next to Raoul, just as tall but half as wide. A jagged white stripe ran down the center of his black hair. He picked up a LAG button and started doing coin tricks with it. "How's the Pupil's Convention going?" he bantered.

"The Pupil's Convention?" I answered bleakly. "Give me a break."

"You should work on the War Chest Tours," he said. "That's where the action's going to be."

"Yeah," I said. "Jenny was telling me about it."

"It's time to push things in the streets," Raoul said. "We don't need another peace march. We need to shut the City down."

I knew that kind of talk would never fly with people like Melissa. My hopes of getting LAG to co-sponsor the War Chest Tours were fading. "What makes you think you'll even get started? The cops might just arrest everyone in sight."

"They might," Raoul answered. "It's a risk we take."

Sid looked at Raoul, then at me. "We can try stuff out at the Kissinger demo and see how the cops respond. Have you heard that Kissinger is coming to town on April 16th? It's perfect timing."

I wasn't so sure, with LAG's Tax Day actions already set for that afternoon. "I just hope it doesn't take energy away from our action," I said.

"It'll probably bring more people, if anything," Raoul said.

Jenny hung up the phone and started toward us. Maybe she'd see some middle ground. But suddenly she froze in her tracks. "Oh my God, I forgot to call about our float in the Gay Pride parade!" She made a beeline for her desk.

"It's super-organizer!" Sid called after her. "Never misses a phone call! Always a clean desk!"

"Oh, shut up," Jenny muttered, scattering papers as she searched for the number.

Raoul reached in his daypack and pulled out a hand-drawn flyer. "Have you heard about the punk shows at Vats, over in the City? They're happening on Sunday afternoons, outside this old brewery in the warehouse district. It's more than the music, it's a total scene. The cops have cruised by, but they've left it alone, since it's not really bothering anyone."

"That's not going to stop the cops from harassing people," Sid said.

"Aw, the police don't want to mix it up with a bunch of punks," Raoul retorted. "They like easier fights."

Jenny came back from the phone looking relieved. "I need to get going. You want a ride to the BART station?" she asked Sid, who nodded.

Raoul stretched, yawning loudly. "Let me know if you want a ticket for the A's opener," he reminded me. "Leave a message on my machine down at the print shop."

"Sure," I called after him half-heartedly. Watching them walk away, I knew the War Chest Tours were gone. The whole street-action wing of LAG was splintering off. And where did it leave me? Sitting at a desk working on People's Convention. Was this what I'd abandoned my history studies and my music for?

In the sudden quiet, I could hear a radio playing in the back of the office.



Outdoor punk concerts at an abandoned San Francisco brewery were a meeting ground for street activists, squatters, and punk rockers.

It was KPFA, the community radio station, with some story about how Vice President Bush and the CIA were implicated in a cocaine-smuggling plot to finance illegal weapons sales to mercenaries in Central America.

It sounded intriguing, but it was too much to follow. I paced around the deserted office, my head spinning. Livermore versus People's Convention versus the War Chest Tours versus the Kissinger Demo versus the Next Big Thing. Everything was coming unglued. Something had to be done. But what?

And what was I going to do about Holly and Angie? Maybe it was out of my hands. What did Holly want to talk about this evening? What if she insisted that I make up my mind? "Sure, just give me another month or two..."

Of course, by that time, Angie might find someone else, and Holly might move out. Keep stalling, and you'll lose them both.

Ironically, when she got home later that evening, Holly postponed our talk. She seemed in good spirits, but said she was too tired for a serious conversation.

I assented, relieved. Apparently there was no immediate crisis. But I knew it was only a respite. I had to make a decision soon, and I didn't like the options. All I could do was press ahead and hope my vision cleared in time.

