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Chapter II: Spring 1983

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Chapter II covers the Spring 1983 back-country actions at Vandenberg Air Force Base, the June 1983 Livermore Weapons Lab blockade, and the International Day of Nuclear Disarmament. (See Appendix for more on International Day.)

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

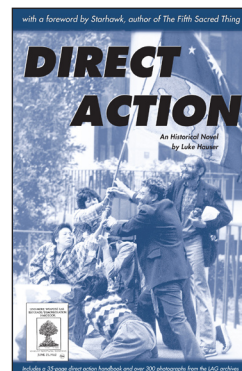


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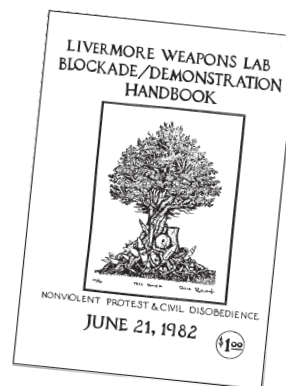


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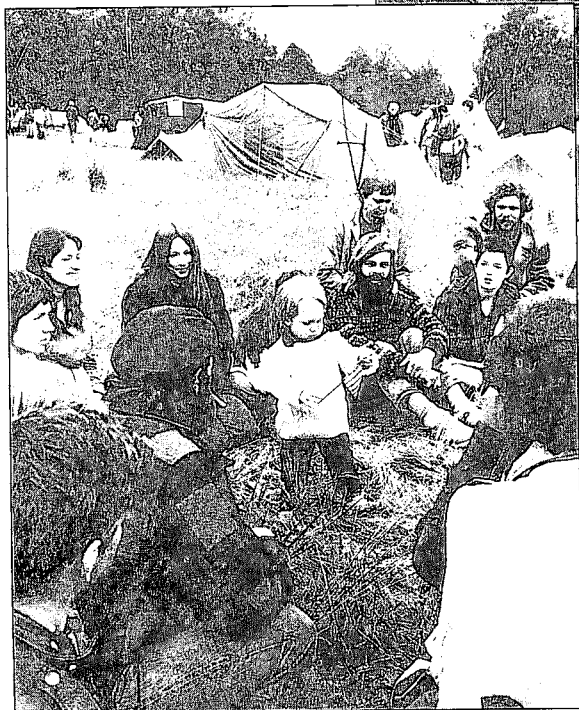
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RECLAIMING VANDENBERG

JANUARY-JUNE 1983

*In January, March, and June,
Vandenberg Action Coalition
and/or Livermore Action
Group organized actions at
Vandenberg Air Force Base
near Santa Barbara,
protesting test launches of
the MX missile.*



*Most of the nearly
1000 people
arrested served one
to ten days in jail,
but some received
sentences up to 60
days for second
arrests.*

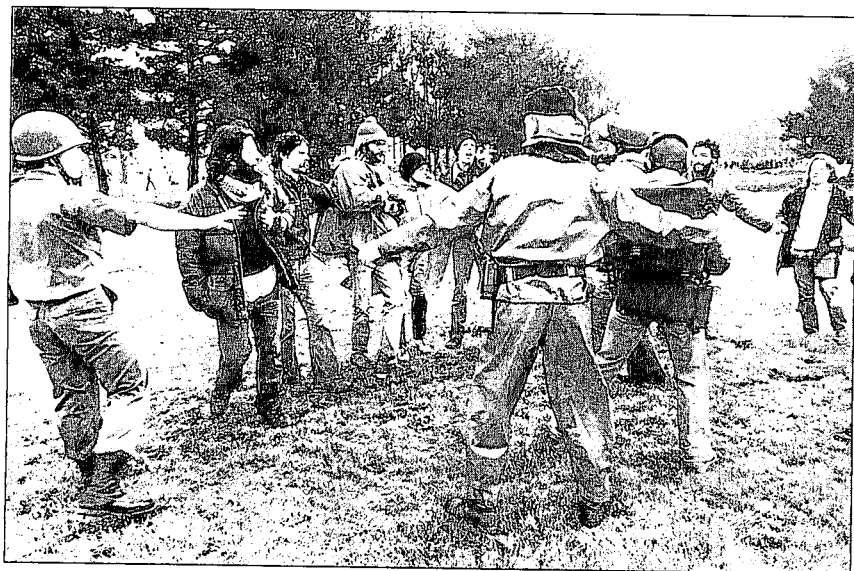
*Top: The Reaper at the pre-action
rally, by Alice Rogoff*

Bottom: Action camp, by Ted Sahl



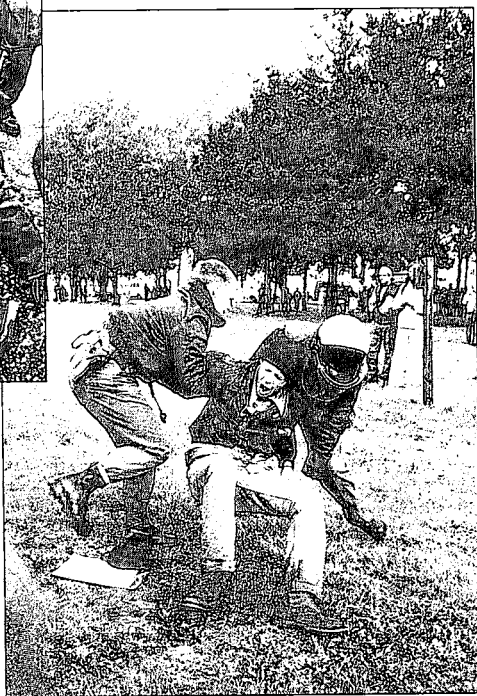
RECLAIMING VANDENBERG

JANUARY-JUNE 1983



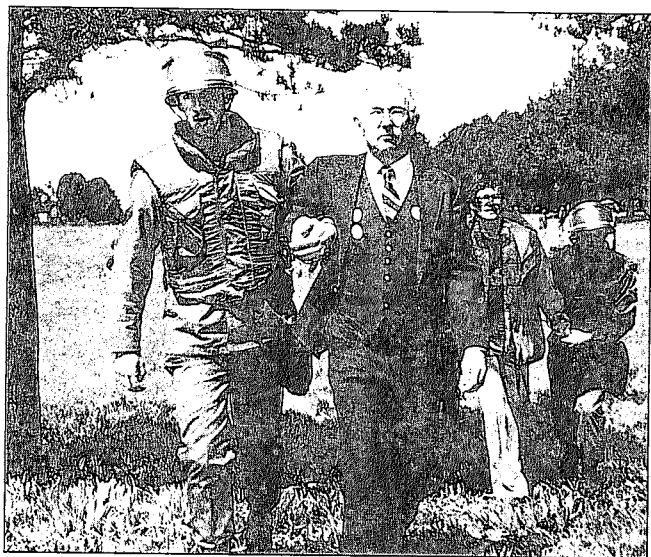
*The sprawling Air Force base
lent itself to "backcountry"
occupations. Here, January
protesters occupy a
meadow near the main gate.*

*Other affinity groups did
more clandestine
backcountry actions,
particularly in March and
June.*



*Top left: Ted Sahl
All others: Bette Lee*

*Any connections between the people
pictured in the photographs and the
characters in this book are purely
coincidental. The characters are fictional. No
photo should be taken as implying that an
individual is in any way connected to a
fictional character.*

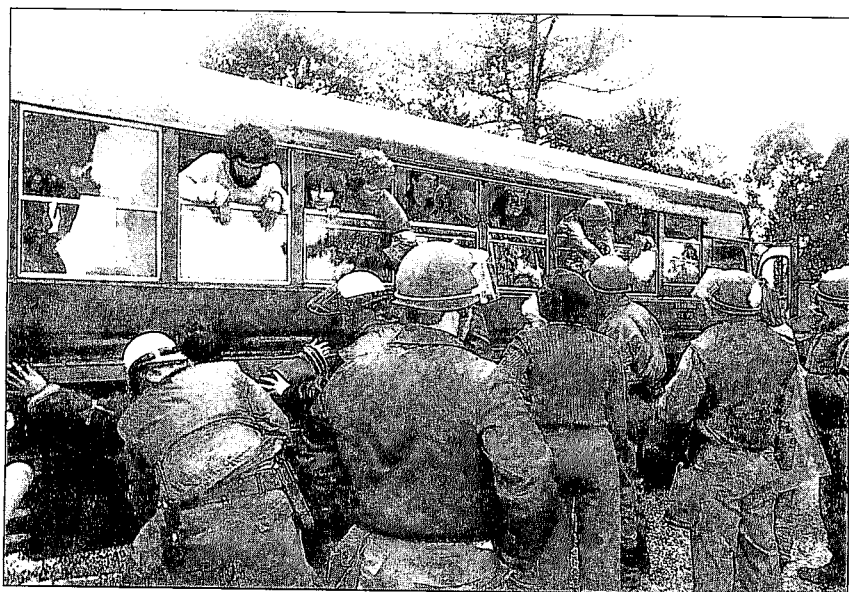


*January
arrestees
were led out
of the
meadow to
waiting
buses, which
took them to
detention
facilities on
the base.*

Photos by Ted Sahl

RECLAIMING VANDENBERG

JANUARY-JUNE 1983



Two / 1983

"(A government) is preserved so long as the ruling class succeeds in putting over its economic and political forms upon the whole of society as the only forms possible."

— Leon Trotsky, "Dual Power," *The Russian Revolution*

Sunday, January 23, 1983

"SHOOT! DAMN wiper's stuck again!" Hank hit the windshield with his fist.

I pointed to the dash. "Try turning it off and on. That worked last time."

He yanked the knob back and forth and the wiper started up. Hank settled back behind the steering wheel of his old van. He'd been talking about a wiring job he'd taken, on top of his regular forty-hour week. "I've got to make some money. I'm buying four classic pinball machines from a place in Omaha that closed last year. The shipment comes in next week."

"Your shop is already overflowing," I said. "Where are you going to put them?"

"I can fit a couple more near the door, I think." He stuck a Bob Dylan tape into the player and fiddled with the tone control. "Anyway, I hate to miss too much work. I'd vote for a state blockade, with a shorter sentence. But if people decide to do a federal action, I'll do it."

"You could do it and cite out," I said.

"Naw," he said. "Once we're in jail I'll hang to the end. How can you leave when everyone else is staying in solidarity?"

I nodded and looked out the window. A row of trees bordering a farm field swayed as the wind carried banks of gray clouds inland. "I'm staying till the end," I said. "I have two weeks off work, and I'll take more if we have to. But maybe there'll be so many of us that they'll have to dump us out like they did at Livermore last year."

"I don't know, it'd be sort of a letdown after all our — damn, stuck again!"

This time the on-off trick didn't work, and Hank steered to the side of the road. In the back of the van, voices grumbled. "Are we there? What time is it?" I fished a roll of toilet paper from under the seat and climbed out into the light mist. "Watch out for poison oak," Hank called after me. "That's all you need, two weeks in jail with poison oak."

Poison oak. I winced. Two weeks. I ducked behind a row of trees back from the road. Federal prison, maybe. And that might mean the Federal Marshals. Federal thugs. Anxiety cut through me. What were we walking into? What if they stuck us in prison for a year? What if they broke my wrist or fingers and I could never play guitar again? What if we never even got there? That was the immediate concern. An old van on a slick highway...

As I waited behind the tree for results, the mist gathered into beads on my skin. I wiped it from my brow like sweat and shivered. Damn, think about something else or I'll be here all day with my pants down. Think about the trip.

Two more hours of riding left. A slight nausea fluttered through me. The Marshals. Were we ready for this? Maybe they won't be there. Maybe they'll leave it to the soldiers to deal with us. That would be weird, getting arrested by enlisted guys younger than me. That's not how I picture authority.

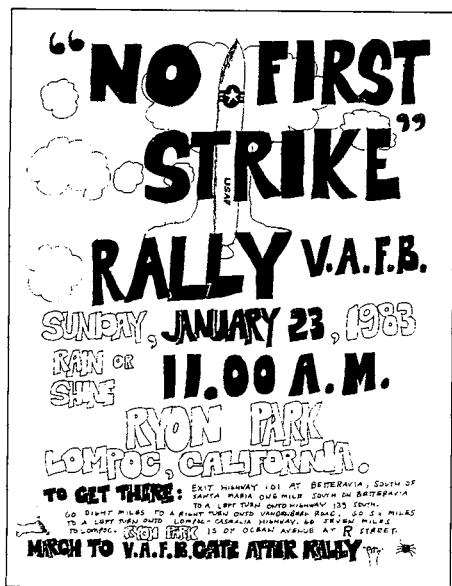
When I returned, Hank had gotten the wipers running. People shuffled around and tried to get comfortable in the back of the van. I took another shift in the rider's seat. Caroline sat on some packs behind us and leaned up between the seats.

As we pulled back onto the road, Bob Dylan launched into "Highway 61" — an auspicious sign, I thought. I turned in my seat to face Caroline. "This is your first arrest?" I asked.

"Yeah," she said slowly, pouting her lower lip. "Seeing everyone else arrested last Summer, well, I knew I had to do it the next time. And I'm going to non-cooperate when they arrest me. I can't stand up and walk with them."

"Right on," Hank pitched in.

"What if it's the Marshals who arrest us?" I asked her.



Flyer for the legal rally the day before the action. Legal rallies preceded or accompanied nearly every LAG action.

"Oh, it won't be. I heard in the office last week that it'll probably be soldiers who arrest us, and then the Marshals will take over as guards."

"Why would they do that?" I asked.

Hank laughed coldly. "Easy. They don't want the Marshals beating on people in front of the media."

Caroline nodded slowly. "I'll still non-cooperate, even if it's the Marshals."

Hank fiddled with the heater levers. "What's your sense of how many people will get busted?"

Caroline mulled it over. "From what I've heard at the office, I'd guess maybe two hundred," she said. "It's too bad about the split over the date. I think there could have been a whole lot more."

I nodded. I hadn't been thinking about it much lately, but when solid numbers were spelled out, my jaw tightened. Two hundred arrests. It might have been a thousand. My resentment rose at the people who had split from LAG and called the March action. Get in line, I felt like saying, then felt irked at myself. Get in line?

We made it to Lompoc by late afternoon. But between dropping off a couple of people in town, getting something to eat, and making a few wrong turns, we didn't get to the rally till it was over. We pulled up at the deserted site and hailed a few stragglers. "Where is everybody?"

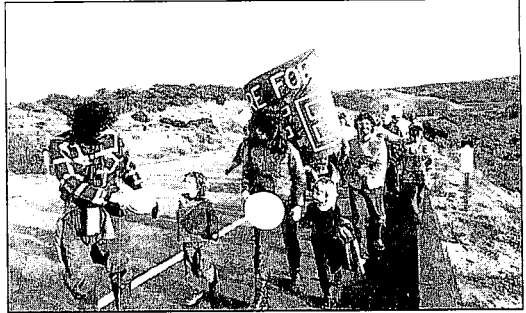
"They left about twenty minutes ago," a guy with a short, curly beard told us. "They're marching to the main gate."

Hank wheeled the van around and headed up the road. Wild fields stretched out on either side, merging on the horizon with the low gray clouds. "The edge of the base," Hank pointed. "Most of it is just open land. Look, there's everybody." As we caught the tail end of the march, little clusters of people waved, pulling their banners taut and shaking their signs. Hank honked and hollered, "Bunch of hippie freaks!"

He spun the van into a gravel turnout across from the gate. As I stepped down onto the gravel, the earlier nausea welled up again, and I clutched the door to steady myself.

Holly, who had ridden down earlier with Antonio and Daniel, walked up at that moment, and looked alarmed. "Are you okay?" she asked, putting her hand on my shoulder.

"I think I'm fine," I said in a thin voice. I wobbled a step forward. "Just



A few of the hundreds of people who marched to the gates of Vandenberg AFB following the rally.

motion sickness." She took my arm and steadied me as I walked off the nausea. Welcome to Vandenberg.

The brisk evening air soon cleared my head. Holly went to talk to Caroline, and I crossed the street to check out the protest at the gate. The entrance to the base was a simple two-lane road flanked by trees and open fields. A steel arch spanned the road, bearing a large sign: "Vandenberg Air Force Base — Peace Is Our Profession." Underneath stood a row of young soldiers, struggling to avoid eye contact.

Several hundred people filled the entrance road and spilled out into the intersection. Some pressed forward to lecture and plead with the tight-lipped soldiers. Others dropped back to talk with friends. Off to one side, a cluster sang peace songs.

Through the crowd I spotted people I hadn't seen since Livermore. A guy with long, scraggly hair and a tie-dyed sweatshirt breezed by, dancing after a conga player. "Moonstone," I called. He turned and enveloped me in a hug. "Hey," I said, "How are you doing? Have you been down here at the camp?"

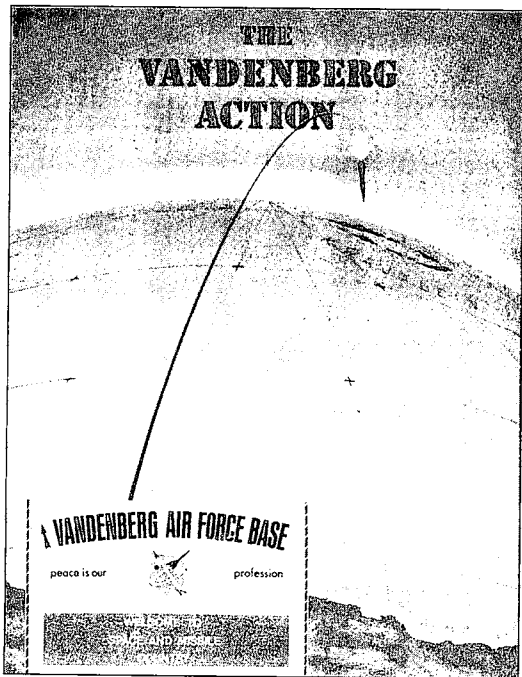
"Yeah, three days, been going onto the base, at night, scouting out the routes. Whoa!" He bent over to catch his breath, dangling his arms, still

laughing. "I want to try a backcountry action, but other people in my AG want to do a state blockade, then come back when the MX is actually being tested and do backcountry. We'll decide tonight, I guess."

Hank and Doc walked up. "Can you believe how young those soldiers are?" Hank said. "I was trying to talk with them, but they won't even tell you where they're from."

"They're ordered not to speak, I'm sure," Doc said. "I did a stint in the military when I was their age. Privates don't make their own decisions."

Hank looked back and forth from me to Doc. "They've never seen



A Vandenberg Action Coalition work group edited and produced this 56-page action handbook.

anything like this before. They're all worried about the gate — we should just walk down the road and sneak onto the base right now. We could come up behind and surprise them."

Moonstone and I laughed, but Doc furrowed his brow. "Surprise them? You want to keep on living?"

"Yeah, you're right," Hank said. "But wouldn't it be funny? They think they know our plans, they're all set to deal with us in the morning, and we show up at their headquarters tonight."

Doc looked past us toward the gate, which was spot-lit as dusk settled in. "The entrance is so small. I was picturing more maneuvering room. If we do a trespass here, they'll just sweep us right up. It would be totally symbolic. We wouldn't disrupt anything."

I kicked at the road with my toe.

Change of Heart was leaning toward a front-gate action, and given my fear of poison oak, I wanted it to stay that way. "It's going to be symbolic anyway, if the MX isn't here," I said. "We might as well do the action at the gate and see what media coverage we can get."

"Then why do a federal action?" Doc answered. "If we don't want to get on the base, our best tactic would be to do a state action and blockade the entrance road. I want to feel like we're doing something, not just walking into their arms."

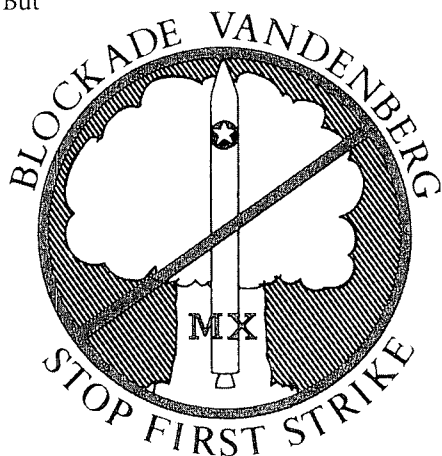
"I'm not arguing," I said.

Holly came over and took my hand. "There's a Chumash ceremony to reclaim the land starting over there. Want to go?"

I felt like I should be spending time with Holly since we were parting the next day. We only had a few waking hours left. But a ritual? I squeezed her hand. "Not right now," I said, grasping for an excuse. "I want to find Craig."

Holly, Doc, and Moonstone headed off to join the circle forming across the road. I wandered through the crowd still milling around the gate. Looking for Craig was as good a mission as any. Although the rain was holding off, everyone had hoods and hats pulled tight. In the fading light it was hard to recognize anyone without staring right into their face. I ran across a few more people I knew, but no Craig.

After the ritual, Hank rounded up the van-riders. Amid a flurry of people hastening to their vehicles, I spied Holly talking quietly with Doc. I signaled to



them that we were leaving, then got into the van. Holly followed soon after, and we sat together just behind Hank's seat. I put my arm around her, but had trouble getting comfortable. The milling at the gate had left me agitated and impatient. Maybe I should have gone to the ritual after all.

Hank tried to follow a couple of cars back to the encampment, but we lost them right away, and wound up creeping down a muddy country road

between two tall rows of trees. There were no lights anywhere. All I could think about was how old

the van was and the weird noises it kept making. But Hank said he was sure it was the right road. He'd been here in December when they were looking for a site for the camp and was sure he remembered the turnoff. We kept driving.

A light flashed up ahead, then disappeared. Hank slowed the van. "I think I can see a car up ahead. It might be off the road." He rolled down his window and leaned out. "Yeah, it is."

The light reappeared and moved toward us. "Better hold it right there," a voice called out.

Hank leaned his head out the

window and called back. "What's the problem?"

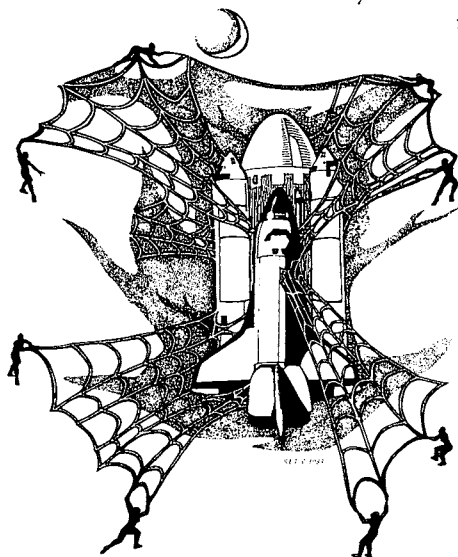
"It's solid mud from here to the camp," came the answer. "Unless you have four-wheel drive, you'd better park."

The camp. We'd made it. My chest relaxed a notch. I eased out of the van into a light drizzle. Holly and I gathered our tent and other gear and made our way up the road. Walt tromped by in heavy galoshes. "Why be so careful? You're gonna get wet anyway. The sooner you get to the camp, the sooner you can dry out by the fire."

Holly pointed through some trees. "Look, there's a light over there."

Walt peered through the trees. "That's it, that's the camp. I'm going backcountry." He plunged into the brush directly toward the lights. His route looked no worse than ours, but my respect for poison oak kept me to the road.

We set our bags under a canopy and made our way to the welcoming campfire. The flames were roaring, but all around was sloshy mud. A few pieces of plywood provided the only solid footing. Holly and I pressed up to the fire, toasting our chilled hands.



"There's food in that tent over there," someone said. "You'd better hurry, they're getting ready to close the kitchen."

We headed toward an off-white canvas tent, where Turning Tide AG had set up a camp cafeteria. As we ducked inside, the aroma of vegetable soup greeted us.

Holly stopped to talk to someone she knew. As I approached the table, I recognized Artemis working at the big butane stove. She was a broad-shouldered woman in her forties, active in Matrix AG. She and I had co-facilitated a tough Coordinating Council meeting a couple of weeks earlier, so I felt a special bond with her.

"This is amazing," I said as she turned to greet me. "I'll eat better here than at home." I filled my plate with potatoes, green beans, and corn chips.

Artemis handed me a bowl of soup. "I can't say I always cook like this at home. Interesting how when we gather as a community, we eat better."

I admired a knife rack fastened to one of the tent-posts. "What a great set-up. And I'll bet there's not a dryer spot in camp."

"I know, I've been sleeping in here the past few nights."

"You've been here all weekend?"

"Yeah, it's been great except for the rain." Without setting her mixing spoon down, she wiped her brow with the back of her hand. "People have been going onto the base at night to scout entry routes. My AG is still thinking of doing a backcountry action, but they're leaning toward state charges. How about you?"

"Change of Heart is thinking about federal trespass at the gate," I said. "No point in going backcountry if there's no missile to stop."

"Sure there is," she said. "Backcountry actions get you in touch with the land, with the Earth we say we're fighting for. It feels less symbolic. I'll probably do backcountry at the March action, whether or not the missile is there."

"So you're planning to do the VAC action?" I asked.

She shrugged. "I don't think of it as VAC or LAG. It's about shutting Vandenberg. We ought to be glad there are more protests."

"Well, it feels like having a second date weakened this action," I said, giving a forced shrug.

Before Artemis could respond, one of the other cooks called her back to the stove. I drifted back outside with my plate of food, feeling unsettled. Craig walked by, looking surprisingly relaxed. I followed him over to the fire. "How did the rally go?"

"Really good," he said. "Especially considering we had three weeks to organize it after VAC pulled out."

"Yeah, the whole scene came together well."

"Shows who was doing the real work all along." He held a shoe on a stick over the edge of the fire. "We've done all we can do. Tomorrow we'll see who steps up."

I looked off toward the camping area, where flashlights darted around like fireflies. The mist congealed into a light rain.

Antonio walked up and put an arm around each of us. "Gentlemen!" He greeted us in his warm, resonant voice. "This beautiful weather reminds me of why we chose to hold International Day on Summer Solstice."

"Yeah," tossed out another guy. "We're out of synch with the natural rhythms of the planet."

I laughed, assuming he was joking. Craig pulled his steaming shoe back from the flames. "Unfortunately," he said, "the government doesn't follow the natural cycles."

"Which is one more reason not to respond to the government," Antonio said. "We have to take the initiative, declare our own calendar."

We were interrupted by Claudia. "Are you guys going to the spokescouncil?"

I polished off the last of my dinner, tossed my plate into the fire, and followed the others up to the meeting tent. I wasn't a spoke for Change of Heart, but I figured I might pick up some information on the next day's action. And apparently most people felt the same way. There wasn't a spare seat in the tent. The dark green canvas absorbed most of the light from the four bare bulbs dangling overhead, and my eyes couldn't quite get used to the dimness. The ground was cold and damp even through a layer of straw. A hundred people crammed onto plastic dropcloths, sitting back-to-back to keep our muddy shoes off the sheets.

At the front of the tent, next to the medics table, the facilitators huddled. I recognized one of them, a back-to-the-land type from Humboldt County whom I'd seen at a couple of meetings in the Fall. He turned and addressed us. "Okay, everybody, my name is Abelard, and this is Janet, we're the co-facilitators tonight. We want to try to get through the agenda as quick as possible so everyone can get some sleep." He was bouncing up and down and slapping his hands together, and he seemed relieved when Doc raised his hand.

"Why is the solidarity discussion at the end of the agenda?"

"Well, we figured that people would want to talk first about what actions they're doing, and get the legal review out of the way, and we have to do camp support, we can't put that at the end or we'll never get to it — yeah, Melissa?" He stopped bouncing and pointed to her.

"We put off the solidarity discussion at the last spokescouncil and said we'd do it here, when everyone was together."

Janet stepped in front of Abelard. "We'll try to get through the early parts fast so we have plenty of time for solidarity."

Melissa muttered to herself. Someone called out: "Who chose these facilitators, LAG?" Several hands shot up. "Process point, process point," someone yelled. Everyone was shuffling around and the plastic dropcloths

were making a racket. Abelard was bouncing up and down and pointing, "Process point, let's hear the process point!"

"Never mind, I withdraw it."

Janet waved for quiet. "Me and Abelard were chosen at the end of the last spokescouncil. You don't have to treat it like a conspiracy."

"Process," someone yelled. "Can't we just get on with the discussion so we can get to bed?"

"That's what we're trying to do!"

Everyone was arguing over what to do next. The facilitators conferred hurriedly. Finally Janet pointed to Moonstone, who was waving his hand.

He stood up and looked around the tent. "I just want people to know that one affinity group is already on the base, and another one is going backcountry in about an hour."

The tent erupted again. Moonstone was besieged with questions.

"Do you think you should be announcing that here?"

"Why not?" he said. "The Feds know we're coming. They've been looking for us all week and haven't caught us yet." Scattered applause and laughter rippled through the tent.

"So you're definitely doing federal?"

"Yeah, we can probably make it to some test areas. And if not, we'll at least get a better idea of the base for next time."



The final spokescouncil the night before the action was more like a general meeting, with half the camp crowded into the tent.

Melissa raised her hand. "It's obvious what we need to decide — whether to do a federal action in solidarity with the backcountry people, or do a state action and leave them to deal with the federal government alone." Her prejudicial remarks seemed to rankle the facilitators, but Melissa talked over them. "I propose we do a straw poll and see how many people are willing to do federal charges, either backcountry or at the main gate."

Someone objected. "I need to check back with my affinity group before we do that. Let's take a break and report back to our clusters and AGs." The facilitators wearily consented, and we scattered around the camp hunting people up.

I was pretty sure what Change of Heart would decide. I stopped at the fire to talk to Antonio and a couple of other people while Doc went on down to the tents to look there. Hank trudged up from the distant row of portajohns. A silent mist coated us as I filled people in on the latest developments.

Doc returned from the tents with Karina. We warmed our hands one last time and headed back to the meeting. The place was even more packed than before, and we had to search for a corner of plastic to sit on. The wind sliced through the flaps of the tent, snapping them at their anchor ropes. We huddled together to cut the draft.

During the break, the facilitators had stepped aside. When we reconvened, Abelard proposed that Artemis facilitate. No one objected, and the straw poll began. In no particular order, a spoke for each AG or cluster stood and called out their name and decision while Janet tallied them.

"Spiderwomyn AG, seven federal, main gate."

"Truth and Dare Cluster from Santa Cruz, twelve federal backcountry."

"Soviet Agents affinity group, eight state. We need to get out of jail sooner, but we support the federal action."

"Overthrow Cluster, twelve federal, main gate."

Doc got to his feet to report for our cluster. Our decision had been easy. Once we knew that some people were doing federal, there was no question. The only issue was backcountry versus front gate, and with a majority favoring the gate, the rest agreed. "Change of Heart, fourteen federal, main gate," Doc announced.

Yeah, I thought as the final clusters checked in. Solidarity. Count me in.



People intending to risk arrest at Vandenberg wore these armbands.

Artemis added up the figures. "I get one hundred seventy-two federal, thirty-four state." There was some applause and even a cheer or two. People started standing up. Artemis waved her arms and pointed to the rest of the agenda, but half the people in the tent were saying their goodnights and heading for bed.

"I knew this would happen," Melissa groaned. "We agree to do federal, but there's not going to be anyone here to discuss solidarity tactics." Even as she spoke, more people were trickling out.

"We'll never have a serious discussion now," Antonio said. "People can talk before the arrests, or in jail. We might as well get some sleep."

People consensed with their feet, and after a few more announcements, the meeting fizzled out. We headed toward the camping area. "See you tomorrow around ten," Doc said as we parted. "That should be early enough."

"Good. Ten's a civil hour."

Holly rolled over as I crawled into our tent, making room for me next to her. "Here's your sleeping bag. The floor is dry except right near the door."

I zipped the bag and scooted it up against hers, shivering as we curled together. I was glad we'd made love the night before, because I couldn't imagine getting out of my sleeping bag. "It's colder in here than outside," I said.

She put her arms out and hugged me as I tried to get warm. We lay there a while, listening to the rain on the tent. I wished she were getting arrested with us. I imagined sitting in the road holding her hand. How poetic...

But even if she wasn't doing the action, her presence was calming. I remembered the days before the Livermore blockade, feeling agitated and alone with my decision on whether to get arrested. How different it was this time, being here with Holly.

"What got decided at the meeting?" she finally asked. "Is it federal charges?"

"Yeah, for most people," I told her. "Change of Heart is trespassing at the front gate."

"That's good for you," she said. "You can keep your new shoes dry."

I smiled at my own foresight. Figuring it might never stop raining, I brought along a brand new pair of sneakers to put on just before our arrest. The front-gate action meant I would start my jail time with dry feet.

Holly rolled over so I was behind her and our bodies spooned. "This is our last night together for a while," she said. "Our apartment is going to seem empty. That will be hard after spending every night with you for the past two months." She pulled my arms tight around her. "It feels hollow knowing you and all my friends are getting arrested, and I'm just watching."

"Yeah," I said, feeling thankful that if we had to part, I was the one going to jail. I kissed her hair, then leaned up and kissed her face. She turned so our lips gently met. "I'm so glad to be here with you, Jeff," she whispered. "I love you."

Monday, January 24, 1983

CAROLINE'S AG WAS the first to cross "the line." Vandenberg officials apparently figured that if they discouraged us from trespassing at the gate, we'd just be more likely to go backcountry. So they painted a white line across the entrance road and ordered the soldiers to remain well back of it, giving us plenty of room to commit federal trespass.

The rain had let up, but the pavement was still wet as Caroline's AG strode past the gate and sat down in the road, blocking a couple of incoming cars. A squad of soldiers moved up behind them.

I was standing with Holly, several rows back in the crowd of protesters bunched around the front gate. Holly was slightly in front of me, and I gazed at her as she watched Caroline. We were about to be separated for who knew how long. Ten days? Two weeks? I reached out and took her hand. She squeezed mine in return but kept her eyes on the protest.

Caroline was seated in the middle of her AG, wearing an army-green poncho. It was keeping her pants dry, but even more, it was making life difficult for the two soldiers who were trying to pry her arms out and make her stand up. Caroline's brow was taut, and she refused to acknowledge the presence of her tormentors. Finally, after a few clumsy attempts, one of the soldiers succeeded in getting a wristlock on her. Caroline grimaced and

lurched to her feet. The crowd yelled encouragement to her, but Caroline stared stoically at the ground, ignoring the soldiers as they half-dragged her to a bus.

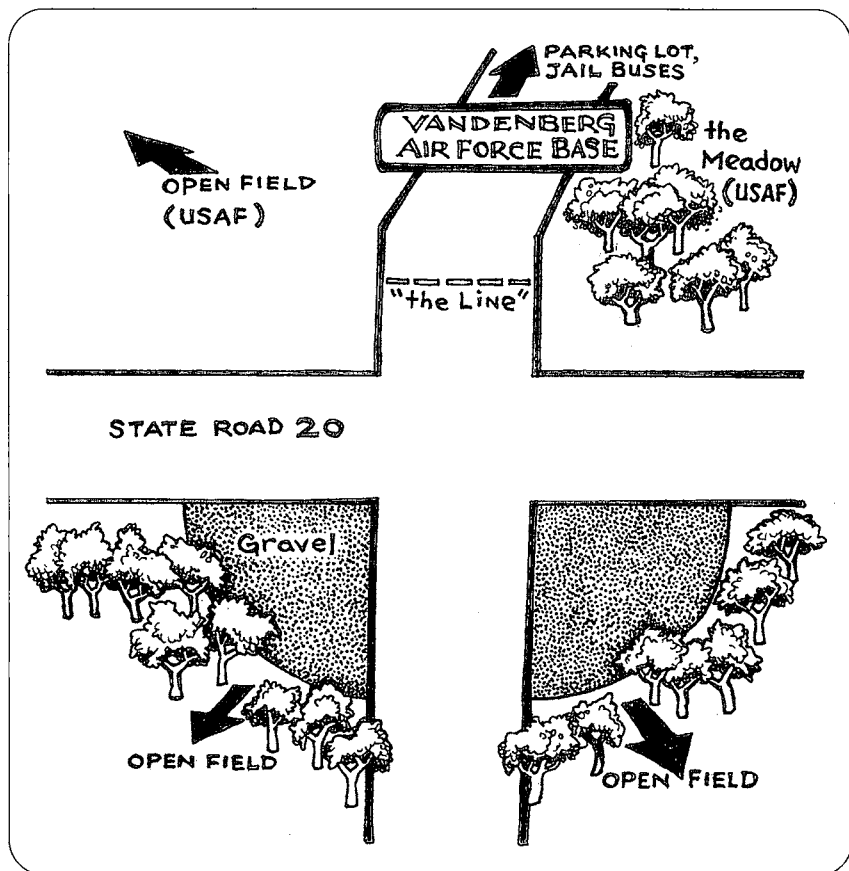
More arrests followed. Forty or fifty people had crossed the lines by the time Change of Heart circled up for a meeting in the gravel turnout across the road. We started talking about when we wanted to go, but Doc changed the topic.

"We can't just walk into their arms," he said. "They've got the buses right there, waiting to haul us away."

Karina jumped in as soon as he finished. "I just walked down the road and found this huge meadow, right past those trees. If we walk down there real casually,



The first protesters of the day were arrested blockading the base entrance.



Main gate at Vandenberg AFB in 1983 — not to scale. The area has been built up since then, with low buildings in the meadow and subdivisions in nearby fields.

then all of the sudden head out into the meadow, it'll catch them completely off-guard."

Karina's remarks set off a passionate debate. "Surprising the soldiers is too dangerous, even in daylight." — "But if we go into the meadow, we're actually occupying the base." — "We should stick with what we already agreed on." — "The whole point of affinity groups is to be flexible." — "The gate is under their control. Occupying the meadow takes back the initiative."

My concern was mostly for keeping my feet dry. Even though it wasn't raining, I was carrying my new tennis shoes around in a plastic bag, aiming to put them on right before we got arrested. Naturally, I favored the gate over the wet meadow. But I wasn't going to admit to that motivation.

Back and forth it went, around the circle. No one gave in, and no comment quite clinched the debate. "Let's do a straw poll," someone finally

said. "How many want to do the gate? Seven. And the meadow? Seven." Laughter and applause vented some of our jitters.

Karina reached in her pocket. "Let's toss a coin." More applause. "Here, Walt, you toss it, you're neutral."

Walt, who was working on the legal collective for the action, placed the nickel carefully on his thumbnail and held his arm out. "Heads for the gate, tails for the meadow." He let it fly. The coin bounced off the gravel and landed in some tall grass. "Tails! The meadow!"

"Wait, he has to catch it," someone said.

"No way," Karina shot back. "Come on, let's go!"

We strolled away from the gate with a casualness that attracted thirty or

forty supporters and several photographers while evading detection by the military. I felt uneasy about our change of plans, but I was relieved to be getting on with the action.

Holly slid her arm around my waist as we fell behind the others. "I'm planning to stay in camp for three more days," she told me.



"Then unless it looks like you'll be released in the next day or so, I'll probably go home, and come back down when you get out."

Up ahead, people were bunching in front of a large "No Trespassing" sign, as if that were our destination. I put my arm around Holly's shoulders and pulled her close. Amid the tumult of feelings, I couldn't think of anything to say that didn't sound trite. "I'm really going to miss you," I finally whispered.

She slowly released me. "I wish I were going in, too," she said sadly. "I knew I'd feel this way."

I knelt to lace up my new shoes. "Even if we got busted together, we'd get separated right away," I said.

"If we were both in jail, I'd feel like we were still together," she said. "It's different if I'm on the outside."

I weighed her comment as I tied the second shoe. Then I stood up and hugged her one last time. "I love you, Holly. I'll write if they let us."

We kissed, then parted. Change of Heart clustered. Only a token strand of wire separated us from a huge green field, lush from the rain. Way off across the field was a row of trees. With the skies trying to clear, my worries over dry

Several AGs moved down the road and entered a meadow, symbolically occupying the Air Force Base. Trespassing on the base raised the charges from state to federal, risking longer sentences.



feet subsided, and I felt an impulse to take off running and see if I could reach the trees.

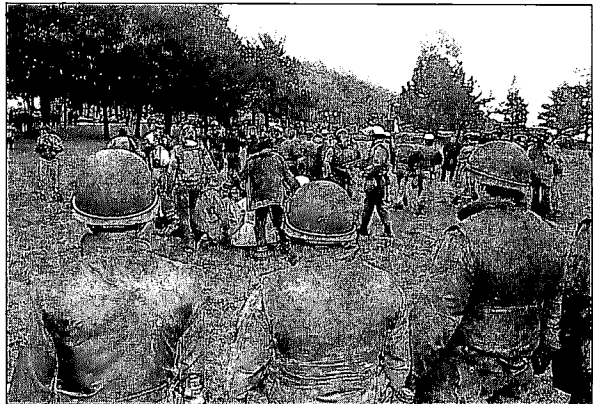
Karina looked around our circle. "Here? Now?" No one objected. She ducked under the wire. Cindy and Doc were close

behind. I glanced back at Holly. "I love you, Jeff," she called as I slipped under the wire.

I grabbed Hank's hand as we formed a ribbon and streamed out into the field. My feet sunk deep into the sod carpet, as if the Earth were welcoming our celebratory incursion. Shouts and laughter reverberated in the crisp air. The field expanded to immense proportions, and I sensed our spirit permeating the entire base.

In the distance I spied three soldiers flying down to intercept us. As they zeroed in, we swung the line around to form a circle. We thrust our clenched hands into the air in a victory salute. We were occupying Vandenberg!

The three soldiers hastily conferred, then fanned out and "surrounded" us. Someone started singing "We Shall Not Be Moved." We took it up at the top of our voices, drowning out the



Soldiers surrounded and arrested clusters in the meadow.



The military seemed ill-prepared for the mobile, decentralized affinity group action that developed.

“Overthrow! Overthrow!” When two of our soldiers ran over to corral them, Change of Heart took off again. Arms linked, we chorus-lined another fifty feet onto the base before the final soldier grabbed Karina’s arm. We stopped and circled up.

Reinforcements rushed down, mostly young battle-helmeted privates



Pain-compliance holds and pressure were used on some non-cooperators...

attempts of the soldiers to communicate with each other.

Overhead, patches of crystal blue shone through the clouds. Two other groups followed us into the field. Overthrow Cluster got within fifty feet of us before several more soldiers raced down and headed them off. Most of their cluster circled up, but Tai got up on Lyle’s shoulders and the two of them came galloping toward us yelling,

ordered around by a few officers in black berets. The arrests began almost immediately. We sang “This Land Is Your Land” as two soldiers gingerly took Doc’s elbows and led him back across the field toward the gate area. Daniel and Cindy soon followed. Nearby, the first couple of people from Overthrow Cluster received a similar escort.

