

Anarchy in San Francisco

The 1989 gathering: 3 views

Various Authors

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Introduction

"Without Borders," this year's Anarchist Conference and Festival was held in San Francisco from July 20th to 25th. Taking place at the Horace Mann Middle School in the city's Mission District, the gathering drew somewhere between 1,000 and 3,000 people from North America and around the world. The exact number will never be known since only the lower number "officially" registered as participants, but thousands more took part in the six-day conference and other events which provided opportunities for learning and discussion, direct action, performance, play and celebration.

Actually, covering 9 days of activities, the conference was preceded by an Obnoxious Women's Network gathering and a men's campout on July 18-19, and ended with a Day of Action on July 26. From Thursday through Saturday, workshops were held throughout the afternoon at the school, with Friday and Saturday being devoted to anti-sexist and anti-racist workshops, respectively.

On Sunday a picnic was planned in Delores Park, providing a welcome break from the intensive workshop schedule. Monday was devoted mainly to affinity group meetings, with workshops again resuming on Tuesday. Additional workshop themes included anarchy/theory, current events, environment/civilization, ourselves, skills, and worker's struggles.

Taking place concurrently were musical events ranging from folk to punk, films at the York theatre, parties, and an anarchist coffeehouse.

We present here three accounts of the gathering: two centering on the workshops which illustrate the incredible diversity present within the anarchist movement, and a third which critically examines the Day of Action from the viewpoint of a participant in both this and last year's actions.

San Francisco marked the fourth consecutive year in which anarchist gatherings have been held, but unlike at preceding ones, no group volunteered to act as the host city for the next one in 1990. This may have resulted from a realization of the overwhelming work and responsibility such an event demands, so local and regional gatherings may be the direction for the next few years.

1. “A Wild Undomesticated week.”

by Debbie and Rob

Although the Gathering was not without hitches, we had an exhilarating time, immersed, if only temporarily, in this liberated zone. By definition, a gathering of people from around the planet who share a desire for a new way of living made for a wild undomesticated week. The exuberant spirit of those gathered in the Mission District was contagious.



With over a hundred workshops listed in the guidebook and more being added every day, choosing amongst many appealing topics became problematic. But choose we did, and most of the workshops we attended proved to be well worth our while.

In “Palestine: First-Hand Report from the Intifada” an Arab-American woman who had spent time living among the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip gave a slide show, presentation illustrating the realities of daily life under Israeli occupation.

The strategic background of the situation was down-played in favor of factual first-hand information of the street level tactics and weapons used to put down the Intifada. She also discussed the acts of resistance and ways in which Palestinians were restructuring their communities to deal with mass arrests and prolonged detention of many of the young men.

The increasing role of women in Palestinian life is not being widely reported, and her experiences with militant groups of women was fascinating. We left this workshop very affected; her descriptions of brutality and slides

of young children lifting their shirts to display Israeli-inflicted wounds were powerful in a way that coolly distant discussions of the politics of the region can never be.

In the workshop entitled, “Nicaragua: An Anarchist Perspective,” there appeared to be no facilitator. There were many individuals present who had been to Nicaragua, and most of the people who participated in the discussion spoke from personal experience.

Two themes that seemed to recur were how best to go about providing help and aid without imposing one’s own cultural or political agenda. and the conflict between the exigencies of daily survival under less than optimum conditions while maintaining political ideals.

As in the past, the argument of how valid it is to support leftist states in their struggles against U.S. intervention arose. The workshop then divided along the line of those who supported a “popular front” approach (aid the Sandinistas now, worry about their political flaws later), and those who adamantly opposed support for any group of politicians ruling by force. Some examples of past treachery by leftist politicians who used anarchist support to attain power (Russia, Spain) were brought up with no adequate response given as to why Nicaragua would somehow be different.

In “Anarchists in the Sex Industry,” people spoke candidly about their feelings and experiences in doing sex work. Sex work included everything from prostitution to dancing to providing phone sex services. While some spoke of sex work as being empowering and liberating, others questioned the commodification of the body.

The feminist assumption that sex work intrinsically oppresses women was challenged. One participant suggested that no one in the sex industry could be an anarchist: they were too much a part of the exploitation of women to claim to be in opposition to this. The sex workers vigorously attacked this position as self-righteous.