Monday, April 16, 1984

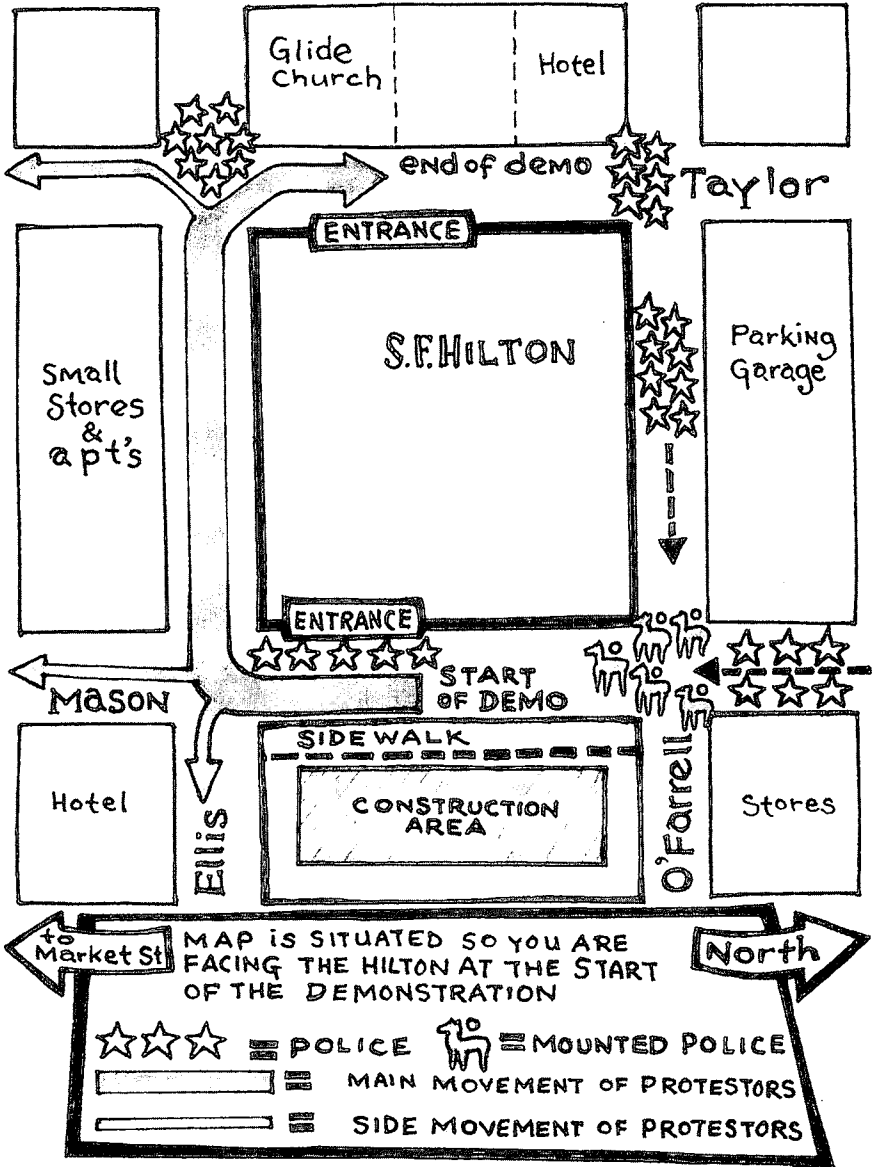
HENRY KISSINGER, architect of Richard Nixon's genocidal five-year extension of the Vietnam War, will speak in San Francisco on Monday, April 16th. Dr. Kissinger has just returned from Central America and is touring the United States drumming up support for U.S. intervention in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

— from a flyer for the demo

YOU COULD tell right away it was going to be different. A block from the hotel, helmeted riot police were redirecting traffic and giving hard stares to anyone who didn't take the hint and turn back. Angie and I hurried past the cops and joined the crowd gathering in front of the San Francisco Hilton, where Henry Kissinger was addressing the Commonwealth Club at their monthly luncheon.

The San Francisco Hilton was a sheet-glass monolith that covered an entire city block, dwarfing the small stores and apartments on the surrounding streets. Fifteen stories on Mason Street, the building towered to twenty-five on the opposite side, its shiny facade sealing the rich in and the rest of the world out.

Over the entrance to the hotel, three flags flapped in the gusty breeze: the United States', California's, and the Hilton's own banner. Underneath the flags a row of riot cops clenched their nightsticks and eyed the growing crowd. At the right-hand end of the block, a half-dozen mounted police paced their anxious horses around. Beyond them, another squad of cops came marching down toward the hotel.



The layout of the demonstration against notorious war criminal Henry Kissinger on April 16, 1984 was typical of many in San Francisco during this time, with a thousand protesters squaring off against a couple of hundred riot cops. What was different about this protest was its occurring two months before the Democratic National Convention came to town. The day served as a testing ground for activists and police alike. Map by A. Narcoleptic.



A thousand people turned out to protest the visit of Henry Kissinger on April 16, 1984.

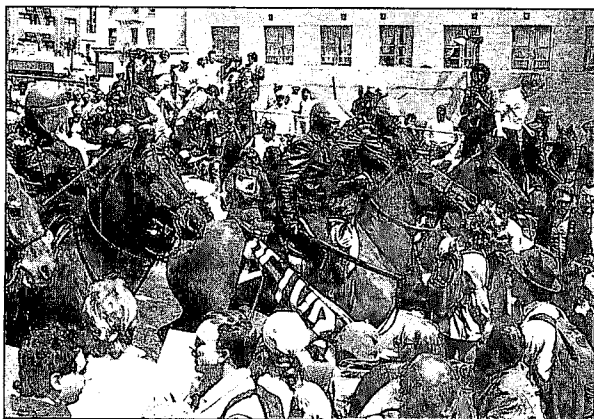
Despite it being noon on a workday, nearly a thousand people gathered across the street from the hotel to protest Kissinger's visit. When Angie and I arrived, the crowd already filled the ten-foot sidewalk that butted up against a construction area. The monitors, volunteers from some of the traditional leftist groups, had gotten

part of the demonstrators to march in a picket loop and chant.

One especially vocal contingent seemed to consist largely of Central American people. Many were carrying pots, pans, and metal utensils, which they beat in time to the chants. How different from the LAG folks, who milled around or talked in small groups off to the side.

If there were arrests, the difference would be even more accented. I doubted that many immigrants, documented or otherwise, would want to risk arrest. That privilege was best left to those of us born north of the border.