But when two soldiers came for Lyle, who was seated near us, he didn’t budge. The soldiers took hold of his arms and tried to twist them behind his back. Lyle stared intently ahead. One of the soldiers removed his gloves, reached in his pocket, and pulled out a short wooden dowel. He took a long breath, then bent over and jammed the dowel into the soft spots behind Lyle’s ears.

Lyle stared straight ahead, his jaw firmly set. As one soldier twisted his arm and the other jabbed with the dowel, I wavered unsteadily. I gripped Karina's hand for support. A private fastened onto my elbow. I didn't resist, and he led me away from our circle. As we passed Lyle, who had risen to his feet but refused to walk, the private started twisting my arm. My elbow twinged in pain, and I looked around at him. "Hey, I'm not going anywhere," I said. He eased up, but wouldn't look at me.

Emboldened, I leaned forward, trying to catch his eye. "How does it feel to arrest American citizens? Is this why you enlisted?" He yanked my arm forward, but it seemed to get under his skin. And sure enough, a moment later, when I proposed veering out of our way to avoid a marshy area, he silently acquiesced, as if to show that he had a heart.

He led me up an embankment to the gate area where the buses were parked. After a quick pat-down he handcuffed me with white plastic bands. Then another soldier carefully wrote the number "R-56" on my hand.

Most of Change of Heart and Overthrow wound up on the same bus. People were yelling to each other, leaning out the windows to razz the soldiers, and laughing up a storm. We had survived a confrontation with the U.S. military, even out-maneuvered them for a few minutes! The nail clippers came out, the plastic bands were cut off.

I held my wrists out as Cindy snipped my cuffs. I stuck them in my back pocket — maybe I'd get to keep them as a souvenir.

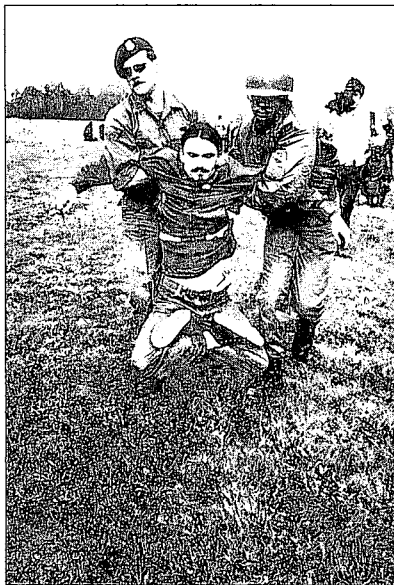
Once free, people bounced around the seats. Secret stashes of fruit and nuts and even a few candy bars were passed around as the last protesters came aboard.

The driver closed the doors. The two guards at the front ordered everyone to sit down, and the bus pulled out and headed into Vandenberg. "They're keeping us on the base," I said, settling into a seat next to Hank.

He shook his head. "Naw, they're probably just taking a back road."

"Remember what you see for the occupation next time," Karina announced. "This is our chance to scout it out."

We rolled down a two-lane road, passing an occasional nondescript



... while others were carried out of the meadow by military police.

building. Without discussing it, a number of people began industriously rubbing the numbers off their hands. Hank went a step further. After smearing out his number, he borrowed a pen from me and inked a fresh one over it. I leaned toward him, trying to make it out. He held it up and read it aloud. “4Q-U812.”

He started laughing, read it again, and laughed even more. “4Q-U812 — I always wanted to use that!”

I laughed, even though I wasn’t sure it was such a great idea to mess with the system that way. But I didn’t want to be the only one still numbered. I rubbed out most of my R-56.

The bus pulled up in front of what looked like a junior college classroom complex. I turned to Hank. “We’re still on the base, I told you!”

An officer with an unnecessary bullhorn leaned into the bus and barked: “Everyone out! Single file!” Out the windows we could see a pack of guard dogs straining at their leashes, snarling at the first people stepping off the bus.

They herded thirty of us, men and women together, into the first building and through a doorway so low you had to stoop. We found ourselves in a twenty-foot square room with a high ceiling, painted entirely white except for a couple of horizontal black lines running around the walls.

“What’s this,” I said to Hank, “The brainwashing chamber?”

“No, it’s a squashball court. See, up there’s the cage for spectators.”

“Or to spy on us!” I said.

“It’s pretty convenient for them,” Doc said as he joined us. “They can watch us without having to be in the room. They don’t want the soldiers around us. They’re afraid we’ll corrupt them.”

A woman I didn’t recognize suggested that we make basic solidarity agreements not to move unless we all moved together. “There’s thirty of us in this room — we have to stick together,” she said as people gathered around.

“They’ll want to separate men and women,” said a woman named Aurora from Spirit affinity group. “That’s usual.”

Doc raised his hand even though no one was facilitating. “Just because it’s ‘usual’ doesn’t mean we have to agree to it.”

“I can’t support invoking solidarity over that issue,” said Aurora. Most people seemed to side with her, and Doc let it go.

After fifteen or twenty minutes, we consensed to “no fines, no probation, and equal sentences,” chose a couple of spokes for when the soldiers returned, and the meeting dissolved. People milled around, as if unsure whether to bother getting comfortable. We could be here for five minutes or five hours. I figured the Feds were in no hurry to deal with us, and sat down to unlace my new shoes. The moment of truth: the canvas was wet, but inside, my socks were dry. Success.

Some people took seats against the white walls, sitting quietly or talking in twos and threes. Others paced the floor. Karina, not content to pace,

danced around the room, using people's bodies as props and balance beams.

I took a seat in the corner by Doc, who rubbed at the back of his hand. He held it up to the light, rotating it to see if the number showed from different angles. I looked down at my faded R-56, still hesitant to efface it completely.

I wished there were a clock in the room. When's recess? Was this chamber my home for an hour or a month? Didn't they have to let us go outside? Or at least tell us what was going on?

I wasn't feeling especially social, but it was my first chance to talk with Doc in a while, and I was curious about his motives for getting busted. "I'm glad you're here," I said. "But this turned into such a LAG action. I thought you would be more interested in March."

He looked at me thoughtfully. "I am. I'd prefer an action organized by affinity groups. But this first action is critical. It'll set the tone for March and beyond."

I pursed my lips and leaned my head back against the wall. "Do you really think VAC can get the March action together without LAG?"

He stopped working on his hand and looked at me. "It's not a question of VAC getting it together. It's going to be organized by AGs. And a lot of this action was, too — look at the kitchen, the medical team, the whole encampment. Those are done by affinity groups."

I crossed my arms and nodded. "But LAG wound up coordinating all the publicity, getting the rally together, and paying for posters and mailings. Plus, the media collective is all LAG people."

"That doesn't mean AGs can't do it," he said. "The problem is, as long as the LAG office is involved, people will assume things are getting taken care of. If there isn't a central organization, it would be clear that AGs have to take it on."

A chafing crept into my voice. "That's too idealistic. If the organizing gets decentralized, who's going to see the big picture? Who is going to make sure that pieces don't fall through the cracks?"

"That's what the spokescouncil is for."

"But every meeting it's different people. The spokescouncil is as transient as a lot of affinity groups. Someone has to provide continuity and maintain an overview."



Arrestees were numbered and re-numbered.

Doc knit his brow. "What you're describing is a traditional, centralized power model. Maybe it's efficient in the short-term, but it reproduces the social dynamics we're trying to change."

A large paperwad being used as a soccer ball bounced off his leg, chased by two guys kicking at it. As they brushed past, I pulled my legs in, then put them out to reclaim my space.

"People on the office staff or Coordinating Council aren't trying to control the action," I said. "They see their jobs as facilitating the organizing. They're committed to not being leaders."

"It's not that simple. It takes more than good intentions to avoid hierarchy. It's inevitable that an organizational staff will be seen as leaders, and start to act the part."

I thought about Holly. My discomfort must have shown, because Doc quickly added, "This isn't an attack on the staffers as people. It's a critique of the centralized structure."

"So we should disband LAG?"

Doc's brow relaxed, but he continued to look intently at me. "If LAG exists as a network to do actions at Livermore, it has a function. But building an organization shouldn't be our goal. Suppose we succeed, and LAG becomes the acknowledged hub of radical organizing. The government would just know what to sabotage." He paused for a breath. "There's an alternative. A decentralized affinity group network can forge a community of resistance they'll never destroy."

How do you argue with a poetic vision? For me, it all came back to the question of overview. If you're asking people to take risks, you need to know that the support work is being done.

Before I could say anything, though, the door opened and a soldier stepped in. All talk stopped as he counted us, pointing to each person in turn. The two spokes approached him, but he ignored them. Without a word, he backed out of the room and locked the door.

"Maybe they're going to bring us lunch," someone said.

"Or jail clothes," said Karina. "I wonder if we'll get a New Testament like at Livermore?"

Suspecting that something was about to happen put a damper on conversation. Doc went over to talk with Rick from his AG. I sat by myself, feeling restless for some change, any change, just to be on with it.

The little door opened again. Two soldiers ducked in, followed by an officer. "Line up by your numbers," the officer ordered. "You're going next door to be booked."

I looked around to see what others would do. There was some shuffling around, but no one lined up.

"We're not moving unless we all move together," Karina called out.

"We want to see a lawyer," someone demanded.

"Yeah," Hank seconded. "And when's lunch?"

The officer gruffly assured us that we would all end up back together. "You won't be separated. We just need to process you. Now line up by your numbers."

This time his command set off a ripple of half-suppressed laughter, which seemed to perplex the officer until someone explained the situation to him. He cocked his head and growled at one of his aides, who ducked out of the room. "Alright then," he ordered. "Everyone line up along this wall." As he spoke, the aide ducked back in with six more soldiers and a magic marker.

The officer glared at us. "Line up!"

We slowly made our way to the wall. One of the soldiers came down the row and renumbered us. When he got to me, he labeled me A-17. Then he scratched out the rest of my old number, as if reprimanding me for my caution.

Someone called out a proposal that we go ahead with the booking, with everyone making sure that they could see the person ahead and behind at all times. If anything went wrong, we would all sit down and refuse to move. We agreed, and the line was ushered out of the squash court.

The booking was held across the hall in a gymnasium barely bigger than a basketball court. Moveable partitions divided it into a maze of cubicles. As we wended our way through the booking process, protesters bantered with the military police checking our IDs and taking our fingerprints. The guy ahead of me made a hard-boiled-gangster face for his mug shot. I tried to follow suit, but wound up laughing instead.

The only downer was that they took away everything in my pockets, including my pen and paper. So much for keeping a prison journal. I should have put it inside my shoes, the one place they didn't check.

As each person finished the booking, they were steered to the other side of the room and put into a small cage — to save sideline space in the small gym, the team benches were right at courtside, enclosed behind wire mesh.

I joined Cindy, Hank, and about fifteen other people in the cage, followed soon after by Doc and Karina. Karina seemed unusually subdued. She gave me a faint smile as I caught her eye. I wished she'd sit down next to me, but she went and sat with a couple of people from her AG. I looked around the cage, not feeling like talking to anyone. I wished I had a book. I should have smuggled in some pages of a novel in my shoes. Or maybe Trotsky's autobiography. That would make good prison fare.

Daniel was put into our cage. But before the next person could be brought over, the calm of the gym was broken by the sound of stomping boots. A squad of men in khaki fatigues came marching across the floor, and the racket echoed off the concrete walls. We stared through the wire mesh as the squad came to a halt in front of our cage. "Hright, Hace!" The column snapped around to face us — the U.S. Marshals.

Someone called out in a shaky voice: "I don't think we should move unless we all move together." People nodded, but no one took their eyes off the Marshals.

The commander pulled open our cage door. I pressed my back against the wall.

"Cindy Davenport!" he bellowed.

Cindy didn't answer. We stared back at the commander, motionless.

"Move it! Davenport!" No one budged. Cindy was hunched behind two people in the center of the cell. Her head was down, her hair hanging across her face.

The commander glared at us, then stepped out to confer with two of his men. The three of them came back into the cage studying a small piece of paper — Cindy's polaroid photograph.

"That's her, over there!" The three Marshals charged at her, knocking other people aside. They grabbed Cindy by the arms and dragged her out the cell door. Then, as she staggered to her feet, they flung her headlong into a partition. She hit it with a thud and dropped to the floor.

I froze in my seat as the cage door slammed. But Karina leapt up against the wire mesh. "Shame! Shame!" she screamed. Her rage sparked the whole cell. In an instant, everyone was up and shouting, "Shame! Shame!"

The Marshals gawked at us. The commander hollered at his men. "Get her out of here!" Still shaking, Cindy was hauled away. "Shame! Shame!" The shouts rocked the gym. An Air Force officer ran up and talked heatedly with the commander of the Marshals, who kept making sweeping gestures with his arms. "Shame! Shame! Shame!"

Suddenly the Marshals snapped to attention. "Hright, Hace!" The column bristled as the commander strode to the front of the line. And with a step so quick it made us jump, they marched straight out of the gym.

We gaped after them. Were they really gone? Had we shamed them into leaving? Before we could get our bearings, a short man in an impeccable suit stepped up to the cage. "Legal Counsel," people started yelling. "We want to see a lawyer!"

He waved for quiet, a tight gesture that belied his cool exterior. "I'm the assistant federal prosecutor for this district. You'll see your lawyers."

"Where did you take Cindy?" people demanded. "We're not moving till we see our lawyers!"

The prosecutor set down his briefcase and pleaded in a terse, polished manner. Gradually, by various arguments and reassurances about us all ending up together, and getting to see our lawyers, and not having to deal with the Marshals, he persuaded us that it was in our best interest to move back to the squashball court.

A gauntlet of soldiers with riot clubs and helmets lined our path as we were led out the back of the gym. I tried to make eye contact, but they stared

blankly away. Behind me, Hank jived at them: "Protecting national security, huh? Feel good about working in a prison camp?"

En route we were given our first chance to use a toilet, a relief I hadn't been anticipating. It surprised me that I hadn't noticed how much I needed to go.

We were steered to a small wood-floored exercise room. It wasn't the squash court we'd been promised, but no one seemed inclined to fight over it. We ducked through the low doorway.

"What's with all these four-foot doors?" I asked Karina.

"Teaches you to stoop," she said.

People sat down in a rough circle and started to discuss what to do about Cindy's being taken away. We hadn't even gotten as far as choosing a facilitator when several soldiers ducked through the doorway. They stopped just behind Hank. Their heads jerked as they sized us up. Suddenly they grabbed Hank by the arms and dragged him out of the room.

I groped to my feet along with a few others, but the door had already slammed. I sagged. How did we fall for that? Of all the amateur...

Hank. What was happening to him? Why had they grabbed him? Was it coincidence, or retaliation for his taunting the guards?

We reformed our circle as a horseshoe so no one had their back to the door. I took a seat on the far side of the room. If the soldiers returned, I wanted a chance to see what other people did before they grabbed me.

Karina, seated near the front, was the first to speak. "Don't let them drag us away. Next time the door opens, let's all get in the corner and link arms. At least make them work for it!"

Next to her, a big guy named Kurt shook his head slowly. "Why fight when we know we can't win? They can move us if they want to."

Aurora from Spirit affinity group nodded. "I don't feel good about fighting them, either. They're not my enemies. Non-cooperating only escalates the confrontation." When she finished, she looked around. "We need a facilitator."

"No," someone said, "A facilitator will get singled out as a leader. Each person call on the next one. It's safer."

Aurora called on Doc. His voice cracked as he spoke. "We've got to make some basic solidarity agreements," he said hurriedly. "There's no guarantee that we'll end up back together if we leave here separately. This is the federal government. They can ship us all over the place if they want to." Several hands went up as he paused, but he waved them off. "Wherever we are, we should all keep demanding a mass arraignment, so we can meet before we go to court. If you get isolated, don't go to arraignment till you've seen one of our lawyers."

A woman across the circle kept her hand up insistently, and Doc finally called on her. "The question is," she said urgently, "What are we going to do when they come back? Are we —"

"Process, process," I called out anxiously. I knew it sounded formalistic, but the scattered energy was hard for me to handle, and I really wanted us to stay focused and make some agreements. "Doc made a solidarity proposal. We should stick to that."

Karina groaned. "We're never going to reach consensus on this."

The woman across the circle spoke again. "We shouldn't be wasting time trying to reach consensus. We should break into small groups based on what we want to do, so people who want to resist can plan it."

But the idea of splitting the group got a cold reception. Daniel spoke next, in his deep, measured tones. "We have to stay together. But that doesn't mean we all have to do the same thing. Solidarity means respect and support for each person, not identical responses."

More hands flew up, but at that moment, the door swung open. "Kurt McCormick," a soldier called out. "Come with us."

Kurt looked sheepishly around, then stood up. The soldiers latched onto his arms, led him out, and relocked the door.

Karina threw her arms up in exasperation. "This is so disempowering!"

"Process," someone yelled over the rest of us. "Let's do a go-round and see what people plan to do when their name is called. It'll give us an idea where we are."

It sounded good to me. I leaned against the wall opposite the door, next to Daniel and Doc. Probably they would both non-cooperate. I pictured twisted wrists and sprained elbows. Was it worth fighting, just on principle? But if the rest of my cluster resisted, how could I *not* do it? Hopefully they wouldn't call my name right away, so I could see what the others did.

The go-round hadn't even started when the door opened. "Aurora Elkhart?"

Aurora rose from the floor, but as the soldiers approached her she knelt down. "I would like a moment to pray." The soldiers stopped and put their hands on their hips, waiting like patient executioners. At last they beckoned to her. She nodded, crossed herself, and slowly got to her feet. Taking her lightly by the elbows, the soldiers ushered her from the room.

Her response lowered the tension, but it quickly rose as people spoke. Daniel's plan made the most sense to me. "I'm going to tell them, 'I can't cooperate with you because of the way you have treated people before me.' Even if they drag me away, it's important that the soldiers understand the consequences of what they do to us."

When the guards returned, it was Doc they called for, and he adopted Daniel's tactic. "Because of the way you yanked Cindy and Hank from the room, I cannot cooperate with you." The soldiers looked at each other, then bent over, took hold of his upper arms, and dragged him out.

I can do that, I thought. I have to. Daniel was right. Somewhere we have to draw the line.

Besides, they're dragging people, not using pain holds. Of course, who knows what happens once they get you out of the room? They might have more persuasive techniques at their disposal.

A few minutes later, Daniel was dragged out. I could be next. I was ready. It felt powerful to declare solidarity with those before me, to join in a common response.

But it was discouraging that there was nothing we could consense on as a group that was more effective than each of us acting individually. It didn't bode well for the coming days.

The door opened. Was it my turn? Two soldiers stepped in and flanked the door. Instead of calling a name, though, they stood at awkward attention, staring at the back wall and pretending not to notice that we were in the room. A minute passed. An unhelmeted head ducked in — Walt!

He surveyed our grim circle and burst out laughing. "Haven't they told you what's happening?" We shook our heads. "They've charged thirty people who trespassed at the gate with misdemeanors," he told us, "and given them three-day sentences. They've already pled 'no contest,' and they aren't asking for further solidarity. All of you here are getting tossed off the base with ban-and-bar notices. You'll be back at camp in an hour."

My initial response was stunned silence. I wanted to believe it was true, but I couldn't quite summon the faith. After all of our preparation, after all we had just been through, we were getting out? I looked around at the others. Everyone seemed dazed. Was it a trick? Or was it really a victory?

Finally Karina clambered to her feet and let loose a whoop. "Yeah! I knew they couldn't handle us! We're free!"

A few others joined her celebration, but the rest of us were still recovering from the shock. Karina caught my eye. I wanted to jump up and hug her, but my body didn't respond. I smiled and shook my head, as if to say, "Unreal, isn't it?"

Walt stuck around to answer a few more questions. Someone asked about Cindy and Hank. "They're both already free," Walt told us. "They dragged them right out to the bus. That's where you're heading, too."

To the bus. Back to camp. And then home. We could be on the road in a few hours. I could hardly believe it. After all our build-up, we got off with a slap on the wrist? Well, why not? Maybe we'd earned it by our willingness to travel halfway across California in the middle of Winter to protest a missile that the Pentagon couldn't even get it together to test.

But it was hard to feel too glib. Our half-baked jail solidarity hadn't exactly forced their hand. It felt more like we'd escaped than that we'd actually won anything.

Still, we had occupied Vandenberg Air Force Base. And for whatever reason, the government had backed away from a confrontation. Score round one for us.

so they can come down heavy on the second-timers at the March action."

"Sounds logical to me," I said. "They wanted to show us that they could be tough, play the divide-and-conquer game, then get rid of us and see if we come back." I plucked some dead leaves off the vine that wandered around the Michelangelo collage. "Maybe that was the point with the Marshals, too. They wanted us to see what we were dealing with."

"That makes me want to do the March action," Holly said.

I was a little bugged that she had skipped the LAG action, and now was thinking of doing the VAC one. "Tomorrow at Concord is enough for me to worry about," I said.

"Yeah. I have the whole weekend free if I can get these International Day letters done tonight. I could stay in jail for a couple of days at least. Maybe I'll cite out Monday so I can go to Coordinating Council." She paused. "Then again, maybe I won't. I could use the break."

I opened a beer and a bag of corn chips and sat down beside her. "What are you mailing, the International Day Call?"

"Yeah, the Call. But mainly it's a mailing to raise money for the European networking trip Les and Aurora are starting in February."

"It's really going to happen?"

"They already bought the tickets. But we still need money for their expenses. They'll be gone over two months, all over Western Europe. Les speaks German, and Aurora knows Spanish and Italian, so they can cover a lot of the continent."

"France gets left out?"

"The main response to our first international mailing has been from England, Germany, and Italy. So it makes sense to focus there."

"Do you think there's still time for groups to plan an action for June?"

"Well, even if they can't do much this year, we can get them involved for next year," she said.

I picked up some of the letters and started folding them. "So Mort and Claudia finally approved sending the Call out?"

"Oh, they still can't stand the poetic part at the beginning," she said impatiently. "But we had to quit arguing and get something to the printer. International Day is only five months away."

I glanced at her. She was intent on the envelope she was addressing. I scooted my chair back and stood up from the table. Stepping over behind her, I started massaging her shoulders.

She stopped writing, although her pen remained poised. Her eyes were closed. I worked my thumbs under the uppermost muscle and felt her wince. "Too much?" I asked.

"No," she said. "Would you do my neck?"

I kneaded my fingers up and down her neck, then worked on the lower part with my thumbs. "I could do this better if you were lying down," I said.

She smiled. "If the offer extends till later, that would be great. But I have to get this mailing finished tonight, and make a list of tasks for next week. I don't want to come back from jail and try to remember all these details."

I sat down and finished folding the letters. Holly hand-addressed each envelope in her plain, open script. When we finished, she went into the kitchen and made a cup of tea, got out her day planner, and settled in on the living room cushions. I put on a reggae tape and sat down next to her. I took a hit off my pipe, opened a book on Renaissance architecture, and let my eyes range over the classical forms while my mind wandered forward to the Concord action.

Saturday, January 29, 1983

Jenny and Angie buzzed our door at ten the next morning. I was still groggy as Jenny gave me a quick hug. "Hey — how's it going?" she said. She exuded a charge that extended to the tips of her curly brown hair. Jenny was twenty-three, short and wiry, with freckled skin and bright, expectant eyes. I'd met her a few times at the office, where she was helping Caroline with bookkeeping and Claudia with the mailing list.

She jangled her keys. "Ready to go?"

"Just about," said Holly. "I want to fill a jug of water."

Angie stepped from behind Jenny. In height and age the two were matched, but that was the extent of the resemblance. Angie was quiet, pensive. Her auburn hair, which had been in a loose ponytail the other time we'd met, was woven in several braids. Our hug was casual, but she held on for a moment longer than I expected.

Holly handed me the water and picked up a bag of International Day flyers. "We should take some copies of Direct Action out there too, don't you think?"

I pointed to the stack near the door. "I got a bundle."

Jenny's live-in boyfriend had come along as chauffeur, but he didn't seem very excited about the protest, and drove in silence. Jenny sat next to him, but she turned around in her seat to face Angie, Holly, and me in the back.

"I noticed you have Massachusetts plates," I said to her. "Did you just move here?"

"Well, in September," she said with a guilty look. "We just haven't gotten new plates yet."

"That's only four months," Holly said.

Jenny seemed to review a mental calendar. "It seems like a long time ago. When we came out here, we weren't even sure we were going to stay. But the first week I was here, I heard about LAG, and then visited the Berkeley Women's Health Collective. I knew this was where I wanted to live."

"I know that feeling," I said. "For me it was the first time I saw Telegraph Avenue."

"That's what did it for me, too," Angie said. She worked a braid loose and plaited it again as she spoke. "That and the murals. After I got out of college last Summer, I decided to hitchhike from Boston to the west coast. I wanted to see San Francisco, then go on up to Portland and Seattle and maybe Vancouver. But I never made it past Berkeley."

"There's worse places to get stuck," I said. "So you two met here? I thought maybe you went to school together."

"No," Jenny said. "Angie and I met in the LAG office, then took our nonviolence prep together. Most of us at the prep formed Red Menace AG, and Alby wanted us to join Change of Heart because he's friends with Karina. So here we are."

"Are you staying in jail?" Holly asked.

"Oh, definitely," Jenny said, although she was shaking her head. "That's the main point, to go to jail for what you believe in. If you cite out, it's like you don't really mean it, it's just a gesture."

Holly looked over at me. "Some people have to cite out, to get back to things like work or kids. Even if they cite out, the media still reports it as arrests — it builds our actions."

"Right, right," Jenny said hurriedly. "I was just speaking for myself."

Angie looked down at her hands. "I'll stay at least one night," she said. "But after that I don't know. I'll have to see if I can handle jail." I nodded, but she didn't look up.

We cruised over the Berkeley Hills and out into the valley toward Concord, a suburb forty-five minutes northeast. The demonstration was at Concord Naval Weapons Station, located in a semi-rural area outside the town. Concord was the major weapons depot in the Bay Area, and had been a shipping point for munitions to Vietnam and more recently to Central America.

PROTEST U.S. ARMS SHIPMENTS FROM PORT CHICAGO TO EL SALVADOR



RALLY: Clyde Park 1:00
BLOCKADE &
SUPPORT PICKET 2:00
at main gate,
Concord Naval
Weapons Station

SATURDAY
JAN. 29
CONCORD NAVAL
WEAPONS STATION

CAR CARAVAN:

From San Francisco: leaves 9:30 A.M.

Garfield Park, Harrison and 25th Street

for information call C.I.S.P.E.S. at 861-0425

Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador
(CISPES)

LAG joined the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) in calling an action at Concord Naval Weapons Station, which shipped arms to right-wing forces in Central America.

The main organization behind the day's protest was CISPES, the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador. Central American politics were pretty convoluted, and I was groping to make sense. In El Salvador, the CIA was supporting a right-wing government and its military death squads against a large, popularly-based guerrilla movement. CISPES's role was to build opposition to U.S. policy.

CISPES also did a lot of organizing around neighboring Nicaragua, where a 1979 revolution by the Sandinistas had toppled a longtime dictator. Then-President Carter cautiously supported the revolution. But since Reagan took office in 1981, the CIA had not-so-covertly funneled millions of dollars to right-wing "Contra" rebels trying to destabilize the Sandinistas and reinstall a pro-corporate regime.

It was hard to keep it straight. But weapons from Concord were going to both countries, which simplified the matter for us.

We left the car up the road and walked to Clyde Park, which wasn't a park at all, but a muddy lot the size of a football field. Clumps of straw stuck up out of the lumpy ground on either side of a gravel road. It was hardly an uplifting sight, but its location right next to the main gate made it the logical staging area for the demonstration.

And it was truly a demonstration, not a LAG-style action. CISPES's leadership consisted of more traditional leftist-socialist types. The bullhorns were out in force, the planning committee was conducting scenario briefings, and those of us who planned to get arrested were being assembled into "waves" which would blockade the gate in orderly succession.

In some ways I liked it. Short as my Vandenberg jail time had been, it was sufficiently draining that I didn't mind someone else orchestrating this one.

As I came out from under the briefing canopy, I heard Karina accost Mort, who with a few other Overthrow people had worked on the demo as unofficial LAG reps.

Karina was wearing a dark green poncho with a visor on the hood. "What about affinity group autonomy?" she demanded.

"This action isn't organized by affinity groups," Mort answered.

"Isn't that up to us to decide?" Karina countered. "A bunch of self-proclaimed leaders have worked out all the details ahead of time, and we're supposed to be good soldiers and carry out their orders? That's the whole mentality we're protesting, isn't it?"

Mort threw his hands up in exasperation. "We've been working for months to get CISPES to organize an action with us. They don't want any 'autonomous affinity groups' running wild and upsetting things."

Before Karina could answer, Hank loped up in leather paratrooper boots. "Hey, I thought maybe I was the only one here from Change of Heart."

"No," I said, "Holly's here, and Angie and Jenny from Red Menace, and a couple of other people."

"Maybe you should join Overthrow and do the same wave as us," Mort proposed. "We have about eighteen people here."

"Wow," I said, "That's a lot."

"This is our focus," he said, "building a local coalition."

We rounded up the rest of our cluster and joined the circle of Overthrow people huddling on the gravel road. I recognized a half-dozen, including Lyle, Craig, and Tai. Lyle proposed that we sign up for the last wave. "Since we're planning to stay in jail till arraignment, we should let other people who are citing out get arrested first, so they can get processed sooner. Does everyone here plan to stay in till Monday?"

Everyone nodded. I still hadn't made up my mind, but if all the other LAGers were staying in, it would feel weird to leave.

We consensed to being in the final wave. Lyle shrugged. "Since the steering committee is planning the action, there's really nothing else for us to decide. The march down to the gate should begin pretty soon."

We started to break up, but Craig called us back. "People are lining up over there right now. Let's march over there as a cluster."

The crowd looked to be around a thousand people, including a large contingent of church people led by local clergy, a lot of Central and South Americans, various leftist groups, and a healthy sprinkling of LAGers. I saw Nathaniel talking with Pilgrim, and near them Monique and the Walnettos from nearby Walnut Creek. Off to the side, Melissa and several other people from Spirit AG were part of a prayer circle.

Facing this crowd, Overthrow unfurled its brand new fifteen-foot banner, white letters on black silk: "Stop Corporate War, From Livermore to El Salvador." Twenty of us fell in behind the banner and started down the gravel road to join the main group, loudly chanting "Over-throw! Over-throw!"

Our little procession was greeted with enthusiastic applause from the rest of the crowd. The initial effect was indeed a fine blend of stridency and high spirits. Unfortunately, none of the Overthrow lefties stepped forward to lead our march toward the main gathering. Still chanting "Over-throw," we paraded past the crowd and on down the gravel lane, finally coming to a halt facing the portajohns. "Turn around," Craig yelled, "We can march back up!"



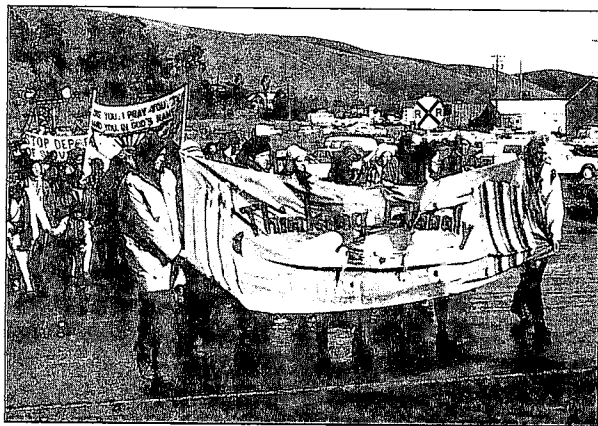
"Stop corporate war from Livermore to El Salvador," read Overthrow Cluster's banner for the action.

"Let's just walk," Karina answered. Her proposal won general approval, and we merged into the main crowd.

In traditional demonstration form, the masses assembled in a column five to ten people wide. Most groups had their own banners, and the more militant had also brought bullhorns to enforce their chants. LAGers drifted toward the back of the line, marching behind a big International Day banner reading, "Thinking Globally — Acting Locally," and talking in small groups as the procession wound out of the park.

We strung like a ribbon along the right shoulder of the country road. The morning rain had passed on to the east, but clouds of clashing gray and white still towered from the horizon. The short march ended across the road from the weapons depot gate. The entrance was a two-lane drive flanked on the left by a single railroad line and on the right by a neat little suburban lawn with a few spindly trees. Beyond the lawn, a chain-link fence and guardhouse ordinarily controlled access. But for the protest, a hundred young Marines in combat fatigues were arrayed behind the fence. In front of the fence stood several dozen California Highway Patrol officers, who I assumed would make the arrests.

Although the base was open on Saturdays, no vehicles were entering the



"Think globally, act locally" — a favorite slogan of the 1980s.

gate. This elicited some murmuring about the point of a blockade when there was nothing to block, but the organizers were undaunted. We did a few chants, and then the first wave of fifty protesters strode across the road and sat down in the entrance.

Despite the absence of traffic, the police quickly moved in and busted the blockaders. The second wave of fifty was swept away just as quickly. At that pace, it might not have been necessary to repeat any chants before the arrests ended. But for reasons no one could fathom, the third wave was left sitting as the police abruptly marched off and the Marines moved out onto the lawn.

Speculation had a field day as the third wave squirmed on the damp pavement. Maybe the authorities were nervous about how many more people planned to get busted. Maybe the jail only had room for the first hundred.



Dancing at the gates of the weapons depot.

Maybe the police were taking a coffee break.

Melissa brought up the possibility of going down the road and climbing over a fence. "Then they'd have to deal with us," she said. The idea got some support. But just then, the state police re-emerged. The Marines stepped back, and the cops marched

out into the road and arrested the third wave. It was our turn.

Without a chant, or even much organization, Overthrow, Spirit, and other miscellaneous LAGers filtered across the two-lane road and formed a long blockade line. Some people in the crowd started chanting the Overthrow banner slogan: "Stop Corporate War, From Livermore to El Salvador!" But it faded as the police once again marched off and the Marines moved up. Did they hope we'd get bored and go home? Were they getting paid overtime and stretching it all they could? We muttered among ourselves. Someone started a Holly Near song, but no one quite knew the words. Confused, we linked arms. Nervous laughter rippled up and down the line, and when someone kicked their legs in a can-can, the whole wave erupted in a chorus line, to the applause of our audience across the road.

No telling what theatrical heights we might have scaled had the police not returned as suddenly as they had left. We sat down. The cops scraped their boots on the concrete behind us as they waited for orders. Finally a bullhorn made the official pronouncement that we were blocking U.S. government property, and would be liable to arrest if we did not immediately disperse.

No one budged, and the arrests began. Non-cooperators got dragged. The rest of us stood and walked away with our arresting officer. Twenty feet behind the lines, we were patted down for weapons, plastic handcuffs were pulled tight, and we were herded onto a bus — a real prison bus this time, with the windows barred and rings under each seat for shackles. I took a seat across from the door, just behind Holly and Karina. A few more people were loaded on. Then the door slammed shut, and we headed toward the highway for the county jail in Martinez.

Inside a minute, Karina had snipped her cuffs off and was turned around in her seat. "They just built this jail a couple of years ago. We're practically the first protesters to try it out!"

"Yeah, it's one of the new high-tech jails," Hank said from across the aisle.

"I heard it's all done by remote control, with video cameras everywhere. It's like Big Brother."

Karina's clippers cut through the plastic bands around my wrists. "This'll be my first time in a real jail," I said.

"We're starting with the best," she said. "I hope so, anyway. What a drag if they put us in a gym again."

Pilgrim, who was getting arrested for the thirty-fifth time in his illustrious career, hollered for attention. "We need to talk about solidarity before we get off the bus. I propose that we demand mass arraignment, refuse fines and probation, and insist on knowing the sentence before we'll plead."

Melissa, who was one of six people stuck in a little "high-security" chamber at the front of the bus, separated from the rest of us by a mesh grill, interrupted him. "You shouldn't make proposals if you're facilitating."

"It's okay with me if someone else facilitates," Pilgrim answered. "Let's just get on with it! Why don't you do it?"

"I can't from in here. Karina, you do it."

Karina squatted in her seat so she was a head taller than the rest of us. "Okay! Pilgrim has made a proposal. Any clarifying questions?" We turned in our seats to form a rough oval and pulled together a by-the-book meeting. We were on the verge of reaching consensus on "no fines, no probation, mass arraignment, equal sentences" when the bus pulled into the jail garage. The door was wrenched open, and a voice with no need of a bullhorn cried: "Out of the bus, single file!"

"We're having a meeting," Karina shot back.

A husky deputy barreled up the stairs and came to a halt right in front of me. I recoiled, but he grabbed my arm and yelled, "I don't give a damn about your meetings!"

He yanked me down the stairs and shoved me toward a line of deputies. Before I could get my footing, the deputies sent me careening down their gauntlet, shoving me from one to the next. At the far end of the garage two deputies caught me and jerked me upright. I struggled to gain my balance, expecting to be sent sprawling at any second. But the two deputies held me firmly in place. I looked back toward the bus just in time to see Karina dragged out and sent reeling toward me.

After her there was a pause. I caught my breath. Karina's eyes, ablaze with determination and delight, met mine, then turned toward the bus door. A minute passed. The deputy emerged — empty-handed! He flipped his hands in the air and walked over to a telephone. Another minute passed, and another. Then, slowly, one by one, the rest of the people got off the bus.

As Karina and I rejoined them, everyone seemed to be talking at once. Mort wound up behind me as we were led into a hallway for a preliminary booking. "You doing okay?" he asked.

"Yeah, what happened in the bus?"

"After they pulled you and Karina out, the rest of us piled up in the back of the bus. They could tell it would be impossible to get us out of there without a major mess, so they gave us five minutes to finish the meeting."

"Did you reach consensus?"

"I think so."

The authorities photographed us, searched our pockets, and fastened a white plastic ID bracelet on each person's left wrist. Then we were herded, men and women together, into a large holding tank.

A small window and recessed fluorescent fixtures cast a diffused light on the glossy white cinder block walls. The door was cast metal, polished to a dull sheen. Varnished wood benches ringed the cell like a locker room. Even the aluminum toilet glistened.

The cell door opened again, and Karina and Holly were put in with us. Karina said something over her shoulder to the guard, then turned and gave me a hug. She was practically vibrating, and held onto me as if I were an anchor. "Breathe," she said as if reciting a mantra. "Remember to breathe." I held her close, and felt her chest quiver as she laughed to herself.

After Karina, Holly seemed solid as an oak. I leaned into her and swayed a little. Our cheeks pressed together. Hers felt cool next to mine. I whispered, "I love you" and she kissed me gently.

We found a couple of bench-seats and sat holding hands and sharing impressions of the action. Being in jail with Holly gave me a new perspective. Compared to my previous two arrests, I found myself less concerned with "what's next?" or "when are we getting out of here?" Maybe I was getting the hang of jail. But mainly it was due to being with Holly. I thought of the title of a book I'd seen on her shelf: *Be Here Now*. That was easier with her around.

The evening passed in conversation and speculation. The most popular rumor had it that we would be arraigned the next day — Sunday — just to get us out of their hair. Gradually the mood quieted, and I found myself yawning constantly from the stale air.

"Would there be any dinner," someone asked.

"Sorry, you missed it," came the reply. All the granola had been confiscated during the search. Around the room, people moaned about involuntary fasting. We leaned against each other on the benches. Conversations were hushed.

Around 11 p.m., deputies came in dragging thin mattresses and a bunch of army blankets. The booking of earlier protesters was going slowly, they said. We might have to spend the night in the holding tank. We spread the mattresses on the floor. The deputies turned the lights down, and we laid down and tried to get comfortable.

"Isn't it weird how prison is designed to remove you from the people you love?" Holly whispered as we curled together under a flannel blanket. "People

who probably need the most affection of anybody, and the state denies it to them.”

“Yeah, this is pretty amazing. Here we are, sleeping together in jail. It’d be a whole different thing if you could be in jail with your lover.”

Near us, Karina was curled up with Sara. Lucky for them, I thought. They’ll get to stay together after Holly and I are separated.

Though Holly managed to fall asleep, I lay awake, my eyes playing with the renegade light beams slipping through the mesh window. Was I staying in jail? Should I cite out if I got the chance? Maybe when we got booked. But why? We’ll probably get a two or three day sentence. I might as well stay in and serve it now with everyone else. But wouldn’t it be great to get out tonight? Even if it took all night to get home, it would feel so great to sleep in my own bed.

I had just about drifted off when the door opened, bumping my mattress. The lights came on with a jolt. “Everyone up. Pile the mattresses over here. You’re going to be booked.”

Midnight booking? Were they just messing with us? People staggered up. The guards herded us out of the cell and led us through a maze of brightly-lit concrete hallways and remote-controlled steel doors. From above every door a gray video camera stared down like an unblinking cyclops.

As we traversed the shiny corridors, I thought again about citing out. But now I was so tired that all I wanted was to get back to sleep. Just stay the night. Get some sleep and then see what happens in the morning. Maybe we’ll all get out then.

After enough twists and turns to thoroughly disorient us, we suddenly emerged into a large reception area with contoured chairs, drinking fountains, and dark gray carpeting. Hank cupped his hands over his mouth. “Flight 666 for Livermore Lab now boarding rows one through ten.”

Melissa sat in a chair and shifted around, seeming unable to get comfortable. “Well, at least it’s clean,” she said sourly.

“Yeah,” Craig said. “You should see the booking area at Santa Rita. It’s cement and metal. The windows are all barred up — can you imagine working there?”

“You’d rather work here?” Hank said. “How could anyone be a jail guard? You spend most of your waking hours in prison.”

Melissa scowled. “It fills a need some people have to be an authority figure, to be respected, or at least feared,” she said in a voice that seemed intended to be overheard.

I looked around at the guards, who were clumped around the booking counter acting bored and disinterested. “They must believe at some level that what they’re doing is a service, that they’re protecting society,” I said.

“How could anyone believe that?” Hank scoffed. “They can see what’s going on. Ninety percent of the people in this jail are Black or Latino. Most of

them are here for drugs, theft, or prostitution. How many of them are a threat to society?"

A deputy approached and ordered several of us to come over to the counter to be booked. I went first — get it done and get to bed. Melissa and Hank grumbled and followed slowly.

I stepped up the counter, walked through fingerprints, photo, and health survey, and then obediently went to the far side of the lobby to await further instructions. I leaned against the wall and looked back to the booking area, where Melissa gave her name loudly and lectured the woman taking the information about why we had done the protest. She grudgingly consented to being fingerprinted. But when she was led to the camera, she balked. "You already took our pictures earlier."