Why was one more radical for slaving away their time and energy 40 to 50 hours a week in some office or factory, they asked. Most felt they could support themselves in the sex industry as well or better working fewer hours per week, and have more time left for projects and activities opposing the state.

Others disagreed, citing the degrading aspects of the work. It seemed to differ depending on the type of sex work involved. Many people we talked to later had been forced to re-examine their position on an issue they thought was pretty straightforward, ourselves included.

In the workshop, “Anarchy Then and Now,” participants talked about anarchist individuals and movements past and present while the facilitator listed them on the blackboard in a time-line fashion. The group came up with a lengthy detailed list and what emerged was that anarchy is not a rigid linear ideology, but rather recycles past ideas into the present and combines them with new ideas (militant feminism, environmentalism, etc.) to resemble a network of interwoven themes and concepts.

The presenter of the workshop, “Alexander Berkman and the ‘Blasters’” (a newspaper reference of the time to Berkman’s publication *The Blast*) evoked an episode of local anarchist history—the July 22, 1916 bombing of a “War Preparedness Day” parade on Market and Stuart Streets, and the subsequent framings of Tom Mooney and Warren Billings, both militant union organizers. Using overhead transparencies of relevant articles from the Hearst *Examiner* (yellow transparencies were used for examples of yellow journalism), illustrated cover pages from *The Blast*, photographs, and readings from Emma Goldman’s biography, this moment in history was vividly and colorfully recreated.

The “Loving Alternatives” workshop stalled initially with an excessive discussion of process, possibly due to the intimate nature of the content. However, this was brought to a halt when one brave soul stated, “I’d like to stop discussing process and get started.” and then he launched into his story.

People spoke openly and at length about their experiences with alternatives to monogamous relationships, about pain and jealousy, as well as fulfillment and ways of dealing with the problems encountered in such relationships. With a few exceptions, each person who spoke chose the next individual to speak, and so on, so that many people in this highly-attended workshop were able to tell their stories. The atmosphere in the workshop was one of respectful, active listening coupled with non-judgmental acceptance.

Three facilitators who had been in China either just before or during the June 4 Tiananmen Square massacre presented the workshop entitled “Some Looks at the Chinese Democracy movement.” They all agreed that diverse elements were part of the movement and the Western media’s interpretation of America-loving students desiring more capitalist values and investments was not the prevailing viewpoint.

They felt that the movement was still defining itself even as it was engulfed in action in the streets. There was some disagreement over how radical the movement was, or would have become, but each had come into contact with radical participants during their stay.

They also talked about the long history of student movements in China and other dissident movements during the Mao era. This workshop tended to be less related to anarchist specifics, but it was inspiring to hear first-hand accounts of the more revolutionary aspects of the movement.

Throughout the workshops, the courtyard in the center of the school reverberated with the festive sounds of drumbeats and skateboards and humans at play. There was a holiday feeling, like school was out even as the classrooms were swollen with people interested in learning and sharing.

We found the discourse at the workshops lively and informed. If the workshop discussion was not long or deep enough, there was always an opportunity to get together with new or old friends later. The energy we felt from the participants and the excitement of the Bay Area itself made our time at the gathering the high point of the summer.

2. No Radical, Utopian vision

by Bob Brubaker

What I found most enjoyable about the conference were the informal gatherings with friends. I especially enjoyed a meeting in Delores Park with a group of people who are part of a correspondence network I became involved with earlier this year.

Here I was able to engage in the kind of intelligent, critical dialogue that seemed to be lacking in the conference as a whole.

It was of course impossible to attend more than a handful of the more than one hundred workshops offered, so my remarks about them shouldn't be taken as overly general. The quality in the ones I attended was fairly low. This was partly a result of the workshop form itself: up to sixty people, mostly strangers, crowded into a small room to talk about a subject about which there might be as many viewpoints as there are people. Discussion in these conditions was cumbersome if not futile.

The preferred method of ensuring everyone's right to speak was for the person who had just spoken to call on the next person; the result, while guaranteeing that a few people wouldn't monopolize the discussion, also made focus and continuity virtually impossible. A few times when I wanted to comment on something just said I gave up, knowing that by the time it came around to my "turn" to speak the point would have long been forgotten.