The restless feeling on the street heightened the friction between Angie and me. Walking up to the Hilton from BART, we got into a disagreement about the foggy weather. She loved the fog and wanted to live in San Francisco, but I preferred the East Bay, where the sun shone more. We finally let it drop, but once we got past the cops we went our separate ways.



Riot police and mounted officers patrolled the street, forcing protesters back onto the sidewalks.

The whole situation felt impossible. How long could I juggle two relationships? Nothing had been resolved between Holly and me, and a crisis loomed. Meanwhile, my relationship with Angie, once a source of such pleasure, seemed tenser each time we got together.

What was I supposed to do? Sometimes I wished a higher authority would make the decision for me. Sure, I'd probably rebel against it. But reacting to someone else's decision seemed a lot easier than making my own.



The scraping of boots on concrete called my attention back to the present. A fresh squad of cops marched in and replaced the ones who were monitoring the Hilton entrance. "The changing of the royal guard," someone said.

The squad leaving the hotel marched past the crowd, who greeted them with loud boos and catcalls. A leftist group, the Revolutionary People's Front, shook their signs and accused the officers of collaborating with the enemies of the working class. The sticks holding the RPF's signs were pretty stout, as were the poles holding their banner.

At the right-hand end of the block, up near the horse cops, Jenny and Raoul's affinity group huddled together. I felt a twinge of envy, wishing I were part of their schemes. Why hadn't I planned anything?

Closer to the picket loop I saw Antonio, who had canceled his creative writing classes so he could be in our Tax Day action at Bank of America later that day. He was standing off the curb talking with Claudia and Sara, and had to jump back as a squad of cops came sweeping up the street.

The cops were forcing people back onto the sidewalk, but mostly they were doing their own little drill. It was this funny exercise where they would come shuffling up the street in two lines, eyes rigidly forward, batons gripped against their chests. At the end of the block, they would do a sharp about-face and come back past us, their heavy boots scraping an insistent rhythm on the cement. They weren't trying to hit anybody, but most people gave them a wide clearance anyway.

I started up toward Antonio and Sara, but Hank intercepted me. Hank was tall with broad shoulders, and seemed to bear down on me. He was wearing a baseball hat, and looked like he hadn't shaved for a day or two. "Hey, buddy," he said, giving me a quick, energetic handshake. "How's it going?"

I was glad to see him, and even happier that he had flagged me down. The demo felt like being stuck at a party where I hardly knew anyone. "Are you thinking of getting busted?" I asked.



As the protest stretched on, mounted police became more aggressive in their crowd-control maneuvers.

“Not today,” he said. “I’ve got a wiring job that’s supposed to be done by today. Gotta keep the boss happy.”

Hank had driven a truckload of signs and props over to the actions. One of them was Change of Heart’s Tax Day prop, a ten-foot nuclear missile

made of paper-machéd tax forms. “It’s still on the truck,” he reported. “I’m not too worried about anybody stealing it. I’ll take it over to Bank of America later.”

We surveyed the scene. The police had closed the block to all traffic except limousines bringing the local elite to hear Kissinger. As two limos snaked their way through the police cordon and disgorged their passengers, the crowd raised a righteous chorus of jeers. The monitors, who were trying to keep the picket circle going, cranked their bullhorns up another notch. The cluster of Central American protesters started banging on their pots and pans, and everyone yelled even louder at the arriving aristocrats.

As the tumult peaked and subsided, Doc and Melissa walked up to me. I was surprised to see Melissa at a street demo, but it turned out she was actually in the City to go to her job at a senior hospice, and was just swinging by the protest on her way there. “What a hostile scene,” she said, her arms folded across her chest. “I don’t even see the point. It’s just us and the cops. Who are we going to reach with this kind of energy?”

I shrugged. It was an old argument between us, and I didn’t feel like taking it up again.

Doc tugged on his graying beard as the bullhorns pounded out a chant. “It’s bad enough dealing with riot cops,” he said, raising his voice. “But we’re putting out the same aggressive tone.”

Melissa pointed up the street. “Look at the horses. They can’t stand still. They know something’s wrong.” She crossed her arms again, her olive skin standing out against her blue shirt. A sad look clouded her eyes. “On the way up here I heard some people talking about throwing marbles under the horses’ hooves to trip them up. Who would do something so cruel to a horse? What ever happened to nonviolence?”

I didn't have an answer. Doc spotted some other men from Enola Gay and went over to greet them. Melissa reminded me of a few logistical details for the next day at Livermore, then headed off to work.

Although the picket loop was still chanting and the cops persisted in their shuffle drill, the general energy had ebbed. Jenny and Raoul's AG was still plotting. I walked over to Sara, who had come straight from her downtown office-temp job. She was dressed in a fluffy sweater and a billowy skirt, and her hair was pulled back in a long braid.

"I guess you have to look the part when you work down here," I said.

"I hate dressing like this," she said. "The dumbest part is, I have to shave my legs. Can you believe it?"

Sara eyed the cops patrolling the entrance. "I wish I had figured out a way to get into the hotel. Out here, we can yell forever and they probably can't even hear us. I'll bet if we got dressed up and waited for some hotel guests to arrive, we could follow them right in. There's hundreds of guests at the Hilton. How do they know who's who?"