"We need to do it again."

"No, you don't."

My teeth grated at Melissa's audacity. Did she really think she could flout authority like that? Here, where they hold all the cards?

"Just stand there and hold your head up," the guard directed Melissa. Another deputy steered her against the wall, but her chin drooped onto her chest.

Melissa's non-cooperation was attracting attention. The deputies nervously tried to pry her head up, but Melissa responded by sitting down. Finally the commandant flipped his hand. "Just put her in that cell over there till she wants to cooperate."

As the two deputies grabbed Melissa by the arms, other protesters started moving that way. In a flash a dozen guards formed a cordon as Melissa was dragged to a row of tiny isolation cells tucked into a corner of the lounge.

Some people yelled at the guards, who backed up a step. But Melissa didn't call for any help, and even the other women from her AG settled for calling out encouragement. "We'll stay in solidarity! We won't leave without you!"

The cell door slammed. "That's Melissa all the way," one of her friends sighed. "No one's going to tell her what to do."

Slowly the booking process resumed. The next few went through fine and joined me against the wall. Then Hank stepped up to the counter. His shoulders were hunched, and he wore a clenched-teeth grin. The deputy looked up at him. "Last name?"

Hank stared at the deputy. "Feddup."

"Spell that."

"F-e-d-d-u-p."

"First name?"

"Irma."

"Is that your real name?" Hank was silent, as if he were struggling to keep from laughing. He offered no resistance as two other deputies led him to an isolation cell.

I gazed after him. You think you know someone, but then... Who would voluntarily provoke the guards to isolate them? Well, Hank and Melissa, apparently. I wondered if he thought up the name right on the spot.

People yelled encouragement and promised to stay in solidarity. The rest of the processing went without incident. No one was paying attention to those of us by the far wall, so I went back over to say goodbye to Holly. "How long are you planning to stay in?" I asked.

"At least a couple of days. There's an International Day meeting Wednesday night that I don't want to miss, but they have to arraign us before then, anyway." A look of alarm flashed across her face. "There goes your group! I love you!" She squeezed my hand and gave me a little push toward the departing men. I caught the door just before it closed.

All of the men from my holding cell, except Hank, were present. Mort, Lyle, and Craig were up ahead. Just behind me was Claude, the muralist I'd met at Livermore. To me, he was an elder statesman, and I was glad to be in with him.

Again we were led through the twisting halls, this time on a guided tour by a couple of young deputies who relished showing off their high-tech jail. They explained how the video cameras monitored each door, which opened only after the proper security codes had been relayed back to command central.

At last — at four o'clock in the morning according to the clock high on the wall — we arrived at our new lodgings. In the dim light we could make out the cell-block: an irregularly-shaped central area about half the size of a basketball court, with two-person cells along two of the walls. A wide stairway in the center led up to a balcony and a half-dozen second-story cells.

About thirty-five men had decided not to cite out. The earliest arrivals had been placed in the cells, but by the time my group got there, the rooms were full, and we had to crash in the main area.

As soon as I hit the thin plastic mattress I started to doze off. But I was awake long enough to overhear Lyle go to the door and call for the guards. "It's freezing in here. Can't we get some more blankets?"

"What's your name?"

"Lyle Eisner."

"Okay, go lay down and we'll see what we can do."

A while later we were awakened by guards with a few extra army blankets. "Where's Eisner?"

When Lyle raised his hand, the two guards grabbed him, led him brusquely to a cell, locked him in, and marched out.

I shook myself awake, along with the dozen others sleeping in the main area. We clustered together at the back of the cell-block, trying to figure out what to do. Mort went over to Lyle's cell and knelt down to talk under the door.

"There's nothing we can do now," someone said. "We know where Lyle is. We should just get some sleep."

Claude cut in sharply. "We have to figure out how we're going to resist if they try to grab anyone else."

Nathaniel, my nonviolence prepper, raised his hand. "We shouldn't resist them. Part of civil disobedience is a willingness to accept whatever punishment the state imposes, however unjust. It's our steadfast refusal to fight back that ultimately reaches people."

"I'm familiar with your views," Claude said. "Those of us who feel differently would like to discuss how to deal with the guards."

Nathaniel shrugged. "I've stated my opinion. If anyone is interested in discussing this later, I'd be glad to." He and another man left the circle and went back to bed.

Nathaniel's pacifism was intriguing, but it didn't speak to my heart. Even though I was scared by the guards, I wanted to resist, especially if someone had an idea how to do it. Claude proposed that if the guards reappeared, we all huddle behind the stairs and link arms and legs. We decided not to cooperate until the people confined in cells were let out and we could meet as a whole group. A couple of guys were chosen as liaisons to the guards if they reappeared. We all laid down.

It took a while, but finally I fell back asleep. It seemed only minutes later when I jerked awake. The guards were back! I groped toward the stairs. People called out, "What's happening? Who are they after?" We peered at the guards, who were opening up a coffee machine and filling it with instant crystals. "Sorry, it's decaf," one of them said. "It's all you're allowed to have."

Huddling together and linking arms seemed a bit theatrical, but we stayed together as our spokes approached the guards and demanded to have the cells opened before we'd cooperate.

"Oh, they'll be opened about nine," a deputy said. "Usually they're left open till about ten at night. You're on an open cell-block here. Of course, there aren't ordinarily people sleeping on the floor, but I guess they want to keep you all together, away from the other prisoners."

It was hard to stay militant in the face of such matter-of-factness, and we gradually drifted into smaller groups, talking among ourselves. I lay down again, fantasizing about more sleep. Behind me, Craig and Mort weighed our immediate prospects.

"They'll probably arraign us tomorrow morning," Mort said.

"You never know," said Craig. "I'm sure they want us out of here. The guards were telling people we could cite out anytime. I think they'd like to be rid of us."

"I still wouldn't count on anything happening today."

I looked around the shiny concrete cell-block. The odd angles of the walls gave the place a Kafka-esque feel, but even more striking were the video cameras mounted high on the walls, capable no doubt of surveying every inch of the room. 1984 had arrived early.

Shortly after nine, the cells were unlocked, including Lyle's. But Hank was still separated.

Breakfast followed — a bowl of Special K, a carton of milk, and a banana. Afterward, Pilgrim called for attention. "We should have a quick meeting and see who is staying in and who needs to cite out. Then we could do some workshops."

We gathered in a circle in the open area in front of the stairs and did a go-round. I wasn't feeling an especial desire to escape, mainly because as soon as the meeting was over, I was going to take a nap. Six men did need to leave by the end of the day, leaving twenty-nine to spend a second night. "What else do we need to discuss?" someone asked.

Claude thrust out his chest. "Melissa and Hank are in solitary confinement! The least we can do is find out what's happening to them."

Craig spoke in a calmer voice. "A couple of people should go talk to the guards and try to find out. The rest of us should talk about what we're going to do if they keep Hank and Melissa separated."

"That's fine," Pilgrim said. "But some people already said they didn't want to talk about resistance tactics."

Claude threw up his hands. "Then they don't have to stay at the meeting!"

Nathaniel was standing against the wall with his arms folded across his chest. "I'd like a chance to say something. Then I'll leave you alone to meet." He stepped forward to join our circle, but remained standing. "We have to keep sight of what civil disobedience means. We deliberately break the law, and we publicly submit to arrest, knowing we'll be punished. It contradicts the spirit of nonviolent resistance to try to avoid punishment." His assertions were met with some grumbling, but Nathaniel pressed on. "These two people carried their protest into jail, and refused to cooperate with their booking. They knew what they were doing, and knew they could be isolated for it. Willingness to accept the consequences of our actions is the strongest statement that we can make."

No one ventured an answer to his speech, and Nathaniel quietly left the meeting. Someone put out a tactical suggestion. "Maybe we should wait till we have word from them before we start making plans."

"If they're in solitary confinement, who's going to talk to them?"

"The lawyers will be able to see them. They can let us know what's going on. Until then, we should just agree not to leave jail without them."

Mort and Lyle returned from talking to the guards, who claimed to know nothing except that Hank and Melissa were still in solitary. Claude pushed for some sort of action to try to get them out, but got only lukewarm support, and with a loud sigh withdrew his proposal.

As the meeting broke up, most of the men stayed in the circle for a "life stories" session that Pilgrim pulled together. Each person got five minutes to share who they were and how they got involved in the protest.

I wanted to sleep. I went over and lay down on my mattress. The shiny

cinder block walls created an echo chamber, though, bombarding me with stray bits of people's stories.

Nearer to me, Craig and Mort were talking about working with CISPES on the demo. I would have preferred silence, but eavesdropping on them was some consolation.

"This was a big step," Mort said. It was unusual to hear Mort optimistic about anything, and I inclined an ear in his direction. "Of course, only Overthrow people went to any meetings," he continued. "We've got to get people in LAG to connect the issues, get out of our anti-nuke ghetto."

"Reagan's doing his best to help out," Craig said with a wry chuckle. "Between trying to put the Cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe, giving the CIA money for the war in Central America, and cutting social services at home, I'd say he's doing his best to build a united front."

"It does open some doors," Mort said. "Right now, LAG is still pretty isolated. But I can see us a year or two from now as the direct action wing of a coalition that would include everyone from the Nuclear Freeze to the Central America support groups — like the Greens in Germany."

I finally succeeded in drifting halfway to sleep, transfixed by the big clock on the wall. It had no second hand. Each minute was marked by a click of the big hand, driving home its sheer duration. I lay there for nearly an hour trying to anticipate exactly when it would move.

Finally lunch interrupted my endeavors. I welcomed the white bread, bologna and cheese, a little bag of potato chips, and a waxed red apple.

"This isn't real jail food," Craig said. "This must mean they don't have enough people to make meals for us."

Once lunch was done, though, the expanse of time began to weigh on me. A book. Why didn't I bring a book? Just like at Vandenberg, they didn't search our shoes. I could bring in a novel. No, something dense, where each page would last a long time. How about Hegel? I could read that forever and never understand it, so it would always be fresh.

Would we get to go outside? Maybe we could play basketball for a while.

Maybe we could improvise a hoop and ball here. But the idea of organizing anything, even a game, seemed overwhelming.

Midway through the afternoon, a percussion jam developed on the second floor, with a dozen guys hammering on the hollow aluminum railings. I didn't feel inspired to join, but sat on my mattress dreamily listening to the rhythms and shouts echoing off the cinder block walls. I found myself humming a bass line as a tall guy wearing a blanket-cape twirled and pirouetted among us.

Amidst this circus, it took Claude a while to convince us that his shouts and waving arms were not part of the spectacle. "Hey, everybody should come down, the lawyers are here."

Instantly our mood changed from the communal celebration of free time in an exotic setting to the urgent personal need to know exactly when we were

getting out of jail. There's the power of the law for you, I thought. We gathered in a horseshoe around Kathleen and another attorney I didn't recognize. They were laughing and talking with Craig. Kathleen turned to the group. "We were just over in the women's section. We came here to tell you the district attorney has agreed to recommend a sentence of time served for everyone, provided you accept arraignment now and come back in a month for the actual sentencing. They're willing to hold the hearing here at the jail tonight, if you accept the offer."

Kathleen had spoken so plainly that it took a moment to sink in. "Sunday night arraignments?" I said to Lyle. "Can you believe it? There's sixty of us in jail, and we're forcing them to hold court on Sunday night."

He nodded. "They can't deal with us. They want us out of here right now!"

Claude called for silence so he could ask a question. "What about the people who got put in solitary?"

"We're going down there next. They'll get the same deal. We'll make sure they get arraigned first, just to be sure. In the meantime, you should decide whether to accept the offer, and we'll try to get back down here in an hour or so."

There seemed no doubt that we'd accept the deal. Unless they agreed to pay us for our troubles, we weren't going to do much better.

It was several more hours before it all came together, so we spent the evening doing a talent show. I was feeling upbeat, and sang a John Prine song called "Flag Decal" that set forth an incisive analysis of patriotism and militarism:

Your flag decal won't get you into heaven anymore
They're already overcrowded from your dirty little war...

Around midnight, the twenty-nine men were led into a courtroom within the jail complex, where we were joined by Hank, looking none the worse for his solitary ordeal. The judge quickly arraigned us and ordered us to return en masse a month later for the formal declaration of our time-served sentences.

Out in the jail lobby we were reunited with the women. I saw Jenny and Angie first, and they welcomed me with an exuberant double hug. As they released me, Karina grabbed me in a tight embrace before spinning off to hug someone else.

I greeted a couple of other women, then spied Holly across the lobby talking to Craig. I wove my way through the crowd toward her. As I approached, a smile lit her face. She turned toward me, and I wrapped my arms around her. She seemed surprised at my intensity, but when I let go of her, her eyes were sparkling.

Hank interrupted our twosome to give Holly a hug. "Have you guys seen the control booth?" He gestured toward a glass-enclosed room filled with TV screens. "That's where they monitor all those cameras we were seeing. Look at

the bossman, he's in paradise." A jowly deputy was tilted back in his comfy chair, supervising several female operators.

Holly frowned. "Reminds me of too many offices I worked in," she said.

Jenny's boyfriend drove out to pick us up. Six of us piled into the small sedan: Jenny and Angie sat in the front, with Sara, Karina, Holly, and me in the back.

Sara was still mainly a stranger to me, although I'd heard a little about her from Holly. She was involved in Central America support work and helped organize the Concord action. She was sitting upright next to the right-hand door. Her long brown hair flowed over her shoulders and onto Karina's. "Tell people about Johann," Karina said to her.

Sara's brow creased. "While we were waiting for our ride I called home," she said in a pained voice. "After we were arrested on Saturday, my roommate Johann was walking back to his car, and three guys jumped him and beat him up and broke his ankle. He had to go to the hospital. And the guys turned out to be off-duty Marines."

"Marines?" several of us said in unison. Sara nodded.

Angie turned around from the front seat to face Sara. "Did they catch them?"

"Two of them, anyway. The third got away."

"What are they charging them with?"

"Nothing," Sara said. "Johann didn't want to press charges, so they let the Marines go."

"What?" I said. "They broke his ankle, and he didn't want to charge them?"

Sara's brow creased further. "I can understand why he didn't," she said. "It's contradictory for us to protest the state, and then turn around and use the courts to prosecute someone."

Angie gave a skeptical laugh. "But if they attacked you?"

"That's part of nonviolence. Nothing says we won't have violence used on us."

Angie shook her head. "I'm not that much of a pacifist. Sometimes you have to fight back. And if it means using the courts, so what? The state works against us all the time — why not get it to work *for* us once in a while?"

"I don't think that's a consistent anarchist position," Karina intervened.

"I'm not trying to be a consistent anarchist," Angie said. "I'm a realist. The government exists. So does violence. And using the first to fight the second seems practical."

"Well," Karina retorted, "I don't think we should ever do anything that legitimizes the government."

With a growling sigh, Angie paused, then spoke in a level voice. "I agree, we basically should not appeal to the government. But here's a chance to play one part of the state against another, to use the courts to go after the military. We can turn the government against itself."

"But where does it end up?" Sara said in a low voice. "They prosecute a couple of eighteen-year-old Marine privates whom the military couldn't care less about sacrificing. And then they say, look, it's a fair system, we punished the offenders. What does it matter to the government? We're victims, the privates are victims, and the state comes out looking good."

Angie spoke slowly, as if thinking out loud. "But you can't just let it go. You have to give a message to people that we won't be intimidated. Maybe you could threaten to press charges, and offer to drop them if the Marines would meet with you."

As she spoke, the car pulled up in front of our apartment. People got out of the car for hugs under the Dwight Way streetlights, then bid us farewell. As they drove away, Holly put her arm around my shoulder. I turned toward her. We looked into each other's eyes, then kissed.

"I'm so happy to be back home with you," she said.

"You have to admit," I said after another kiss, "we're charmed. Counting last night when we were together in the holding cell, we've never missed a night. Two actions and not a night apart."

Wednesday, February 9, 1983

SINCE MOST OF US from Direct Action had spent the end of January in jail, we decided to hold off for a week or two and do a mid-February edition of the paper that would cover all the actions of the past month.

Production was going on all afternoon and evening, but I had to work at least a few hours, with the pay period coming to a close. Revolutionary journalism didn't pay the rent. Not yet, anyway.

It was a crisp day, overcast with fog. As I raked the leaves in front of the building, I went over what needed to happen on Direct Action, stopping now and then to jot a note. I didn't have a good handle on the issue overall, but I had the feeling that we were running behind. It was going to be a late night.

Around six I got cleaned up and headed over to the big house at Telegraph and Ashby. I wasn't sure if I even knew any of the people living there, but they seemed okay with us taking over their living room for a couple of weeks for newspaper production.

I stepped through the front door. Once-proud couches ringed the ample living room. Bob Marley and the Wailers filtered out of a boom box perched on the cluttered mantle. Spraypainted on the dirty walls were stencils of Ché Guevara. In the corner stood a television set with a smashed screen. Was it art, accident, or spontaneous social criticism?

Half a ping-pong table surrounded by folding chairs formed the central work space. Caroline and Holly were working on a layout together at the table, with Daniel across from them. Angie and Jenny were pasting up pages over in

the corner by the TV. Claudia was sitting on a tattered couch proofreading.

I said hi to folks and walked over toward Holly, who looked relieved to see me. "I need to show you where we are," she said. "Then I want to go get some dinner before my meeting."

"Okay." I put my arm around her shoulders. "How are you doing?" I asked.

"Pretty good, considering."

I didn't have a chance to follow it up before Caroline tugged on my arm. "Jeff, glad you're here."

I gave her a hug. "Hey, I saw your finance report," I said. "LAG is two thousand dollars ahead?"

"At least," she said. A cautious smile crossed her face. "All along, I wanted to believe it would work out."

Holly stepped over to me. "Let me show you where we are. Here's a list of pages that have been started, with a note on who's working on what. Artemis left her pages under the couch. She said she'd try to come back tomorrow to work on them. Melissa came by and picked up pages two and three to work on at home tonight. Here's her number if you need to call her about anything. And Monique is doing the xeroxing."

I was taking notes as fast as I could. "Here's a list of stories that aren't in yet," she continued. "These people need to be called right away. Tell Mort we need his spokescouncil story tomorrow."

Holly tucked her notebook in her pack and said goodbye, but just then Craig came in. "Here's my Vandenberg analysis," he announced, waving densely-typed pages at us. "I hope we have a separate story describing the action."

"No, not really," I said, looking at Holly. "But we're doing a photo page."

"That's a great idea," Craig said. "Showing a successful action is the best way to build momentum for June at Livermore."

"And for the March action at Vandenberg," Holly said offhandedly. She pulled on her coat and turned to speak to Caroline.



Direct Action #4, February 1983

"What's happening with the VAC action?" Craig asked. "In the paper, I mean."

"We have a story," I said. "We're going to run it at the bottom of page one, under your story."

Craig didn't miss a beat. "No, we should put the June Livermore story there. That should be on the front page."

I didn't want to contradict Craig, who seemed coiled for a confrontation. "We should ask some other people," I said noncommittally.

Claudia, over on the couch, had been listening to the exchange. Now she put down her proofreading and joined us, pulling Holly in along with her.

Craig reiterated his position that the VAC action be relegated to an inside page. Holly listened for a minute, then spoke plainly. "The purpose of the paper is to promote civil disobedience. There's a major action at Vandenberg next month. That belongs on page one."

"But Direct Action is a LAG paper," Claudia said. "It should focus on our actions. VAC has been very clear that this is *not* a LAG action."

Holly leveled her gaze at Claudia. "A lot of the people involved are LAGers. They'll expect us to cover it."

"I'm not saying we shouldn't cover it," Craig said. "But the June Livermore action belongs on the front page. We agreed at the Congress last Summer that as soon as Vandenberg was over, we would start organizing for Livermore. No one expected a bunch of people to go changing the dates of actions."

That's the essence of the situation, I thought. I hated not supporting Holly, but my sense was, go with Livermore.

As Craig finished speaking, Claudia nodded vigorously. "The whole idea of the LAG Congress was to lay out a coherent plan for the year, so we're not always racing from action to action, burning ourselves out, with no better idea of where we're going than the government has."

Holly shook her head as she wrapped her scarf over her shoulder. "I've got to go — you know what I think."

I followed her out onto the porch and silently hugged her goodbye.

"We don't even have a Livermore story, do we?" she asked.

"We must have gotten someone to write one," I said.

"I didn't. Maybe Craig did." She squeezed me and started away. "I'll see you at home tonight. How late are you going to be here?"

"Oh, eleven or so. Why don't you come back and we'll walk home together?"

"Then we'll both wind up staying till midnight."

Notwithstanding that likelihood, we agreed on the plan. As I stepped back inside, Claudia and Craig pounced. "I'll write the Livermore article by Friday," Claudia informed me. "It should go on the front page, ahead of the VAC story." She turned back to the page she was working on. "We can talk about it Monday

night at Coordinating Council if Holly really objects. We can see what other people think."

The door swung open, and Cindy stepped in. "Hey, I've got the prints from our BART action last Friday," she said. I was glad to have a break from arguing. Cindy pulled out photostats of the poster that her AG, the Commie Dupes, had designed. People crowded around the table, eyeing the authentic-looking poster outlining emergency procedures for a nuclear attack.

"We put three hundred of them up in the ad-slots of BART trains," she told us. "It got in the *Chronicle*, and it was on KPFA news, too."

"Did anyone get busted?" Caroline asked.

"We got hassled by the police," Cindy said, "But no one was arrested. They just made us get off the train. So we'd wait a few minutes and get on the next train."

After Cindy took off, I tried to get back to work. I thought about starting

IN CASE OF NUCLEAR ATTACK



1. REMAIN CALM



5. RESERVE MEDICAL ATTENTION FOR HIGH PRIORITY EVACUEES



2. AVERT EYES FROM FLASH



6. HAVE FOOD AND WATER FOR SEVERAL WEEKS OF ISOLATION



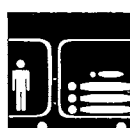
3. BRACE FOR BLAST



7. COMFORT THE DYING



4. DUCK AND COVER/
PLACE NEWSPAPER
OVER HEAD



8. ISOLATE CORPSES
TO PREVENT SPREAD
OF DISEASE

This official-looking poster was inserted in advertising panels on 300 commuter train cars.

the photo spread, but felt like I didn't have a good enough sense of the paper as a whole. The past couple of issues, I'd been the person who kept track of the progress of each two-page spread — what stories went where, who was designing it, what was missing, what was finished. It came naturally, since I liked having the overview, watching the paper take shape. And having a coordinating role, even an informal one, solidified my sense of belonging to LAG.

I drifted around the room taking stock of what was needed on each page. We were in better shape than I had thought. All of the pages were started except the photo spread and the front page.

As I put the finishing touches on the local actions page, Angie brought her pages over and laid them on the table in front of me. "I just need a graphic for the top, and it's done," she said. She tugged on the sleeve of an oversized sweater.

"The layout looks really good," I said. The sweater hung loosely around her small body as she leaned toward me to tape down a loose headline.

I offered to help her look through the graphics file, which was a cardboard box stuffed with anti-nuke graphics from around the world, a bunch of anti-Reagan editorial cartoons, and all sorts of loose pictures torn out of other magazines.

"Copyright isn't a big issue, I take it," Angie said.

"I think of it as 'liberating' the graphics," I said.

She turned the idea over in her mind. "For me, it's a question of giving credit. It's not like we're making money off it. But if we use someone's art, we have to give credit."

I nodded. "Good point. Mostly we do, but that's something we should check during final proofing."

We sifted through another folder with no success. Angie yawned and leaned her elbow on the table. "I think my drugs are wearing off. I'd drink more caffeine, but then I'd need another beer to balance it. I think it's time to call it a day."

As she stood up, her eyes fell on her page and saddened. She straightened a column of type. "I was hoping to find the perfect graphic and have the page done."

I looked over her design. "Maybe Tai could draw something. He's doing the graphic for the subscription ad. Maybe he has time for this one, too."

"Good idea," she said. "I'll call him tomorrow. Anyway, I'm going home now."

I gave her a hug. "See you here tomorrow night?"

"No, I've got something else going. That's why I wanted to finish tonight. I'll run into you at the office sometime soon. Say goodnight to Holly for me."

Right at that moment, Holly walked in. She stopped to say goodbye to

“We have cartoons like that,” Holly said. “Daniel brought in a bunch he clipped from British papers.” Angie took off her coat and joined Holly back at the graphics box. They thumbed through several folders, all the while discussing how better to catalogue our ever-expanding graphic arts collection. At last their efforts were rewarded with the perfect cartoon. Angie got a gluestick and pasted it onto her page. “Now I can sleep with a clear conscience,” she said.

"Sure," I said. We headed up the slight hill. "Did you know that in Jack Kerouac's book, *Dharma Bums*, the first scene is on Hillegass? It doesn't give the address, but I imagine it being right across from the park where we saw the Mime Troupe."

“Yeah. It would be nice to actually see some constellations.” I pulled the tip off an evergreen branch hanging over the shadowy sidewalk. The production

Some editions of the International Day Action Bulletin were published as pages of Direct Action newspaper.

session was still on my mind. But I didn't want to impose my agenda on Holly. "Do you want to talk about the paper," I said, "or something lighter?"

"How about you?"

"I could go either way."

"Let's just talk about it till we get home," she said. "I want to know what was decided about the front page."

The front page. I'd forgotten that issue. "Well, basically what you heard before you left," I said. "Livermore goes on the front page. Claudia is writing a piece on the Livermore blockade. The March Vandenberg action goes on the back page."

Holly put her hands in her pockets. "It isn't right. Vandenberg is a major action regardless of who is organizing it. Sara and Karina told me that thirty people from Change of Heart plan to get arrested — that's double the January action. How can we call the paper 'Direct Action' and not have Vandenberg on the front page?"

"You should talk to Craig if you want to change it. But you know how he feels."

"I know," she said with a hint of exasperation. "He takes the VAC action as a personal insult."

"Some people meant it that way."

"But that's hardly anyone." Her voice broke, and she cleared her throat sharply. "Only the organizers are fighting. Everyone else is focused on the action. The newspaper shouldn't take sides. We should be getting the word out about any protests that are happening."

We had reached the Dwight Way entrance. I rattled my keys to avoid answering. I hated to be arguing when I had hardly seen Holly for days. "You should talk to Craig and Claudia about it," I said. "They're the ones pushing for Livermore."

"I'll think about it," she said. "I have plenty else to worry about."

I opened the front door. "Well, we're home now," I said as we started up the stairs. "Do you want to talk about something else?"

"Yeah," she said over her shoulder. "But wait — one more thing..."

Of course, her one more thing led me to think of one more thing, which reminded her of one more thing, and soon it was two in the morning.

Finally Holly headed to bed. She sighed as she pulled back the covers and stretched out. "We really need some time away, Jeff. We get so caught in the moment. All we think about is LAG. We need some time for us."

She pulled the blankets up and lay her head on her big feather pillow. "Jenny and Angie are going dancing at Ashkenaz this Friday," she said. "Want to go with them?"

"Sure," I said, "sounds like fun." Actually it sounded terrifying, as did anything involving dancing. At least if we went with other people, I wouldn't be so conspicuous.

I sat down beside Holly and stroked her hair. "How about going down to Santa Cruz sometime soon," I said. "We could rent a car and do a day-trip."

Her eyes lit up, and she rolled toward me. "Maybe the last weekend of this month?"

I nodded. "I can do that."

But then Holly clouded. "No, there's an International Day meeting that weekend," she said. "But maybe the weekend after that..."

Saturday, March 5, 1983

WHEN LOCAL resident Arthur Looff (son of the famous carousel builder, Charles Looff) built the Giant Dipper in 1924, he envisioned a giant wooden coaster which would be a "combination earthquake, balloon ascension, and aeroplane drop." With speeds up to fifty-five miles per hour, it's all that and more.

— from a brochure for the Santa Cruz Boardwalk

I TESTED THE safety bar one last time as the train lurched into gear and began the steep ascent. Next to me, Holly sat bolt upright, both hands clutching the black bar that was supposed to keep us from flying out. The people in the car ahead of us laughed and whooped as we crept upward through a narrow tunnel.

Why did they enclose the tracks in a tunnel? Probably so we couldn't see the white-washed wooden scaffolding that held the roller coaster aloft. Given a close look at the rickety structure, half the riders might bail out before we reached the top.

The first car crested the peak, tugging us in its wake. Holly looked at me, eyes wide with terror and delight as we cleared the top and dropped. My stomach flew upward. I gripped the bar and let out a low howl. Holly shrieked and threw her arms in the air. I burst out laughing. No turning back now — we're in this to the end!

Sunday, March 13, 1983

THE STREETS were still damp, but the sun shone through patchy clouds. It was warmer than I'd anticipated. I peeled off my sweatshirt as I crossed Telegraph Avenue, making my way to the Change of Heart meeting in People's Park.

On the way, I stopped at the copy shop to pick up some Livermore flyers. Sure, the cluster meeting was about Vandenberg. But we had to keep Livermore on the table, too.

Coming out of the store, I recoiled as a truck spewed exhaust at me. Was it my imagination, or were there more cars than when I moved to Southside two

years before? Seemed like every time I went to cross a street, I had to be watching out for them.

Why was I going to this meeting? I was out of the Vandenberg loop. I had no plans to do the March action, or even to go down to the encampment. But from being around Karina and Angie and Jenny at the office I knew how fired up people were. Even if my official excuse for going was to plug Livermore, I wanted to share the Vandenberg excitement, to be around a crowd of people getting ready for an adventure.

I thought I was fashionably late, but when I got to the Park the only others there were the two facilitators, Sara and Alby. Sara gave me a quick hug. I'd been getting to know her a bit at the office when she'd come by with Karina. She still mainly worked on Central America organizing, but was doing the Vandenberg action with Change of Heart.

"So you're facilitating?" I said by way of making conversation.

"Yes, we're facilitating," Sara said as if I had challenged her competence. I winced. It wasn't the first time I had inadvertently irritated her.

I started to explain myself, but luckily Alby spoke up. "Hi," he said, extending a hand to shake. Alby was about twenty-five, with bushy red hair. He was six inches shorter than me, but his crunching handshake more than compensated.

I extricated my hand and excused myself. "I guess you two need to plan for the meeting," I said, then immediately regretted it.

But Sara didn't seem bothered this time. "No, I think we're ready," she said. "We better be, here come more people."

A dozen people arrived in the next ten minutes, although Walt and Antonio were the only ones I really knew. But then Angie and Jenny arrived. Angie came over and gave me a hug, and I felt more like I belonged.

I was standing on the edge of the circle when Karina made her entrance. Being closest to her, I got the first hug. I held her for an extra moment, then released her to Sara. They kissed, and Karina ran her hand through Sara's hair. Sara leaned up and kissed Karina again before they separated.

Karina hugged Walt, then turned to Alby. I knew Alby was one of Karina and Sara's spraypainting cohorts. Was he one of Karina's lovers as well? The way their hips swayed as they hugged suggested it.

Moonstone interrupted my pondering by hugging me from behind. The contact felt good, and I let myself drop back into his arms. He held me for a minute, then lowered me to the ground, where a circle was forming in the grassy middle section of the park.

I settled in on the low, scruffy grass. Twenty yards away, a guitarist strummed a Grateful Dead song for a small gathering. Further back toward Telegraph, a few people worked in the garden, a former parking lot slowly being reclaimed from the asphalt. Off to one side, a couple of men sifted through clothes in the "free box." Scattered around the rest of the block-long

park were little clumps of people, many of them looking like they spent a lot of time on the streets. One woman stopped by our circle and asked for spare change, but after that we were left in peace.

We went around the circle and said our names and AGs. Lots of new people, mostly young, just out of college, it seemed. Jenny, Angie, Alby and a dozen others. A new wave. In the eight weeks since the January action, Change of Heart had almost doubled in size. Several new AGs had joined, and others, like Lifers and Deadheads for Peace, had taken on new members. The cluster was humming, with thirty people planning to get busted and a dozen more making the trip down to the encampment.

Great — for them. My AG had fizzled out. Since January, when four of us were busted, we hadn't met again. The only other active members were moving on. Cindy was in Commie Dupes. And Hank was joining Overthrow Cluster, referring to Change of Heart as "amateur anarchists."

It was a harsh assessment, but not devoid of truth. With the changing of the guard, Change of Heart was becoming a cluster of young anarchists: long on ideals, creativity, and spontaneity, but short on patience for working in coalitions or building an organization.

I considered following Hank to Overthrow, which would be more politically congenial. But a couple of things held me back. One was gender. Overthrow, true to the leftist tradition, was mostly men. In Change of Heart, on the other hand, a lot of the most active people were women or gay men: Karina, Jenny, Doc, Rick, and, increasingly, Sara and Angie. I liked the tone it gave to our actions.

Plus, Holly had proposed that the two of us form an AG. We'd talked it over with a few other people, and it looked like Caroline, Daniel, and Walt were up for it, with Jenny and Angie possibly joining after Vandenberg. Belonging to an active AG would give me more solid footing in the cluster. I'd have a support raft of like-minded LAGers amidst the sea of anarchists.

The meeting got underway with Karina reporting on the previous day's spokescouncil meeting. As she spoke, I looked from her to Alby and back again. I thought of something I'd heard her saying to Jenny recently: "If I care about someone, and we're attracted, why shouldn't we make love? Why put an artificial restraint on it? If I feel love, I want to express it."

Hard to disagree, in theory. But in real life? I remembered Holly continuing her sexual relationship with Frank after she and I became lovers. That was difficult enough. But Karina's interpretation went well beyond that, covering several of her friends at any given time. I wondered how it was for Sara. Did she have other lovers, too?

I looked at Karina, whose head was bobbing up and down as she concluded her report with a glowing estimation of the prospects for bringing Vandenberg Air Force Base to its khaki'd knees. I couldn't help being intrigued by her. Holly and I were doing great, and I didn't want to throw a curve ball

into our relationship for the sake of a fling with anyone. But it certainly spiced up the meeting to sit across from her.

Once we finished the reports, the main issue was whether to do a backcountry action, given that the MX still wasn't ready to test.

"We need to scout out the base," Alby said. "When they do try to test the MX, we need to know the terrain."

Angie was lying in the grass sketching on a notepad. She'd draw for a minute or so, then tilt her head and gaze pensively at the pad. Now she looked up and shielded her eyes from the sun. "The whole point is to occupy Vandenberg, isn't it? I want to get on the base and reclaim it."

A couple of people spoke in favor of a front-gate action, but most of the cluster wanted to go backcountry, and consensus was quickly reached. The decision let loose a cascade of brainstorming for the action, but Sara reined the discussion back to the agenda.

"Solidarity is the next discussion. I forget, who put this on the agenda?"

Doc raised his hand. "I did." His tone of voice sobered the meeting. Doc looked around the circle, his heavy brows accenting the intensity of his gaze. "We have to get serious. Solidarity was a failure at the January action. They pushed us around, yanked people out, jailed some, and released others — and we didn't have any idea what to do. There was almost no discussion of solidarity tactics before we got there, and we paid the price."

I nodded, although I still didn't see a lot we could have done if the authorities really were determined to move us.

Walt raised his hand. "It's hard to plan solidarity when we won't even meet most of the other protesters till the night before the action," he said. "The spokescouncils can make some decisions, but it really comes down to the people who wind up in jail together. I don't see that much we can do ahead of time."

Doc's eyes fixed on Walt. "We can make our own decisions, and propose them to other clusters at the action. In a crisis, we'll have a response ready. If one cluster has a plan, others may join."

"Right," Karina put in, "There's no time to have a meeting once they start jerking us around. It's going to be especially risky this time, because so many of us have ban-and-bars hanging over us."

Antonio ran his hand through his thick silver hair. "We need to go into jail resolved to non-cooperate every step of the way, until they guarantee that everyone will be arraigned together and get equal sentences."

Sara spoke up. "Love and Rage AG from Santa Cruz is proposing that we refuse to give our names. Make them identify second-timers by trying to match the January photos."

"Yeah," Karina said. "If they try to separate someone out, we should non-cooperate in any way we can. We have to stay together and refuse to be processed out of jail until we're certain of the legal deal. Don't give names, and

leave your ID with the legal collective. If we make it tough enough, they'll have to give all of us the same sentence and let us go."

"Right on," Alby said, "Take it to them, and let 'em deal with it if they can."

Consensus was reached on not giving names, along with a general resolve to physically resist separation. Doc wanted more definite tactics, but time was running out, and it was put over to be discussed down at Vandenberg.

One lingering item remained on the agenda: LAG's role in the action. Jenny delivered the news on LAG's official line — that the office would not be giving logistical support to the March Vandenberg action.

I thought back to last Monday's Coordinating Council meeting, where we had made the decision to focus exclusively on June at Livermore.

Not surprisingly, Holly had been the one person at Coordinating Council to speak strongly in favor of supporting the VAC action. "I've been thinking of going down to the encampment," she announced. "Instead, I'm going to stay here and be the office liaison."

Craig and Claudia, sponsors of the "no help" proposal, were caught off-guard. Holly looked calmly from one to the other and continued. "People are bound to call the LAG office when they hear there's been a big action. I'll deal with it. You won't have to do anything."

Claudia looked away, as if she had no further interest. Craig sat back and shrugged. "Alright," he said, "as long as I don't have to answer any calls."

It seemed reasonable at the time. But sitting here in People's Park amidst thirty people preparing to occupy Vandenberg, I felt embarrassed for LAG. Our decision not to give support seemed lame, out of touch. Jenny reported that Holly would support Vandenberg in the office, and I spontaneously said I would help, too. But compared to LAG's all-out effort in January, it seemed like small change.

Doc brushed back his long gray hair. "We're doing fine without any help from LAG," he said with no rancor in his voice. "There's nothing we're asking from Coordinating Council."

"Yeah," Alby chimed in. "Who needs them?"

Their words stung, and the murmur of approval that followed rubbed it in. I wanted to respond, but that would be to admit my own culpability.

We'd reached the end of the agenda, but Karina had one more item. "We need to make plans for rides home," she said. "We might need them faster than we think. This action is going to be way bigger than January. People are coming from all over California. If we stick together, there's no way they can handle us. We might get out the same day."

As we gathered in a closing circle in the middle of People's Park, I wound up next to Karina. She squeezed my hand as Doc spoke up. "It's great that we're meeting here," he said. "Fourteen years ago, People's Park was reclaimed from the government. Now it's time to take back Vandenberg."

I put my arm around Karina's shoulders, and her exuberance vibrated

through me. My heart felt warm and full, and for an instant I was ready to drop everything and join the pilgrimage down to Vandenberg.

We took a breath and released it together. No, I probably wouldn't go down to the action. But Change of Heart was in the thick of it. And that included me. Up till now I had been toeing the LAG line about the March action. I hadn't let myself experience the excitement that was percolating among the hundreds of people heading to Vandenberg. But now it boiled like a cauldron in the center of our circle, fed by our breaths and our resolve. Yes, part of me will be there, too.

After the meeting broke up, Angie and Jenny headed toward Telegraph to get coffee at Café Med, and I walked with them. As we approached the corner we passed the People's History mural — itself a piece of history, as one of the oldest of Berkeley's many murals. I slowed my gait and took in the familiar local history: the Free Speech Movement, the Vietnam protests, the fight for People's Park. Our forerunners. Maybe someday the artists would paint a new panel showing our triumphant occupation of the meadow at Vandenberg, fists thrust in the air. That was us — the next link in the chain.

Thursday, March 31, 1983

WHAT HAD IT been — two weeks? — since people left for Vandenberg? And I hadn't seen or spoken with most of them since.

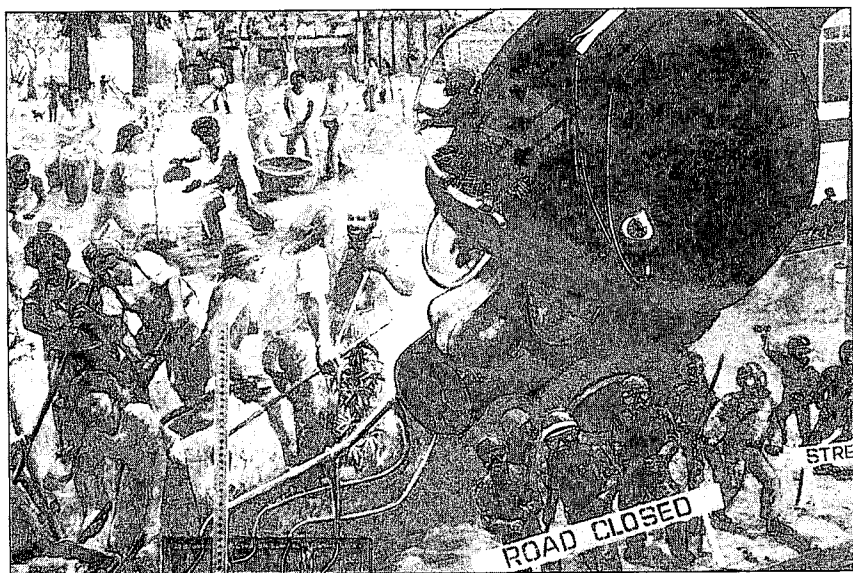
At least they were getting out. Supposedly. That would be the worst, to drive all the way down there and find out that the judge changed his mind.

I hadn't intended to make the ten-hour round trip down to Santa Barbara. Someone had to pick people up, though, and when Lyle volunteered to drive a van down, I let myself be drafted to keep him company. I felt like I hadn't done much to support the action, and I owed it to people in my cluster to help.

It was hard not to compare the action to LAG's January protest. Incessant rain provided a common element — mud. But there the similarity ended. Maybe it was thanks to our pioneering efforts in January, but this time seven hundred seventy protesters were busted. A lot of them did backcountry occupations even though the MX still wasn't ready to test. The message was clear: March was a dress rehearsal for stopping the missile test.

Backcountry or front gate, the sheer scale was hard to ignore. 770 arrests, hundreds held in jail for a week or more, a two-week encampment under terrible conditions — VAC and the affinity group network proved their mettle.

VAC was being tested in a way that LAG hadn't been. Jail support — challenging even with an office and staff — was a nightmare for the scattered support team working out of the rain-soaked Vandenberg camp or from collective houses like Urban Stonehenge back in San Francisco. Simply keeping



Detail from the People's History mural at Telegraph and Haste, Berkeley. Left, gardening at People's Park. Right, showdown with the police, c. 1970.

track of people was a Herculean task, with protesters held in almost a dozen jails and prisons all over Southern California and even in Arizona.