Some of the workshop organizers seemed ill-prepared to facilitate their own workshops. The organizer of the "anti-ideological critique" workshop, for instance, made only a few brief remarks about his subject before opening up the discussion to general comments. (Later, he told me that in previous workshops he had done, the short attention spans of the participants—about five minutes—had effectively discouraged him from giving lengthy presentations.) The resulting discussion was confused and unfocused.

A number of the participants equated ideology with theory or critical thought *per se*.

Thus, these bewildered souls could only conclude that the antidote to "the alienation of ideology" is more practice (including spiritual practice)—a conclusion that suits the anti-intellectual prejudices of many anarchists but is a far cry from what the workshop organizer was trying to convey.

At one point in the discussion, a man expressed his desire to hear the definitions of ideology held by "every person in this room." Faced with the daunting prospect of having to hear forty or fifty such "definitions," I began looking for the exit...

In another workshop, a rambling discourse on "the appearance and disappearance of daily life," a speaker proposed the dubious hypothesis that radical therapy and New Age spirituality are the legitimate heirs of the situationist legacy. The situationists' emphasis on daily life and its subversion has supposedly been renewed and extended in the therapeutic and spiritualist milieus since the demise of 1960s radicalism.

According to this speaker's version of post-1960s events, once it became apparent that the subversion of daily life pioneered by the situationists wasn't going to produce an immediate revolution, many of us succumbed to a deep "depression," withdrawing from the confrontation with history into our private, defensive worlds. Seeking refuge

there, we turned to therapy, spirituality, and other introspective practices in order to explore and illuminate the labyrinths of daily life, heal ourselves, and regain our strength for the struggles ahead.

As a result of this preoccupation with the personal, spiritual aspect of life, people are now beginning to emerge from their -therapeutic and spiritual shells newly equipped with “auras of power” (or did he say “powerful auras”?)—an inner strength and magnetism that will enable us to influence people more effectively and hence to “create social change.”

One can only shake one’s head at the naivete of this Dale Carnegie of the left. Much of what he said was either simplistic, one-sided, or dead wrong—from his assumption that radical subversion ended with the ‘60s, to his failure to notice that many anarchists these days are too young to have had their entire outlooks shaped by the 1960s and its disappointments, to his unqualified faith that encouraging the manufacture in people of “auras of power” (like Hitler’s?) is an act consistent with anti-authoritarian practices, to his substitution of a vague notion of “social change” for the idea of revolution.

But these errors are mere details compared to our speaker’s revisionist interpretation of the situationists. In order to make more plausible his assertion that therapy and spirituality are authentic manifestations of the situationist project, it was necessary that he distort and dilute the thrust of the situationists’ critique of daily life. This he accomplished in a number of ways, one of which was to assert that the situationists’ main innovation was their attempt to construct what the speaker called “theatrical situations.”

Whether this phrase—which the situationists never used and would have abhorred—was intentionally spoken or a mere slip of the tongue I cannot say. But the message was clear: the situationists advocated nothing essentially different from the symbolic, aesthetic, individualized expression of “personal growth” and creativity which has reached its mature pitch in the constellation of groups and practices comprising the New Age.

Such an interpretation negates everything the situationists tried to accomplish, beginning with their critique of the avant-garde. The situationists, unlike our speaker, were careful to distinguish the “construction of situations” from experimental theater and similar avant-garde endeavors of the day:

“These perspectives [regarding the construction of situations], or the provisional terminology describing them, should not be taken to mean that we are talking about some continuation of the theater. Pirandello and Brecht have already expressed the destruction of the theatrical spectacle and pointed out a few of the requirements for going beyond it. It could be said that the construction of situations will replace the theater in the same sense that the real construction of life has tended more and more to replace religion.” (*Internationale Situationniste* #1 (June 1958), in *Situationist International Anthology*, edited and translated by Ken Knabb, Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981)

In opposition to the merely symbolic, aesthetic, and individualistic forms of the theater, the situationists proposed nothing less than the collective creation of “experimental forms of the game of revolution.” “Real individual fulfillment,” they wrote, “entails the collective take-over of the world. Until this happens there will be no real individuals—only specters haunting the things anarchically presented to them by others.”