It sounded plausible to me. Sara started to expand on the idea when Karina walked past, waving to us. I'd heard rumors that their relationship had hit stormy weather. I was amazed that they'd managed to navigate two years of non-monogamy. Holly and I had barely lasted three months and were coming apart at the seams. As Karina walked on past, Sara's smile vanished. Her mouth hung open, and with a quick goodbye she headed after Karina.

I stepped back and looked around. Up toward the horse cops, Angie was talking with Norm. I edged over to where I could see her better. They were laughing about something. I thought about joining them, but it felt like I'd be chasing after her. Maybe in a while.

Jenny and Raoul's affinity group had finally broken out of their huddle. They were dressed like somber peasants, in tattered black and white. Jenny was talking with a guy from her AG named Jacey whom I'd run into at a couple of



Berkeley demonstrations. He was about twenty-eight, with short hair and a broad, open face. He was critical of LAG and nonviolence, preferring to "mix it up in the streets," as he said. He had a chipped front tooth that gave him

credibility, and I had to admit he had a lot of guts when it came to confronting the police. But I got the feeling that Jacey wouldn't be real torn up if the cops responded by attacking the entire crowd. "It'd radicalize people, getting attacked by the cops," I imagined him saying.

Jacey turned away as I approached. Jenny greeted me with a sharp squeeze of my arm. "How are you doing?" she said. "Have you heard anything from Holly?"

"No," I fumbled, caught off-guard. "No, I haven't." I hadn't thought about Holly all day, and it felt weird to be reminded.

"She's probably okay," Jenny assured me. "I wonder if they've gotten caught?" Holly was part of a small action at Site 300, Livermore Lab's local test area for non-nuclear devices. They had gone over the fence before dawn that morning. It embarrassed me that I wasn't sure whether she planned to elude the cops or just hike in and be arrested.

Jenny didn't seem to notice. She stepped off the curb, her sharp eyes searching beyond the horse cops and on up the Mason Street hill. "We hoped Sid's AG would get here before we started," she said. "But maybe they got busted." Two peace-punk affinity groups, Domestic Terrorists and Gruesome Rebels, were doing a roving tour of the financial district on their way to the Kissinger protest.

"What's your plan?" I asked.

Jenny straightened the white scarf around her head. "We're supposed to be ghosts of the Vietnamese peasants Kissinger killed," she told me, "returned to haunt him for his Central America policy. Did you hear that we actually saw him earlier? You should have seen it. We were walking by the garage around the corner on Ellis. Kissinger got out of his limo wearing this big trenchcoat, and Raoul and Jacey started howling like wild animals and screaming at him, 'Murderer! We want you, Henry!'" She laughed nervously as Raoul stalked over our direction.

"It was the dogs in our souls," he hissed menacingly, his big frame hulking toward us. "The first scent of fresh game."

Jenny looked at him uncertainly, then let out a sharp laugh. Her hands flitted around as she spoke. "We're going to creep into the street like ghosts, groaning 'Henry! Henry!' Then we'll throw red paint on each other and maybe do a die-in. Hopefully other people will come out in the street, too." She looked a little dubious.

I scanned the street without replying. The squad of shuffling police had finally come to a halt in front of the entrance. Up behind the horse cops were still more officers, ready for action. "There's a lot of cops," I observed with an air of foreboding. I looked at Jenny.

But it was Raoul who responded. "They've brought all their goons out," he said. "It's a test run for the Democratic Convention, getting the troops ready for battle."

The crowd was still on the sidewalk, but taunts and an occasional crumpled-up flyer were being hurled across the street at the cops who lined the hotel entrance. The chanting fizzled out, and an eerie stillness hung over the nearly deserted street.

Jacey and some others from their AG approached Raoul and Jenny. "We should do it now. We can't wait any longer for the punks. Now's the time." Their circle braced. I squeezed Jenny's shoulder. The group inched off the curb, hesitated, then started crouch-creeping into the street. My eyes went for the police, who gawked around for orders. The AG reached the middle of the street. "Hen-ry! Hen-ry!" they moaned. "We want you, Henry!"

The picket line stopped as everyone focused on the spectacle. Raoul pulled out a bottle of red paint and doused the other peasants with it. "Hen-ry! Hen-ry!" they cried. The cops got orders to advance, and a dozen officers moved stiffly out from the hotel entrance, batons ready to strike. The AG melted back into the crowd, then re-emerged farther to the left. "Hen-ry! Hen-ry!" Jacey was gesturing broadly to the crowd. A few other people stepped cautiously into the street, then retreated hastily when the cops advanced in their direction.

Angie, Sara, and Doc had moved a few feet off the curb as the cops swung the other way. "Come on!" Angie called to me. My chest tightened, but I was spared a decision as the cops about-faced and moved our way, sending everyone jumping back to the sidewalk. Angie stepped over and looped her arm through mine like we were going to the theater. "We can take the street down here," she pointed, tugging on my arm. Twenty or so people in our little group edged out into the street again. I followed Angie reluctantly, craning my



Protesters used die-in tactics to shut the street as mounted police looked on.