Arizona. Last we had heard, there were still thirty men there, with no word on when they might be back. "No one is sure why they picked those thirty men," Lyle told me as we drove down early Thursday morning. "It's probably just because they ran out of California jail cells. But they might be planning to prosecute those guys heavier. The misdemeanors carry up to six months in jail."

Lyle had been arrested as well. But since he had a federal ban-and-bar from January, he opted for a state-charge blockade outside the base. "There were about fifty of us. They put us all on a bus and drove us to Santa Barbara County Jail. When we get there, a deputy comes on board and tells us we're going to be issued citations and released until a later court date."

"So they were going to cite you out?"

"Yeah, but then we'd have to return next month for court. Some people said they couldn't do that. Pilgrim especially argued that we should demand an immediate arraignment, and not get off the bus until it was set up. So most people stayed." He nodded his head at the memory. "We were on the bus for about six hours. They gave us at least ten 'last chances' to cite out or get put into general population. Finally, they booked us into the jail. Some people cited out, but twenty-five of us stayed.

"The next day, they took us to court. At first, the judge refused to credit us

for time-served for the day we spent on the bus! But we threatened to plead not-guilty, and he had to give in.”

“And he let you go on time-served?”

“No, they just dropped the charges against us and told us to get lost. We stayed in solidarity for one day, and they totally caved in.”

“Too bad that didn’t work for the federal charges,” I said. “It’s been ten days since the first arrests, and a couple of hundred people are still in jail.”

“Yeah, that’s what I’ve heard,” he said. “Different judges and magistrates are giving different sentences. It feels like you spin the wheel and you don’t know what will come up — a day, a week, a month....”

A light but steady rain was falling as we cruised off the freeway into Santa Barbara. I suddenly felt out of place. Lyle belonged — he had done the action. But me? I felt like a poseur, a hanger-on. I tried to shoo the feelings, but they persisted. How could I not have seen that this was going to be a major action? Why hadn’t I at least gone down for the rally?

We were approaching the jail. Maybe people would be waiting outside and we wouldn’t even have to get out of the van. Just pick them up and head north.

Sure enough, there they were, huddled under an overhang outside the jail. As we pulled up, a wave of animation swept through the little knot of people. I spotted Karina, Jenny, Moonstone... Forgetting my out-of-place feelings, I hopped out of the van and jogged through the rain to the overhang.

Jenny and Angie were the first people I reached. Jenny greeted me like a favorite brother, wrapping her arms around me. Angie had tears in her eyes. “I can’t believe we’re out! It’s so great to see you!”

It was one continuous welcome. Alby treated me like a long-lost friend. Karina threw her arms around my shoulders. Moonstone squeezed me and held me in a long embrace, as if I were his means of regrounding with the outside world.

Walt took my place up front with Hank. I gladly climbed in the back of the van, finding a spot between Karina and Jenny. My left arm was touching Jenny’s shoulder, but our bodies were carefully distinct, like we were sitting in bus-seats.

Karina, on the other side, leaned back against me and draped her legs over Alby’s. As she nestled into me, I let my body curve into hers.

The whole crew was bedraggled and exhausted, but they seemed delighted to have someone new to tell their stories to. Karina inclined her head back onto my shoulder, as if to suggest that her words were intended for me. “The first few days they held us at Vandenberg, on the base,” she said. “But then they said they were taking us to San Diego, and one of the lawyers drove all the way down there, but they really sent us to Los Angeles, only we wound up spending the whole night on the bus. If you had to pee, tough luck until they decided to let you, and there was no food except balogna sandwiches and not enough of those, but it didn’t matter because I was fasting anyway, only later I decided it

was better to eat because we were in for so long, and we finally got our one phone call, but what could we say, we had no idea where they were going to take us next."

I nodded, letting my cheek brush against her hair. Jenny rustled on my other side. "Thank God for the lawyers," she said. "They somehow found us. It was so great to see Walt when we were taken before the judge this morning."

I wanted to hear about the backcountry action. I leaned up so I could see Angie, who was on the other side of Jenny. "Did you get onto the base like you were hoping?"

"Yeah," Angie said in a wistful tone. "About twenty feet in. We tried to get over the fence during daylight, but a helicopter spotted us right away."

"Most people went on at night," Jenny explained. "Some of the Pagan

groups got way onto the base and did rituals. We blew it."

"Too bad," I said. "Did they hold you on the base?"

"The first day," Karina said. "But it was tougher than January. I was in handcuffs for seventeen hours. Megan and I were dressed as pirates. We had these terrific coats, burgundy and navy, and boots and baggy trousers and eye-patches. We had made a parchment map of Vandenberg, with an X marked, 'Here thar be missiles!'"

Jenny yawned. "That was tough, being in handcuffs so long. Someone had a bottle of soap bubbles. It took three people to do it — one to hold bottle, one to hold wand, and one to blow — but they did it."

"There was a lot of that kind of improvising," Karina said thoughtfully. "Later in the week, we did a Passover Seder. We didn't have matzo, so we took the leavened bread they gave us for dinner and mashed it flat to de-leaven it. Someone had managed to smuggle in a little vial of goldenseal, which we used for bitter herbs."



It's About Times, published by Abalone Alliance in the early-to-mid-1980s, covered LAG and VAC actions as well as Diablo Canyon protests.

I nodded. "I guess you have to get creative if you're in for ten days."

"Ten days," Angie said. "Mostly it was okay, except for one scene with the Marshals. They were trying to separate out a few women who they'd figured out had ban-and-bars from January. When they came to get them, we all took off our clothes and circled around the people they were looking for. We figured the Marshals would be too freaked out to do anything. Wrong."

"Yeah, that was pretty disgusting," Jenny said. "They came in and threw people all over the place."

"It was a horrible feeling, being naked in front of those gross men," Angie said. She shivered. "A lot of women were crying afterwards. I wouldn't do it again."

"Why didn't they give you court dates and throw you out like they did other people?"

"Because we wouldn't give our names and weren't carrying ID," she said. "They didn't know who we were, so they couldn't force-cite us. That was the only way to keep solidarity with second-timers."

"And it worked," said Jenny. "Everybody in our cluster got the same sentence in the end, regardless of whether they had a ban-and-bar."

"Exactly," Karina said. "They held us for almost two weeks, but in a lot of ways, we won. We kept ourselves emotionally and psychically intact. And even when they succeeded in pulling someone out, people knew that we had done everything possible, and that we would do everything possible for their return."

No one spoke for a moment, as if the deciding word had just been spoken.

Angie leaned up so she could see me around Jenny. "Was the action covered much in the newspapers?"

"Not in San Francisco," I said apologetically. "Not after the first couple of days. They covered the arrests. But it was hard to get ongoing news. All we had was word-of-mouth."



We stopped at the Vandenberg camp to pick up people's tents and gear. The rain mercifully took a break, and I disembarked to check out the camp. It wasn't quite the quagmire that January had been, but the canvas tents were damp and musty.

I took in the big field bounded by



Encampments modeled on the 1981 Diablo Canyon action — and inspired in part by the 1969 Woodstock festival — provided a gathering place for people preparing to do the Vandenberg actions as well as a home base for support workers. Here, campers gather during a rare dry moment at the March 1983 action.

clumps of trees. The camp had a mellow feel, even though I knew support people must be getting frazzled with driving to Santa Barbara or Los Angeles for court hearings.

We arrived at dinner time. People were gathered around the central fire pit talking and eating. A guitar player was strumming off to one side, and I wished I'd brought a harmonica so I could join him.

I stopped by the kitchen tent and said hi to Artemis, who was back in the kitchen after spending the previous week in jail. I spotted her over by the compost bin. Her shoulders slumped a bit, and her black and gray hair was matted and cowlicked like the latest punk fashion. I wondered how she was holding up, but when she turned toward me, her eyes answered the question. "I could do this full-time," she said as she came out to hug me. "It's been so wonderful. I'm going to stay a few more days, till I have to be back in Berkeley for a meditation workshop I'm leading. That's going to seem so strange after this."

Artemis got together a care package for our journey home, stocked with bagels, fresh fruit, and a brick of chocolate. We said our goodbyes and headed back to the van. Sara, who had been at the camp, joined us for the ride home. I was a little sorry, since I'd been hoping to sit with Karina again. I volunteered to ride up front with Lyle, figuring the others probably wanted to sleep. Before we reboarded, I put my arm around Jenny, and said to her and Angie, "You know there's no vacation after this. We have newspaper production this weekend."

"I have it on my calendar," Jenny assured me. "It'll be nice to get back to normal life."

"Depends on your definition of normal," Angie said. I laughed and hugged her before she got in the van.

Back on the highway, Lyle and I tuned in a country station from Bakersfield. As a Freddy Fender song drifted through the van, I cracked the window to catch the cool evening air and thought back over all I'd heard in the past two hours.

Up till now, the ten-day sentences — and the uncertainty surrounding those still in jail — seemed simply unfortunate, a remote occurrence that didn't affect me. Today's trip made it concrete, something that had happened to a bunch of my friends. And what about the thirty guys in Arizona? How long would they be held?

I'd never done more than one night in jail. Was it just coincidence? What if the guards tried to separate out second-timers at Livermore in June? How far would they go? Could we hold solidarity?

The image of the Marshals throwing around Karina and Jenny and Angie pressed into my mind. Ten days in jail they'd served, and some folks got even longer. What happened to our string of victories? Was this a fluke, or did it signal a crackdown on protests? Either way, we weren't quite as invulnerable as I'd thought.

Friday, April 12, 1983

HOLLY WASN'T at the office when I got there. I was meeting her at the end of the day, but she and Craig had gone to see about permits for LAG's pre-blockade rally in June.

Holly and I hadn't been finding much time together since our trip to Santa Cruz. We talked about another excursion, maybe over to the Sierra foothills, but with the Livermore spokescouncils starting up, plus a couple of weekends every month for Direct Action production, it didn't look promising.

The office was fairly quiet for a change. Sara and Claudia were on the phones, and Jenny and Caroline were working together at a small desk near the door. LAG had recently moved to the front of the long office. Plate-glass shop windows made the front a lot brighter, although posters and flyers always threatened to obscure the sunlight. Up front, a couple of old couches formed a "reception area," while a half-dozen desks and several worktables filled the rest of the space.

I went over to where Jenny was updating donor cards. Coordinating Council had just hired Jenny as a bookkeeper, to keep track of the money we were steadily losing. She was hired only half-time, but the other half she volunteered with Caroline on fund-raising, so it was a bargain for LAG.

At twenty-three, Jenny brought a younger spirit to the office, doubly so when Angie was around. A couple of days earlier I had worked with them sending thank-you notes to Direct Action subscribers. They sang along to a Madonna song, reminisced about salsa dancing over in the Mission, and drew me into a graffiti plot that involved four stencils and six colors of spraypaint.

I wished Angie were around now. Jenny and I were meeting to organize a "Blockade-a-thon," where Livermore protesters would get sponsors to pledge so much per day in jail. Who knew if it would work, but people laughed when we announced the idea at a spokescouncil, so it seemed worth a try.

I pulled up a chair next to her. "How's it looking on the AG outreach?" I asked her.

"I'll call the rest of my list tomorrow," she said quickly.

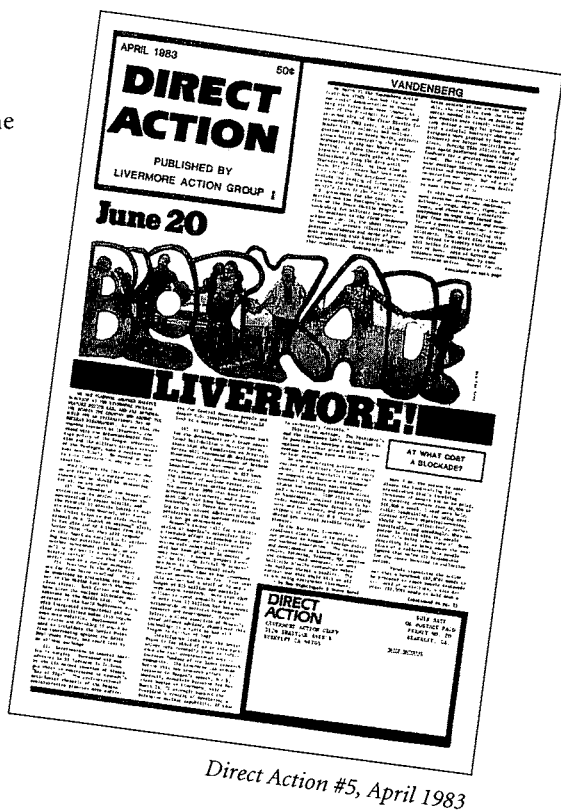
"I haven't finished, either," I said. "But most people I've talked to say they'll pass out Blockade-a-thon forms at their next AG meeting."

"Yeah, mine too," she said. "And I'll take stuff to the spokescouncil next weekend."

"That's all we can do," I said. "You put out an idea and see if it flies. If not — on to the next idea."

Jenny studied my eyes for an instant, as if I might have said something profound. Then she apparently decided I hadn't, and laughed loudly, which made me laugh, too.

Claudia called me over. "Do you have time to help me with this mailing?" she asked. She gestured to a press release for our June Livermore action as if it were a stack of widgets to be shipped to Acme Hardware. You'd never guess from her demeanor that it concerned the most important event on our calendar, the action that practically defined LAG.



Direct Action #5, April 1983

worktable.

She folded a half-dozen

"The action was halfway
across the state," I said, irritated
I had to defend VAC.

"Doesn't matter. A lot of

“Well, maybe LAG could help out with those kinds of details,” I said pointedly. “VAC organized the camp, the legal team, the handbook. And they sure showed they can get a lot of LAG people to come to their actions.”

I expected her to snap back, but she kept stuffing envelopes. “The March action happened because of the work that LAG did in January,” she said. “So what if it was bigger? As if all we need is bigger blockades. We’ll run from action to action till we all burn out. Protests alone can’t change anything. We have to build a broader movement. But who has time for movement-building or coalitions? They’re too busy getting arrested.”

Claudia clearly wasn't in the mood to be dissuaded by facts. Just recently LAG had joined a coalition with local chapters of the Freeze, War Resisters League, and a dozen other peace groups. The focus was a demonstration in

[illegible]

The Blockade-a-thon, in which friends and family members pledged support of blockaders, raised \$3000 for LAG while giving donors a personal connection to the action.

October against the new generation of "Euromissiles," which the U.S. was pressuring its NATO allies to accept — another component of Reagan's First Strike nuclear strategy. I reminded Claudia of the Euromissiles coalition.

She tossed her head back and laughed sharply. "That proves my point," she said. "Sure we joined. But how many people in LAG give a damn about the coalition? It's just another chance to protest."

For once I could trump her. I laid out my cards. "I'm planning to be part of the coalition," I said. "And Mort and Melissa definitely are. They're the ones who proposed it in the first place."

"Well, that's great," she said, loosening up a little. "I'm glad not everyone has tunnel vision."

I took it as a compliment. We finished up the mailing, and I was glad to see her leave for the post office on a positive note. For now, anyway.

Claudia had just departed when the door burst open and Raoul tromped in. Raoul was the burliest man I knew, a linebacker in street clothes. In baggy shorts, a T-shirt, and a backwards baseball cap, he seemed even younger than his twenty-five years. "Hey, the Livermore posters are almost ready," he told no one in particular. "We just finished printing them." He sized up the bunch of us in a glance, then plopped his hefty frame onto one of the couches in the front of the office.

I didn't know Raoul well, but I knew he was one of the thirty men who spent two weeks in an Arizona prison for the Vandenberg action. With their return, everyone was out and accounted for. We'd come through intact.

"Good to see you," I said. I sat on the arm of the adjacent couch. "Thought we'd lost you guys for a while there."

He scrutinized me before speaking. "Felt that way to us, too," he said. "We had no idea what was happening. We were arrested just like everyone else, but then they shackled us and stuffed us into an airplane. We kept trying to figure out why they picked us, but we never found out. We didn't do anything different from anyone else."

Sara and Jenny came over to where Raoul was sprawled. Jenny looked at Raoul intently. "They were making examples of you guys," she said, "to scare everyone else."

"Maybe," Raoul said. "They wanted the second-timers, the people with ban-and-bars. They tried to get us to talk, and offered to let first-timers go. But we never gave in, never even gave them our names. Finally after two weeks, they shackled us again, put us on a bus, shipped us back to Santa Barbara, and dumped us on the street. Totally bizarre."

"But solidarity worked," Sara said. "They finally had to let you go."

"Definitely," Raoul said. "We got shoved around, but everyone got out within two weeks, which isn't too bad. They couldn't isolate a few people and hammer them. But before the next action, we have to think about how we can we keep them from splitting us up. How can we bring more pressure on them?"

"We have to have everyone involved from the start," Sara said. "There were almost eight hundred people arrested at Vandenberg, but only half did solidarity. The pressure we have on them is when we overflow their jails. If everyone stays in jail and refuses to cooperate until we get equal sentences, they couldn't stop us."

"I wouldn't be so optimistic," I said. "Look at the Good Friday action at Livermore last week. They force-cited people, kicked them out of jail, and gave them separate court dates. Sure, that was only sixty people. But why couldn't they do that to a thousand? They can throw us out if they want to."

Sara crossed her arms. "On Good Friday, people gave their names. If you refuse to identify yourself, they can't throw you out, or they're setting you free."

"Maybe," I said, weighing her point. "Seems like they're yanking people around a lot lately."

"That's because they know we'll stay within predictable bounds," Raoul said sharply. He shifted so he was sitting upright on the couch. "We're essentially passive vis-à-vis the police. Civil disobedience is a ritual of submission, with a safe and acceptable outcome for all parties. We have to push the limits. Refuse to submit. Show up where they aren't expecting us. Raise the ante."

Jenny looked at Raoul with fascination. Sara nodded, but her brow creased. For myself, I had to wonder whether Raoul had specific proposals or just a general critique. Anyone could talk a radical line.

But at that moment the office door opened. Holly and Craig were back. A smile came to my face as I stood to greet Holly. Enough of Claudia's cynicism or Raoul and his anarchist rhetoric.

Holly gave me a quick hug, but I could see she was still engaged with Craig. "I'll be five more minutes," she told me.

I turned back to the office. The conversation had broken up, and people worked alone or in pairs. I followed Jenny to her desk and reminded her about the Direct Action meeting the following Tuesday. "We're going to plan the new issue," I told her. "Tell Angie, too, will you? I haven't seen her in a while."

Jenny scribbled a note to herself, then looked up. "Did you hear about Angie's souvenir from Vandenberg? When we were in jail, there was no place to wash our underwear, so the Marshals went out and bought this old 1950s-style underwear at J.C. Penney's. Angie smuggled five pair out of jail. She modeled them for me last night."

"What a prize — McCarthy-era underwear," I said. I pictured Angie striking Marilyn Monroe poses. "I hope you both can make the meeting."

"Yeah, I'll tell her about it. How many pages do you think this issue will be?"

I wasn't sure if she was kidding me about how the paper kept growing, or expressing concern for the financial impact. "Well," I said, "there's all the

International Day reports, plus covering our June Livermore action. And Holly is doing a report on peace camps here and in Europe. I'd say twenty pages."

"At this rate, by next Fall we'll be up to a hundred."

"Or publishing weekly," I said, "Then we'll go daily in 1984."

The place was clearing out. Craig took off, and Jenny shortly after. Sara was on the phone for a few more minutes, and then it was me and Holly.

We wended our way to her nook at the back of LAG's section. "The further I am from the door," she said, "the more work I get done."

She picked up some file folders to take home. I came up behind her, put my arms lightly around her waist, and kissed her on the cheek. A smile crossed her lips, but she held onto the folders. "Sorry, I haven't quite slowed down yet. I've been going non-stop all day, and I have more to do tonight."

"Don't let me distract you," I said. I leaned over her and kissed her ear. She stopped sorting and leaned back into my chest. Brushing her hair from her face, she tilted her head toward me. I leaned forward to kiss her. Just as our lips met, though, the phone rang. She glanced down. "It's the night line," she said apologetically. "I told Daniel he could call me here after six. I promised I'd answer." I kept my arms around her as she picked it up, but it was clear that she needed to concentrate. I let go and stepped back. Curses. Foiled by the night line.

It wasn't that big a deal, I told myself. It was part of the total package. After



Each issue of Direct Action grew more ambitious in its coverage of global activism.

all, it was Holly's passion for peace that had drawn me to her in the first place.

Still, I felt a twinge of jealousy as she laughed on the phone. Not concern that she would leave me for Daniel, but that she was using up her laughter and enthusiasm talking about International Day with him.

I shook my head. Take it as a political lesson: Sometimes you're going to get preempted by the night line.

Friday, April 30, 1983

I HEADED DOWN to Hank's about ten o'clock, after stopping by my new night job. I'd stumbled onto a custodial gig at a little office building a few blocks from my apartment. For dumping the trash and sweeping up two evenings a week, I got \$150 a month, increasing my income to the unheard-of total of \$600 per month. My after-rent income practically doubled.

Friday night's chores took a little longer than usual. But I amused myself thinking of all the records I was going to buy when I got paid the following week. I had my eyes on a four-disk set of Bessie Smith, and maybe a Renaissance lute compilation.

Hank's shop was about six blocks from my new job, in a little industrial zone just off of Shattuck. The area had once fit neatly in the shadow of Berkeley's auto row, but car dealers were being displaced by video stores and restaurants, and the enclave seemed like a relic of another era.

As I came through the door, the Rolling Stones' "Satisfaction" blared out of the trebly juke box. Hank put down the purple lava lamp he was rewiring and gave me a firm handshake. "Hey, welcome to Friday Night Pins," he said. "You're the first to arrive. Want a beer?"

"Sure," I said. Hank produced a bottle of Pilsner. He picked up a massive set of keys from the workbench, flipped expertly through them, and produced a bottle opener. He popped the lid and handed me the beer.

I looked at the lava lamp. "My favorite uncle had one of those when I was a kid," I said. "Only his was green."

"Hey," he said. "Look what I got at the Ashby Flea Market last weekend." He pointed up into rafters, where a rubber mask of Richard Nixon — ski-slope nose, jowly cheeks, and a perpetual five-o'clock shadow — grinned down at us.

"Well, that'll keep us on our toes," I said, shifting a step or two so the mask wasn't looking right at me.

"You never know when it might come in handy," Hank said. "I've had a grudge against Nixon ever since he sent my brother to Vietnam. He and I have a score to settle."

Mort, Lyle, and Craig arrived. Mort set a six-pack of Beck's on the workbench and started a game on Old Chicago, a house favorite. Craig leaned

on the next machine to watch. Lyle opened a beer and wandered around, looking more at Hank's work area than the pinball games.

I rang up a game on El Dorado, a western-motif game with the fastest flippers in the house. My first ball shot to the top of the illuminated playing field and careened downward, setting off an array of bells and buzzers before heading straight for the drain. I saved it with a deft double-flipper maneuver, but watched helplessly as it rolled down a side chute and disappeared. My luck wasn't much better on the next ball, and I reset the game prematurely to wipe out my low score.

Before I could shoot again, Hank called out: "Check what I did to the shooting gallery game. I just got it working. It used to be these cute little squirrels and deer that you were trying to kill. When you hit one, the next one would pop up. Check it out now."

I looked into the window of the old game. There in the target range was a miniature photo of Vice President George Bush, his expression frozen halfway between a grin and a grimace.

"Take a shot," Hank invited.

I gripped the mechanical pistol and aimed carefully. Pow! Pow! Got him! Curtains for Bush. Up popped Jesse Helms. Pow! Down he went, and up popped Richard Nixon. Pow! Pow! Pow! A goner. Up popped the big prize — Ronald Reagan.

Craig was looking over my shoulder. "Let me have a shot," he said boisterously. He stepped up and squeezed the trigger. Pow! Missed. Pow! Pow! Pow! No luck.

"He's an elusive character," Hank said. "Try aiming a little higher, right between the eyes." Craig leaned over the gun, eyeing down the sight line. Pow! Pow! Clunk.

"That didn't sound good," Mort said.

Hank went around back and checked the connections. "Shoot, I think we fried the coil. It's not hard to do on these old machines." He looked frustrated, then seemed to slough it off. "Ah, well, it can always be rewired one more time."

"Figures it would get stuck on Reagan," Craig said.

"What a metaphor," I said. "Did you hear what he said the other day? He called the Soviet Union the 'Evil Empire.' It's all a *Star Wars* movie to him. What a joke."

Mort cleared his throat. "I hope it's a joke. But he's got Congress eating out of his hand, funding every weapons system the Pentagon can come up with. Sooner or later, Reagan's going to want to play with his new toys. How long till we send troops into Central America or the Middle East?"

"That's what I've been thinking," Craig said. "Especially with the economy in recession. A war could knock the economy off the front page for a while."

I leaned back on a pinball machine. "I don't see it," I said. "Not direct

intervention. People may tolerate CIA mercenaries and weapons sales. But not an open war. After Vietnam, people won't swallow the patriotic propaganda you need to justify sending people to die."

I preempted Mort's reply by pulling out a joint, firing it up, and passing it his direction. "Direct from Mendocino County to Berkeley."

"Ah, nature's bounty," Hank said as he exhaled his first toke. "The sun shines on California."

Lyle punched some Beatles songs on the jukebox. Hank turned back to rewiring the lava lamp. Mort started up a game on Queen of Hearts. Craig and I leaned against the workbench watching him play.

"Hey, how did the meeting with CISPES go?" Mort asked Craig.

"Okay," Craig said after a moment's reflection. "I think CISPES and the Freeze will help organize a legal march this June."

"Do you think they can get their members to come out to the Lab?" I asked.

Craig contemplated his beer bottle. "Even if they don't, it helps our credibility with the media. We need to do a march, anyway. There'll be plenty of people out there who don't want to get arrested. We have to provide ways for them to participate. You can't have people just stand around doing nothing, or they won't come back."

"Well," I said, "if people support the blockade one time, maybe they'll come back and get arrested the next."

Craig nodded. "Exactly. It's about making links to the mainstream, finding different ways for people to get involved." He took a drink, then turned to Hank, who was still at his workbench. "Hey, we need banners and props for the march, too. The Grim Reaper for sure. And what ever happened with that big nuclear missile that Spirit AG made? We should have it in June."

"I think the police confiscated it out at the Lab on Good Friday," Mort said over his shoulder as he worked the flippers on Queen of Hearts.

"Yeah," Hank said. "We saw Melissa and Nathaniel carry the missile into the intersection and chain themselves to it. But then the crosses came out and the prayers started. That was our cue to go back to my van and get high."

"Couldn't take a little praying for peace?" I said.

"Well, we were worshipping in our own way," Hank answered.

"Worshipping nature. By the time we got back, everyone had been arrested and the missile was gone."

"Maybe the cops will return it," I said. "Don't they have to give back your property?"

Hank set down the lava lamp and came over toward us. "I want to take the missile idea a step further," he said. His eyes grew large. "I want to build the world's first Nukeycycle. It'll be a twenty-foot-long tube with a nosecone and fins. The top will be cut away so four people can get inside it. Then the whole thing will be mounted on bicycle frames, with four seats and four sets of pedals."

We laughed, but Hank pressed on. "I can weld the bike frames together, with double wheels at the front and rear. Turning corners will be a problem, but I'll figure it out. I already got an estimate on a reinforced tube, twenty feet long. It would be about \$250. Do you think Coordinating Council would pay half?"

"Then LAG would have its own nuclear missile," Craig said. "It's about time."

"Right," Hank said. "We could paint LAG slogans all over it, then pedal it out to Livermore and do a first strike on the Lab."

"Then we could drive it out to Concord in July," Mort tossed in between shots on his game. "The Central America groups are calling another action out there a couple of weeks after ours. They want LAG to endorse it."

"Great," Hank said. "Get busted at Livermore, rest up a few days, and head out to Concord."

"You'll have to think up another pseudonym if we go back to Concord," I said to him. "I think they caught on that Irma Feddup wasn't your real name."

"I've got one ready for Livermore," he said. "Sikov Bulls Schmidt."

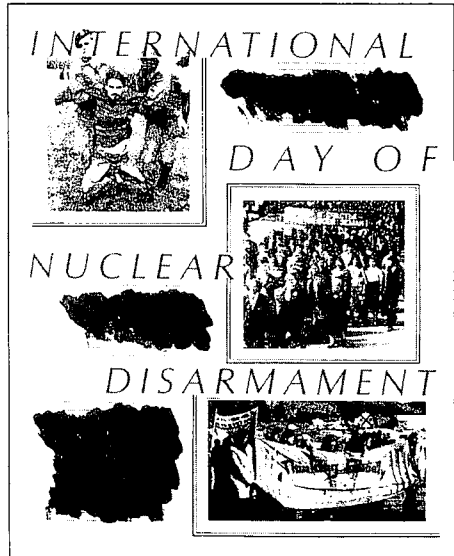
I laughed. "I'd like to see them write that on their booking forms."

"You could use that at Concord, too," Craig said. "It's a different jurisdiction."

Mort stopped playing and turned to us. "We've got to get behind the Concord action. We can raise anti-intervention issues in LAG and build a coalition with CISPES."

"Sure," I said. "That's the way to get people interested in a coalition. CD excites people. Why not use it?"

"The problem is," Mort said, "it becomes an end in itself. The point becomes getting arrested, not building a strategy for political and social change. It warps the organization, so that any other type of organizing gets ignored. Some people didn't want LAG to endorse the October Euromissile coalition, because the Freeze doesn't want to do CD! Between the CD junkies



The International Day work group produced this 104-page handbook, consisting almost entirely of new material, in Spring 1983.

and the new-agers in the International Day work group, it's a wonder we aren't totally isolated."

I felt defensive for Holly. "International Day includes other local groups," I said. "There's a local coalition."

"Sure, other peace groups. But do you see any unions or Central America solidarity groups getting on board? You can't ask people who are engaged in a daily struggle for jobs or lives to line up behind new-age rhetoric." He set his beer down and resumed his pinball game.

Craig leaned against the machine next to Mort. "It's a start. International Day gives us something to build on. It will help with the Euromissiles coalition in October."

"Even the Euromissiles coalition is mostly peace groups," Mort said over his shoulder. "There's got to be more diversity. White, middle-class activists aren't going to change the world by themselves."

"Well," I said, "If the Democrats come to town next Summer, we'll get our chance to form coalitions. Everybody will want in on the action." We had been hearing rumors that the 1984 Democratic National Convention was headed for San Francisco. "That would be wild if the Democrats come here. There'll be protests every day. It'll be a free-for-all."

Mort turned from his game as if he'd been stung. "It's not that simple," he said. "Protesting the Democrats could actually help re-elect Reagan. It's not like nuclear weapons, where the target and message are clear-cut."

His ardor surprised me. "Yeah, I guess not," I said.

Craig seemed unfazed, though. "You've got to admit," he said, "if it comes to pressuring the Democrats, we should be able to form a hell of a coalition."

"Yeah, it could be interesting," Mort said. "Of course, we'll have to deprioritize International Day. Some people talk like it's already carved in stone, and they get all bent out of shape if you question it."

I figured he meant Daniel, not Holly, so I let it slide. Hank screwed the base back on the lava lamp, wrapped tape around the loose wires, then plugged it in. After a moment it began to glow a deep, iridescent purple. "Now we just have to wait and see if it heats the lava," he said. He looked around the circle. "Hey, let's get back to work here. Enough goofing around. These machines need their exercise."

"I'll get us in the mood," Mort offered, pulling out a joint. "Someone ring up Old Chicago for four players and let's go."

Saturday, May 22, 1983

IT WAS coming up fast. The Livermore blockade was barely a month away. By the time we got Direct Action out, it would be down to a couple of weeks.

I was going to meetings practically every night. It was hard to believe that

only a year before, I had all of my time to myself, to read, write, or play music. Now my history books seemed like artifacts from that distant time before LAG. And it had been a week since I had touched my guitar. If not for a benefit that I was playing in early June, I might drop it altogether.

At least till after the blockade. Once in a while, especially late at night, I would think how nice it would be to do the action, spend a day or two in jail, and then take a break. Not that I wanted out of LAG. But I wanted a balance. This every-night business was too much.

And on top of that, here I was at a Saturday afternoon spokescouncil. I arrived early with Craig to set up a literature table and talk over the meeting, which Jenny and I were facilitating. We were meeting in the rec room of the student ministries center on Bancroft. A ping-pong table and volleyball net held center stage in the big hall. Windows along one side looked onto a garden, and banners proclaiming "peace," "love," and "justice" hung from the high ceiling.

Craig and I carried the ping-pong table to the side of the room and wheeled out a rack of folding chairs. "We should have another rack handy," he said. "There were over seventy people at the last meeting."

"Yeah," I said. "Solidarity is on the agenda, so that should bring people out."

Craig started setting up chairs. "We've got a lot to cover in five hours."

Jenny arrived with a box of stuff to sell. We covered half of the ping-pong table with flyers, bumper stickers, buttons, and stacks of recent issues of Direct Action. The other half would fill up fast enough with other people's flyers.

Besides being facilitators, Jenny and I were spokes for our new AG, Rabbit Deployment. We'd had our first meeting the previous Sunday — Daniel, Caroline, Walt, Angie, Jenny, Holly, and I. We decided to meet for dinner once a week till the action, then all get arrested together at Livermore.

Rabbit Deployment was named for the proposed Rapid Deployment Force, a special strike team which could intervene militarily anywhere on the



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globe on short notice. Probably the RDF was just a public relations ploy, a way to get more money for the military machine. But if it existed, Reagan might be tempted to use it. And once the Rapid Deployment Force was committed, more troops would follow. Maybe intervention wasn't as impossible as I thought.

"Did you hear Walt's idea?" I asked Jenny as I made a donations sign for the lit table. "He wants to announce that we're going to deploy hundreds of pregnant rabbits at Livermore in June."

She laughed sharply. "That's terrible! We'll have the animal rights people all over us!"

Craig came over, and the three of us conferred about the agenda, which focused mainly on blockade tactics and jail solidarity. People kept filtering in, and people had to scoot their chairs back to widen the circle. "This is great," Craig said. "We must be doing something right."

I nodded as I copied Jenny's agenda notes. Livermore was right on target. After that, though, who knew what we'd agree on. Beyond June we had

nothing except the sketchy October Euromissiles coalition and vague rumors of the Democratic Convention. Still, for the moment, we could play our ace — Blockade Livermore!

Of course, there was a wild card — Vandenberg. About once a week we'd hear that the MX test was imminent. So far, it had been false alarms, and there was no solid evidence that the government was any closer than before. With billions of dollars in defense contracts at stake, the first test had to be perfect. So we could be waiting a while.

The meeting got underway with a quick check-in. Spokes had come from as far as Santa Barbara to the south and Eugene to the north. Reports on media work, the legal collective, and other logistics took too long, but finally we moved into solidarity.


It wasn't an easy topic, since it could mean anything from organizing a hunger strike to pressuring the courthonts to give everyone equal sentences after we'd been cited out.

Jenny, who was facilitating, suggested starting with tactics during booking.

Two northern California clusters, the Acorns from Mendocino County and

**LIVERMORE
ACTION GROUP**

**Blockade
Livermore Lab
on
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF
NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT**



Kids Affinity Group, Livermore Blockade June, 1992.

**LIVERMORE ACTION GROUP
3126 Shattuck Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94705**

Locally, LAG focused its International Day energy on a second June blockade at Livermore.

Sonomore Atomics from Sonoma County, put out similar proposals that no one give their name or provide ID until we had been promised equal sentences, no probation, and no fines. "That way they can't single out second-timers and nail them," said one of the spokes.

"But what about people who need to cite out?" someone asked. "Shouldn't they take ID?"

Several people raised their hands. Doc was first. "Each person will have to make their own choice. But you have to know that if you take an ID, they may find it and force-cite you. Once you're out, you're a lot more vulnerable. Our strength is to be together in jail. We're visible, and we're costing the government money. That's our best leverage. If a thousand people hold firm, they'll have to give in."

"We should refuse to even talk to them," said Cindy. "Maintain complete silence through the booking. They'll just have to call us all Jane or John Doe."

The discussion went on for quite a while. Jenny kept trying to move forward, but someone always had one more reservation or concern. Finally, the spokes consented to the proposal about not giving names, but decided that carrying IDs and maintaining silence would be optional.

It was already past four, and we only had the room till six. Jenny proposed a ten-minute break, but most people wanted to press on with the meeting. I took over facilitating the last segment, a task I didn't relish.

We moved on from solidarity, agreeing to take it up at the next spokescouncil. Then we took up blockade tactics. Like the previous year, hundreds of first-timers were expected, many of whom would want a predictable scenario. But there was also a sizable contingent of people, not the least from Change of Heart, who wanted to step things up.

I was wary of spending the entire time hearing complaints and concerns that would just divide people. I searched for some way to channel the pent-up energy. Already, a half-dozen hands were up. We had to let the steam off, even if we never got to a concrete proposal. Maybe if we aired the differences, we'd see that we weren't that far apart.

I called on four people, who spoke about keeping our chants nonviolent; the importance of a good flyer to give stalled drivers; mobile blockade tactics; and the possibility of renting a bus so people from L.A. could come to the protest.

Another half-dozen people raised their hands. My jaw tightened. At this rate, we'd use our whole hour talking past each other. The next speaker talked about the symbolic value of shutting down the Lab for the entire day, but didn't say a word about specific tactics.

We had to try something different. Something that would get people talking directly to each other. I thought of a technique I'd seen Artemis use at a Vandenberg meeting earlier in the Spring.

"Let's do a fishbowl on how to make the blockade more effective," I said.

"Specific proposals. Six or eight people with strong opinions come into the center. It's okay to dialog, but when you've spoken a couple of times, step out so someone else can come in."

I must have sounded like I knew what I was doing, because people assented. Hopefully it would focus the discussion without triggering an all-out fight. At the minimum, it would buy me a little time to think of something else. I pulled my chair into the center. Most of those who joined me were people I knew: Karina, Raoul, Hank, Melissa, Monique from the Walnettos, and a few others.

Before we even got the chairs arranged, Karina was waving her hand. "Last year, the blockade was over by noon because we sat down right in front of the cops and waited to be arrested. We should make them catch us. Get up and move every time the cops show up. We need to shut the Lab all day, whatever it takes."

Melissa folded her arms across her chest. "What it might take is renewing our commitment to nonviolence. I propose that we all go limp when they arrest us. It would take them all day."

"Aw, they can handle a bunch of pacifist blockaders," Raoul said. He shifted in his folding chair, which looked fragile underneath him. "If we all do the same thing, that's playing their game. Our strength is spontaneity. We need some people going over the fences, others chaining themselves to the gates, others doing roving blockades. Keep the cops guessing."

Monique bristled. "I hope you don't do that near my AG. We'll be bringing in a lot of new people, and we're planning traditional civil disobedience."

"You can be at different gates," said a man across the circle. "That worked last year: Different zones for different tones."

Good idea, I thought. But I wondered whether anyone had tried going over the fence the previous year. That could complicate matters.

Alby jumped into the circle as Karina stepped out. "We should drive old cars out there and disable them right at the gates," he said before he even sat down. "They'll have to get a tow truck through the blockade to get rid of them."

A ripple of laughter ran around the room, but Melissa didn't look amused. "I assume you plan to stay and take responsibility for what you've done," she said.

"No way." The speaker was Sid, a gangly nineteen-year-old with a paint-spattered T-shirt and spikey black hair that leapt away from his pale skin. He perched on the edge of his folding chair. "That's the whole point. Keep moving. No sitting and waiting to be arrested. Move down the road and blockade again. Make them come to us."

"Wait," Melissa said as if struggling to comprehend. "You're going to disable cars and then run away?"

Raoul jutted his jaw. "Don't we have affinity group autonomy? AGs can do anything, as long as it's nonviolent."

Melissa spread her hands in front of her. "Well, *is* it nonviolent? I don't want to see anybody stirring things up and then running away while others pay for it."

Raoul muttered something, but Claude, who had just joined the circle, spoke over him. "I have another concern about escalating tactics. People could wind up with different charges. Some could have felonies, others misdemeanors. It makes jail solidarity a lot trickier."

"Why can't people with similar charges be in solidarity among themselves?" someone asked.

"No," Claude shot back. "We have to demand equal charges for everyone. We can't let the authorities divide us into different groups."

"Hey," said Hank, who had sat silently through the whole fishbowl. "Don't worry. It'll give us something to argue about at the jail meetings."

Most people laughed. At least we can still make jokes, I thought. We'd just about run the range of tactics and no one had gone ballistic. Still, my secret hope that the fishbowl would magically produce the perfect proposal and make me look like a genius was fading.

Time was running short, and we had reports about outreach, a wheelchair blockade, a seniors' march, and a youth action on the agenda. I had to call an end to the discussion. People grumbled as they moved their chairs out of the center. The woman who was taking notes said she would mail them out to AG contacts the next day, so the next meeting could try to come to some decisions.

I had brought my guitar, hoping to end the afternoon with a song, but the meeting ran on until we had to vacate the space. With minutes to spare we chose facilitators for the next meeting, folded up the chairs, and cleared out.

Craig and Mort talked about getting dinner. I wished I could go with them and debrief from the meeting. Even without any dramatic decisions, I felt like it had gone well. Most of the tactical differences could be contained within the "tones for zones" policy. Still, I'd have liked to get Craig's sense of it.

But that would have to wait. I had plans with Holly. It was our only night together all week, and I was looking forward to going to a movie or a play.

I hoisted my guitar over my shoulder as I angled across People's Park. A group of drummers sat on the edge of the stage, not quite getting a rhythm going. "Hey, play us a song," someone called to me.

"Can't right now," I said apologetically. It nagged at me as I kept walking.



Was I in such a big hurry that I couldn't stop and play a song? But it was too late now. The moment had passed.

I skirted the edge of the garden and headed toward Telegraph. As I waited for the light to change, a headline about the Giants caught my eye. Baseball. I dropped a dime into the newsbox and opened to the sports page. Sure enough, the Giants were playing baseball. I scanned the standings — fifth place. Not a great start. I should go to a game. Maybe Mort and Hank would go. Good idea. Well, after the blockade. No way it was going to happen before then. But once we got the protest behind us, a sunny afternoon in the bleachers would be the perfect kickoff to a belated Summer.

Holly stood to greet me when I got home. I was still pretty keyed up from the meeting. "How about going to a movie?" I asked, picking up a *Bay Guardian* and flipping to the film section.

"Okay," she said with hesitation. "Actually, I'm not sure more stimulation is what I need. I was hoping to spend the evening hanging out and talking. Maybe we could get something to eat."

"Okay," I said, pacing around the living room. "How about some music?"

"Sure," she said. She poured a cup of tea and settled back in on the cushions on the floor. "Something not too loud."