For the situationists, there could be no “refuge” in daily life, no consolation in symbolic, aesthetic, or individualized (i.e., separated) forms of expression. “The time for art is over,” they emphatically announced.

Indeed, it was the growing contradictions of daily life—the contradiction between spectacular images of fulfillment and everyday emptiness; the contradiction between the possibility of free, generalized creation and its fragmentary, specialized realization in the person of the artist—that had spelled the end of art (and ultimately spectacular society); henceforth, art could be realized only by being “suppressed”—superseded by the collective project of freely creating our lives.

(And as for one workshop participant’s tedious proposal to put video cameras in the hands of “the people” so as to hasten their entry into the realm of creativity, consider what Debord said in 1959: “There is talk of the liberation of the cinema. But what does it matter to us if one more art is liberated through, which Pierre or Jacques or Francois can joyously express their slave sentiments? The only interesting venture is the liberation of everyday life, not only in the perspectives of history but for us and right away. This entails the withering away of alienated forms of communication. The cinema, too, has to be destroyed.”)

Implicit here is a rejection of therapeutic modes of transformation—and for the same reason, namely that therapy cannot possibly produce “real individuals.” As in modern art, individual “solutions” are an illusion: therapy alone cannot eliminate the conditions that produced the need for therapy in the first place. Either therapy proceeds “interminably,” as it were—the individual caught in knots or contradictions that can be resolved only collectively—or else therapy “terminates” in the individual’s more or less complete adjustment to existing conditions. Which is to say, the individual is now worse off than before.

I’m not denying that in a strictly pragmatic sense therapy can sometimes lessen individual suffering—but there’s a world of difference between acknowledging therapy’s practical applications and promoting the pious wish that it (or neo-pagan rituals) can unlock the door to an endless process of healing, personal growth, and spiritual fulfillment. This groundless belief in the “transcendent” power of therapy and spirituality channels human energies that could otherwise be directed toward the struggle against social alienation into escapist “solutions” that only aggravate the problems they were intended to resolve.

The only true “therapy,” the situationists would have argued, is revolution—a formulation not without difficulties and ambiguities of its own, but far more insightful than the banal platitudes about “healing” and “personal growth” that are the common currency of New Age enthusiasts like our speaker.

(In this vein, it is worth recounting an anecdote the situationists related in the course of summarizing the results of the student-worker uprising in France in May, 1968. It seems that the patients of two psychoanalysts practicing in Paris at the time told them that as a result of the May events they felt “less depressed and dissociated” than before—a confession that reveals the relative worth of a lifetime of psychoanalysis versus a week of unconstrained autonomous activity.)

Not every workshop failed in what it set out to accomplish. The Wild Sensuality workshop in particular was reported to have been quite successful—up to the point where the proceedings were prematurely interrupted. This eminently practical workshop, which included lots of “hands on” experience, was rolling along quite smoothly until one of the building janitors happened to glance through the window into the room.

Horried to see people divested of their clothing and their inhibitions, this paragon of virtue ran downstairs to the organizers’ table, angrily vowing that if the wild sensuality didn’t cease immediately he’d see to it that the entire conference was shut down.

“We were stupid,” the workshop organizer later confided to me. “We should have covered the window with paper.”

In spite of such lighter moments, the conference as a whole had an effect on me quite the opposite of that which the events of May 1968 had on the clinically depressed. My overall impression is that the anarchist movement has degenerated into a sort of clearinghouse for the various protest groups—the peace movement, anti-nuke groups, AIDS action groups, and so on.

As I read through the many newspapers, pamphlets, and leaflets I had picked up from the literature tables in the main auditorium, I kept asking myself, “Where are the anarchists?”