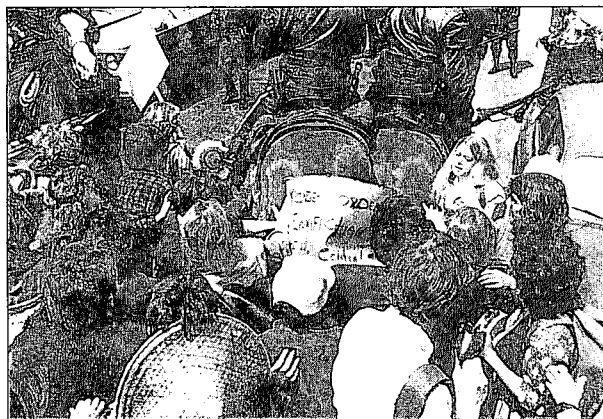
neck for undercover police. “Don’t be so nervous!” Angie rasped. “You’re making me uptight.”

“I don’t even see the point of being out here,” I answered under my breath. “The cops are just going to chase us back.” My prophecy was fulfilled as the police turned back our direction, batons shoving the slower people out of their way.

Angie watched the street intently as Jenny and Raoul’s AG dodged the increasingly hostile cops. “We have the right to be in the street,” she insisted. “They can’t tell us where we can protest!”

Her spirit was drawing me in, but I had to be realistic. With obligations at Livermore tomorrow I couldn’t risk getting busted here.

A few more bands of protesters were edging into the street. The mobile squad of cops was outnumbered. The reserves up the block weren’t moving.



Police backed their nervous horses into the crowd.

“What do they really care?”

Angie asked with a sweep of her arm. “They’ve rerouted all the traffic anyway. Are they really going to fight us over the principle of keeping the street clear? Is it really just a power-trip for them?”

I wasn’t as optimistic as she

was, but it was hard to resist when she tugged on my arm. The squad of cops stopped to regroup, and we joined a dozen more protesters venturing off the sidewalk. The monitors made no attempt to impede anyone, and some people carried their banners out into the street. It felt like we were claiming the territory, conquering the street for peace.

The squad of cops soon moved on us, jabbing with their batons. We gave ground but stayed in the street. The cops circled around and we eluded them a second time. We were congratulating ourselves on our brilliant maneuvering when several mounted cops came riding down our way. Alarm gripped me. People started to retreat. Raoul called out, “Hold your ground! Horses won’t step on people.”

Whether they willingly would, we never learned. When the cops reached our group, they wheeled their mounts around and backed the nervous, high-

stepping horses toward us. Angie seemed as scared as I was, and made it back to the sidewalk ahead of me.

We leaned against each other, studying the street. My eyes were wide open, my muscles taut. As the horse cops rode back up to deal with Jenny and Raoul's group, someone yelled, "Down here!" and we were out in the street again.

I hadn't lost sight of the other cops off to the right. As the first squad regrouped, the second geared up to join the sweep. Damn, I thought. Out of a thousand people at the demo, only about fifty of us were in the street. Counting the second squad and the horse brigade, there were almost that many police. I tried to scope out our retreat route to make sure no more cops were coming up that way to surround us, but I couldn't tell.

The police lined up facing us. They clenched their riot clubs and pawed at the pavement, awaiting the order to launch their sweep. With no chanting and no traffic, it was eerily quiet. I studied the cops, then gauged the distance back to the sidewalk, bracing myself for the onslaught. But just as they were about to strike, a commotion erupted in the intersection behind them. The cops looked around, confused. I craned my neck to see — the punks had arrived!

As the cops floundered about, their battle plan in disarray, seventy or eighty young punks came parading around the corner to join us in the street. A spike-haired woman carried a sign proclaiming, "Kissinger is a Tax-Paid Terrorist." I spotted Sid near the front of the march with a black Circle-A flag. A broad smile crossed his face as he greeted Jenny and Raoul. The punks merged into our crowd, more than doubling the number in the street. Their festive spirit infected the entire demonstration, and spontaneous chants and cheers echoed off the plate glass of the Hilton as we celebrated victory.

It took the cops ten minutes to work out a new plan, and when they finally moved to clear the middle of the street, the punks were ready. Migrating down toward Ellis, they started a countdown that could be heard up and down the block. "10! 9! 8!" They occupied the intersection. "7! 6! 5!" The rest of us took up the count as we moved down toward them. "4! 3! 2! 1! Aaaaagggghhhh!" A hundred people dropped in the street, screaming in the agony of a die-in.

Two squads of foot cops double-timed down our way, ready for action. But it wasn't clear what they could do with us lying on our backs. They halted ten feet away. We still had the street, and might have held it longer. But out of nowhere the Revolutionary People's Front materialized, taunting the police and brandishing their banner poles like pikes and spears. It was the crudest sort of confrontation, and the authorities seized the opportunity. The foot cops fanned toward the outside of the crowd, chopping with their clubs. The horse squad came galloping down the middle of the street toward us.