I put on a Flatt and Scruggs tape and sat down next to her. The banjo was too jangly, though. I reached over and turned it down, but then it seemed too low. Just relax, I told myself. I stretched out on the floor, using the cushion she was sitting on as a pillow. I reached over and rubbed her lower back. "How did it go with Caroline today?" I asked.

"Well, good," she said dubiously. "I mean, it was great to spend the day with her. But she is so stressed about money. LAG is deep in debt again. The only hope is that with the blockade coming up, our mailing might bring in a lot of money."

"It worked with Vandenberg," I said.

Holly took a sip of tea. "Jenny was there for a while, too. She and Caroline are organizing a raffle. The grand prize is a trip to the island of Grenada."

"Why Grenada?" I said.

"It's a Caribbean island, for one," she said. "People will buy tickets to go to the Caribbean. But also, Grenada's new government is socialist. And it's the only country in our hemisphere with a Black president."

Grenada seemed far away to me, but Holly had traveled through Central America a few years earlier and spent time on the Caribbean coast. "I think it would be a great prize to win," she said.

She set down her tea and stretched out next to me. "Caroline told me about a friend of hers who went to Nicaragua on a coffee harvest brigade. It sounded wonderful. Since the revolution, people believe they're building a new society. Caroline and I were fantasizing about going on a harvest brigade."

Her words raised a nervous tremor in me. "Going to Nicaragua?"

"It's all a dream right now," she said. "But after the blockade, I'm going to need some sort of vacation. And Caroline definitely does. She's thinking of resigning from the staff after June."

I rolled onto my side so I was facing her. "Really? But she's done such a great job. How could anyone resign such a central position?"

Holly sighed. "I can understand it. It's so stressful. Especially being in the office. When I need to get work done, I have to get out of there."

I reached over and stroked her shoulder. "Is this what you want to be thinking about?" I asked.

She looked at me sadly. "No, you're right. We should talk about something besides LAG. But did I tell you about getting confirmation from the Plowshares people up in Connecticut? They're the people who have been arrested for hammering on missiles. They're going to do a CD at Electric Boat on June 20th."

"Cool," I said, sitting up on the futon. "What about Chicago? Did they ever sign up?"

"Yeah," she said. "Disarm Now Action Group is doing an action at Northrop Corporation. And a coalition of religious groups are doing a vigil in Cedar Rapids, Iowa." She sat up, and her eyes shone. "And you know what the best one is? The traditional Navajo down at Big Mountain, the Dineh Nation, are going to do a vigil in solidarity with us."

"That's great," I said. "That's not the 'usual peace group' that Mort complains about."

"Yeah. Every day there's something new. Antonio is working on a joint press statement that all the groups can use. And Daniel is planning a trip to Europe in the Fall, to help build for next year."

Next year? Wait a minute. What about the Democratic Convention? My jaw tightened. What to say? I didn't want to dampen her exuberance, but I remembered Mort's words about changing priorities, and it didn't seem right to remain silent. "If the Democratic Convention comes to San Francisco next Summer, a repeat of International Day might not make sense."

Holly stretched out on her back. "Why does the Convention make a difference? I don't care about yelling at a bunch of politicians? I'd rather be blockading Livermore as part of International Day."

"But we can't ignore the Democrats," I said. "They've given Reagan everything he wants. They're just as guilty as the Republicans. And just as crooked."

Holly yawned. "We have our focus, with International Day and the Livermore blockade. We shouldn't abandon our plans because of the Democrats."

I was sorry I'd brought it up. Before I could think of what to say, the tape player snapped off. Holly yawned again, and her features softened. "Weren't we going to get something to eat?"

"Yeah," I said, glad for the shift. I sat up next to her. "Do you want to go out?"

"Let's get something on Telegraph. Sara told me that the new Ethiopian place across the street is really good."

We grabbed our sweaters. I wished we were going to a movie, but at least we were getting out for a while. "How's Sara doing?" I asked as we started down the stairs. "I haven't seen her much lately."

"She's okay. Sometimes she has a hard time with Karina and her other relationships. She won't say so, but I think she wishes she had Karina all to herself."

"I can relate."

"What, you wish you had Karina all to yourself?"

We were just going out the lobby door. She passed through ahead of me. I reached out and tugged on her sweater to slow her down. "No," I said. "I'm happy right where I am."

Wednesday, June 8, 1983

"YOU DON'T really think they timed the MX test to mess with Livermore, do you?" I looked at Doc expectantly.

"Sure I do," he said. "They know the strength of our movement. And it scares them. Anything they don't understand scares them."

I nodded. Doc and Antonio and I were standing behind a circle of couches and folding chairs in the Savo Island Co-op community room. The seats were filled to capacity. Inside the ring, a couple of dozen people were crowded onto the floor.

I had just walked over from the LAG office, where I'd spent the afternoon helping Holly with her duties as unofficial Vandenberg liaison. As she predicted, dozens of people called LAG after learning that the MX missile test was about to happen.

The MX test. LAG answered the phones, but VAC called the meeting. Dormant since the exhausting March action, the Vandenberg Action Coalition sprang back to life in a day. Here at last was its moment of truth.

I skipped a Livermore publicity meeting to attend the emergency gathering. Even if it was exasperating to see LAG's blockade undermined by Vandenberg, I knew this was the place to be.

The meeting hadn't started yet. I looked around the room. Change of Heart was well-represented: Moonstone, Karina, Alby, Sara, Doc, Antonio, and a couple of others were already present. Karina got up from the floor and came over to Doc and Antonio and me.

"Are you going?" she asked us.

Antonio and I shook our heads, and I felt sheepish.

Doc nodded to Karina. "I'm leaving tomorrow night. And you?"

Karina glowed. "Tonight. This is the point of everything we do, isn't it? If we're on the base, they can't test the missile. It's as simple as that. Even a hundred people could ruin their plans. It's our biggest chance ever to affect the arms race."

The implicit contrast with stodgy old Livermore annoyed me. But Karina's enthusiasm was irresistible, and I leaned closer as she continued.

"We know the terrain from last time," she said. "We can approach the MX site from at least three directions. Most people will get caught, but as long as some get through, we can stop the test."

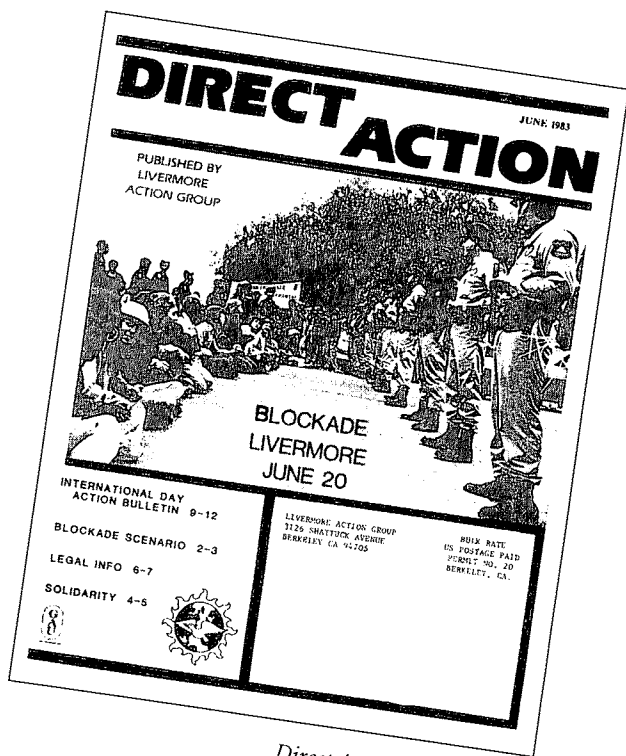
The meeting got underway, and she returned to her seat. I turned to Antonio. "I wonder how many people will skip Livermore and go down to Vandenberg?"

He looked around the packed room. "If Change of Heart is any indication, this is going to hurt the Livermore blockade."

"That's putting it mildly. Change of Heart is losing half its members." I lowered my voice. "Between you and me, it's a problem. LAG needs a strong action. We've got nothing definite planned after the blockade. We need the boost. And this cuts right into our action."

Antonio crossed his arms and tilted his head philosophically. "It's all one movement," he said. "It's not a competition. All of us working together will stop the arms race."

"I don't know," I said. "We're diluting our impact. We can subtract the Vandenberg arrests directly from the Livermore total. We expected the June blockade to be bigger than last year. Now who can say?"



Direct Action #7, June 1983

Sunday, June 19, 1983

"SIXTY DAYS?" I could hardly speak the words. "Karina got sixty days in federal prison?"

Moonstone clenched his teeth. "She'll be in jail for the rest of the Summer," he said as we talked at the office the day before the Livermore blockade. "Alby, too. They both had prior arrests. And several others got thirty days for a first offense."

Backcountry actions at Vandenberg began June 10. AGs went on and off the base, some getting busted, some hiding in the backcountry. No one was sure who had been arrested, who was still somewhere on the base, and who had gone back home. There wasn't even a phone at the camp, so messages had to be relayed from a house in Lompoc. All we knew for sure was that about a hundred people made it to the camp in the first few days. For an emergency action, it wasn't a bad start.

But unexpectedly, it tapered off. Maybe because of the heavier sentences at the March action, maybe because of the logistical strain of a long-distance action, and maybe because Livermore had its own emotional pull, Vandenberg didn't build momentum. Only about thirty-five people got arrested in the week before the missile test.

Worse yet, the MX test shot landed close enough to its Pacific island target that the Defense Department could call it a success. At the LAG office, everyone seemed to sag. And for VAC, the launch knocked the wind out of the weary network. Meetings evaporated, and information was even harder to get than for the March action.

Moonstone tried to put a good face on it, talking about the need to organize solidarity actions in support of Karina and the others in prison. But there wasn't really much that could be done.

Jenny called Moonstone over to her desk, and I turned back to Claudia, with whom I was working on a media kit for the next morning's press conference. Claudia had remained silent while Moonstone talked about Vandenberg. Once he was out of earshot, though, she wasn't slow to offer her opinion. "VAC set themselves up for failure, claiming they would stop the missile test," Claudia said matter-of-factly. "And now they've got people with sixty-day jail sentences. Big surprise. You can't pull off actions of this magnitude without a solid organization behind you."

"Makes me wonder about doing small actions," I said. "With thirty-five people, you're left to the mercy of the court. They couldn't get away with this at Livermore."

Claudia shrugged. "Maybe. All we know is that they haven't tried so far."

Walt came in the door. I stood and greeted him with a warm hug. His eyes seemed tired and harried. Walt had represented Karina and Alby at their Vandenberg hearing, and he looked like he felt culpable.

"Come on," I said, "You couldn't know what was going to happen."

"No," he said in a low voice. "But I was more cocky than I should have been. Most people who got arrested pled not-guilty and risked their luck on a later trial, figuring maybe with the missile test over, the courts would go lighter."

"But the five Change of Heart people wound up before a federal magistrate who had given people a ten-day jail term for the March action. I was the only lawyer there at the time. We assumed they would get a similar deal. So they pled no-contest."

Claudia peered at Walt. "And the magistrate hit them with sixty days?"

"Well, he asked why we were before his bench on these charges, and I told him that we were there to stop the government from building first strike nuclear weapons. He didn't like that at all." Walt shook his head slowly. "Next thing we knew, it was sixty-day sentences for second-timers."

"He was probably going to do it anyway," I told him. "How did Karina and Alby take it?"

"They were more angry than anything. But the first-timers who got thirty days were stunned, and this woman named Madrigan was really shaken up. She started sobbing right there in court." He looked at the ground. "It was pretty hard to take."

I felt for Walt, but I couldn't think of anything to say. I pictured Karina. Sixty days in prison. She could be tough when she needed to be. But that sort of sentence would wear anyone down.

Walt and Claudia started talking about the Livermore press conference. I went over to Moonstone, who was up by the couches in the front of the office. "How come you're free?" I asked Moonstone. "Didn't you get arrested?" I asked.

"Oh, I did," he said. "Twice. We were at camp within two days after the alert, and went on the base that night. We got dropped off on a perimeter road at dusk, seven of us from Change of Heart. We hiked the whole first night, took cover and slept all day, and hiked another night."

I could picture Moonstone hiking through the backcountry, burrs clinging to his tattered jeans and scraggly beard, looking like Old Man Mountain himself.

"Some people were getting exhausted," he said. "Not everyone was ready for a week in the backcountry. So we made it to an access road and dropped them off. They got spotted by a helicopter and busted right away."

"That left me and Alina. We hid in some bushes till the cops left. We hiked on for another night, using a compass to steer in the general direction of the MX site, until we ran into a swamp. We're wondering which way to go, sitting there alongside this swamp with our packs. But we were too near an access road, and a military policeman in a jeep comes along. Talk about lousy luck!" He laughed to himself. "The poor cop, he was so desperate, calling for help on

his radio and yelling at us not to move. Finally some more cops showed up and busted us."


"Why did you wait?" I said.

"Exactly. We should have run away. At best, he could only have captured one of us."

He scratched the back of his neck. "So we went to jail, spent the night, and cited out. I went back to camp, and immediately get recruited to be a guide. Suddenly I'm the expert! I'd been on the base one time, and made it about halfway to the MX site, and now I'm the guide.

"So I wind up taking Karina and Alby and three others from Change of Heart. We hiked two nights, hiding out during the day while the helicopters were patrolling, and made it back to the swamp just before dawn of the second night. We wanted to keep moving, since it was getting close to the launch date and we wanted to get to the MX site. I told people to stay hidden, and went crawling along the access road, looking for some safe way around the swamp. Well, wouldn't you know it, a police jeep comes along right then! I dive back into the bushes where people are hiding. But the jeep stops and points its headlights at the bush.

"They tell us to stay still, that they have dogs. But I can see there are only



INTERNATIONAL DAY of NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

BLOCKADE/DEMONSTRATE AT LIVERMORE LAB

CALENDAR:

June 17: Chris Williamson benefit concert, Zellerbach Auditorium 6:00 pm UC Berkeley Campus

June 18-19: To participate in the non-violent civil disobedience June 20-23 come to blockade assembly Place Berkeley High Cafeteria, Milvia at Bancroft, Berkeley

Non-violence Training begins at 10:00 am
Registration begins at 9:00 am
Spokes Council, Legal Briefing, Scenario Briefing, Monitor Training, etc. begin 10:00 am
You must have non-violence training!

June 20 & 22 International Day of Nuclear Disarmament Blockade at Livermore Lab 6:00 am-5:00 pm

Car Pool: 6:00 am-9:00 am MacArthur Bart Station, Oakland
Busses: 6:00 am and 9:00 am

From Bay Area take 580 East to North Livermore Ave. Exit. Turn right/south, follow 1 1/2 miles to East Ave. Turn left, follow East Ave. 1 1/2 miles to park. Monitors and signs will direct you to demonstration

March: Assemble: Robert Livermore Park, Livermore 8:30 am

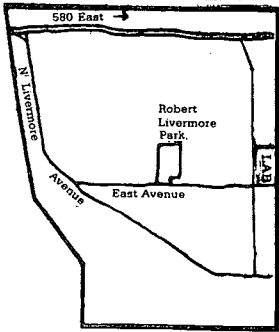
June 20 (evening) 7:00 pm Evaluation/Information/Planning

June 21 Place: Trinity United Methodist Church, 2320 Dana at Bancroft, Berkeley
Spokes Council, Legal Briefing, Scenario Briefing for June 22 Livermore Blockade
Place: Berkeley High Cafeteria, Milvia at Bancroft, Berkeley

June 22 Blockade Livermore Lab

June 22 & 23 Information/Jail Support/Planning 7:00 pm
Trinity United Methodist Church, 2320 Dana at Bancroft, Berkeley

June 25 "Hands Around Livermore Lab" a legal non-violent circle for peace 2 pm-4 pm
Car pool: Pinedo Park, Grove & Center, Berkeley 12 noon
Manzanita parking lot, Marin County 12 noon
Dolores Park, 18th & Dolores, San Francisco 12 noon



LAG's International Day plans included a rally, a benefit concert, the Livermore blockade, and Hands Around the Lab.

two cops, and there's seven of us. So this time I say to people, 'I'm going to walk, see you later.' And I take off, back up the hill. I get up a hundred feet, find a nice spot, and lie down and listen to them rustling up the other people."

"The others didn't try to run?"

"No, running would mean splitting up, and I was the only one who really had any clue where we were. No one else wanted to risk it."

It surprised me to hear that Karina hadn't taken off. If there was anyone I thought would have been up for an adventure, it was her. But maybe not alone.

Moonstone bent over and scratched his leg. "After they busted the others," he continued, "They come looking for me. They get close, so I do a little ritual. I cast a circle around myself and ask the Goddess for invisibility and protection. The cops are cussing and talking real loud about snakes and wild boars that are going to get me.

"Finally they bring up a dog. It immediately trots right over by me, sniffing, followed by a cop, not five feet away. I'm not breathing. I try to melt into the bushes. Luckily, the Goddess protected me. Also, the dog didn't actually have a scent to go by, and it went right on past, sniffing at the ground.

"They finally gave up and left. I waited there most of the day, and that night tried to figure out how to get to the MX site. But it was hopeless. I could never find a safe route. I wound up going through a big bed of poison oak, and then through a patch of thistles."

A swell of nausea rose in my stomach. His face was a little splotchy, and I'd noticed he was scratching a lot, but I hadn't put it together. I knew poison oak wasn't contagious, but I couldn't help edging away from him. "So how did you get busted?" I asked in a thin voice.

"I ended up near the officers' quarters," he said, not seeming to notice my revulsion. "I walked past the buildings, looking in the windows, till someone saw me and had me arrested. I was so exhausted that I non-cooperated all the way."

"If you got arrested twice in one week," I said, "how did you avoid the sentence Karina and Alby got?"

"They took me to a judge for arraignment, with Daniel and a few others. This was after Karina and Alby got sixty days, so we figured we better plead not-guilty and take our chances later. It was my second arrest, but I got a different judge, and he said he would let me go without bail if I agreed not to come back within two months. Between my exhaustion and the poison oak, I wasn't in any hurry to return, so I said okay."

"And Daniel, too?"

"Yeah, we both wanted to get back up here and do Livermore."

I laughed in spite of myself. "You're going to get busted with a case of poison oak?"

"I might as well itch in jail as out," he said. "I've been fasting, so I'm not feeling it much. And we'll probably only be in for a couple of days, anyway."

I reached out and rubbed his shoulder. He stepped forward and gave me a long hug, which usually I would have appreciated. But I was still feeling a little queasy about the poison oak, and it was hard to return his fervor.

Moonstone released me from his embrace. "I've got to get going. See you in jail." He started away.

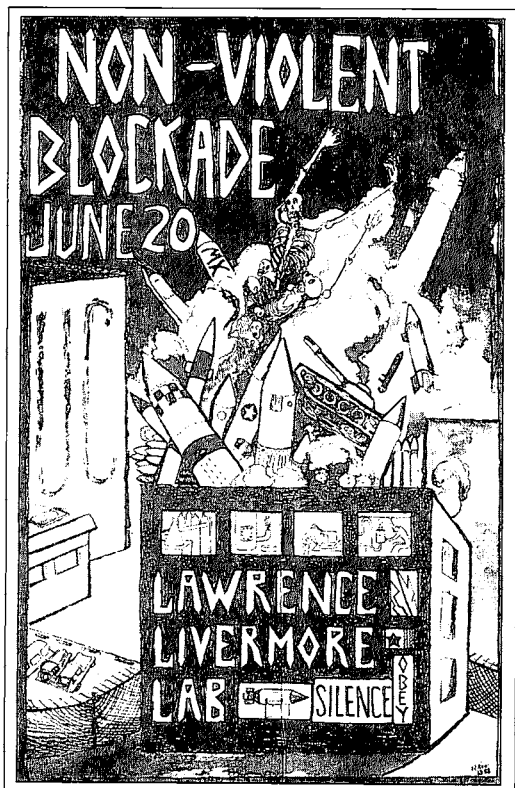
"Yeah," I called after him. "I'll see you there."

Monday, June 20, 1983

I HAD A nagging feeling on the pre-dawn ride out to the Lab, a vague sense of going into "enemy territory." I wanted to turn back. But we were already on the highway, heading over the Berkeley Hills toward the Livermore Valley.

Maybe it was the music. Jimi Hendrix was great accompaniment to pinball and weed-fueled political discussions. But on a pre-dawn ride to a nuclear weapons lab?

I was riding shotgun with Hank, who was hauling a van-load of signs and banners out to the action.



"Hopefully we can drive in pretty close, so we don't have to shlep them too far," he said. He sneezed hard. "Damn, I'm getting a cold. Too much work and too many meetings. I'm running on fumes."

I looked at Hank and nodded. "I'm glad we're not getting busted today."

Hank and I were among twenty organizers who had decided to delay our arrest till Wednesday so we could help with logistics, media, and jail support during the main blockade. It was important organizing, sure. But more than that, it meant two more nights in my own bed. I figured that the first couple of days in jail would be the

toughest. If I got arrested Wednesday, with the legal settlement already in place, I might be released the same day.

Holly was planning the same, as far as I knew. She and Sara had driven out to the Lab even earlier to be legal observers for a women's cluster opening the blockade at the East Gate. Legal observers, being right in the middle of the action, were always at risk of arrest.

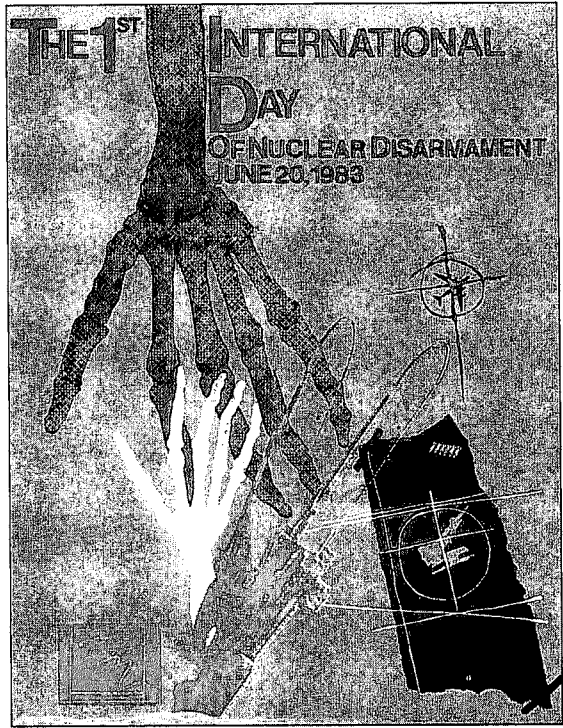
What if she did get busted? I'd have the apartment to myself for a couple of days. Get some space to myself before going to jail.

It was still dark as Hank eased his van off the exit ramp and rolled through the deserted little downtown of Livermore. "I'm surprised there aren't cops everywhere," he said. "Wish I had a can of spraypaint."

I twisted in my seat, picturing us trying to drive a van loaded with protest signs up to the Lab. Cops everywhere, ready to bust everyone in sight. And we'd be the most conspicuous target. Why hadn't I volunteered to work in the office with Claudia and Caroline?

As we approached the Lab, the first rays of dawn were visible on the horizon. I could make out clumps of protesters along the roadside. There were hardly any other cars on the road, and Hank was able to drive up to the gravel lot at the corner of East and Vasco, about a half-mile from the South Gate. He pulled up alongside a row of portajohns.

Although the police at the intersection weren't trying to stop us, driving farther seemed risky. I definitely did not want to get busted. And not just for selfish reasons. Jenny and I were doing a last-minute nonviolence prep the next day for any new people who wanted to join the Wednesday action. I had obligations.

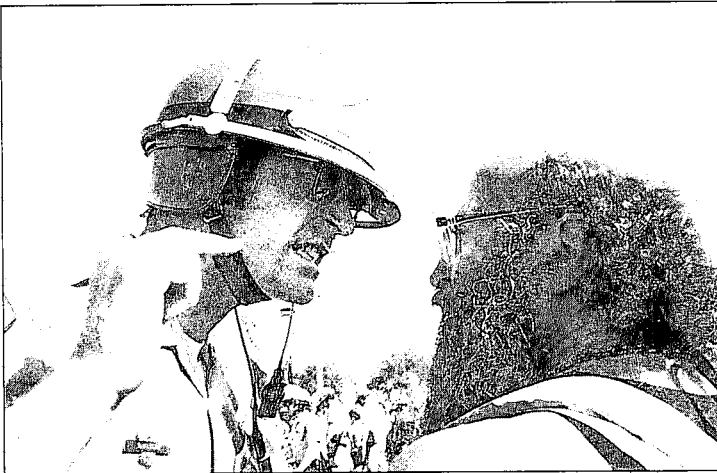


Local artists offered posters such as this silk screen in support of International Day.



Scenes from the June 20, 1983 blockade at Livermore Lab. Over 1100 people were arrested in this, the largest of two dozen civil disobedience actions across North America and Europe as part of the International Day of Nuclear Disarmament.





Hank decided to go for the gate, though. "Otherwise, we have to carry the signs all that way."

I sucked in my breath and stayed quiet. Hank's headlights illuminated a



One AG blocked traffic while other protesters gathered along a road near Livermore Lab.

row of helmeted cops against the backdrop of the Lab's tall chain-link fence. They studied us coldly but let us pass. Pockets of protesters huddled together making final plans. Others hiked toward the gate.

We made it to the South Gate with no hassle.

Hank pulled over,

and we started unloading the signs and banners that Overthrow had painted. Hank did a quick inventory of the signs, which covered disarmament, nuclear testing, Central America, and social justice. "If we're blockading people," he said, "we might as well give them something to think about."

"Maybe they should be like the old Burma Shave highway signs," I said, "where you read them in succession and they make a poem."

"Yeah, yeah. I had an idea like that. I should've done it. Four signs, and they'd say: It Ain't/No Joke/George Bush/Deals Coke."

I laughed. Some of the tension drained from my shoulders. "Don't forget the fifth sign," I said. "It has to say 'Burma Shave' at the end."

Blockaders came and grabbed signs and banners, and the scene seemed more like a theater production than a protest. We had just about cleared out our stock when a cop came over and poked at the van with his baton. "Gotta move. No parking."

"Thank you, officer," Hank said with exaggerated politeness. "Good to see our tax dollars at work."

The cop cocked his head. "Let's see the registration on this vehicle," he said, pulling out a flashlight as big as a riot baton.

"You've got to be kidding," Hank said.

"Let's see it. And your license, too."

Hank muttered to himself and went to get the papers. Several other cops, having nothing better to do, came over to help hassle us. I instinctively patted my back pocket to be sure I had my wallet in case we got busted.

Suddenly I realized I hadn't emptied my pockets the night before. My pipe. I didn't dare check my pocket or it was a giveaway. I tried to visualize my last toke the night before, with a sinking feeling that I'd put the pipe in my pocket.

Hank returned with the van's registration. His jaw was set, and I thought he was going to fling the papers in the cop's face. Don't antagonize them! I tried to signal him. The cops were on their radios, running a warrant check. Should I try to get away? But I couldn't desert Hank. Besides, trying to leave would make the cops suspicious. And there wasn't anywhere to run.

I started over toward Hank to try to quiet him down. But one of the cops immediately held his arm out. "Back over there, don't move."

I was stuck. And now the cops were watching me. Hank was jawing at them, going on about illegal searches. His voice kept rising, like he didn't care whether he got arrested or not. Maybe he figured if the van was getting busted, he might as well, too. I stayed silent and tried to look insignificant. Maybe they'd arrest him and leave me. It was my only hope.

Minutes dragged by. The cops seemed determined to find a reason to impound the van. Hank was defiant. I felt sick. I'd probably be separated from the other blockaders and left out of solidarity for having brought weed to the blockade. Damn!

One of the cops got on his radio, probably to call a tow truck. An officer over at the side was fiddling with handcuffs. The search would be next. I groped for a way out. Make a run for the cover of the crowd? Plead that I was an innocent bystander?


Just when it seemed like we were goners for sure, the first affinity group stepped out into the road. The chanting and the applause of the crowd drew the cops' attention away. Their commander ordered them to line up and strap on their riot helmets. Hank and I seized the opening, jumped back in the van, and made our getaway.

As it turned out, I didn't even have my pipe on me. False alarm! I felt grateful just the same — saved by the blockade.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT
LIVERMORE BLOCKADE
CONTINUES
WEDNESDAY JUNE 22nd

Participants Must Have Non-Violence Preparation.

It's not too late to join the action!



SPECIAL TRAINING WILL BE HELD TUESDAY JUNE 21st.
 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The future will depend on what we do in the present.
 —Gandhi

CALL LIVERMORE ACTION GROUP 644-2028
 Up to 12 midnight Monday or after 8 a.m. Tuesday for location.

A Wednesday action drew newcomers inspired by the Monday blockade.

Wednesday, June 22, 1983

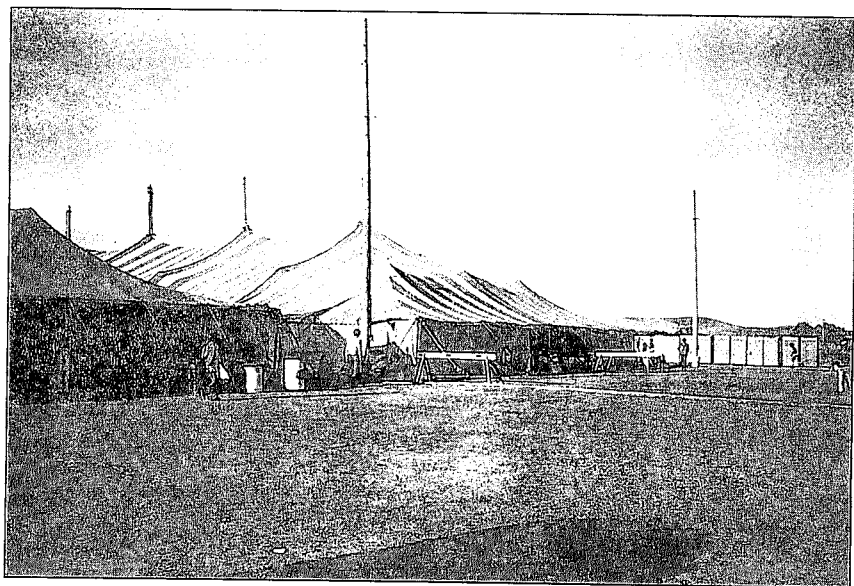
THE DAY DAWNED as we cruised east through the hills. I squinted out the window at the pinkish sky, feeling slightly nauseous.

My eyes traced the silhouettes of the rolling hills that separated Berkeley and Oakland from the Livermore Valley suburbs. Across the great divide. Again. Why didn't we ever protest in Berkeley?

Holly, next to me in the back seat, took my hand, and I felt thankful for the reassurance. Here we were, blockading together on our anniversary. I squeezed her hand.

We'd been living in different worlds the past couple of days, me with my head to the ground, hers in the clouds. My attention was stuck on Monday's Livermore action. Specifically, on the fact that there were two hundred fewer people than last year.

Two hundred fewer. What happened? Vandenberg's thirty-five arrests weren't the difference. Where was the groundswell of activism that the previous year had promised? How could there be fewer people? I tried to tell myself that eleven hundred arrests was a fine showing. And over nine hundred people remained in jail. Not bad at all. But I couldn't help feeling that we'd lost our momentum.



June 1983 Livermore blockaders, who would have overflowed the already-crowded Alameda County jail, were kept in circus tents on the jail grounds. Photos were taken by two protesters who smuggled cameras past the police and guards. Another person smuggled in a small tape recorder and sent live reports to a community radio station.

Holly, on the other hand, was basking in the glow of International Day. For the past two days, news had been pouring in about the three hundred International Day protests and events. A dozen groups did CD, most for the first time, and sent jubilant accounts of their actions.

Even now, at six a.m., Holly was telling Caroline, Jenny, and Angie, our traveling partners, about a blockade at Kirkland Air Force Base near Albuquerque where thirty people were arrested. I'd heard about it the day before, and had a hard time getting excited. We'd lost two hundred blockaders at Livermore. Even if Albuquerque gained thirty, I didn't like the math.

Still, if I couldn't share Holly's triumph, I tried not to begrudge it. Hearing her talk to reporters the day before, listening to how gracefully she showcased the actions of other groups while subtly underscoring LAG's initiating role, I felt proud of her and all she had done. But the glow seemed distant, and paled next to our reduced numbers at Livermore. How were we going to change the world if we got stuck at a thousand arrests? It was going to take a lot more than that to turn the arms race around.

I hadn't been tracking the scenery, and I was surprised when we pulled off the freeway onto Vasco Road. Although there were squads of police along the road, we were able to drive up to East and Vasco, at the southwest corner of the Lab. I stepped out of the car and caught a deep breath, remembering my last visit to the site. I patted my pockets just to be sure there were no surprises.

My travel-nausea receded, and I surveyed the spectacle. Two hundred people, maybe. A group of nuns. A few kids. A guy dressed as a skeleton with big floppy bone-hands. Up near the street, Mort and Tai unfurled Overthrow's red-on-black "Stop Corporate War" banner next to a white and blue banner reading "Let Peace Flow Like a River."

Traffic into the Lab was picking up, and the crowd seemed restless for the blockade to start. Rabbit Deployment circled up: Jenny, Angie, Caroline, Daniel, Holly, and I were getting arrested, and Walt was doing legal. Blockading with a bunch of friends — what a difference from the previous year.

We moved up to the intersection. There were about forty people doing the action. A women's AG linked arms and filed into the street. The cops casually buckled down their helmets and moved in to make the arrests. It was shaping up as a routine day on the old blockade line.

At that moment a boisterous figure made his way forward. People stepped aside to let the man through, and I caught a glimpse — Richard M. Nixon was joining the blockade. A confused buzz ran through the crowd. Then it dawned on me — Hank and his flea-market Nixon mask. As he came by I heard him rasp, "It's about time Tricky Dick paid for his crimes!"

Attired in coat and tie, Nixon did a spindly two-step into the street and joined the second group of blockaders. As the others knelt in the intersection, Nixon hunched his neck and thrust both arms in the air in his classic "V-for-Victory" salute. The media ate it up, and I smiled at the idea of tomorrow's

paper showing a jowly, grinning Nixon getting hauled away by two burly cops.

It was our turn. Holly and I kissed quickly. Even though there was no legal settlement yet, I figured I'd see her in a day or two, so it wasn't a real dramatic parting. We didn't even sit together in the blockade line. When we went out into the road, I wound up between Jenny and Angie. We sat down in front of a short line of cars, linked arms, and squeezed together. I could feel Jenny and Angie vibrating on either side, as if they were channeling electricity to each other and I were part of the circuit.

Our arrests were a simple affair. The only twist came when the first bus filled up just before my turn, and I was separated from my AG. Oh well, I thought, we'll probably be back together for booking.

Being a small group, we got special treatment: a real jail bus. It looked like a school bus gone bad. The outside was dirty white, with "Alameda County Sheriff's Department" stenciled in big black letters. Thick bars covered the windows. I wondered if you could see anything from inside.

I climbed the stairs and took a seat away from the door. The interior could almost pass for an antique. Everything was made of tubular steel like old playground equipment, once-painted but now worn bare in many places. Wherever the dark gray paint remained, it was etched with graffiti.

The bus pulled out, and I sat back and listened to the others talking. Mostly it was speculation about when a legal deal would be reached, but one rumor put me on edge: that we were going to be housed in general population, not with the other protesters.

We pulled off the freeway and onto the Santa Rita jail grounds. I pressed up to the window and peered through the slats. I made out the main jail entrance, with a tall barbed-wire fence around it. Were we getting dropped there? Or did they have a back gate? General population. The concentration-camp barracks. I wondered if we'd all be kept together in the same unit. Probably not. It'll be a few here, a few there. I wondered if I'd be in with anyone I knew.

The bus trundled past the main compound, though. I watched the barracks recede from view. After that, all I could see was low-cut fields. Finally, the bus turned sharply to the left and jerked to a stop. A sheriff ordered us out. There seemed no point in resisting. Single file, we tramped out into the daylight.

I squinted at the makeshift booking area the deputies had erected in the middle of a scraggly field. A canvas backdrop stretched for thirty feet, as if masking some environmental eyesore. Two long tables formed the processing department. Down at the opposite end I spotted Hank, one of the last of the earlier bus. The cops confiscated his Nixon mask, and he pointedly reminded them that it was his personal property and must be kept and accounted for.

I was released from my handcuffs and directed up to the tables. Off in the distance I heard a chorus of cheers. Had some supporters gotten visitors'

passes? It sounded like a lot of people. I worked my way down the booking line. At the end, a cop snapped my photo, then directed me around the curtain.

Emerging on the other side, I saw where the cheers came from. Two hundred feet away loomed a huge red-and-white-striped circus tent. Lined up in front of it were hundreds of men, waving and cheering. Guards lined the periphery. But they seemed like part of another reality. All that counted were the sea of hugs and friendly faces welcoming me to the "Santa Rita Peace Camp."

Hank and I found cots together toward the back of the tent. Coming in late, I didn't wind up near Change of Heart, but that was okay. I didn't want to get sucked into all the meetings. Better to have some distance.

Hank dropped onto his cot and lay there motionless. "How are you feeling?" I asked.

"Not so good," he said hoarsely. "I thought I was better last night. I even got high. But now it feels like it's turning into the flu." He coughed and winced.

I sat down on the edge of my cot and looked around the cavernous tent. It was about eighty feet wide and two hundred feet long. Seven stout wooden poles, twenty-five feet tall, held up the center spine. Thick hemp ropes traced the slope of the red and white roof. The side flaps were rolled up, but the air still felt musty. Probably the smell of the tent.

Row upon row of army cots filled most of the space, with two aisles about six feet wide. The front quarter was open, to use for meetings, talent shows, or whatever. In the center of the tent was a bottled water dispenser, an anomalous luxury. On the tentpole next to it, a makeshift bulletin board was covered with announcements of workshops and spokescouncils as well as poetry, drawings, and inspirational quotations.

I leaned back on the cot. I felt restless, wishing I had something to eat, preferably not bologna and white bread. Don't think about food, I told myself. Do something constructive. Like read.

Yeah, read. I bent over and unlaced my shoes, took a quick look around for guards, and pulled out my stash of fine-print Shakespeare plays: *Hamlet*, *Richard II*, *Julius Caesar*, and *A MidSummer Night's Dream*.

The guy on the cot next to me looked intrigued. I lent him *Julius Caesar*, and started in on *Hamlet* myself. It was slow going. The Melancholy Dane. Maybe I should start with something cheerier.

My ruminations were interrupted by a swell of applause from the front of the tent. Around me, men's faces lit up, and they jumped up and headed toward the commotion.

I put down *Hamlet* and followed. Was it the lawyers? Was there some news? Maybe this was the breakthrough. Maybe I'd gotten here just in time to celebrate our release.

It wasn't the lawyers, though. It was the County Sheriff, Reginald Krieg. Sheriff Krieg had been a regular visitor, I gathered, and his arrival triggered an

ecstatic response. "We've been doing this twice a day since Monday," Antonio told me. "Every time we have a more elaborate greeting."

Doc joined us. "It was different the first time the sheriff showed up and ordered us to arraignment," he told me. "There were a bunch of deputies surrounding us, ready for action. We thought they were going try to force people onto the buses. All five hundred of us retreated to the center of the tent and linked arms. The sheriff got the message that we weren't going to cooperate, and he was smart enough not to push it."

The cheers rose again, and the sheriff approached, a tall man with wire-rim glasses and a Smokey-the-Bear hat. As he pulled out his bullhorn, the crescendo of shouts and applause brought a smile to his face. He looked embarrassed as the assembled inmates launched into a rousing rendition of an old Summer camp favorite:

We love you Reginald, oh yes we do
No one can say those words, the way you do.
When you're not with us, we're blue
Oh Reginald, we love you.

Raucous cheering followed the serenade. Only after it subsided could the sheriff make his speech, which some of the men seem to have memorized. "Gentlemen, I would like to advise you that Judge Lewis is sitting in Livermore Muncipal Court. You are hereby ordered to appear for arraignment. (Loud boos and hisses.) However, I have been informed that you will not cooperate at this time. (Cheers.) If any of you wishes to be arraigned, please step forward."

Several men who had to leave moved toward the back of the tent. Odd, I thought. Do they exit that way? Then I saw that the rest of the men were forming two long lines down the left aisle, leaving a narrow pathway in the center. I took my place, linking hands with the person on either side. As the departing men passed slowly between the ranks, those remaining sang, "I will never forget you, I will never forsake you." As if our tent were the true reality, and those leaving were journeying forth into the unknown. I picked up the tune, touched by the loving assurance the song offered.

After they left, more cheers resounded, and the old union song "Solidarity Forever" rose from hundreds of throats. I joined in, feeling like I was being initiated into a rite. And it must have worked, because as the song wound down, I felt stronger and more resolute than before.

I thought back to the Vandenberg action, when they were dragging us around, and I'd felt like nothing we could do collectively was more powerful than each acting alone. What a difference here. We might be stuck in jail, but no one was pushing us around.

The day passed as quickly as I could have hoped. When the lawyers showed up late that evening, my hopes rose. But they had nothing new to

report. As they departed and I got ready for bed, an unaccustomed sadness mingled with irritation crept over me. The exhilaration of the earlier showdown with the sheriff had melted away. What did it matter? Sure, it felt good to stand up to authority. But at the end of the day, we were still here, and the Lab was still building nukes.

The shuffling, coughing, groaning, and sniffing of four hundred men pressed in on me. If only I could close the door. I longed for an art book, for my Renaissance tapes, for my guitar and a pipe of weed. For home. I pictured Holly sitting on the cushions sifting through her International Day notecards, the scent of her tea filling the air. How beautiful home seemed, and how bleak my present abode.

Friday, June 24, 1983

"DAMN," SAID Hank as the guards roused us from sleep on Friday morning. "It's hard to wake up without caffeine." He hauled himself to a sitting position.

"Tell me about it," I said, rolling over onto my back. "I don't even drink coffee, and I still miss it." Waking up was even harder than the previous day. Between the cold and the snoring, I hadn't gotten more than a few hours sleep either night.

There was no point lying in bed, though. I wasn't likely to get back to sleep with all the commotion around me. I sat up and rubbed my eyes. "What do you think's for breakfast?"

Hank scratched his stubble. "I'm guessing filet mignon and roast duck, with a side dish of stuffed peppers."

"Wow, sounds great," I said. "I was expecting oatmeal." I looked around the tent at the wrinkled clothes and unshaved faces. People's hair was matted and cowlicked. Some wore their blankets like ponchos. Friday was my third day. But it was the fifth for most of the men. With no end in sight. Unlike the wrist slap of the previous year, the prosecutor was demanding jail sentences of eleven days plus two years' probation. Local judges Lewis and Hyde were backing him up. These were the same judges who the previous year had stepped aside because of "conflict of interest." Something was fishy.

Eleven days in jail was bad enough, but probation was the real sticking point. With probation would come a suspended sentence, probably six months. If you violated probation — in other words, got arrested again within the two years — the judge could throw you in jail for up to six months with no further hearing. It was the state's most effective weapon against protesters.

We saw two choices. We could cite out, demand individual jury trials, and threaten to snarl up the legal system in hopes of forcing them to negotiate. But since we all had the same charges, the court could probably get away with consolidating everyone into one big trial and railroading us. Once we were

convicted, the judge could stick us with whatever probation or jail time he wanted.

Our other option was to refuse arraignment and stay in jail. It was a lot of stress since, based on the previous year, few people had made long-term plans to be away from families, jobs, and other responsibilities. But it was our strongest card: to be together and publicly visible. So far, we were holding tight. Out of eleven hundred people arrested, over eight hundred were still in jail on Friday, half of them men. We weren't budging.

But neither was the court. So here we were. Wherever this was. I still didn't quite have my bearings. Someone had told me which way was north, but I couldn't remember. With the sun hidden behind the low gray fog, I had not a clue.

As I neared the front of the chow line, I looked out over the yard area in front of our tent — a thirty-foot strip of crumbling asphalt bounded by a coil of barbed wire. A quarter-mile past the barbed wire, the stripes of the women's tent were visible. Beyond them were the barracks of the main Santa Rita compound, which kept things in perspective. We weren't so bad off.

The California National Guard, called in for the "emergency," had set up several wobbly folding tables in the center of our yard and were dishing up culinary delights. I got my toast and oatmeal and looked around at the scattered clumps of men eating and talking quietly. I was surprised by how few I recognized. Someone had done an informal poll the day before and concluded that about half were there on their first-ever arrest. Only about a



Rows of army cots lined the inside of the dirt-floored tents.

quarter had been at Livermore the year before, with the other quarter being veterans mainly of Diablo Canyon or Vandenberg. I heard that the women's camp was about the same.

The percentage of returnees disappointed me. Everyone had been so fired up when we got out last year. "We'll be back," everyone was saying. I was sure half or more would. Where had they gone? Was this the best recidivism rate we could hope for? No wonder our numbers were down.

Even though it was too early for the lawyers to have stopped by, there was already a fresh rumor circulating as we ate — we were all getting out today with sentences of time-served. Not impossible, I thought. They've gotten five days out of most people. I wondered if I'd have to stay two more days because I came in late. That would mean getting released Sunday. I could handle that, if I knew the end was in sight.

After breakfast, I followed Craig out to the side yard, which was about forty feet wide by the two-hundred-foot length of the tent. The far side was bounded by a low barbed wire fence separating us from a wild field that stretched for what looked like miles. Way off in the distance loomed the blue-ish hulk of Mt. Diablo, the tallest peak in the area. "Not a bad view for a jail," I said.

"No, I guess not." Craig had been in since Monday, and looked weary. I'd expected him to be organizing workshops or strategy sessions, but he was laying low. I asked if he'd done anything the first couple of days.

"No, I'm staying out of the spotlight," he said. "I've caught enough flak for one year."

"That's too bad," I said. "Seems like a loss not to have you doing workshops."

"Yeah, well, Nathaniel did a strategy game the second day. I think about five people showed up." He spoke as if making an irrefutable point, then looked down.

"Maybe people just needed some time to get oriented," I said. "Could be different now. I'd be there."

He glanced up at me awkwardly. "Maybe I'll set up something over the weekend if we're still here."

Around eleven that morning, the legal team came by. I'd done a good job the previous day of not getting all worked up, but today being Friday, I felt anxious to get our situation resolved. When I heard the lawyers were up front, I headed that way, along with half of the men in the tent.

One look at Walt dispelled my hopes. He looked tired and beleaguered as he brought us up to date. "The government is entrenched," he said. "They've already rented the tents and called out the National Guard to feed you. There's no pressure to resolve it before next week." He looked down at his notes. "The courts are closed Saturday and Sunday. Anyone needing out before Monday afternoon should go today. You may not get another chance over the weekend."

The weekend. Another three days in jail. I've got to quit getting excited every time a lawyer shows up. I moved slowly toward the lunch-line. No more. I refuse to get my hopes up.

After lunch I retreated to my cot and tried to read Shakespeare, but the tiny print was irksome, and I didn't make much progress. Mainly I brooded about wasted Summer days. A guy came around announcing a sing-along happening out in the side yard, but I wasn't in the mood for music.

A while later, I got up to use the portajohn. I was just coming out when several panel-vans pulled up in front of the tent and started unloading stacks of plastic bags. "Line up," the guards said. "You're getting your belongings back."

Getting our stuff back? For real? Sure enough, going by our John Doe numbers, the guards returned most of the personal effects confiscated in the arrest. For me it wasn't much of a haul — my apartment key and a few dollars in change. Other people got watches, hats, and belts.

Funniest of all, Hank regained possession of his Nixon mask. He pulled it on and stalked around congratulating everyone on their fine work. People were laughing and talking excitedly: why would they return our stuff unless they planned to cut us loose that day?

A few people warned that it could be a coincidence or a cruel trick, but the mood was ebullient, especially when we learned that the women's camp had gotten their belongings back, too. I thought of Holly. Even though we'd only been apart three days, she seemed far away. What if I got to see her tonight? We could make love, then go for a walk around Berkeley. How beautiful it would be after this.

Plus, I would get to eat the next day. Daniel, Moonstone, and six other men had started a hunger strike, protesting our incarceration by refusing to eat jail food. Everyone joked about how the strikers weren't missing much, but to me, the meals were more than food. They were the prime events of the day, the only punctuation in the monotonous flow.

No, I wasn't a hunger striker. But I'd gotten roped into doing a one-day solidarity fast on Saturday. Supposedly it was a big deal, with a press release and all. But if we got out of jail and I never had to do the fast, I wasn't going to be overly disappointed.

I spied Moonstone standing near the tent entrance wearing his bedsheet as a toga. He looked slightly dazed, and I wondered if hunger-striking was taking its toll. Moonstone had continued his fast since Vandenberg the week before. "I always fast in jail," he said. "I don't trust the food they give us. And it was better to keep fasting than stop for a couple of days and start over. Besides, I figure we'll be out of here any day now."

He adjusted his toga, which along with his scraggly beard made him look like an ancient Greek sage. Moonstone had gotten arrested in a lacy white wedding dress, doing a skit about being the "forgotten bride" of Lab founder

Edward Teller. But since the wedding gown was a bit formal for everyday attire, he fashioned a toga from a spare bedsheet.

"I could go on for at least another week if we have to," he said. "I'm not craving food." Moonstone's voice was ethereal, and he gazed past me. "I'm just tired."

He looked exhausted. And beyond that, his poison oak from Vandenberg looked worse. It made my skin crawl to see the splotchy rash on his face and arms, but he was so spacey from not eating that he seemed not to mind. "I'm meditating a lot," he said slowly. "That helps."

I shook my head. Moonstone smiled to himself. I put my arm around his shoulder, and he drooped against me. "I need to lie down," he said.

I might have skipped the hunger strike altogether, except that Daniel was one of the core organizers. I respected his icy determination and unrelenting resistance. I wanted to show some affinity group solidarity with him, so I went over to his cot and offered to help make copies of the strikers' press release.

He handed me a blank sheet of paper and a pencil. He set the corrected draft down between us, and we commenced our monkish task.

"How's it going?" I asked. I meant it as a personal question, but Daniel took it politically.

"Realistically," Daniel said as he continued writing, "I doubt that ten or twenty people on a hunger strike is going to turn the tide. We need two hundred."

"Well, maybe you'll have it with the solidarity fast tomorrow," I said.

"For one day, we will," he said. "Most of Change of Heart signed on for the whole day, and about half the men have pledged to skip at least one meal."

After we finished copying the press statement, I wandered back to my cot.

Monday June 27, 1983

Refusal to Eat statement

Under the banner of "Fast for Freedom," seven blockaders so far are ~~refusing~~ refusing to eat until the final demands consensed upon by spokes Council are guaranteed. Some have refused Food since our imprisonment began, one week ago; two dozen other prisoners are also fasting in solidarity with Food Refusers.

By refusing to eat, we are reclaiming the initiative. In the spirit of last week's blockade we are taking direct action. We are empowering ourselves to challenge the attempts by the authorities to crush our movement. The judiciary, as represented by Judge Lewis, who has intimate ties with Livermore Labs and the military industrial establishment, is trying to smother our organized opposition to nuclear proliferation by imposing restrictive probations, heavy fines, and long jail sentences. We are refusing to

A small band of hunger-striking protesters drafted this handwritten press release.

I wished someone would come around wanting to sing now. But I didn't feel up to organizing it myself. I checked in on Hank. His eyes were sunk, his nose red. I sat down across from him, and he pulled himself upright on his cot.

"Hanging in?" I asked.

"I haven't croaked yet," he said. "What have you been up to?"

"Helping Daniel with the publicity for the hunger strike."

"Oh, Martyrs Incorporated?"

"I take it you're not going to join the solidarity fast," I said.

"No, I need the nutrition," he said. "Besides, I'm not into that whole self-flagellation trip."

I didn't feel like arguing about it, so I didn't say anything. I knew Hank didn't care for Daniel. But I felt like he was dumping on me, too, for being part of it. We're all in this together. Can't people be more tolerant? Live and let live. Protest and let protest. How are we going to survive if we tear each other apart?

Friday afternoon ground on. The air inside the tent was hot and stuffy. Outside, the only shade was behind the portajohns. I opted for my cot. I took a drink of lukewarm water and lay back, studying the rhythm of red and white stripes overhead. Maybe there'll be showers today, I thought. The previous day, the National Guard had hauled in a tank of water and erected a shower-tent. But there was little soap, no shampoo, and only enough water for about a hundred men to shower. I didn't make it through the line.

At least I had a clean shirt. I'd learned the trick of wearing two shirts and two pairs of socks and underwear to jail. One to wear, one to wash. And I wasn't alone. The guy-ropes of the big tent were strung with hand-laundered clothes.

Around four o'clock the guards ordered everyone out of the tent so they could conduct one of their periodic searches. "Looking for drugs and weapons," Hank scoffed. "Wouldn't surprise me if they planted something."

As we waited in the yard, a slight breeze wafted the aroma of the portajohns our direction. "This is pretty bad," I said. "We'd be better off in the real jail."

"Don't kid yourself," said a guy named Les from Mustard Seed AG. "I was in Santa Rita for the Good Friday action. You've got fifty men crammed into each of those broken-down old barracks. There's one shower hall for the entire compound. Really, what complaints do we have here? Bad food and being cold at night? If you were in the real jail, you'd have a lot more to worry about."

I hadn't expected such a serious response. "Yeah," I said. "You're probably right."

He looked at me as if to say, Probably?

Damn, I thought, gotta watch what I say around here.

Nearby, Raoul was trying to organize a sit-down strike in protest of the guards' raids. He'd gathered a small audience of mostly younger guys. "Next time they order us out of the tent," he said as Craig and I walked up, "we

shouldn't budge. What can they do if we don't acquiesce?"

Craig chuckled. "Nothing except crack a few ribs. They've got a few tools at their disposal. It's one thing to defy a distant judge, and another to defy the guards face-to-face."



Protesters used empty water-jugs to improvise a drum circle. Soon after, guards confiscated the musical instruments.

Raoul's eyes narrowed. "We have to let them know that when they jerk us around, we're going to resist. We have to fight them every step of the way for collective control of our environment."

"If the guards want to move us, they have their ways," Craig said. "You're setting yourself up for failure. Don't pick fights you have no chance of winning."

Raoul drew himself up to his full, imposing size. "Maybe we won't lose. And even if we do, it'll make them think twice the next time."

"Yeah, we can't let them push us around," Sid chimed in. He jutted out his chin. "If they mess with us, we mess with them."

Craig walked away. I thought about speaking up, but Raoul turned away, and the circle broke up.

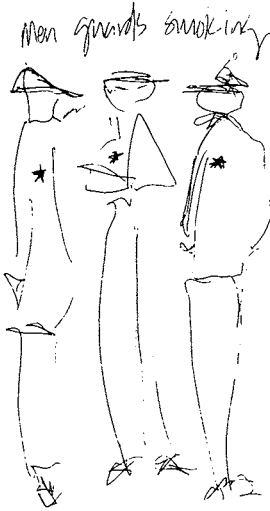
Still, I thought they were wrong. We should pick our fights carefully. We had to conserve our resources, not burn people out by resisting every petty power-trip the guards pulled. Besides, when you non-cooperate, and they inflict pain to force you to move, doesn't it just reinforce their tendency to use violence?

As we milled around the yard waiting for the search to end, some guys took empty plastic water jugs and started a drum circle. Others danced or clapped counter-rhythms. I liked hearing it in the background, but I felt too fatigued to join in, too tired to do anything except hope we'd get out. I didn't even feel like reading. I'd finished three of the Shakespeare plays, and I wasn't up to starting the last one yet. My midSummer night's dream was to sleep in my own bed, not study Shakespeare in jail.

The guards' search turned up nothing. Back inside, a workshop got going on the arms race, facilitated by Daniel Ellsberg. I was debating whether to go to it or try to take a nap when Raoul came by and told me that there was a baseball game on the radio. I thought he was joking, but it turned out that

Pilgrim had smuggled a transistor radio by stashing it in his underwear. Tired as I was, there was something irresistibly poetic about that. I followed Raoul across the tent. Baseball! The real world, at last.

Around Pilgrim's cot sat a little throng of spectators, hardly any of whom I recognized. Most of the men in the tent probably scorned professional sports, so there were plenty of good seats for the fifteen or so who grasped the peculiar charm of professional athletic competition. A couple of guys acted as sentinels, watching for guards who might confiscate the radio.



I settled into my seat as the San Francisco Giants came to bat the bottom of the eighth, trailing 4-2. The team hadn't been very good this season, and when they made the second out in the eighth, nothing suggested that today would be any different.

"They'd be a lot better if they still had Joe Morgan," Pilgrim said. "They never should have traded him."

"Yeah," said Raoul, "Stupidest thing the Giants ever did. He almost won MVP last year."

MVP, I thought. Most Valuable Player. I looked around our little conclave, then at the rest of the tent. MVP. Most Valuable Protester. You'd win a bronze statuette of a blockader getting his arm twisted, with your booking number engraved on the plaque.

People were still discussing the Morgan trade when Pilgrim waved for silence. "Two on, two out," he told us. "Clark at bat."

"Clark? Oh no, he always —"

"Shhhhhhhh!"

We crowded in together. If the Giants were going to turn it around this year, they had to win close games like this. The ballgame, and maybe the season, were on the line. Clean-up hitter Jack Clark stepped to the plate. A double could tie it, and a home run would put the Giants ahead going into the ninth inning.

After falling behind, Clark worked the count full. It was down to one pitch. We leaned toward the radio. There's the pitch — Clark rips it! It's a long drive down the line — hooking — foul ball!...

Nervous laughter ran around the circle. I leaned in toward the radio. Come on, Jack! The pitcher checks the runners, then studies the signs from the catcher. He shakes off one sign, then nods. There's the stretch, and the pitch — Clark coils — he cuts loose with a mighty swing — and it's strike three. He's outa there!

The crowd groaned, and our circle sagged. Sure, there was still the ninth inning, but the steam had gone out of the game. It was a lost cause.

I got up and wandered back toward my cot. Whatever hope I'd felt earlier in the day had dissipated. Sure, we could still be released at any time. But I didn't feel it coming.

Craig, Claude, and Lyle were talking nearby. "I think they're just stalling," Craig said as I joined them. He chopped with his hand to emphasize his points. "Today is a make-or-break day. They can't keep us here forever. They're hoping that when they call for arraignment tonight, a bunch of people will leave, not wanting to face the weekend in jail. That would be a victory for them, to see our numbers drop. They'd think they had us on the run. If we hang tight, they may cave in."

I was swept right along, seeing Craig so upbeat. "The court has its breaking point, too," I said. "Maybe they've just about played out their hand."

Claude scowled. "I wouldn't count on it. It's not the Livermore judges calling the shots. They're pawns. The pressure is coming from Washington, and you better believe there are back room deals being made. They want to make an example of us. We're going to be here a while."

Craig adjusted his glasses. "I hope you're wrong," he said. "But I still think arraignment tonight is the key. If a lot of men leave, we'll be in bad shape. If we hang tough, it puts pressure on the court to accept a compromise."

I folded my arms. I could do it. Sure, I wanted out as soon as possible. The idea of citing out had crossed my mind. But it wasn't like I was on the brink of collapse. In fact, compared to a lot of people, I was doing pretty well. Some men were barely hanging on, calling their jobs or family each morning to ask for one more day of grace. And now it was for the whole weekend. Refusing arraignment today meant not being at work Monday morning. Some people would have to leave.

"Let's just hope Hank's typical," Claude said. I looked over toward Hank's cot, where he was stretched out on his back, oblivious to the world. Sick as he was, Hank refused to cite out.

"That's dedication," Lyle said with a shake of his head. "Let's hope he's not our first martyr."

A rustle swept through the tent. We were about to find out exactly where we stood. The tent-flaps were rolled up, and we spied Sheriff Krieg's convoy pulling up on the road adjacent to our camp. Clusters drew together spontaneously, and all eyes turned toward the front entrance.

There were the usual shouts of "Reginald! Speech!" as the sheriff made his entrance, but it died away. Everyone seemed to sense that the stakes were higher this time.

I did some quick math. Four hundred men still here. If over a hundred leave, we're going to be hurting. Under fifty, we can claim victory. Fifty. That seemed like the magic number. Anything under fifty, and we're okay.



Paper and pencils were scarce. Razors and other amenities were non-existent.

"Gentlemen," the sheriff began, "I would like to advise you that Judge Lewis is sitting in Livermore Municipal Court..." As he droned through his incantation, I looked around the tent. Gaunt, determined faces stared back at the speaker. Next to me, a guy pulled his blanket tighter around his shoulders. I folded my arms across my chest.

Sheriff Krieg wrapped up his routine. "If any of you wishes to be arraigned at this time," he announced, "Please step forward."

There was an awkward pause before anyone moved. I looked around the tent. Anything less than fifty... Behind me a man hugged his friends goodbye. To my left

another guy slowly made his way forward. He looked pretty upset, and I felt sorry for him having to walk away from the fight. A couple more stepped up. Then a pause, and it sank in — only a dozen men were leaving! We had held! Shouts and cheers burst out around the tent, swelling into our mantra, "Solidarity Forever."

As the sheriff marched out with his little detachment, the rest of us gravitated to the open front of the tent, singing and clapping. The energy peaked with a melange of sweaty people pogo-ing in the center. Some waved their arms over their heads. A few rows back from the dancing, I clapped and sang a high harmony as the voices settled into a long, rich "ommmmmmm." Sure, we'd all just agreed to spend the weekend in jail. But I probably wasn't the only one who remembered the Sunday night arraignment at the Concord action. We had held firm. Anything could happen.

As I turned back toward my cot, hopes running high, I ran into Antonio. We shared a hug, but he looked sober. "I'm proud of the stand we've taken," he said. "But we've reached a point of no return. Till now, we could have compromised, bargained for shorter probation. By refusing to leave today, we've thrown down the gauntlet. Any compromise from this moment forward will seem like surrender."

I nodded slowly. We had staked out our position. There was no graceful retreat. "We have to hope the court caves in first," I said. "It's happened before."

Before the crowd had quite broken up, the legal team suddenly materialized. I didn't recognize either attorney, one of whom actually carried a briefcase. I hung back at first, but when the briefcase guy said something that made people laugh, I moved in closer.

"The only news, unfortunately, is that there's no news to report," he said. "We don't have any meetings with the judge or DA scheduled till Monday. I don't expect anything to change over the weekend."

Nothing new. Nothing scheduled. Nothing. I turned away. Why did I even waste my time and brain cells? Quit getting worked up. Nothing ever changes.

I wasn't alone in my annoyance. There was a lot of grumbling as we queued up for dinner. I was toward the end of the line, which stretched down the left-hand tent-aisle. Hank and Craig joined me.

"Hey, good to see you up," I said to Hank. "How are you feeling?"

He coughed hard. "I don't know how much longer I can take this," he said. "Besides, I've got to be back at work Monday, or my boss is going to have a cow." He looked around for guards, then whispered to Craig and me. "I've been watching. I can escape from here when they're not looking. We're outside the main security fences."

Craig smiled, but I was afraid that Hank might be serious. His eyes had a wild tinge, and there was no telling what he might try.

"They'd notice that you were missing," I said. "They'd put out a warrant for you."

"They'd know *someone* was missing," he answered. "But they'd never know who it was. I'm just another John Doe to them."

"No, you're not," I said. "You told them your name was Sikov Bulls Schmidt."

"Well, I am Sikov Bulls Schmidt," Hank said as we moved up the chow line. "But the deputy wrote down John Doe on my form." He laughed, then coughed again.

People seemed subdued as we ate our meager dinner. Doc talked in a low voice about having to miss San Francisco's Gay Freedom Parade on Sunday. "I've been to it every year since I moved here," he said.

"Me, too," said Rick. "In fact, that's what got me to move to San Francisco. I was visiting one June and went to the parade. It blew my mind, thousands of queers taking over the City. I knew I had to be here."

They were sharing memories of parades past when Doc suddenly brightened. His eyes swept our little circle. "We should do a Gay Pride march here!"

People laughed and applauded spontaneously. The idea spread through the dinner crowd. For the gay and bisexual men in the tent, it offered a chance to stand up to the homophobic prison system. For me, my motives were a little

less pure. Solidarity, for sure. But I also wanted to see the guards' reaction to four hundred prisoners marching for gay rights.

Costumes and props would be a challenge. People saved their paper cups, and when a lawyer stopped by, he was persuaded to smuggle in essential items like glue, glitter, and make-up.

Clustosterone, a gay and bisexual men's cluster that had formed for the blockade, met with Enola Gay after dinner and drew up a statement to be sent to the San Francisco Freedom Day rally expressing our solidarity and calling for their support. When the phone lines opened later, someone talked to the women's camp and found out they had come up with the same idea.

"Synchronicity," Moonstone said.

Antonio nodded. "You know you're on the right path when that happens."

The evening passed slowly. I lay on my cot reading *Richard the Second*, my final Shakespeare play, but gradually tuned in to a group of Jewish blockaders holding a Shabbat observance nearby. The quiet voices lent a peaceful tone to our corner of the tent, and when someone read a familiar passage from Isaiah, I felt like I was hearing the lines for the first time:

They shall beat their swords into plowshares,
And their spears into pruning hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war anymore.

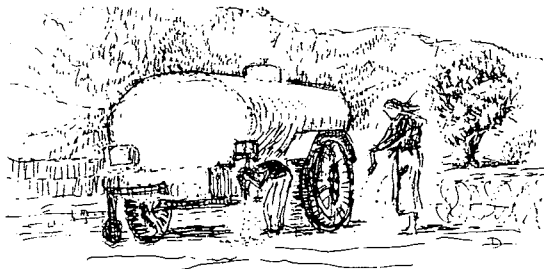
As they sang their closing song, I wondered if any Christian groups were doing services. It was hard to imagine going. But maybe if they sang songs I knew...

Later, during the talent show, I went out and called Holly on the phone lines that people had figured out the first day. By making a single ten-cent call and then passing the phone from person to person, we could keep a line open between the camps for hours.

Holly's voice sounded far away, like an international call. But after a day of nothing but male sounds, I was happy to hear her voice.

We talked about the decision to stay in for the weekend. It had never occurred to me that Holly would cite out.

Without talking to her, I had taken that for granted. Maybe that was part of solidarity — knowing what the other person would do without having to ask.



WASHING UP

But despite our shared commitment, Holly seemed remote, as if we were living in separate worlds. She was almost chipper, telling me about a workshop on war tax resistance and a meditation circle she'd been part of. I felt embarrassed to say I'd just been sitting around reading Shakespeare all day, so I told her about Hank and his Nixon mask, which made me laugh again.

One odd thing Holly told me was that Caroline had joined a different AG. "She did it yesterday. She said she felt more comfortable with them. I tried not to take it personally, but I thought that Caroline and I were going to spend a lot of time together here."

I started to ask why, but Holly didn't want to dwell on it. "I've been hanging out with Sara," she told me, "She's really upset over Karina getting sixty days at Vandenberg."

She mentioned Jenny and Angie. I asked how they were doing. "Why don't you ask them yourself? They haven't talked with anyone in the men's camp, it'd be fun for them." I held for a minute, and they all returned together.

"How's it going over there?" Jenny asked. "Are you getting any sleep? Have you been singing in the talent shows?"

"Once," I told her. "How are you doing?"

Jenny talked so fast that I couldn't get all the details, but I sensed she was holding up well. Jenny and her apolitical boyfriend had split up just before the action, partly over her immersion in LAG. I wondered how much her staying in jail was to prove to herself that she'd made the right decision. Hey, if that's what keeps someone in solidarity, we'll take it.

Then Angie got on the phone. What a change of pace after Holly and Jenny. Angie's voice had a whispery, confiding quality that drew me in. "Staying in jail all weekend is hard to face," she confessed. "I'm going through caffeine withdrawal. I've had a headache for three days. I don't know if I'm cut out for this."

"I know what you mean," I found myself admitting. "I miss smoking weed, just kicking back at the end of the day. All I want to do in here is drown my sorrows in books." I told her about my smuggled Shakespeare.

"That's brilliant," she said. "I've had to settle for some cheap novels the lawyers dropped off."

We said goodbye, and I wrapped it up with Holly. "I miss you," I told her. "It feels really strange not seeing you for so long."

"I miss you, too," she said, "But I can feel your presence. It gives me strength to know we're in this together."

As I returned to my cot, I mulled over her words. I wished I could feel Holly's presence and draw strength from her. But it seemed like we existed in alternate dimensions.

Still, how great to get to talk to women. What a different spirit. Could I imagine talking with a man the way I had with Angie? Not likely. No matter how supportive men tried to be, for me there was something missing.

I knew it didn't have to be that way. I saw how the guys in Enola Gay interacted, how caring they were toward each other. But for me and most of the straight men, the most we could say was that we were peacefully co-existing. Which wasn't bad, considering the pressure. Outbursts of pent-up anger must be a routine occurrence in general population.

The talent show was still going, but something more exciting caught my eye. The lawyers had dropped off a couple of boxes of books. I dug in. Mainly it was pulp fiction, with a few self-help volumes tossed in for good measure. But amidst the debris I came across a tattered copy of *The Fall* by Albert Camus. What a find! Now I could afford to polish off Shakespeare.

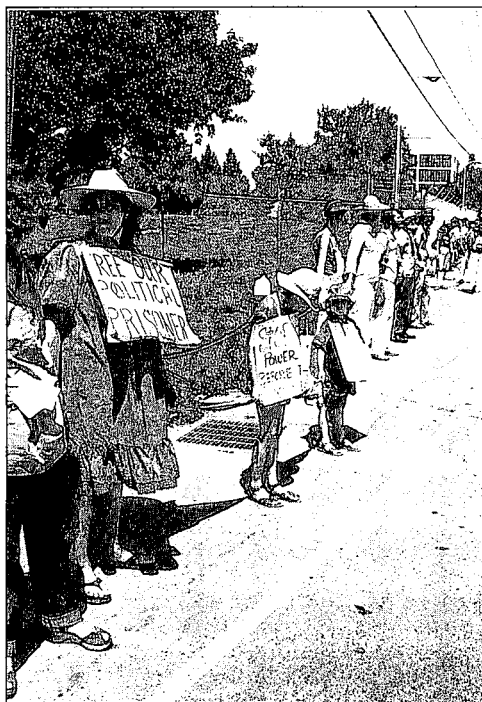
I retreated to my cot, tucked Camus carefully under my blanket, and lay down to finish *Richard the Second*. As I sifted through the pages searching for my place, Daniel wandered by and asked what I was reading. When I told him, a knowing smile crossed his lips. "Ah, not a propitious choice. You realize how it ends, don't you?"

"No," I said, "Don't tell me."

But it was too late. Daniel seemed to gaze beyond me. "He winds up languishing in prison," he said, "and finally provokes his own execution." He

nodded to himself, not seeming to notice my chagrin.

I set the pages aside and tried to get comfortable on my cot, which was barely wide enough for my shoulders and sagged in the middle. I scanned back through the day. Facing down the sheriff. The false hopes when we got our stuff back. The baseball game. The Shabbat service. Talking with Holly and Jenny and Angie. It didn't sound bad. But like the previous two nights, I found myself depressed as the day wound to a close. Missing weed was part of it. But the worst was having no idea how long I'd be here. Give me a certain number of days to count, something to look forward to. I felt like the future had been stolen.



Hands Around Livermore Lab drew 5000 people to the Lab in support of the jailed blockaders.

If only I had an art book and a joint. Would it be that hard to smuggle in? Well, the art book would. Damn. If I could just get high and look at pictures, eat some peanuts...

I shook myself. Don't think about that. You'll go crazy. Stay in the present. Someone laughed a few cots over. Pipe down! Enough of the chatter, the incessant scraping and shuffling. And when the lights went down, it would be even worse — another night of freezing under my single army blanket, trying to fall asleep with four hundred snoring roommates. Earplugs. Why hadn't I smuggled in a pair of earplugs?

There was no escape. At least not tonight. But what about tomorrow? Maybe the sheriff would come back and offer us another chance to cite out.

Saturday, June 25, 1983

HANDS AROUND Livermore Lab. Not one of the more inspiring proposals I ever heard — a legal demo at the Lab the weekend after the big blockade. The idea was to get blockaders to return, joined by thousands of people who wouldn't come to a CD protest, but would attend a legal event with no risk of arrest. Apparently the idea had worked at Greenham Common peace camp in England. Maybe it would work here.

But I wasn't going to be there. I and eight hundred others were cooling our heels in the circus tents. Hands Around Livermore would have to happen without us.

Had I been free to attend, I might have found another way to spend my first free Saturday in two months.

Denied the right to go, however, I felt compelled to attend the alternative — Hands Around the Tent. Unfortunately, the back side of the tent was off-limits, and the guards claimed they were powerless to make an exception. So at the same time as Hands Around Livermore we gathered in the side yard and formed a circle. When it grew to the limits of the yard, we turned it into a peace sign.

"Maybe the media will hear about it and fly over to film it," Moonstone said. Someone phoned the LAG office and asked them to notify the press.

We got a link with a pay phone in Livermore to update us on Hands Around the Lab. Over five thousand people were gathered, we heard — the biggest crowd ever at Livermore Lab. We cheered for those at the Lab and cheered for ourselves. "We'll be on the front page again tomorrow," Antonio said.

We stayed circled in the mid-afternoon sun for an hour, awaiting the mythical press helicopter, until the heat wore down enough people to make an end of it. As the circle dissolved, men turned to one another, exchanged a few parting words, here and there a hug. I hugged a couple of people and

talked for a minute with Antonio, but it seemed like something was missing. I stood there for a minute, but I couldn't put my finger on it, and finally wandered back inside and lay down on my cot. Too much sun, too little inspiration.

A legal protest. That's it. We did our protest where the guards permitted. They drew the line, and we acquiesced. Never very empowering.

But there was something else, right at the end. A feeling like I had dropped something, or forgotten some final detail. I tried to focus on the feeling, but it took too much effort. I felt like I'd drained my reservoir for the day.

I rolled onto my side and stared at the wooden tentpole near my cot. Its surface was uneven but smooth. The light wood, stained here and there with dirt or tar, clashed with the bright red and white of the tent.

My stomach rumbled. No relief was coming. It was my day of fasting in solidarity with the hunger strike. I tried to remember what the point was. Making a stand of some sort. Backing up Daniel and the strikers. Proving I could go without food, no matter how boring it made the day. It wasn't an especially uplifting experience. Another legal protest, I noted. Maybe I'd feel different about fasting if it were illegal.

To make matters worse, our National Guard chefs prepared spaghetti for lunch, the best meal they had served all week. Ouch.

I lay on my back, wondering what time it was. Three o'clock? My eyes traced the arcs of the red and white tent-stripes. Doc and Rick came by and asked if I wanted to help with Change of Heart's Gay Pride props, but I couldn't summon the enthusiasm. "I'll be in the contingent tomorrow, but I want to rest right now."

Rick went on ahead, but Doc stopped and looked intently at me. "Feeling run down?"

"Yeah," I said. It felt good to actually say so. "I guess I'm not seeing much I can contribute. I feel like I'm just an extra body, keeping the numbers up. And I wonder how long I can do that."

He sat down on the next cot. "I know the feeling," he said, "like nothing we can do will make any difference. But that's exactly the feeling the authorities want us to have. It makes their job easier if we feel powerless. If they could create that feeling, they would, wouldn't they?"

I laughed awkwardly. "Well, I guess so."

"It's something to think about," he said.

As Doc stood up, shouts and a flurry of activity at the front of the tent alerted us to a surprise visit by Sheriff Krieg, offering a fresh opportunity to cite out.

Cite out? I dimly remembered the previous night. Hadn't I been thinking about leaving? No way. Sure, I wanted out like nobody's business. And I couldn't swear I'd stay in this pit forever. But I wasn't ready to give in quite yet.

Only a couple of people opted to accept the sheriff's invitation. Which was

hardly a surprise. There were no songs and little cheering — just a general rumbling of resolve.

"They're testing the waters," Claude said. "Weekend visits by the sheriff are not routine procedure. They wanted to see how we'd respond."

"Well," someone said, "they just handed us a perfect opportunity to show where we stand."

Doc nudged me. "Sometimes just being present makes a difference," he said.

A smile stole across my face. "I guess I can still manage that much."

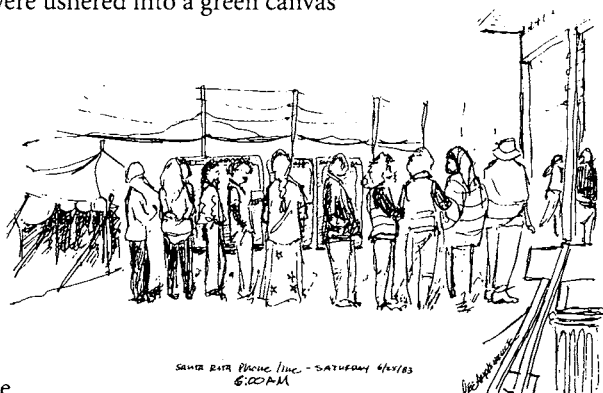
A while later, the shower-wagon returned. Camp etiquette dictated that those who'd missed the previous visit go first. I was among the first in line. Six of us were ushered into a green canvas tent with a wood-slat floor, where we disrobed under the watchful eyes of two guards.

I felt especially naked as we were steered through a flap and into a second, larger tent. I turned the knob and tested the water coming out of one of the six showerheads. Lukewarm. Oh well, better than cold.

Little cakes of motel soap were the only washing material. I washed my body hurriedly, then did my best to work up a lather and scrub it into my hair. The soap and oil congealed into a pasty film. How did our ancestors live without shampoo? I rinsed as best I could and cleared out so others could have a shot. I stepped back into the first tent. No towels. Of course. What was I expecting? I sponged off with my T-shirt and pulled my jeans over my still-damp legs. Not very satisfying.

I hardly made it back to my cot when dinner was called. About seventy-five people had fasted along with the hunger strikers for breakfast and lunch. Our numbers were noticed by the guards, but it didn't make much difference in the bigger scheme of things. For dinner, though, twice as many sat out the meal. We gathered in a big circle and shared our motivations for fasting. Some spoke of internal resolve, or of making a statement to the authorities. It felt good to speak my intent aloud: Solidarity with the strikers in my cluster.

Just before the evening talent show I got a letter from Holly. The lawyers operated a shuttle service, carrying missives, poems, and calls to action back and forth. Holly's letter wasn't very personal, mainly reflections on jail and its



effects on the movement. But it felt good to hold it in my hand. Holly and I actually are sharing this experience. We're facing a lot of the same pressures. Sometimes it feels like we're in different realities. But maybe that's part of the experience. Maybe years from now we'll look back to this time as forging a deeper trust and love between us.

With the letter she included some drawings that Caroline had made of the women's camp, and asked me to post them on our bulletin board. Funny, I thought, I had no idea Caroline was an artist. Of course, since we met last June, when had she had any spare time to draw? Until now.

After the talent show, Antonio and Moonstone helped organize a full moon ritual. I declined their invitation to attend, but I liked hearing the fifty men singing together in the distance. One song, with a chant-like melody, especially reverberated in me:

We are the power in everyone,
We are the dance of the moon and sun,
We are the hope that will not hide,
We are the turning of the tide.

Some of the other parts, like when they invoked "the spirits of the four directions," were too new-agey for me. But the warmth of their singing and chanting pervaded the whole tent.

Later on, Holly and I talked on the phone. We chatted about odds and ends, sharing impressions more than feelings. Holly was in her usual upbeat mood, which I was finding harder to believe. Was the women's camp that different from ours? Something felt unreal. Still, I appreciated having someone outside my immediate universe to share the dramas of the day.

Before lights-out, I made myself jot a few notes in my loose-leaf journal. I had smuggled in blank paper, and the guards provided us with pencil stubs. I knew I'd regret it if I didn't write some jail-reflections. I tried to catch all the feelings, but the perfect metaphor eluded me, which seemed like a metaphor in itself. The lights were going down. I folded the paper and tucked it into my pocket. Maybe I'd be more inspired tomorrow.

After the usual tossing and turning and coughing and mumbling, people settled down. I was drifting into my own thoughts when I half-noticed Sid, the young punk I had met in the office a few weeks before, fidgeting around a few cots over. He propped himself up on one elbow. As lanky as he is, he probably can't ever get comfortable, I thought.

I lay back, grateful for the momentary calm before the snoring set in. Suddenly a shrill tone pierced the stillness. It took a second to place — a kazoo. It was Sid, serenading us with a slow, heartfelt rendition of Taps.

By the end, you could hardly hear the kazoo for the laughter. I made a mental note to smuggle a kazoo to all future protests.

The guards came in with big flashlights and made a fuss about knocking it

off and getting to sleep. As I lay back, I yawned widely and smiled to myself. Score the final round of the day for us.

Had it been the final round, I'd have slept happily. But the good humor quickly gave way to malaise. Another day, another fizzle. What was the point in fighting my way through the wasteland of the day, if it came up empty in the end?

Sunday, June 26, 1983

SHORTLY AFTER lunch on Sunday, just as we were gathering for our parade, Sheriff Krieg arrived with his offering of cite-out forms. In keeping with the Gay Pride Day theme, Clustosterone gave him a special welcome. From each side of the tent, three Greek graces danced in, attired in mini-togas and sporting green paper wreaths around their brows. They pirouetted across the front of the tent, strewing invisible confetti as if welcoming a conquering hero. When they reached the center, they curtsied to the sheriff, who looked like he was struggling to keep from laughing.

Amid tumultuous applause the Clustosterone men danced back into the crowd. When the cheering subsided, Sheriff Krieg read his obligatory call. Not one person accepted the invitation, which led to a fresh burst of applause. The sheriff went away shaking his head, and we started lining up for the Gay Freedom march.

The participants — about two-thirds of the men in the camp — assembled in the open space at the front of the tent. Our route was down the left aisle, around the center cots, and back up the right side. The men not marching sat on cots lining the route, awaiting the procession. Clustosterone got ahold of a pad of "While You Were Out" office memos and tore them into pink triangles for everyone to wear.

Change of Heart, anchored by Enola Gay, was bringing up the end of the parade. As I waited for us to start, I looked out the front of the tent. A half-dozen guards huddled just outside the tent-flaps, looking perplexed and a little scared. I wondered if they would try to stop us. But on what grounds? So far, all we were doing was milling around in funny clothes. Not much they could do about that.

Finally we got rolling. The dancing graces led off the march, snaking around the front before starting down the aisle. They were followed by the rest of Clustosterone in togas and paper-plate tiaras, singing Bob Marley's "Get Up, Stand Up!"

The next AG fashioned dresses, skirts, and evening gowns out of sheets, with make-up and scarves courtesy of the legal team. As a chorus sang "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," four beefy, topless men carried aloft a cot bearing their "Queen for a Gay Day."

Ahead of me, Doc paused. "We don't need to one-up the guards," he said. "They've become irrelevant. We're not trying to escape, and there hasn't been a single fight. What do we need them for?"

"So true," Antonio said. "We have our own institutions here — a spokescouncil, a food barter system, workshops, talent shows. The guards are superfluous."

"Not quite," Rick said. "They have ways of making their presence felt, by force if necessary."

We cut between some cots and reached the first aisle, right near my quarters. My legs felt heavy, and I sat down. Doc sat next to me, and Rick and Antonio perched on the edge of the adjacent cot.

Doc crossed his arms and looked at Rick. "Sure, the guards can try to impose their structures by force. But the moment they relax their grip, our model sprouts up again. Consensus, nonhierarchy, affinity groups — we're living it. If you ever needed proof that anarchism can work, this is it."

"Well, it works here," I said. "I can't see transplanting it to the real world. This is a special situation, where everyone is present every time a decision needs to be made. In the real world, we don't have that luxury, so we have to fall back on representatives. And that raises problems of coordination..." My voice trailed off, and I couldn't help laughing at my inexorable logic. Doc smiled too, as if in tacit agreement not to re-open that particular can of worms just now.

Rick leaned forward from the opposite cot. "In any case, we're seeing how an extraordinary situation can shatter our old patterns and show us what's truly possible."

Antonio nodded. "Precisely. We've created a model village, a living embodiment of our vision."

I surveyed our village. "The problem is, the urban design is off. These rows of cots are like suburban tract houses. The wide aisles are the highways. There's no internal common space. The only open area is up at the front. We should have a big plaza in the center, with a couple of smaller ones farther out. The cots would be in arcs and swirls around the plazas."

"Maybe we could landscape it so we have some hills and valleys," Rick said.

"That would be an interesting direct action, to reconfigure the tent," Doc said. "But there's no way the guards would allow it. These rows are a vital part of their sense of control. That's the first thing the military does when they go into a new region — build straight roads."

Doc was called away. Antonio picked up my copy of *The Fall*. "You're going for light reading during your stay here, aren't you? Did you finish Shakespeare?"

"Not quite," I said. "But I needed something with bigger print."