The cop-baiters scattered. The rest of us scrambled to our feet. Angie and I broke for the sidewalk, but I collided with Hank, and both of us staggered. He grabbed my arm and we jumped back as the cops rode past, batons swinging at



The mounted police finally got the order to charge.

anyone they could reach.

We made it to the sidewalk. Several people were hurt. One man was bleeding from his head. As friends tended to him, I felt a rush of anger. That could have been me! Out in the street, the police were re-forming their lines. "Jerks!"

I yelled at them. "Stupid jerks!"

Next to me, Jacey hollered something similar and shook his fist.

But Hank eyed me suspiciously. "This is insane," he spouted. "Why provoke them? We're going to lose every time at this game."

I edged away from him. I didn't have an answer, but I wasn't giving in.

Angie joined me, and we looked around. The crowd in the street had been split in half. Sara and Sid were trying to get over to where we were, but the foot cops deterred them. Doc, on our side, had been separated from his affinity group. Enola Gay was in a crowd being forced away down Mason Street by the horse cops, and when Doc tried to get over to them, he was clubbed back toward Angie and me.

Doc glared at the cops. Next to him another protester grabbed an orange sawhorse from the construction area behind us and dragged it in front of the cops. Doc grabbed another one and pulled it into the intersection at Ellis, which was still open to traffic. Angie stepped out in front of an oncoming car and flagged it to a stop as Doc and I hauled another barricade into the street. Angry motorists honked and cursed, but had little choice except to stop as protesters dragged more sawhorses, newspaper stands, and other debris into the intersection.

As flimsy as the barricade looked, it felt like we'd done something, impeded business as usual. The clutter slowed down the cops as they stopped to sling the objects out of the street. But their mood got uglier. Billyclubs swung freely whenever a protester retreated too slowly. Twenty feet behind us a cop whacked a guy in the side and sent him sprawling to the pavement clutching his ribs.

"Around the block!" Jacey shouted. "Stay near the hotel or they'll disperse us! Around the block!" The cops had split off a large part of the crowd and

forced it back onto Mason, but the rest of us turned the corner and started around the hotel on Ellis. Angie and I were still together. Doc was up ahead, with Jenny and Raoul just behind. Sara and a friend of hers slipped past a line of cops and hurried after us.

We pushed up the long block toward Taylor, where there was rumored to be a second hotel entrance. I was breathing easier when behind us Jenny let out a cry. I whirled around and saw her duck away from a cop who brought his club down right across her back. She lurched forward, arms flung out as she hit the ground. The cop raised his nightstick again.

Before he could strike, Raoul sprang in front of him. The cop was in full riot gear, but Raoul presented an imposing obstacle as he squared his shoulders to confront the officer. The cop froze, arm still in the air, then abruptly turned and hurried away to join a squad roughing up some people back by the barricades.

Raoul stood staring at the cop. Jenny scurried to her feet, grabbed his arm, and pulled him toward us. Angie put her arm around Jenny, who had a scraped arm and a sore back but otherwise seemed okay. "I never even saw him till he started to hit me," she said.

Angie tapped Raoul on the stomach. "Good job," she said.

Raoul's breathing was still fast. "Aw, you could see the fear in his eyes right through his riot mask. If you stand up to cops, they're such cowards."

Angie looked Raoul up and down.

"Well, it probably helps to be six-foot-five."

The horse cops were moving our way, but some people had stretched their banner across the street to slow them down. Good rearguard defense, I thought.

We figured to take a right turn onto Taylor and shut down that entrance to the Hilton. But when we reached the corner we were met by a phalanx of cops who had cordoned off the whole block of Taylor in front of the hotel. You could still get over there, but it was obvious that you were walking into an arrest. The alternative was to go left on Taylor, where you would be blocked away from the action.

"Divide and conquer," Raoul groaned, his big shoulders slumping. He and Jenny conferred, then announced that they were going to the right.



"We *have* to stay, even if arrest us," Jenny said. "If we leave, it's like admitting they had the right to disperse us."

"Yeah," Raoul muttered. "We have to contest their definition of public space."

Angie gestured to me. "Are you coming?"

"I can't," I said awkwardly, hiding my relief at not getting arrested. "I have to be at Livermore tomorrow. People are counting on it."

A hint of vexation rumbled in her sigh, but as the horse patrol advanced, she relented. "I forgot about Livermore," she said. "I guess you can't get busted here. But I have to." She stepped over and gave me a hug. Standing there in the intersection I squeezed her to me, imprinting her soft form onto my body-memory.

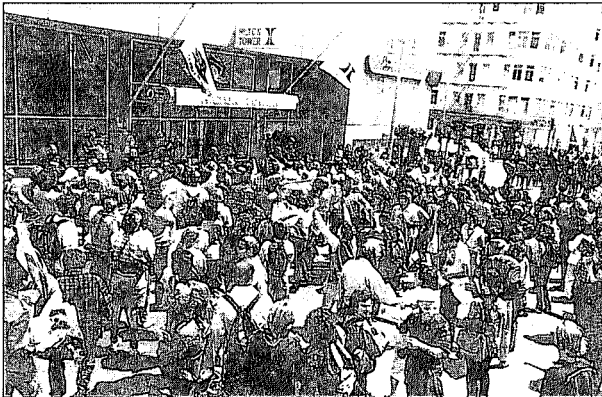
Finally the looming horses forced us to break away. Angie headed after Jenny and Raoul, and I ducked away from the cops.