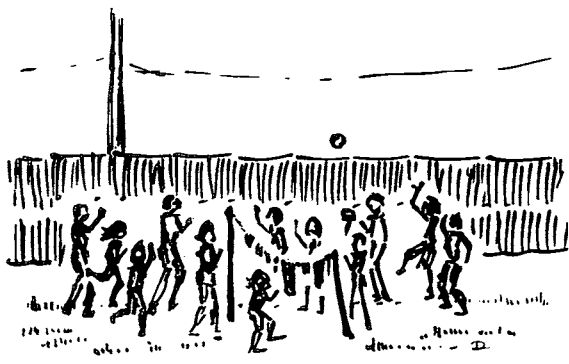
As he parted, I lay down on my cot, wanting some privacy but feeling good about the whole jail scene. Sure, I wanted out — the sooner the better —

but there was no desperation. After five days here, I seemed to have reached some sort of balance.

I let my mind wander, faintly tracking the chorus of voices surrounding me. My eyes traced the billowy curves of the red and white tent stripes, soaring to the peak and gliding back down the other side.

It was almost peaceful, but still something wasn't quite right. Maybe it was the tent itself. How was I supposed to relax in a bright red tent? Had they gotten this color on purpose? I wouldn't put it past them. I closed my eyes, but that made the voices around me louder and harsher.

The arrival of the legal team changed the equation. Lawyers on Sunday evening? A lot of men headed toward the front of the tent to check it out. Could it be another late-night arraignment? I stayed on my cot, but my ears were tuned to the legal circle. If something came down, I was ready.



Jailyard volleyball, with improvised net and ball.

Applause rose up front, but it didn't sound conclusive. Maybe an offer from the court? What if they'd dropped probation? What if we got out tonight? I'd walk out to the all-night grocery in Albany. I pictured the low branches hanging over the shadowy sidewalks on Sonoma Street, my favorite route.

Antonio walked by my cot on his way back from the legal briefing. "The lawyers just wanted to check with us before they meet with the judge tomorrow morning," he told me.

"So there's nothing new?"

"Not much. They said that a lot of people who were at Hands Around the Lab yesterday are going to call the district attorney Monday morning and demand that our charges be dropped. Public pressure might have some influence."

"Maybe eventually," I said dejectedly. Antonio moved on. I dropped back down on my cot. When was I going to learn — stop fantasizing about the outside.

Actually, I was surprised how seldom my thoughts strayed outside our confines. This was our universe. Nothing else mattered. Who people were or what sort of work they did on the outside meant nothing, as if our very identities were in flux as we groped for a new cultural lexicon.

Not that we were total beginners. The ongoing spokescouncil showed us well-prepared for some challenges.

But in other aspects, we were lost at sea. Like how to function without women for emotional support. Or how to survive with zero personal space. And most of all, how to pace ourselves when we had no idea how long the race was.

That evening, we didn't have the usual talent show. The one in the afternoon sort of took its place, but there was also a sense of conserving energy, of people bracing to resume the legal fight the next day. There could be a showdown first thing in the morning.

Toward the end of the evening, I stopped to talk with Craig on my way back from the watercooler. He'd been keeping to himself the past couple of days. I wondered what was going on for him, especially since I was no paragon of sociability myself. Was he just a step ahead of me on the pathway of despair?

He looked at me warily as I sat down on the cot across from him, and for the first time I realized that his discouragement might run deeper than our stalemate with the legal system.

It made me uneasy to see Craig wavering, and I tried to lift his spirits. "Three quarters of those arrested are still here," I said. "No one expected to be in jail for a week, but here they are. That must pick you up, as one of the main organizers."

"I guess so," he said with a shrug.

"How can you not see that as positive?" I didn't like the pleading tone in my voice.

He laughed dryly. "You want to know? A while ago I heard Antonio and Daniel going on about International Day, how it's going to abolish nuclear weapons and save the world. Their vision of the future is more of the same, only bigger. As if we have all the answers, and all we need is more people. There's no grasp of how little we have accomplished, or of what it might take to build an effective movement. International Day offers nothing."

I felt defensive not just for Holly, but for civil disobedience itself.



“Spreading the idea of direct action is a big step. International Day got a dozen groups around the country to do CD for the first time. That counts for something.”

“Sure,” Craig said. He spoke with no rancor, as if giving directions to a lost traveler. “But it also distracts us from deeper questions. Beyond appeasing our conscience, what have we accomplished? Does it matter that our numbers are growing? More people being ineffective isn’t going to change anything.”

I didn’t see what to say. I wasn’t going to abandon my belief in civil disobedience just because Craig was depressed. Whatever direction LAG and the movement grew, CD was surely the foundation. Still, it was hard to hear our whole program called into question by one of LAG’s cornerstones.

Before we could say more, the guards came through the tent and ordered everyone back to his own cot. Bedtime. Craig and I awkwardly patted each other on the shoulder. Not a very satisfying encounter.

As I headed for my cot, I thought about what I should have said to Craig. It boiled down to one thing. “If you want to engage people’s passion, you have to start with direct action, not talk. All the rest — education, community outreach, coalition work — are built on this foundation.”

But suppose I’d said that? Craig wasn’t going to listen. Save your breath. Talk to him after we get out. Maybe everything will look different. I tried to picture us playing pinball and drinking beer, but all I could conjure up were old, faded images. How far away that world seemed.

I stretched my body to the limits of the six-foot cot, trying to get less uncomfortable. The lights went down, and my mood sank with them. I tried to picture moments of color and light during the long day, but it all came out gray. Had I actually laughed because our parade outwitted the guards? Whoopee. Some triumph.

I rolled onto my side. I’d felt lousy most of the day, as far as I could recall. But evening was the worst. You’d think it might be getting easier by my fifth day.

Jailed in a circus tent. It felt like a deliberate insult. And there wasn’t one damn thing I could do about it.

So what else was new? Futility — the watchword of my political life. What had I ever done that mattered? From my high school principal to Reagan and the Pentagon, authority was a monolith, impervious to my efforts. Why should this be any different?

Monday, June 27, 1983

I AWOKE MONDAY morning to thoughts of work. I knew that I had to phone both of my jobs that day. My boss at the apartment repair job would probably be cool, since she knew where I was. It was just a matter of asking for more time off.

But my night job at the little office building was a different matter. I barely knew the owner, a suit-and-tie guy who ran a small geological survey company. I doubted he'd have much sympathy for my plight. And thanks to Reaganomics, there were plenty of people only too eager to take my job.

Why hadn't I arranged a vacation before I got busted? I could have used a break anyway. Never count on getting out of jail, I was learning. The hard way.

Not like losing the job was the end of the world. Sure, I needed the money, but I could probably find something else. Anyway, it was my first offense. Maybe he'd show clemency.

The phones opened about nine o'clock. I got his number from information and reached him on the first try. I pitched right in. "I'm sorry I didn't do any cleaning over the weekend," I said. "I got arrested at an anti-nuclear protest and they're holding us in jail. I have no idea when I can be back at work."

He listened silently. When I finished, he answered in a brusque voice. "I know about the protest. Stay as long as you need to. I'll take care of the cleaning. I'm behind you one hundred percent."

Maybe it was my general level of exhaustion, but his response brought tears to my eyes. Despite the Hands Around Livermore crowd, it was easy to feel like it was those of us in the tents against the whole world. Not so. We had allies on the outside. I had proof.

The morning's Change of Heart meeting brought me back to Earth. Having hung tight through the weekend and shown our determination, we might have hoped for some movement. But the report from the legal collective was stark. Not only was there no change, but unlike the previous year, the two local judges were adamant in refusing to disqualify themselves. Our lawyers were filing papers to challenge them, but the process would take a couple of weeks.

"It's trench warfare," Doc said. "Both sides are dug in, and neither can dislodge the other. Confrontation gives way to endurance. Who will cave in first?" He looked around our haggard circle. "The adversary is no longer the guards or the court. It's an internal struggle. Are we strong enough to outlast the state?"

Other men nodded. That was the question, wasn't it? No reinforcements, no relief in sight. We're on our own. How long can we hold out?

We did a go-round to see how people were feeling about staying in. A few said they would have to leave by the next weekend, but most grimly committed to an open-ended residency. When my turn came, I vacillated more than most, committing only till the weekend but admitting it would be hard to leave.

Only Rick said he might have to leave sooner. He had been ordered to be back at work by Wednesday or lose his job. "I'm not sure what I'm going to do," he told us glumly. "It's only a waiter's job. I could find another one. But my rent's due Friday. I really can't afford not to be working." Everyone assured him

that it was cool to leave, but Rick seemed torn. "I'll decide tomorrow morning," he said.

Daniel updated us on the hunger strike, which besides the seven core people had a couple of dozen solidarity fasters pledged for each meal. Daniel's eyes were sunk, and his unshaved beard showed streaks of gray. Give him a cloak and a staff, and I could picture him striding into the courtroom like a latter-day Jeremiah, crying down the wrath of God on Judge Lewis.

Not that the rest of us were looking much more chipper. With no mirror, I could only guess my own appearance, but around me I saw gaunt, sleep-deprived men. Clothes were grungy, faces unshaven. Voices were low and raspy, and laughs were getting fewer by the day.

As the meeting ended, we gathered in a weary circle. I'd come to the meeting only out of obligation, but in an ironic way I was glad I had. It reminded me that I wasn't alone in how demoralized I felt.

We did a quick check-out and set our next meeting for the following afternoon. Then Rick spoke up. "Since I may have to cite out, I have a special request. There's a song I really like, and I think most people here know it. It would mean a lot to me if you would join me."

His proposal was greeted by nods. We tightened our circle. Rick hummed the pitch. Then with a kick of his right leg he launched into the Hokey Pokey. At first we were laughing so much that we couldn't coordinate the motions. But eventually we danced our way through the whole body, and for good measure added a final verse: "You throw the jail guards in, You throw the jail guards out, You throw the jail guards in, And you shake 'em all about..."

Other men around the tent applauded as we wrapped it up, and I went back to my cot on a better note. That was the most I'd laughed since — well, since the previous day. I shook my head. How could some moments be so uplifting, and yet the gestalt so oppressive?

As I sat down, I thought of Rick leading the Hokey Pokey. He might be leaving, but he was making one last contribution by getting us all to laugh together. Good job. I wondered at my own contributions. Pretty minimal. I'd fasted one day, and sung a couple of times in the talent shows. I hadn't initiated anything since I got here.

What about a sing-along? That's a concrete step I could take. Find the folks who were singing the other day, announce it at a meal, and make it happen. I could do that, couldn't I?

I sunk back on the cot. The thought of organizing pressed like a weight on my chest, driving me down. Let it go, I thought. There's enough happening here already. Someone else will do a sing-along, and maybe I'll join in. Let it go.

Holly sent me another letter that afternoon. I rolled onto my side and opened it. From her opening sentence I could feel a difference.

"Today has been hard," she wrote. "I still haven't gotten over Caroline

switching AGs. It makes me wonder about my relationship to organizing, if this is what comes out of the way we work together."

I thought about Craig and myself. At least we weren't avoiding each other. But it wasn't like we were sharing any personal feelings. Of course, we didn't share much on the outside, either.

I looked back at Holly's letter. "However much I've loved working on International Day," she said, "my life is out of balance. I never garden anymore, or meditate, or get out of the city. Sitting here in jail, I don't miss the LAG office at all. I miss you, but I wonder if this experience is pushing us apart? I wonder if we're growing in different ways."

It was a side of Holly that I rarely saw, and not at all since we got into jail. Reading her words made me want to talk with her. I got in line for the phone, and ten minutes later was connected with her.

"I got your letter," I said. "How are you doing?"

"Oh, I was just depressed when I wrote it," she said. "I'm better now."

I started to tell her that the letter was the most real she had sounded since we got arrested, but it didn't seem like a fair thing to say. We chatted for a few minutes, but my heart wasn't in it. "I guess I'm not feeling real talkative," I said. I paused, and she didn't speak. "What I really wish," I continued, "is that we could just be together. Not have to talk or anything, just be together."

"I want that so much, Jeff," she said. "I love you."

"I love you, too. I'll talk to you tomorrow."

What was happening with me and Holly? I hated phones. It's such a weak connection. Not being able to look into her eyes or touch her. Just a disembodied voice. Plus the alienation of jail. No wonder we felt so distant. Let go of it. It'll be different when I see her. Whenever that is.

When I got back to my cot, Hank met me. His face was an odd mix, wracked by cough and contorted in laughter. "Check it out," he said. He pointed to a cot back in the corner of the tent. "A little surprise for the guards."

Hank was sacrificing his precious Nixon mask to a higher cause. There it lay, propped up on a makeshift pillow. Below it, Hank had rolled up sheets to mold a body, then covered the whole thing with a blanket. Simple enough. Nixon in bed. With one twist. His arms appeared to curve down and grab his crotch. And right in the center, a ten-inch stick poked the blanket straight up in the air.

I'd barely had time to appreciate Hank's art installation when the guards launched their latest raid. "Everyone out in the yard," they ordered.

Hank could hardly contain himself at the prospect of the guards discovering his creation. "Tricky Dick's going out in style," he said.

We joined the crowd shuffling up the aisle. Ahead of us, Sid and Raoul began to "moo" like cattle. The crowd picked it up, and we dragged our feet, forcing the guards to herd us out.

In the yard, Hank regaled Craig and Claude with an account of the Nixon-

dummy. He was laughing so much he had to stop and blow his nose. "It was a classic," I put in. "You should have seen it."

At that moment, four guards marched out of the tent carrying the cot like pallbearers. Nixon's head had fallen sideways and grinned grotesquely at us as it went past. One sheet-arm flopped limply off the side of the cot. But right in the center, Nixon's rod still shot straight into the air.

The guards hustled it away, but everyone who spotted it got a laugh. "Nixon wanking his crank," Raoul said. "You've got to love it."

When we got back into the tent, we discovered that the guards had confiscated more than Nixon. A couple of affinity groups had been folding paper cranes, an international symbol of the desire for world peace. Using every available scrap of paper, the AGs had folded over half of the thousand they were aiming for. Now, they were back to zero.

"Just the sort of stupidity you expect from jail guards," Hank said. "Anything to mess with us."

Nathaniel tilted his head philosophically. "Those cranes represented a threat to their system. Our whole presence is a challenge to their worldview. This is what they have been reduced to — stealing paper cranes."

The talent show seemed subdued that evening — more poetry, less comedy. I had planned to sing one of my anti-nuke songs, but my throat was feeling dry and tight, and I opted out.

After the show, I drifted back to my cot. I kept swallowing, trying to convince myself that the swelling in my throat was my imagination. Damn. Asking for medical attention was a good way to get isolated and force-cited by the guards. It had already happened to several guys.

I held my throat and winced as I swallowed. Well, at least I have something concrete to be dismal about, I thought. I guess that's an improvement.

How ironic, though, that I'd catch a cold right when I'd scored a second blanket. A neighbor who cited out that day bequeathed his to me. Two blankets. I could fold one underneath me to cut the cold that seeped through the canvas. What a difference that would make.

The legal team paid a surprise late-evening visit. Their arrival was so low-



key that my hopes weren't aroused. Walt stopped by my cot. "We're just checking to see how many people are citing out the next couple of days," he told me. "It gives us an idea of our bargaining position. Not that the court is budging. But it's our job to keep trying."

He told me that he was taking a packet of stuff down to Alby and Karina, who were doing their sixty-day sentences for the June Vandenberg action in prisons near Los Angeles. Walt told me they were holding up okay so far. I scribbled a quick note of encouragement to Alby. But I spent longer on a letter to Karina.

Karina had been flitting through my mind occasionally for the past week. Picturing her in federal prison strengthened my resolve. Her sentence dwarfed mine. How could I think about leaving? I felt a pang for her carefree spirit and dreamed of being together, planning our next adventure in the sunshine at People's Park.

That night, lying on my cot after lights-out, I found myself having sexual fantasies for the first time since my arrest. I tried focusing my attention on Holly, but it kept shifting to Karina and Angie. It didn't exactly put me in a good mood, since there wasn't much I could do about the longings within my present confines. But frustration was a welcome distraction from my usual brooding.

Tuesday, June 28, 1983

A SHARP ACHE in my throat greeted me Tuesday morning. I grimaced, trying to ward off the pain. The night had seemed especially cold, and I preferred the warmth of my two blankets to whatever miserly fare the National Guard could dish out.

Exhausted as I was, I managed to drift back to sleep for a while, and might have dozed away the whole morning if the guards hadn't ordered us all out of the tent for another in their continuing series of raids. The only contraband they ever found were things like nail-clippers or a jar of aspirin, but the show had to go on.

I made my way out into the yard. Dawn struggled for a foothold over the distant hills. A flat gray fog cloaked the valley sky, as if the sun itself were in prison.

I spotted Hank, shivering off to one side. "Just when I was finally getting some good sleep," he said. He coughed hard, then caught his breath. "Have you noticed how they're moving the barbed wire in? The yard is getting smaller."

I scanned the boundary. "I don't know. I think that's where it's been all along."

"No, I'm sure of it," he said. "They move it in just a little each day, to squeeze us. I can tell."

I didn't have the energy to argue with him. All I could do anymore was wait. And wait. And wait.

Someone announced that the morning spokescouncil would start at ten o'clock. To me, it sounded as remote as if they had been reading stock market quotes. I hadn't even been thinking about the spokescouncil, let alone sitting through the proceedings. It was hard to believe that the previous year I had found it so fascinating. I guess I'd filled my quota of meetings over the past year.

I'd hardly been to any workshops, either. There was a steady offering — yoga, organic gardening, consensus training, co-counseling. The latter sounded interesting. I could see where counseling might be helpful in jail. I wondered if I'd be less depressed at night. If it were offered again, maybe I'd do it. But for now, I felt more like reading.

I thumbed through *The Fall*, searching for my place. Hardly an inspiring book, I thought. But the narrator, having set himself up as Judge-Penitent at a local pub, had me in his grip. Endlessly confessing his own inexpiable guilt, he held a harsh mirror to all who heard his tale.

"Go easier on yourself," I wanted to say to him. "Just because you once failed to answer a cry for help doesn't condemn you forever. Maybe it will be different next time."

But Camus didn't seem to think so. What if he were right? Are moments of crisis really tests of character? Failing once, we're condemned to a life of futility. I felt the glint of the Judge-Penitent's mirror. Too many times I'd frozen in my tracks. I thought back to the Marshals at Vandenberg, how they grabbed Cindy and threw her against the wall — and how I sat glued to my seat until Karina started screaming and shook me from my stupor.

Yet it wasn't like I was incapable of action. Given a moment to collect myself, I didn't do too shabbily. The sheer fact of getting arrested proved that I could decide and take action. But spontaneity?

Anyway, what did it all mean right now? What could you do when the only effective action was inaction? "I didn't cite out today." That was my sole claim to fame.

But what was the alternative? Fasting with the hunger strikers left me empty. Confrontation with the guards seemed pointless. What else was there? Someone suggested that all of us simultaneously walk out of camp, refusing to acknowledge the token boundaries. But I doubted that it would get us anything except taller fences.

I got up and walked over to the watercooler, where I ran into a big guy named Kurt whom I remembered from Vandenberg. "What's happening?" I asked.

Kurt seemed to take me literally, and filled me in on the latest twist at the spokescouncil. "Someone proposed that we all cite out and demand jury trials. If we keep straggling out a few at a time, they're going to win. They're wearing

us down. We'd be better off leaving together and taking the fight to the courts."

Part of me grasped at the idea. We were probably going to get stuck with probation anyway. It would be better to leave jail together, at our own initiative, than to trickle out till there were too few to fight. Maybe the threat of a thousand trials would force a compromise.

But I remembered what Antonio had said a few days before — compromise would be perceived as surrender. We'd committed ourselves to resistance. Citing out would be like giving in. They'd consolidate us all into one big trial. And if we lost — which protesters almost always did — they could give us all the probation they wanted.

It turned out there was a final twist to the tale, though. "Only a few spokes supported the proposal, and it was withdrawn," Kurt told me. "It's moot for now."

I walked back toward my cot. So most people were resolved to stay. In a way, it was a relief. I'd feel worse about citing out if a lot of men were leaving. If most were staying, maybe I could be spared.

I could be more help on the outside, anyway. What if I cited out, then signed up for legal work? Of course. Why hadn't I thought of that before? They surely needed help. That way I'd still be in the middle of the action, but I'd get to sleep at home at night.

Right near Craig's cot I ran into Hank, straggling back from the portajohns. "What miserable facilities," he said. He pulled out a wad of tissue and blew his nose. "You'd think there'd be a sanitation code or something."

Hank and I sat down opposite Craig, who put down the book he was reading. Hank leaned away and coughed deeply.

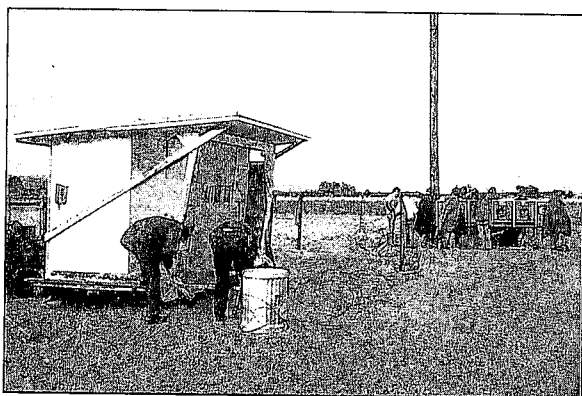
"You ought to cite out," Craig said. "You need to get some antibiotics."

"I know," Hank said when he regained his breath. His speech was

slurred. "I keep thinking it's just going to be one more day. I don't want to break solidarity."

"Come on," I said. "You're sick. Nobody is going to hold it against you."

"No, it feels too weird to leave," he answered. "Every person who cites out just encourages them not to



The guard shack in the side yard, behind which one blockader planned an escape route.

compromise. But that doesn't mean I'm stuck here. I've been refining my plan."

"Your plan?"

"My escape plan."

Hank seemed feverish, so I figured it was best to humor him. "Do you really think you could do it?"

"Sure," he said emphatically. His eyes brightened, and his speech was suddenly quite crisp. "It'd be easy. I've been watching the guard post in the side yard. Most of the time the guards are facing toward the front of the tent. All I have to do is slip out the back of the tent and crawl behind their booth till I reach the barbed wire. It's only about three feet high. I'll throw a blanket over the wire, dive across, and hide in the ditch by the road. As long as they stay in their guard-shack, I'll be out of their sight lines. Then comes the tough part. I have to get across the road. If another guard comes into the side yard at that point, I'm dead. So I'll be counting on you guys to create a diversion in front of the tent."

He looked from Craig to me as if expecting a response, and I realized I was nodding my head. "It'll work," Hank continued, "I know it will. Our tent is outside the main Santa Rita security. There's probably just one more barbed wire fence, and then it's a straight shot toward Mount Diablo. I've heard it's a few miles to an outside road, but I can handle that. They won't know anyone is missing until they do their bed-check, so they won't be searching. By the time they notice, I'll be long gone." He looked at us triumphantly.

Long gone? I was at a loss for words. Craig glanced at me and then spoke slowly. "That's, uh, quite a plan."

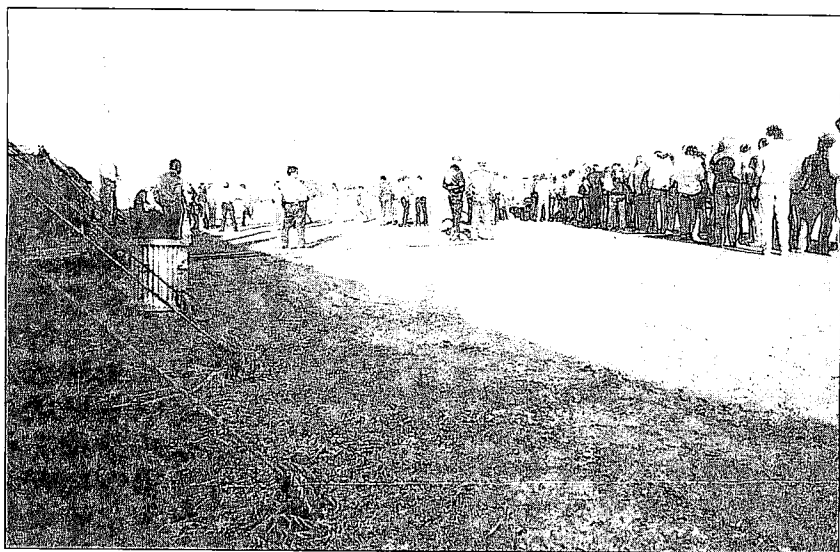
"Yeah," Hank said as if he'd just received a ringing endorsement. "I already did a test run to see if I could make it out to the barbed wire, and it went perfect. It's only getting across the road that I'll need you to create a diversion."

I didn't want to seem unsupportive, especially when Hank had put so much effort into his plan. But if he got nailed, he'd be in deep trouble. Should I intervene? Or would I be crushing the dream that was sustaining him?

I wasn't sure. I'd have to talk with Craig about it later. In any event, there was no denying Hank's determination. He wasn't giving in. And as long as he was holding firm, how could I even think of citing out?

I made my way back to my cot. What now? Where did it leave me? Back to waiting for something to happen. I picked up Camus, but was in no hurry to finish it, since I hadn't seen anything else exciting in the book-bin. A copy of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* was circulating, but there was a long waiting list for that one. I could re-read Shakespeare, but that would just reinforce my sense of being stuck in time. The Earth turns, the days pass — but I'd forever lie on this cot watching Hamlet delay his rendezvous with destiny.

Did I even want to be reading? Or was I just starved for stimulation, craving connection to the world beyond the tent-stripes? I was sick of struggling to fill the empty hours. If only something would happen!



Standing in line was a favorite occupation.

Something did. The spokescouncil I had been so assiduously avoiding came looking for me. Just before lunch, Doc and Antonio, Change of Heart's spokes for the day, stopped by my cot.

"Our cluster is responsible for providing one of the facilitators tomorrow," Doc said. "We want to know if we can volunteer you."

They sat down on the cot next to mine. "You facilitated spokescouncils this Spring," Antonio said. "We need somebody with experience."

"Thanks," I said, sitting up on the cot. "But I'm really out of the loop."

"That's not a problem," Doc said. "We need someone who isn't caught up in the conflicts."

"It wouldn't work," I said. "Facilitating takes an alertness I don't have. Not with forty spokes at my neck. I'm too worn down."

"That's exactly why you need to do it," Antonio answered. "You're feeling powerless. You need to assert yourself."

I gave a sad laugh. "What's the point? It's like Sisyphus pushing his rock up the hill. Will my facilitation bring us a single hour closer to getting out of here? We've stated our terms. It's up to the judge and DA now. All we can do is wait."

Doc leaned forward and jutted his jaw. His beard seemed to have grown grayer in the past week. "We can't build a movement by sitting and waiting," he said. "We have to keep the initiative. However futile it seems, we have to keep trying."

He and Antonio looked at me as if expecting a response, but I didn't see what to say that wouldn't be repeating myself. I studied a splotch of paint on my jeans. "It just feels kind of hopeless," I finally said.

Doc nodded and grew contemplative. "Do you know the story of Paul Revere? I've been thinking about him the past few days. Maybe because it's almost the Fourth of July."

I wasn't sure what it had to do with our conversation, but I couldn't help reciting the famous lines: "Listen my children and you shall hear, Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere..."

Doc settled back on the opposite cot. "When I was a kid in Boston, I wanted to grow up to be Paul Revere. Me and my friends used to race our bicycles from the Old North Church to Cambridge, like we were the modern version, saying, 'the Russians are coming!'"

I smiled, trying to picture him at ten. Doc looked past me, as if calling back the images. "Later I read about him and got inspired by how he acted in the face of huge odds. Even in Boston, there were only a handful of revolutionaries. And there was no guarantee that if Boston and Massachusetts rose against the King, the rest of the colonies would follow.

"Yet as hopeless as the situation seemed, people like Paul Revere kept organizing. He helped set up an emergency network of couriers. Other people formed militia at Lexington and Concord. Even at Boston's lowest moment, people were organizing, searching for some way to make a difference."

I tried to hold Doc's gaze. "I see what you mean."

He looked at me from under his heavy brows. "Think of it. The British army marches on Concord, not expecting to meet any serious resistance. But Revere's riders get the word out, and a bunch of farmers hiding behind trees and barns force the King's army to retreat. A few hundred people organize and act, and they changed history."

He paused, never taking his eyes off me. "The key player was Paul Revere. He and his network alerted the militia in time to respond. Without them, nothing happens. So consider — what if Paul Revere had insisted on knowing that his ride would launch the revolution before he jumped on his horse?"

I nodded. "Good point. I'm just not feeling real motivated right now."

Doc was silent. Antonio cleared his throat. "Jail is an easy place to feel hopeless. But think of it this way — hopelessness is actually arrogance. It assumes that you know everything."

I smiled slightly, but my spirit was heavy. I took a deep breath. Sisyphus' rock was inside me, weighing me down. As often as I clawed my way up from the depths, I'd slide back.

Antonio turned serious. He leaned forward on the cot. "Take the initiative. Make the world respond to you. Maybe your invincible adversary isn't as strong as you thought they were."

"That's a problem in my case," I said. "What if the adversary is myself?"

Antonio's eyes lit up, and he clapped his hands together like I had just clinched his argument for him. "That's precisely the reason to act. Even if it doesn't change the world, it might change you. Reclaiming our power, that's

the real challenge. No government on Earth can resist an empowered people.”

What was I supposed to say to that? Great words, but it's not like empowerment is there for the asking. It takes results. You feel empowered because you do something that makes a difference.

Suppose you can only take action if you already feel empowered. Catch-22. Which comes first, the action or the empowerment?

I wandered in a maze, groping for direction, groping even to keep my feet on the ground. I floated above the maze, and it morphed into a tangled knot. I groaned. Who could hope to unravel the mess?

Doc and Antonio stood up. Maybe they could tell I was on overload. I didn't try to speak. Antonio squeezed my shoulder in parting. “Think about facilitating,” he said. “Let us know after lunch.”

I lay back and heaved a sigh. Facilitating? I'd forgotten about that part. My mind was still enmeshed in the knot. I followed one thread, then another. Take action now. No, get out now. No, make a decision and do something here. No, cite out and join the legal collective. No...

The strands twisted around and around, a snarled mass. Then another figure materialized alongside it — Paul Revere. He seized the knot and grappled desperately, trying to get his horse free. The British are coming! The British are coming! He clutched at strand after strand, but it only tightened the knot. The British are coming! There's no time. Cut it! Cut the knot!

Suddenly it hit me. If I wanted to leave, this was the perfect set-up. I could facilitate the Wednesday spokescouncil and then — having made my contribution — I could gracefully cite out. I'd help Claudia in the office. I'd make phone calls. I'd join the legal collective and come back in to do support. But at the end of the day, I'd be sleeping at home.

Sign me up. I sat upright on my cot. Of course I could facilitate the meeting. I'd done it before. What was to decide, anyway? It wasn't like there was any sentiment in camp for modifying our position. No fines, no probation. Pretty simple.

And then — I could be out the following day. In time for the weekend. Fourth of July weekend, I realized. Just in time to watch the rest of America celebrate its precious freedom by getting drunk and blowing stuff up.

My excitement waned. It would feel weird to leave, I knew. Especially if Hank was still in.

But I wasn't ruling it out. And facilitating was the key to the plan. I got up off my cot, resolved to find Doc or Antonio. Better catch them before they ask someone else. I tracked down Doc by the watercooler and told him I'd do it.

He broke into a broad smile. “Great,” he said. “Paul Revere would be proud. He probably facilitated a meeting or two in his day.” Then he grew serious. “Anything you want to know about what's been going on at the spokescouncil?”

I thought for a moment. "Well, one thing I wonder is, how will people feel about someone so LAG-identified facilitating here?"

Doc weighed the question. "I haven't noticed much anti-LAG disposition. Everyone knows the LAG office isn't trying to run the show here. Besides, the co-facilitator will be a guy named Clem from up in Mendocino who helped start Abalone Alliance. So there's balance."

As Doc walked away, I filled a cup with water and drank it slowly. The die was cast. I opened myself to a wave of resolution, to an inner resonance that would affirm my decision. Unfortunately, the epiphany eluded me. It felt more like, "Sure, why not?"

Oh well, at least there were no second thoughts. Maybe something good will come of it.

As I got in the lunch-line, a guy named Norm from Sonoma Atomic introduced himself. I'd heard his name from Holly, who met him when he traveled down to the LAG office before the blockade. Norm was about forty, a high school teacher with an easy-going demeanor.

"Direct Action is a great paper," he said. "Holly tells me that you coordinate it."

The unexpected praise embarrassed me. "Well, Holly and I and a few others do," I said.

Norm nodded. "It's really important work. Especially the regional and



An AG meets in the circus tent. AG check-ins were a regular part of the day.

international news. It gives people a sense of belonging to a movement. It's easy for us to feel isolated up north. The paper makes a big difference."

I thanked him for the feedback. We inched up the lunch-line. Direct Action. Wasn't that a newspaper I used to work on? It hadn't crossed my mind since I got arrested. Maybe it was just a fantasy I'd always had of working on a radical underground paper.

What if they kept us in jail for a month? Maybe we could do layout here. That would be a hot issue. I'd seen a couple of guys with smuggled cameras — we could do our own inside report.

Lunch was classic fare — a balogna and cheese sandwich, grape kool-aid, and a shiny red apple. The swap-circle was doing a thriving business, but I decided to stand pat and have a balanced meal. I took a drink of kool-aid and looked around. Daniel. Moonstone. Norm. Craig. Claudia.

Claudia? What was she doing in our tent? She and Craig were sitting in a small patch of shade next to the tent. I went over to say hi, and they invited me to join them.

"I'm here as a legal aide," Claudia said. "I figured it was a chance to get out of the office."

"How's life on the outside?" I asked.

Her lips curled. "You don't want to know."

Her response chilled me. In my fantasy of the outside world, everyone was delighted with their work and brimming with purpose. How could anyone be depressed if they weren't in jail?

I'd have to cheer Claudia up, if only to get her to fit my fantasy. "Seems like your media work is going well," I offered. "We've been seeing the papers, and practically every day there's a front-page story."

"Oh, yeah," she said nonchalantly. "Maria and I have the media outreach together. Unlike some coalitions I know." She paused. "But where's it all going? So we get good media coverage. I don't see where LAG can go with this. Keep repeating the June blockade and watch it fizzle out? Change targets to keep action junkies excited?"

Craig looked directly at me. "There's no vision of a sustained campaign, no idea of what else might be involved besides the glamour of going to jail."

I couldn't help laughing at his choice of words. "Real glamour," I said, looking around the tent.

He smiled slightly. But his face clouded quickly. "LAG has to address the question of an overall strategy," he said, "or it's dead. We can't keep racing from action to action, or doing grandiose international networking when we aren't even part of a viable local coalition."

I reminded them of the October Euromissiles plans. "And that includes coalition work. That's a step forward."

Claudia grimaced. "We'll see how many people really work on the coalition, and how many just want to organize another protest. That's not the

solution. We need to face the fact that our numbers here are smaller than last year. Maybe it's the wake-up call we need. We have to address issues like broadening our base, building new alliances. It all comes back to strategy."

Craig nodded slowly, seeming more relaxed with Claudia there to back him up. "That's what we were talking about when you walked up. We're working on a Strategy Proposal for the LAG Congress in August, to develop a long-range vision for our work."

Claudia nodded. "People have got to take a long look at where we're going. Because if all LAG wants to be is Dial-a-blockade, I'm getting out. Let VAC do that. Of course, you see what happens with that style of organizing. Sixty-day jail sentences."

"We might be here sixty days, too," I said in an attempt at humor. "Once people are out of here and rested up, there'll be interest in discussing LAG's future." My words didn't carry much conviction, but I was hoping Craig and Claudia would get the hint and slow down a little.

"The Congress in August is a great place to start these discussions," I said.

Claudia laughed coldly. "All people will want to discuss is the date of the next blockade."

Her tone grated on me. And Craig's wasn't much better. I didn't have a problem with strategy discussions. But it felt like they were going to ram through their proposal or quit if they didn't get their way. Like they weren't asking for input, but acquiescence.

The legal team was heading out, and Claudia said her goodbyes. I stood to give her a hug, but she was already moving away. I felt a twinge of sadness. Even if I was upset at her, I wanted to feel like we were working together. "See you soon," I called after her.

She looked back and gave me a wry smile. "For your sake, I hope it's on the outside."

Odd that she could smile, I thought. I couldn't imagine it. Sure, I'd been depressed for the past week. But my malaise hadn't extended beyond my narrow confines. Now, for the first time, the wider world was implicated. I could picture the August LAG Congress: Two hundred people, a dozen proposals, zero focus — and Craig and Claudia haranguing us to drop everything and debate movement strategy. By the time that's over, I may be nostalgic for jail.

As I shuffled toward the watercooler, a beautiful sight buoyed my spirits — a fresh shipment of books from the legal team. I dropped down and dug through the first box. It yielded nothing, but in the second I hit pay dirt: *The Brothers Karamazov*.

"Wow, Dostoyevsky," I said gratefully. I showed it to Antonio, who was sorting through the other box. "This'll keep me busy for a while."

"You'll probably have time to read the whole book," he said. "Too bad it isn't *Crime and Punishment*, though."

I laughed. "Or *Les Miserables*." I returned to my cot pondering my existential dilemma: Finish Camus? Or plunge right into Dostoyevsky?

I was thumbing through my new book when Raoul and Sid stealthily approached the tentpole near me. Shhhhhh, Raoul gestured with a finger to his lips. Sid draped a bedsheet over his shoulder, grabbed ahold of the pole, and started shimmying up. I couldn't believe it. What if he falls, or gets caught by the guards? I clutched my book as Sid wormed his way up to the peak of the tent. He paused and looked jauntily down at us. Then he hoisted himself through the small opening. All we could see were his feet, gripping the pole.

Raoul scanned the tent for guards. "All clear," he called up to Sid. A small crowd was gathering. If a guard came in, the craning necks would give it away. Raoul tried to wave people away, but it was too intriguing a spectacle. "What's he doing?" people asked.

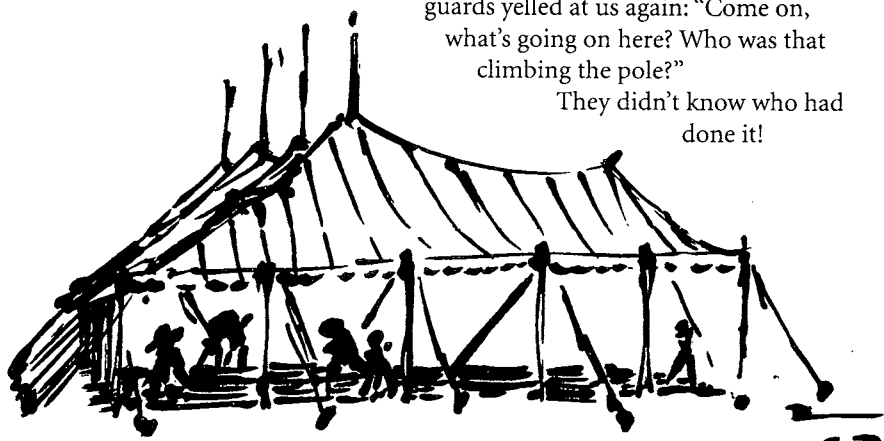
"He's putting up a peace flag," Raoul rasped. "We're declaring it the Santa Rita Peace Camp." The crowd broke into laughter and applause, which Raoul tried to quell. But it was too late. Shouts alerted us that the guards were on the way. Sid was just squeezing his wiry body back through the roof opening. "Come on!" Raoul yelled to him.

Several guards came barrelling back toward us. Sid was only halfway down the pole. He would have been nailed in the act if Les from Mustard Seed AG hadn't stepped directly in front of the oncoming guards. "What are you doing in here?" he cried out. "You have no right to be in this tent!" Accustomed as they were to taking orders, the contingent of guards actually halted for a moment before shoving Les out of the way. They kicked their way through a row of cots and arrived at the swelling crowd around the pole.

"What's going on here? What were you doing on that pole?" The guards glared at us. Reinforcements were on the way.

But instead of trying to grab Sid, the guards yelled at us again: "Come on, what's going on here? Who was that climbing the pole?"

They didn't know who had done it!



Sid's jocular demeanor practically gave him away, but the shouts and jostling of the rest of us covered for him. The guards were incensed, but there wasn't much they could do.

After a lecture on safety and authority and a stern warning not to try the same stunt again, the disgruntled deputies marched out empty-handed. A little later, a guard climbed onto the outside of the tent-roof. I followed the crowd out into the side yard, where we heartily booed as he used the guy-ropes to pull himself up to remove the peace flag. "It's still the Santa Rita Peace Camp," Antonio called out. "You can't kill an idea."

A while later, I was lying around reading and catnapping when a commotion erupted at the front of the tent. I couldn't tell what was going on, but I could see a row of baton-wielding guards lining the entrance to the tent. I joined the men moving that way.

"They just grabbed Darryl," Doc told me. I recognized Darryl's name, but couldn't put a face to it. "He was coming back from the portajohns and several guards grabbed him. Before anyone could do anything, they threw him into a patrol car and took off. Nobody knows where they took him."

A handful of men yelled at the guards, but most people seemed more puzzled than angry. "Why did they grab him?" Raoul asked. "I didn't see him do anything."

A tall, thin guy spoke up. "I heard that yesterday when the guards wouldn't let us go out to the portajohns, he whizzed in a paper cup and told one of the guards to empty it."

"Wait a minute," Moonstone interjected. Moonstone was still fasting, and spoke so seldom that his croaky voice startled me. "He never peed in any cup. I was with him. All he did was take an empty cup up to the guards and say, 'Do you expect me to pee in this?'"

The guy who had made the original remark looked embarrassed. "Why would they drag him away for doing that?"

"Just to mess with us," Raoul said. "Pure and simple, to mess with us."

"It was retaliation for the peace flag," another guy conjectured.

A few people were still jawing at the guards, who refused to let anyone leave the tent. There were only a dozen of them, so we could have swept past them if we'd wanted. But what would that accomplish? Darryl was gone. Someone suggested a hunger strike for dinner, but general grumbling shot that proposal down, and the crowd gradually dispersed.

My throat had settled into a dull swelling. If it would just stay there, I could live with it. Between Dostoyevsky, dinner, and a funnier-than-usual talent show, I got through the early evening in tolerable spirits. Maybe the decision to facilitate was paying dividends.

When the lawyers stopped by later that evening, they brought an update on Darryl. He had been taken to "Graystone," the maximum security section of the jail. Faced with confinement there, he had agreed to give his name and cite out.

That's one path to freedom, I thought. But as much as I wanted out, Graystone wasn't the route I was looking for.

Some men from Matrix AG came around announcing a ritual. I was actually tempted to join Moonstone and Antonio when they went. Part of me knew it might help break the isolation I was feeling. I'd come to jail expecting to bond with people like Craig and Daniel whom I worked so much with on the outside. Wouldn't it be ironic if the people I wound up connecting with were Pagans and gay men?

But I also craved private space as the day wound down. The tent grew quieter after the lawyers left, and Dostoyevsky won out over the ritual. I read for a while, then pulled out my journal. But writing felt like work. My throat stung every time I swallowed. How long was this going to go on?

How long? As if we were the first people to spend a week in jail for our beliefs. I set my paper down and closed my eyes. No, it wasn't the week that was the problem, but the uncertainty about how much longer. If I had a definite number of days to count, there would be some purpose to getting through another day. As it is, I straggle through, and when I get to the end, it's meaningless.

Wednesday, June 29, 1983

THE NEXT DAY dawned like lead. I went out to use the toilet thinking that it was still night, but the morning imposed itself in sullen grayness.

I swallowed and winced at the sharp pain in the back of my throat. Damn. Just what I needed. I returned to my cot and lay down, but I knew I'd never get back to sleep. Breakfast couldn't be too far off. If I was going to facilitate the spokescouncil, I better get whatever nourishment I could. And maybe I can get some salt to gargle with.

Doc, Rick, and I were among the first people in line as the National Guard set up shop. A cloud of steam rose from the vat of oatmeal as the lid was removed. We inched forward, awaiting permission to approach the tables.

But the guards had a new twist on the game. "Everyone has to leave the tent during breakfast," they announced. "No sleeping in. And no wearing blankets at meals. New policy."

Guards circulated through the tent, rousting sleepers from their cots. "No blankets," they said.

I wasn't cold, so I didn't mind. But Doc tied on his blanket like a cape. "They're probably going to confiscate our second blankets," he said.

"You think so?"

"Let's see what happens when I try to go to breakfast."

Nothing, I hoped. Couldn't we enjoy our oatmeal in peace?

Finally the chow line started moving. The first two or three people didn't have blankets, and went on ahead to get their cereal and toast.

Then Doc and I stepped up. The guard gave Doc a perfunctory look. "No blankets," he said. "No breakfast till you get rid of it."

Doc glared at him, then turned and stalked toward the back of the tent.

I looked past the guard to the buffet table. The oatmeal looked edible. But I was getting fed up with them yanking us around. I spun on my heels and followed Doc. "Come on, don't give in," I said to Rick, who joined us.

The next couple of men had blankets, and they followed suit. Then a blanket-less guy stepped forward. He paused in front of the guard and stood at attention. Then without a word he turned sharply and headed after us. The next man did the same, and the pattern was set. As each man reached the front of the line he paused, peeled off, and marched toward the rear.

Doc initially headed toward his cot, but Rick had a better idea. "Form a picket loop," he called out. "Everybody get a blanket. We'll go through the line again." I grabbed one of my blankets and joined the loop. Someone struck up our old standard, "Solidarity Forever." Soon two hundred men were trudging through the line, droning the words in husky morning voices. My hoarseness felt like a badge of resistance, and I sang through the pain.

A few people stopped to argue with the befuddled guards, although it was clear that they weren't making their own decisions. Someone higher up had ordered our blankets confiscated, and the orders couldn't be changed.

But they needed our cooperation to clear the tent. And if the authorities



"Solidarity Forever..." The old Labor classic was sung incessantly in the tents.

weren't budging, neither were we. Round and round we marched, clinging to our pride and our precious blankets. "Solidarity Forever" morphed into "Solidarity for Breakfast." The joke added a layer of delirium to my grogginess, and I wound up feeling more fortified by our bedraggled picket than I ever would have by their gummy oatmeal.

After breakfast, everyone carried a blanket around. I wore mine loosely draped over my shoulders as we launched the morning spokescouncil. The forty-odd spokes took seats on a circle of cots near the front of the tent. Behind the cots, fifty or sixty men had gathered to watch the proceedings.

I sat down on a cot next to Clem, the co-facilitator. The cot sagged, and I wished I'd sat on the ground, where I might find some back support. Maybe I'd move after Clem and I talked.

Clem had been the spoke for his cluster the preceding day, so he offered to facilitate the morning session. I was glad to have time to get acclimated. I moved down to the ground and leaned back on the cot, but it didn't offer much support, either. I tried to get comfortable. Don't rustle around too much, I thought. Facilitators are supposed to look grounded.

The opening check-in rang with the names of the AGs and clusters: Livermore Liberation League, Bombs Away, Radical Ions, Love and Rage, Cazadero Hill People, Low Priority Evacuees, Sane Franciscans, Lou Snit, Walnettots, Endangered Species, Cosmic Compost, The Ring, Nolo Comprendo, Clean Genes, Non-Nuclear Family, Acorn Alliance, Apocalypse Never, Chrysalis, Death and Taxes, Ozone Cluster, Gray Whale, La Paz, Lorax, Matrix, Oz, Fission Abolition, UC Students and Staff, Arms for Embracing, Shalom Mayom, Sangha for Disarmament, Critical Mass, Love is the Way, Atoms Family... And my favorite, the Crustacean Cluster, made up of people from Abalone and Clamshell Alliances and All Us Mollusks AG.

The blankets gave the morning's meeting an obvious theme. Right away a dozen men wanted to talk. People kept trying to make proposals, but Clem held them in check till all the ideas were on the floor — everything from a silent sit-in to wearing our blankets as capes and running around like Superman. The entire meeting could have been spent discussing the different ideas, but Clem deftly shifted the focus onto the immediate issue — what to do at lunchtime. "Based on what we've heard here, can anyone frame a proposal that they think could be consensed in the next forty-five minutes?"

A tall guy I hadn't noticed before raised his hand. "I propose that for the first fifteen minutes of lunch, we all sit or stand in silence in the tent-entrance..."

Murmuring rose around the circle. "I don't think that's going to be a quick consensus," Clem said diplomatically. "Anyone else?"

Raoul raised his hand. "I propose that one cluster remain in the tent at all times to prevent a confiscation. If the guards try anything, the cluster sounds the alarm and the rest of us get back inside."

"They'll never get my blankie," Sid popped off, setting off a round of laughter.

"We should all clutch our blankets and suck our thumbs like Linus," said someone else.

As the laughter subsided, Clem restated Raoul's proposal. After a few questions and comments, we reached consensus and chose the first few clusters to stand watch.

The meeting started to adjourn. "What now?" Sid said. "What are we doing about lunch? We should all carry blankets. Keep the pressure on."

Plenty of people agreed, judging from the blankets already in evidence. "Some people want to go ahead and eat lunch," Nathaniel said. "We should let them go first." No one objected, and a hundred men went to the head of the line.

I stayed back. I wasn't that hungry, anyway. Dinner might be harder, but skipping lunch wasn't that big a deal. I went back to my cot and grabbed one of my blankets, pulled it around me like a poncho, and joined the end of the line.

The lunch-eating crowd got their bag of grub. The first members of the blanket brigade would soon step forward. I couldn't see much from back where I was, but I figured we'd form another picket loop.

The line had moved ten or fifteen feet when it struck me that no one was heading back to form the picket. What was happening?

Word filtered through the line like a game of telephone. A guy in front of me passed the news back. "When the first men with blankets stepped up, the guards told them to go ahead, like they couldn't understand why anyone was hesitating. It's like they officially 'forgot' the rule."

Officially forgot? It sounded like 1984. But it also showed that we weren't powerless. Our breakfast protest had an effect.

Most people seemed more amazed than jubilant. But Daniel drew his head back. "This is exactly what I knew would happen if they were faced with concerted action," he said. "If everyone were to join the hunger strike for even a day or two, they might give in completely."

Heartened as I was by our victory, I didn't share his analysis. The hunger strike felt like an alternate reality. As Daniel got deeper into his fast, we were communicating less than ever. It felt like he was on a solitary mission, a personal crusade. I didn't see where I fit into his vision.

After lunch, we took a break before re-convening the spokescouncil. I lay on my bed with my book open, but I couldn't concentrate. I'd be reading a sentence and my eyes would drift off the page, compulsively tracing the red and white lines to the top of the tent. And why not? They were the foundation of my consciousness. I'd always been staring at these stripes, and always would. I was going to be here for the rest of my life. Now and then someone would leave, but never me....

The idea of citing out after facilitating was still on my mind. In my heart I knew that it would gall me to leave before things were wrapped up, but I craved the outside. Hank's escape plan started to make sense. Sure, they might eventually nail you, but for a day, a week, a month, you'd be free.

I'd given up on Dostoyevsky and was retracing the tent stripes when the lawyers arrived for their afternoon chat. Around me people rustled. I figured I could skip the briefing. I'd hear a report about it when the meeting resumed.

But a burst of applause shook me from my meditations. People were shouting from the front of the tent. I sat up and fumbled for my shoes. Everyone was moving toward the legal gathering. I couldn't hold back a wave of hope. Was this the moment?

As I reached the enclave, the cheering reached a peak and "Solidarity Forever" broke out.

"What happened?" I yelled to Antonio.

He turned to me, wide-eyed. "They dropped probation!"

Around him other voices echoed the tidings: "They dropped probation!"

My heart pounded. Was it true? They dropped probation? I couldn't believe it. They had caved in? I looked around. People were yelling and hugging like they hadn't the whole time here. "They dropped probation!"

"Wow!" I yelled. Antonio and I embraced, and I cast my raspy voice into "Solidarity Forever."

Yet part of me held back. For once, I didn't let my hopes run away, and I wasn't shocked when the celebration subsided and a more sober picture emerged. Judge Lewis had indeed announced that he would not sentence people to probation, including folks who had already cited out. That was a major breakthrough.

But the prosecutor was demanding a fifteen-day jail sentence, which the judge supported. We still had five more days to serve!

For me, a late arrestee, it might be seven. I could be here another week. That took the luster off the bright tidings. Probation was a future threat. Seven more days was right now. I want out now, not in a week.

After the legal team left, the spokescouncil circled up. I took a seat on the ground with my back to a tentpole. Spokes filled the circle of cots, with a few on the ground. With the stakes suddenly raised, most of the other men gathered behind the cots, forming an amphitheater.

So here we are. I caught my breath. What now? Sure, we were united in our jubilation at the no-probation offer, but I knew we were a long way from consensus on our next step. I surveyed the ring of faces. Where to start? How was I supposed to know? Stall for time....

"How about if someone summarizes the court's offer," I said. "Once we're all clear on that, we can make proposals about how to respond, and then spokes can go back to their affinity groups and clusters and see what people think."

People nodded in a get-on-with-it way. Clem reiterated the prosecutor's latest offer: No probation, but five more days in jail.

I saw a chance to clear up something for myself. "What about people arrested in the Wednesday action? Do they have two extra days?"

"The lawyers said everyone would get five more days, regardless of how much you've already served. That includes people who've cited out already."

That's a relief, I thought. No extra time. I looked around. Okay. Refocus. Facilitate. Hands are up. "So let's take the next ten or fifteen minutes," I said, "and hear what people think. In twenty-five words or less. Will somebody keep time?"

The first couple of speakers gave lukewarm support to the five-day offer. "At least we'll know when we're getting out," one said.

"Plus," said the second, "we could probably agree to the deal, then get out of jail and come back later to finish our time. That could make a difference for a lot of people."

Raoul was next. He was planted on the end of a cot, which looked none too stable under his big frame. "If you come back later, they'll put you in general population. You'll be on your own, powerless. Being here together is our power. We shouldn't leave till we all walk out free."

"We could be free today if we go for a mass trial," Pilgrim said emphatically. "They would have to release us immediately if we plead not-guilty. And if we're acquitted, we're free."

"Right," interjected Claude. "But if we're found guilty, they can turn around and slap us with probation. It isn't worth the risk."

I was jotting down ideas as fast as I could, trying to see common threads, some way to weave the strands together. It was hard when I felt myself tugged in all directions. I pressed my back against the tentpole, trying not to get swept up in the emotional cross-currents. As facilitator, I wasn't supposed to be attached to a particular proposal. Well, no danger there. My problem was getting tossed around by every new wave.

Sid, squatting next to Raoul, raised his hand. He stood up and looked quickly around the circle. "We should up the ante. They're caving in. Why let them sentence us to another five days? Take it to them."

Raoul riffed off Sid. "Why not all walk out of camp? There's only about a dozen guards out front. By the time they got reinforcements, we'd be all over the place. What could they do?"

Well, I thought, they do have clubs and other implements of persuasion. But I liked the image of hundreds of men strolling nonchalantly into the barren fields while the guards frantically tried to corral us.

"What are we waiting for?" Raoul's voice rose in agitation. "Why not do it right now?"

Had there been a surge of support, I would have joined in. Great theater, if nothing else. But this was a spokescouncil, and no decision could be made

without exhaustive discussion and at least one report-back to clusters and AGs. Raoul muttered something to Sid, but the meeting moved on.

A couple more people advocated accepting the court's offer. Then I called on Daniel. He was standing with his arms folded stoically across his chest. "If the goal is to escalate our resistance," he said with a nod at Sid and Raoul, "the hunger strike is the ideal tool. It puts pressure on the court and is undeniably nonviolent. If we all refuse to eat, the court might be compelled to set us free."

"Problem is, I'm allergic to masochism," someone behind me mumbled, and a general muttering suggested the fate of the proposal.

A spoke from Acorn Cluster raised his hand. "Why are we even discussing how to respond to their offer?" he said in exasperation. "Just ignore it, and say the only thing we'll accept is dropping all charges. I'll bet we'd get out just as soon."

The next speaker was back to lobbying for the mass trial idea, saying it would get as much media coverage as the blockade did. The following guy opposed escalating resistance because it might alienate the judge and drive him deeper into cahoots with the district attorney.

Around and around we went. Accept the deal. Take them to trial. Hunger strike. Walk out of camp. Do nothing. Accept the deal. Take them to trial...

The mid-afternoon sun radiated through the tent-stripes. Patience was running short. All the ideas seemed to be on the floor, but I didn't see much ground for synthesis. How did you mediate between those demanding a trial and those saying drop all charges? You can't have much of a trial if the charges get dropped.

Without a concrete proposal, it wouldn't usually make sense to break for report-backs to our clusters. But we needed a breather. Or I needed one, anyway. I tossed out the suggestion, and people seemed to agree. A couple of people raised their hands, but I waved them off. "Let's take the break right now," I said. "You can speak first when we come back."

The spokes left to meet with their clusters. I started back toward Change of Heart, then reversed my tracks. I'm not a spoke, I thought. I don't need to be there. I headed out into the front yard, which was almost deserted. The sun shone brightly. A slight breeze cooled the air. I gazed at the distant hills. The fog had cleared. A few wisps of cloud drifted past on their journey inland. I imagined myself wafting away on them. But Berkeley is the other way. I want to go home.

Go home. Yes! But first, I had to facilitate a decision on the court's offer. What to do with all these proposals? Go to trial, hunger strike, cite out, do nothing... What a mess. How were we ever going to reach consensus? Someone better have a stroke of genius, and fast.

When the spokescouncil reconvened, practically the entire tent had gathered around. Clem suggested that we do a straw poll of everyone present, to see which ideas had the most support. "Someone make sure the guards

aren't listening," he said. A couple of guys volunteered for sentry duty, and we commenced the poll.

"Hunger strike for dinner?" Fifty or so men raised their hands. Daniel scowled — it wasn't a bad showing, but hardly a mass action.

"Walking out of camp?" Another fifty. And many who raised their hands seemed tentative. Same for me, I thought, although I refrained from voting.

"Mass trial?" A hundred hands went up immediately, followed by a smattering more. Pilgrim seemed pleased, and I wondered whether he even cared about consensus, as long as he had enough people to stage a trial.

"Do nothing and demand the charges be dropped." A dozen at the most. Clearly people had their fill of sitting around waiting.

That left about two hundred men in favor of accepting the proposed fifteen-day sentence. While they were the largest group, hands were raised with no alacrity. If someone came up with a solid idea for fighting back, a lot of these people might swing behind it. Maybe some of the trial people would, too. With the right proposal, consensus wasn't impossible. All it took was one inspiration.

But where was the straw to grasp at? What could galvanize four hundred tired, cranky men? Something that didn't take too much exertion. And preferably would make people laugh. I strained my imagination, but I drew a blank.

The tent grew hotter and stuffier. I called on a few people, and their comments ranged all over the map. The meeting was getting frayed at the edges. Something needed to happen.

Take another break? I couldn't think of a rationale. Another straw poll? Nothing would have changed. I looked over at Clem, who looked relieved not to be in my seat. You're on your own, his glance said.

People looked at me expectantly. What, did I look like a miracle-worker? The pressure built. Weariness muddled my brain. I took a deep breath and exhaled slowly, then was engulfed in a yawn so big that I didn't even try to mask it.

As my watery eyes refocused, Sid stood up. "Naptime," he called out in his high, clear voice. "Everyone get out your nap mat."

"I want milk and cookies," someone else said, and the spokescouncil devolved into naptime jokes and repartee. I shook my head, marveling at what my yawn had set off. I leaned back against the pole and let my shoulders relax a notch.

The next couple of speakers didn't shed much new light, and I started to despair again. This was going nowhere. What to do?

Claude was next. He'd been to a few protests in his day. Maybe he saw the magic solution. "A third of us want a trial," he said in a voice that both lectured and pleaded. "Half want to go with the five-more-days offer. That's a pretty even split. Maybe we have to admit that we don't have consensus. Solidarity

doesn't have to mean that everyone does the same thing. If we take separate actions with mutual support, I don't think it weakens us. The key point is that we got rid of probation."

No one seemed thrilled with his assessment, but no one was leaping up to denounce it, either. I felt relieved that someone with Claude's experience would say that consensus was unlikely. It took some of the pressure off me.

Someone brought word from the phones that the women's camp was facing similar divisions. A few speakers made final pitches for their viewpoints, but there were no mass conversions, and the reality of non-consensus sank in.

Clem suggested a different straw poll. "How many people plan to cite out now that we've won on probation?" Hands rose slowly, but the trend was clear.

Half or more of the men would leave. Some would plead not-guilty and go to trial. Others would plead no-contest and return later in the Summer to complete their sentence.

I looked around at the drained faces. This is no good, I thought. We can't leave like this. There has to be some way to pull us together. I groped for words. "Even if we can't agree on a unified tactic," I said, "we might want to consense that we're supporting each other's responses."

Scattered grumbling met my words, and I wondered if it was worth prolonging the meeting. I glanced across the circle and caught sight of Doc. He looked back at me and nodded. I wasn't sure if it had anything to do with my suggestion, but I took it as a good omen. Go for it.

"So that's a proposal," I said. "I propose that we declare full support for all of the options we've discussed. Any questions or concerns?" Somewhat to my surprise, the spokes went with the flow. After another half-hour of discussion and debate, we consensed that we were united in spirit, if not in tactics.

I sighed. A small victory, if not the most passionate consensus I'd ever had the pleasure to facilitate. Oh, well. All you can do is toss out an idea and see what happens. They can't all be gems.

As the afternoon session wound to a close, Antonio raised his hand. "This is our last meeting as a whole community," he said. "With the legal settlement and so many people leaving, tomorrow will be completely different. I suggest that we join in a circle for one last time and acknowledge our unity — in honor of each others' decisions, and in honor of our time together here."

Good idea. I climbed to my feet and followed him toward the big open area at the front of the tent. Most men joined right in, but some resisted. Especially the lefties. Hank and Craig were two of the obstinate ones. Come on,



I wanted to yell. It's not religion. It's about remembering we're all in this together.

Someone started an "ommmmm," and it spread around the group. Not the best recruiting song for Marxists. But gradually, almost all of the men joined in. Even Hank and Craig linked into the big oval.

I looked around the ring of faces. Fatigue, yes. Overlaid with irritation and impatience. But notes of satisfaction and relief were just as prominent. Here and there a pocket of laughter bubbled up, and a lot of men, like me, were scanning the circle as if imprinting the faces and spirits on their hearts.

People clasped hands or draped their arms around each other, swaying back and forth together. We did it. Against a system specifically designed to shatter and isolate, we held solidarity. They tried to shut us down with probation, and we outlasted them.

I gazed around, catching people's eyes. We made it, those tired eyes seemed to say. The end is in sight.

Relief and gratitude welled up in me. My nightly depression, my daily bouts of futility, paled next to memories of Moonstone's wedding dress, of Hank plotting his great escape, of Doc's words of challenge and inspiration, of Daniel's austere determination. I pictured Change of Heart, fifteen bedraggled men propping each other up for another day. We did it.

One by one, people cast thoughts into the circle: memories, inspiration, humor, appreciations. Once I'd heard a few, I knew I would speak, though I wasn't quite sure what I'd say. I waited for an opening, then spoke up. "This has been one of the most powerful experiences of my life," I said. My voice cracked, and I flushed. "It's challenged me in ways I never imagined. I'll be feeling the reverberations for a long time. Thank you all."

The man to my right, an older union guy, squeezed my shoulder. "Thank y'all," he echoed, the only words he spoke.

Someone started toning an "om" and once again it took hold of the whole group. I let myself ride the waves of tone as they rose and fell, rose and fell, finally trailing off into silence. Some men turned and hugged their neighbors. Others knelt and touched the ground. I spotted Clem nearby, and gave him a hug. Neither of us spoke, but I felt that our eyes telegraphed the same message — I'll never forget you.

The circle dissolved into a web of farewells. I hugged a few people who were heading out, but not many people I knew were leaving. Most Change of Heart men elected to plead no-contest and stay and serve their time now. Even

Moonstone, whose fasting was entering the martyr zone, was



staying. "I need to get these five days done with," he said. "Looking at what happened to Alby and Karina, I'll probably have to go back and do time at Vandenberg later in the Summer."

Daniel was in the same boat, but I couldn't imagine him citing out, anyway. Antonio and Doc were staying on, as well as Rick, who had been fired from his job the day before. I hadn't quite made up my mind, but with my whole cluster staying, I might as well see it through.

Hank, still fighting the flu, decided to split. I went over to hug him goodbye, but he fended me off with a handshake. Ah, well, some things even jail can't change. "Hope you get some good drugs," I said. "Too bad you never got to try your escape plan."

"Yeah," he said. "It would have worked. Maybe next year. You know what I've been thinking about today, though?"

I shook my head, hoping he wasn't planning some courtroom prank that would get him a contempt citation.

Hank's eyes glowed, as if he were gazing into the future. "I have a bunch of super-thin sheets of plywood at my shop," he said. "They're so thin you can mold them around a curve. We take four of them and make a big canister, five feet across and eight feet tall. We mount it on a trailer, paint it white, and there you have it — a mobile nuclear reactor."

"That's perfect," I said, although I wasn't sure what it would be perfect for.

"We can haul it around Berkeley," Hank said. "We'll make a container for dry ice at the top, so it has smoke coming out of it. And a flashing red light and an alarm that keeps going off. And how about a couple of guys with radiation suits and push-brooms cleaning up behind it?"

"Great, finally a role for me," I said.

He looked at me curiously, as if sizing me up. "Yeah," he said thoughtfully. "Yeah, I could see that."

We shook hands again. "I'll call you when I get out," I said. "Play a game of pinball for me."

Just before dinner, the sheriff made his visit. With the confrontation over, the energy was slack. No arms were linked in defiance, and no songs were sung for Sheriff Krieg. When he read his invitation to arraignment, over half of the men in the tent raised their hands. They were accompanied not with songs and cheers but polite applause.

Every previous exodus had been a small group leaving the main body. Now, with over half the men preparing to leave, it felt like the main body was going, and we, the stragglers, were left behind. Someone tried to start "Solidarity Forever," but it faded after a couple of times through. The departing men began to filter toward the exit. It was a desultory moment till Moonstone called out, "Don't forget to write!" His croaky voice triggered laughter and imitation, and a flurry of farewell jokes filled the air.

Dinner was a subdued affair, although it was nice to get seconds on "stew"

and Wonder Bread. The Santa Rita crash diet program had cost me an inch or more off my waist. Maybe I could beef up these last few days.

I talked with Holly after dinner, who told me that things had gone about the same on the women's side. "Angie left, but Jenny and Sara are staying through the weekend. I'd say most of Change of Heart is staying."

"I guess we just can't get enough of jail," I said. "What about Caroline?"

"I think she's staying," Holly said. "But we haven't really been talking much." I felt a tinge of sadness in Holly's voice. "Caroline has really stayed away from me and Jenny. We must remind her too much of the office and her job." But a moment later she was telling me that she had been meditating with a Buddhist AG, and was going to a Pagan ritual that evening.

When it was my turn to talk, I wasn't sure what to say. She asked about my facilitating, but it seemed long ago. "Overall, I think it went pretty well," I said.

The best news — that I hadn't felt so depressed the night before, or all day today, I couldn't really share. "I'm feeling better, and by the way, I was really depressed the past week." No, that wouldn't work.

It wasn't a very satisfying talk. As usual. But then at the end, Holly's voice grew quieter. "It's been hard not being with you," she said, "I'm glad we have the telephone, but you feel far away. I want to see you so much."

Her voice wavered, and I felt a pang in my heart. "I really miss you," I said. I pictured us hugging and kissing back in our apartment. I could almost feel her thick hair and see her blue-green eyes. "I can't wait to see you, Holly. I love you."

We parted in that spirit. The alienation of the past week seemed already to be fading. In just five days we'd be back home together and we could forget this whole episode.

I wandered over to the watercooler to get a drink. Claude walked past. "You did a good job facilitating today," he said.

"Thanks," I said, surprised by his compliment. "It was frustrating not to reach consensus."

"Sometimes it just isn't there. The main thing is that all the different opinions got heard without ripping the group apart. You did a good job of that."

His praise filled me with pride, like I'd moved up a level as an activist. And to think — I hadn't even wanted to facilitate the meeting. The whole tent looked brighter as I strolled back to my cot.

If only I could have hung onto that feeling. But as I sat down, a pall descended. After the exodus, only about one hundred and fifty men remained. Empty cots surrounded me, and I felt distant from the other men. I looked up at the stripes. Had they always been so drab?

The only consolation prize was that there were blankets to spare. There were so many that I even got a choice of colors: light gray or dark gray.

It was only with effort that a few die-hards got the talent show to happen

that evening. I wasn't going to go, but Doc and Rick said that they had written a special song for the occasion, so I followed them across the tent and took a seat on a cot toward the back of the audience.

The day's developments cast a reflective air over the show. Songs and poems were more introspective, and low chuckles supplanted laughter. That was fine with me. Nothing too taxing.

Toward the end of the show, Enola Gay got up to take its turn. Rick stepped out to introduce their number. "As difficult as this experience has been, there are so many ways we have loved being here. We're going to miss you all, and especially the men from Change of Heart..."

As he spoke, I thought about our cluster. Antonio and his poetic vision. Moonstone and his airy good humor. Daniel, with his unwavering resistance. And most of all, Doc, Rick, and Enola Gay, with their steady modeling of how men can support one another.

"... So this is our going-away song," Rick concluded. "It expresses what to us has been the highlight of our time here. It's to the tune of 'We are the Power in Everyone.'" The crowd hushed. Rick hummed the opening note of the Pagan chant, and gestured like a choir director. The men sang out: "We like to shower with everyone / We like the dance of the naked buns..."

The assembled men erupted, and I was swept right along, laughing harder than I had in a long while. Tears pooled in my eyes, and I felt a little of the grayness dispel. Good riddance, I thought. Laugh it away. Enough, already.

That night as I headed to bed, I felt like I might fall asleep without depression. After eight days of stalemate, we had won. The court had backed down. And I'd been right in the thick of it.

But it wasn't quite that simple. Something nagged at me, unresolved. What exactly had I achieved? I pictured my obituary: "One of his great accomplishments was not getting probation."

And even if it was a victory, how much did I, or any of us, have to do with it? We didn't win — the state lost. It was like winning the World Series because the other team dropped the ball. Not a lot to cheer about.

Oh well, we're on the home stretch. Home. I closed my eyes. Images of my apartment, my guitar, and my books poured into my mind. I could smell the popcorn, taste the first toke off my pipe. Five more days? How would I make it?

Thursday, June 30, 1983

I WOKE UP Thursday morning and it was crystal clear. Get out now.

What was holding me here? With the legal deal struck, solidarity was no longer an issue. A breakfast rumor from the guards said that any men remaining that evening would be moved into general population for the

weekend. Someone cautioned that it was probably just a ploy to get people to cite out, but with our shrinking numbers it seemed plausible to me.

If we're going into general population anyway, I figured, why not take a break, go home for a while, then come back in July and serve my last few days? My throat would sure appreciate the care.

I told Doc about my decision after breakfast. He peered at me. "Do you know what you're getting into?" he said. "It's one thing for fifty or sixty of us to go into general population together this weekend. It's another thing if you go in by yourself. I've been in general population. It's endless hassles and power games, with the threat of violence hovering over every interaction. Maybe it especially strikes me as a gay man, but I think anyone who is perceived as different or alone is targeted."

His assessment was sobering. But no logic was going to sway me. "Maybe I'll find some other men who want to go back at the same time," I said. "I don't have to do it alone."

Doc shrugged, then stepped forward and hugged me. "I'll miss you," he said.

Expecting the sheriff by mid-afternoon, I went around saying my goodbyes. Antonio looked disappointed that I was leaving, but gave me a warm send-off. "It's not too late to change your mind," he said as we parted. "Think about it."

I smiled sadly. "I'm about thunk out."

We parted, and I hunted up Craig. "Are you staying in?" I asked.

"Yeah, I'd just as soon get it over," he said matter-of-factly. He looked at me steadily, as if awaiting my next question.

Funny, I thought. On the outside Craig and I have an easy rapport, in the office or playing pinball at Hank's. Here, we'd hardly found anything to talk about. And yet once out of here, we'd probably get along fine.

"I'm taking off," I told him.

Craig nodded. "No reason to stay if you don't want to," he said. "I was thinking of getting out. But then I'd have to come back later and be in general population. I did it once before, and that's enough for a while."

We hugged gingerly. As we stepped back, I looked into his eyes. He held my gaze, then chuckled. Yeah, I thought. We'll probably pick up where we left off once we were out of here. "See you next week," I said.

Who next? I felt like it was my job to track down everyone I knew. But just then, Sid came loping toward me like he was dribbling in for an easy basket. "Hey, I heard you're taking off," he said as he pulled up short.

"Yeah, it's true," I said. I wondered if I was setting a bad example for youth. "I have to get out and start planning the next protest."

"My sources tell me you're one of the directors of LAG Central."

I rolled with the joke. "Uh, no, I'm just an assistant."

"I heard you were up for a promotion," he answered. We laughed together, and he told me that he was interested in working on Direct Action. We made plans to talk after he got out, then hugged goodbye.

I had to look around for Daniel, eventually tracking him down in a workshop on war tax resistance. I tried unsuccessfully to get his attention, and finally walked around the circle of cots and knelt down next to him.

He was still on his hunger strike, and his face was ashen. I felt pangs of guilt just looking at him. "I'm going to leave today," I told him. He nodded without changing expression. I put my hand on his arm. "Good luck over the weekend," I said.

He nodded again, then turned back to the workshop. I waited a moment, then quietly stood up and backed out of the circle. I looked around for someone I hadn't said goodbye to, hoping for a final connection. But before I spotted anyone, a guard came through the tent saying the sheriff would arrive in a few minutes.

The moment of decision had come. It wasn't too late to change... No, forget it. I'm out of here. Enough already.

I went back to my cot to get my stuff together. But once I got there, I figured, what's to take? My journal pages and pencil-stub are already in my pocket. My change of socks? No thanks.

The Brothers Karamazov? Now there was a tough one. What were the ethics of taking the book? Would I be stealing from the camp library? It wasn't like I needed more books on the outside. I could get a copy at Moe's for a dollar. But we'd probably have time to kill in court. What better companion than Dostoyevsky?

I stood there, perplexed, gazing at the book's tattered cover. Heads I take it, tails it stays. I flipped the book onto the cot. Heads. Take it. Phew!

Time to get in line. I had a concern that they might bring just one bus. If it was full, some people might get bumped. First come, first served. I picked up my pace. There wasn't exactly a line, but there was a clear pecking order of men seated nearer or farther from the front. Maybe thirty men in all. Not a full bus yet.

I was about to sit down in my allotted space when I remembered Caroline's drawings on the bulletin board. Damn! I'd probably lose several places in line. But I had to get them. Maybe I should leave my book to hold my space. But then someone might take the book. I gritted my teeth. How could I be thinking about petty stuff like this?

I walked back to the watercooler as quickly as I could without being conspicuous. An older man looked at me oddly as I took down the pictures. "Saving them for Direct Action," I said. He seemed satisfied. I gathered my stash and hurried back to the line-up. I'd lost just three spaces. Not bad.

The queue was mostly silent. No buzz of anticipation. No chatter about what we were going to eat when we got home. I sat alone on the cot, waiting, waiting. I had no idea what time it was. Asking someone felt intrusive. I thumbed my book. Too much work. Let me go. I'll walk home. Just let me out.

Finally, the sheriff arrived and gave his customary recitation. There was

scattered applause as the forty of us took our leave and followed the sheriff out to the bus. We just fit, with a seat or two to spare. I looked around and recognized most of the men, but there was no one I especially knew. I should have left with Hank yesterday, I thought. I'd have had someone to hang out with.

People talked in low voices about what to expect from the judge. Someone rehashed the pleas: not-guilty if you wanted to go to trial, and no-contest to get five more days. "But we already served one of those days by staying till today," someone said. "So it's four more."

We were transported across the jail grounds to a little pre-fab office complex. Our first stop was in the cafeteria. Fluorescent lights glinted off the dingy white cinder block walls. A zig-zag row of banquet tables divided scruffy inmates from pristine guards. Behind the tables, the authorities searched for our files, matching us to our photos. I wondered how much I still looked like that long-ago portrait. Maybe they'll take another one now — before and after.

The process dragged on. I wasn't ready to open Dostoyevsky yet, not till I was sure they'd found my file. What if they can't find it? Do you get out of jail free, or do they throw you in the tank while they figure out what to do?

After what seemed like an hour, the guards found the last file. We were led down a narrow passageway with a low, curved ceiling that made me feel like I was inside a vacuum cleaner tube. The tube led to the rear entrance of a long, narrow classroom. The forty men squeezed into wooden chair-desks. Up front was a makeshift judicial bench, with a couple of lower tables for court functionaries. Much-erased chalkboards lined the right-hand wall. The windows, along the left, were dark and tightly closed. A whole row of fluorescent lights was burned out, and the room was about as vibrant as an early morning Summer-school class in statistical procedure.

Luckily, I got a back-row seat. My spirits hadn't improved since leaving the tent, but now that we'd reached the courtroom, I could settle in and read. Just listen for my name and say...

And say what? No contest? I should plead not-guilty and join the trial. If we won, I wouldn't have to come back at all.

But if we lost, they could give us probation. Forget that. I smiled to myself. Miserable as the past week had been, I insisted on my right to do it again.

The bailiff came in and warned us to remain silent in the presence of the judge. His vehemence made me wonder what had happened in prior hearings. "There will be absolutely no talking while court is in session," he said. "If you need to speak to your attorney, you will be allowed into the hallway, two at a time." He paused portentously. "There is to be no gum chewing. No laughter. And no reading."

No reading? How low could they sink? I flashed on grad school, surviving a tedious Kierkegaard class by sitting in the back row reading Hegel. Not here. No reading allowed.

After more sitting and waiting, we were graced with Judge Lewis's presence. He came in through a side door, grumbling to the bailiff about something or other. He took his elevated seat and rapped his gavel perfunctorily, then shuffled through some papers and spoke in a low voice to the prosecutors. If we hadn't been assured that the deal was settled, it wouldn't have looked good for us.

Without even acknowledging us, the judge droned into a painstaking reiteration of our charges and his interpretation of the deal that had been struck. People shuffled in their chair-desks. A few lined up to talk to the lawyers. Most looked like they were doing their best to tune it all out.

Perhaps inspired by the classroom setting, Judge Lewis soon broadened the scope of his discourse to include responsible citizenship, waxing eloquent on the privilege of living in a free country. How dare we criticize America! It was the old conservative adage: Prove that you cherish your freedom by not exercising it.

Any minute now, Judge Lewis would start blubbering about how different it would be if we had been arrested in a communist country. "Get on with it," I wanted to holler. "No one gives a hoot." But contempt of court would send me right back to jail. Keep cool.

On and on the judge prattled, expostulating on the duties of obedience to duly-constituted authority. Where'd this guy get his law degree, a Cracker Jack box? Finally I couldn't take it any longer. I let out a long, loud sigh, ending in "Hooo, boy!"

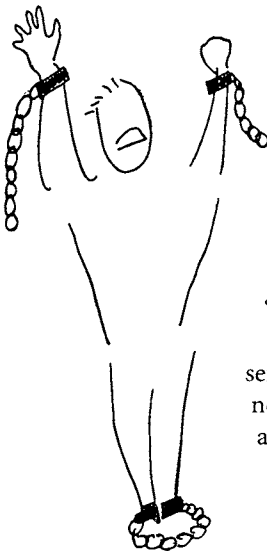
It reached the intended ears. Lewis grabbed his gavel and slammed it down. "That's enough! I'll clear this courtroom!"

His vehemence took me aback. "That would be a blessing," I wanted to retort. But the threat of contempt gave me pause. I clenched my teeth, filled with consternation at being intimidated.

Maybe Lewis was chastened by the negative review, though, because he wrapped up his diatribe and got on with the business at hand. One by one, our names were called. It wasn't to the judge that we answered, though, but to a deputy seated behind a wooden table off to one side. "No contest," I told her. "Do I get to choose my own jail dates?"

She handed me a slip of paper. "The details of your sentence will be determined at a hearing in Livermore next week. This is not an optional hearing. You must attend."

Oh, great. Another wasted day in Livermore. We straggled out of the courtroom, too drained to celebrate. Any stray hopes for sense of release — for a



glimpse of the exhilaration I'd known the previous year — dissipated as we reboarded the bus and rode to the edge of the jail grounds.

Outside the fence we were united with the women who were leaving that evening, about twenty in all. I hugged a few strangers, but didn't see anyone I knew. Fine. Just put me in a car and take me home.

On the ride back to Berkeley, I sat silently in the back of a ten-person van while some of the others talked over their experiences. The women seemed in better spirits than the men. Maybe women's camp really had been different. I thought of Holly and her buoyant moods.

Suddenly it hit me — I hadn't told Holly I was leaving. There was no way to call her now. How could I be so self-centered? What a stupid move. She'd figure it out, sure, but how alienating. Maybe I could get a lawyer to tell her. I couldn't believe it.

My ride dropped me off on Dwight Way at about ten o'clock. I made my way up the wide front stairs. A key. Oh yeah. I fished in my pocket and produced the little piece of flat metal. I studied it, then slid it carefully into the lock and eased the door open.

Old newspapers and magazines littered the lobby, as if no one had swept since I was last here. How many years ago was that?

I heard voices coming through the garage entrance. Clear out. The last thing I want to do is run into someone. I kicked into gear and took the stairs two at a time. The hallway was deserted. I unlocked the apartment door and stepped inside.

The curtains were open, and the low fog seemed to cast an orange light on the space. I went across and opened the sliding glass door to get some fresh air.

A shower. That was the first order of business. A drooping plant caught my eye. "I'll be right back," I promised. I peeled off my filthy clothes and stepped into the miraculous shower of hot water. This was why I came home.

Finally, hunger drew me out. The refrigerator wasn't very inviting, but in the cupboard I found a half-pound bag of peanuts in the shell and a couple of packs of Ramen. The freezer yielded a can of lemonade concentrate. Not the most elegant of homecoming dinners, but a good antidote to the National Guard's grub.

As I stirred the Ramen, the drooping plants called to me again. How strange they looked. The whole apartment seemed to have the life drained out of it. Tapes and books lay where I'd abandoned them. A half-empty beer bottle sat next to the stereo.

Music. But what? Nothing loud or jangly. I studied the shelves. How about Bob Marley? I seem to remember liking him.

I set the volume lower than usual and tended to the plants. None had died, although the fern plant that Holly and I had recently bought was losing needles. Hopefully they'd grow back by the time Holly got home. I shook my

head. Why hadn't I remembered to call her? She'd probably have been happy for me.

I mixed the lemonade and ate some peanuts, then got out my pipe. It was half-full from nine days ago, waiting to be smoked. A living link with my own past. The thought amused me, and I finally got a little perspective. I really was out of jail! I could get high at the end of the day.

I took a toke and held my breath as long as I could, just for the kick of it. I let go and waited for the buzz. It came on quickly, and I welcomed the soft, billowy feeling. But something was off-kilter. I felt unsettled, slightly nauseous. I tried to blame my exhaustion, but it was more. I wasn't really free. All I had done was postpone the final reckoning. Sure, I was glad to be out now, but sometime soon, I'd have to return. And it wasn't going to be a circus tent with a bunch of other protesters. It would be the real jail at Santa Rita. What had I gotten myself into?

Enough of jail, already! Think about something else. I got out a book on Medieval painting and flipped through the pictures absentmindedly, trying to spin out on art-thoughts. But my imagination felt leaden, earthbound. I remembered the previous year, lying in bed after the blockade and reliving the whole experience. This was the opposite. The last thing I wanted to do was to relive what I'd just been through. I just wanted to escape....

I smoked a few more hits, but all it got me was light-headed. It was certainly a change from the ponderous moods of jail. But it wasn't especially liberating.

Finally I went to bed. Thick as my mood was, my body welcomed the feel of the old futon. I sprawled out on my back, luxuriating in a bed wider than my shoulders. I fluffed my pillow and reacquainted myself with the art-prints on the walls. By god, I was home. I'd stayed in solidarity till they met our demands. I had survived....

Sleep wasn't as easy as I had hoped. Lying in bed, my thoughts ran free. Whether I pictured events in jail or out, though, red and white stripes colored everything, as if my imagination hadn't yet escaped the tent.

I thought about people I hadn't seen since before the arrests. Karina, off in federal prison for another month. I felt a pang, knowing how long it would be till I saw her. Mort, who hadn't gotten busted. What did he make of the whole thing? Hank, hopefully on the mend. Angie with her whispery phone voice....

And Holly.... Once more I berated myself for forgetting to call her. Where were my priorities? It would be four days till I had any contact with her. All I could do was wait.