Once I got under a store awning on the other side of Ellis, I caught my breath and let out a big "Phew!" It startled the curious business-types who were gawking at the row of cops in the intersection. They were the first outsiders I'd seen in over an hour, and I gave them a rude stare.

A television crew was pressing toward the cops, trying to film the protesters in the street behind them. I edged up behind the TV crew, wary of the burly undercover who I suspected would be sneaking through the crowd. My eyes searched the boisterous protesters clustered in front of the Hilton. I spied plenty of familiar faces, but Angie's eluded me.

Frustrated, I turned back toward the gawkers across Ellis. What did they think this was, some kind of circus? The turbulence of the past hour welled up inside me. "Welcome to Ronald Reagan's America!" I yelled at no one and everyone. "Welcome to 1984!"

I turned and strode away, agitated, disconnected, discouraged. The action



Protesters marched around to the back side of the hotel...

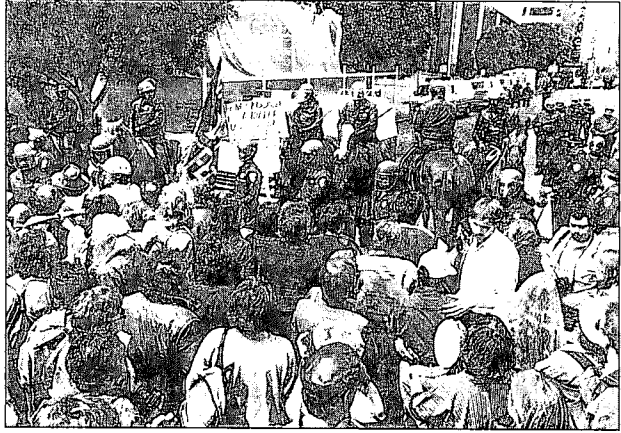
was over. What was there to do? Just get out.

But Sara and Doc intercepted me. "You doing okay?" they asked solicitously.

"Yeah, yeah, just blowing off some steam," I assured them.

We eyed the scene over in front of the

Hilton, where people were shouting and waving their banners defiantly at the encircling police. "Have you seen Karina?" Sara asked us. "I don't know if she's getting arrested or not." Doc and I said we hadn't seen her. Sara continued to survey the two hundred or so people facing arrest.



...where they were greeted by more mounted cops.

"Tell me if you see Angie," I said to her, then turned to Doc. "Are you getting busted?"

"Yeah, I guess." Doc scuffed his shoe on the sidewalk. "But I feel frustrated with myself. I was criticizing the monitors for their aggressive tone, and then I go hauling barricades into the street. There was confrontation in the air, and the worst part of me bought into it."

"What's wrong with barricades?" I answered. "The cops were attacking people. You've got to do something."

"It's not what I want to be doing," he said. "It's militaristic, fighting over the street, over 'territory.'"

A caravan of paddywagons rolled up Ellis Street. The cordon of cops opened to let them pass, then closed ranks. Behind their lines, other officers began arresting the people trapped in front of the hotel.

"I don't want to get arrested," Sara said, more to herself than to us. "But I know if I don't, I'll feel like I didn't do anything." She sighed and tugged on her baggy sweater. "I guess if I'm not sure, I should just do it. I can always decide later it wasn't such a great idea."

As I reflected on her logic, Sara turned to Norm, who was approaching us. "Seen Karina?"

"Not since earlier," he answered. His face was red, and he seemed out of breath. "Half of LAG is getting arrested, though. I just saw Pilgrim and Craig getting handcuffed."

"Craig?" I said. "I didn't even know he was here today. What about Hank? Is he in there? He has the keys to the rental truck."

"Hank? I'm not sure," said Norm. "He probably is."

"What about Sid?" Sara asked. "I never saw him after the barricades."

“You didn’t hear?” Norm burst out. “Sid got beat up by undercover cops. They had to take him to the hospital.”

“Damn!” I shivered. “What pigs!”

“Yeah, they caught him trying to let the air out of a cop-car tire.”

I laughed involuntarily. “I sure hope he’s okay.”

Antonio came over. “I’m going over to Bank of America, in case people start showing up there for our action,” he said. “I’ll drive back by the jail later to see if people from here are citing out.”

“I won’t be citing out,” Sara replied austerely.

“I won’t, either,” Norm said. He turned to me. “I’m going to get busted here and do jail solidarity, so I won’t be at Livermore tomorrow. Sorry.”

It was the first time I’d considered the effect of the arrests on the Livermore action. Even more, I thought about what today would mean as far as LAG consensing on anything around the Democratic Convention. The anti-Convention people would be flipped out over what happened, while the street-action people would be more determined than ever to push things in San Francisco. Of course, the whole thing might rally LAG together, people refusing to be intimidated. But I wasn’t optimistic.

We studied the cordon across the street. The line of cops served not only to hold the arrestees in, but also to fence the rest of us out. Down toward the end, a guy who tried to get a message to someone inside got clubbed away. “What priorities,” Norm said. “Beating the hell out of people because they blocked traffic.”

Doc nodded. “They’re afraid that if one person is allowed to disobey, the whole system will crumble.”

Suddenly Sara sparked to life, waving and hollering to Karina, whom she had spotted in the arrest crowd. Karina didn’t hear her, but Sara said a quick goodbye to us and headed across the street toward the Hilton.

I looked after her with wonder. Did she see a magical opening in the police line?

No one else seemed surprised. Norm went to make a phone call before getting arrested. Doc turned and gave me a hug. “See you,” he said. He started across the street after Sara. I shook my head. There’s determination for you.

The line of police stood with helmets fastened and clubs at an angle across their chest. As Sara paused in the intersection, another cop came over and poked her in the side with his nightstick, pointing toward the opposite sidewalk. Sara ignored him, and he poked her harder, ordering her out of the street.

With a flash of irritation, Sara turned on him. “What’s your badge number?” she snapped. The cop seemed taken aback. Sara squinted at his badge and read the number aloud, then deliberately re-focused her attention on the cordon of cops. She turned toward the edge of the line, searching for an opening. But as she started away, the cop lurched forward and lashed out with

his club, striking her across the back of the head. Sara staggered a step or two, turned around, then crumbled to the ground.

The cop strode away. Doc grabbed Sara and pulled her to her feet. Antonio and I ran to meet them as Doc steered Sara toward the sidewalk. Sara made it to us, then slumped to the ground. Doc bent over her frantically. "Stay awake, Sara! Stay awake! Don't pass out!" He looked up at me. "Get some water! She could go into shock if she passes out."

"We need to get her to a hospital," Antonio said, and went to get his car. I headed across the street to a deli, where I got a cup of water and hurried back. Several other people clustered around, trying to keep Sara alert. She was still conscious, but only vaguely aware of what was happening. "Why does my head hurt so much?" her glazed eyes seemed to ask as I dabbed water on her cheeks. "Why won't you let me go to sleep?"

Antonio pulled up in his car, and we eased Sara into the back seat. Several people got in to ride to the hospital with her. "I'm taking her over to Oakland if she can stay awake," Antonio told us. "If she checks into a San Francisco hospital they'll come arrest her."

They pulled away. Doc and I looked at each other. I wondered if he felt as bleak as I did. Without a word, we hugged. Then he turned and headed across the street. The cordon had eased a bit, and Doc slipped past a cop who had his head turned and joined the arrest crowd.

I sighed, feeling lost. What do you do after something like this? Go to Bank of America with our missile and leaflet the customers about war taxes? Maybe I should just get on BART and go home.

I was mulling it over, half-watching a TV crew maneuver, when Norm came running up the street toward me. I tensed, ready to spring. "Jeff! Down here!" he hollered from twenty feet away. "Angie's getting arrested. The cop is choking the hell out of her!"

My stomach tightened. I ran with him to a vantage point and climbed on top of a mailbox, but we couldn't see Angie anymore. "She was non-cooperating," Norm told me. "This big cop got hold of her by the neck, he was dragging



One of the nearly two hundred arrests at the Kissinger protest.

her away, she couldn't get her feet on the ground, I don't see how she could breathe!" He pointed across the street. "Look! There she is!"

My eyes cut through the crowd just in time to see a cop lift Angie off the ground by her neck and drop her in the back of a paddywagon. She sat there, stunned. Then the cop gave her a shove and she disappeared.

I gaped for a moment, then climbed down off the mailbox and slumped against a lightpost. A dull gray fog blanketed the City, and the chill stiffened my muscles. Ellis Street was practically deserted except for photographers. The whole spectacle receded, as if I were watching it on TV.

My mind drifted off to Holly. I pictured her at the Site 300 protest, dealing with cops away from any media or support people. Was she faring any better? Would she be in jail overnight? I wondered when I'd see her again.

And when would I see Angie? I chastised myself for my indecision, as if my failure to commit to one or the other was the cause of their being held in jail. And suppose one of them was released, and spent the night with me. I'd feel like I was betraying the other...

My reverie was broken by a commotion behind the police lines. The cordon of cops twitched their batons, but maintained a taut line. TV crews jockeyed for position. Although I couldn't make out what was happening, I figured I should split before I wound up getting busted myself. That was the last thing I needed.

But before I could move, a heavy hand clasped my shoulder. My body snapped, then froze. Unable to speak, let alone cry out, I felt myself dragged away, slapped into handcuffs, thrown into the back of an unmarked car...

...Slowly my eyes came into focus. Someone was speaking to me. "Hey, sorry! Didn't mean to scare you." It was Hank. "I thought you saw me coming!"

I sucked in a breath through clenched teeth. Hank gave my shoulder a shake. "Really, I'm sorry!"

Suddenly I burst out laughing. "God! I thought I was gone!" Then I turned serious. "I thought *you* got busted."

"Naw, I couldn't," Hank answered. "I've got to get the truck back to the rental place by five. But we should get out of here. Come on, let's take the tax-missile over to Bank of America and see what's happening there."