A variety of non-anarchist materials were for sale or free for the taking: a flyer celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the Nicaraguan Revolution and advertising a “live television transmission from Nicaragua” by Stalinist President Daniel Ortega; the *Torch*, journal of the Revolutionary Socialist League, whose members showed up in force to convince the gullible that they really have “converted” en masse and unequivocally to anarchism; *Act Up*, the magazine of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, a group that demands among other things “free nationalized health care”; “Refuse and Resist!,” a statement circulated by an RCP front calling for an end to the phony “war on drugs” and the restoration of programs—including “truthful education about drugs” led by “community representatives, legal rights activists, and drug treatment experts”—allegedly beneficial to “the poor and oppressed”; a “Rally for Peace and the Environment” flyer, calling for “nonviolent direct action” by “small affinity group” organizations to “convert Livermore Weapons Labs” to “environmentally safe, peaceful, and socially useful purposes”; a “Save the Dolphins” flyer calling for a boycott of all canned tuna and the companies that sell it and for the support of companies “willing to sell a safe alternative”; and a flyer by the Institute for the Development of Stoned Socialism, a group which advocates among other things “worker ownership, new forms of workplace/union organizing, effective controls on rent gouging and housing speculation, opening yourself to the love of God, and the parallel development of socialist and capitalist property relations within the U.S.A.” Worse than the fact that so many liberal reformists

and other non-anarchists had free access to this conference is that so many avowed anarchists seem to lack the capacity to discriminate between those ideas, actions and groups which have a radical thrust, and those which merely reinforce existing institutions and values. When an ostensibly anarchist group like “Food Not Bombs,” which is involved in a direct action campaign to provide food for San Francisco’s homeless, they illustrate just how far many anarchists have drifted from the original vision and principles of the anarchist movement. Such slogans may be filled with compassion for the hungry and homeless, but they also tend to carry with them the practical effect of affirming the poor as a permanent caste within capitalism, able to survive only as wards of the state. Most anarchists, it would appear, have completely forsaken the desire to articulate and communicate a radical, utopian vision of the future; perhaps they have none to offer. What they do have amounts to little more than the empty promise of “endless struggle” (the title of one anarchist publication). One searches in vain through the vast majority of anarchist newspapers and ‘zines for anything more substantial than cheerleading accounts of the latest riot or protest.

Would it be too incongruous, or somehow humiliating, to talk to the poor about “the-abolition of work” and “everyone living in their own cathedral” when these people have neither work nor places to live? Or could it be that the poor, along-with the rest of us, need to dream, need utopia, far more than we need to “survive” under capitalism?

I am not, to be sure, the only one concerned about the present condition of the anarchist movement. In a flyer distributed at the conference entitled “Have Anarchists Forgotten their principles?” the group Resurgence (Box 2824, Champaign 61825) expresses its concern over “the increasingly non-anarchist character of our movement.”

Unfortunately, Resurgence limits its concern to the relatively trivial problem posed by the “formerly” Trotskyist Revolutionary Socialist League’s (RSL) attempt to “infiltrate” the anarchist movement. Actually, groups like Resurgence have only themselves to blame for this problem; as members of the now-defunct Anarchist Communist Federation, they bear much responsibility for the continuing bout of organizational fetishism that has given the RSL its current opening.

But more significantly, the entire anarchist milieu is to blame for not sufficiently distancing themselves from the model of “industrial communism” that the RSL advocates. If during the past decade the anarchist movement had done more than merely revive the contradictory visions of past generations of anarchists, perhaps the RSL wouldn’t now be “targeting” them for infiltration. An anarchist movement that had grown and matured would regard the RSL as offensive not merely because their commitment to direct democracy is only “skin deep” (Resurgence), but more importantly because the RSL’s belief that “an industrial society [can] be organized on anarchist lines, without losing either productivity or freedom,” is one that true lovers of freedom (and enemies of work) have long since outgrown. (Quote from *The Torch*, Sept. 15-Oct. 14, 1988)

Perhaps I shouldn’t end on such a sour note. There were also some faint but detectable signs of life at the conference. The critique of technology and civilization, for instance, while hardly embraced by the anarchist movement as a whole (or articulated coherently by many of its would-be proponents), has made considerable headway in the past decade.

I remember that at anarchist conferences I attended in the late ’70’s, many people considered the notion of an “anti-technology” perspective absurd or unintelligible; today, most anarchists have at least “heard about” our critique. Indeed, it was my impression that it is the anarcho-syndicalists, neo-marxists, and other defenders of technology who are now on the defensive.

One reason for the advance of the anti-tech critique has been the untiring efforts of various individuals to publicize it over the past decade. But another, and probably more significant, reason is the accelerating ecological crisis, which has made our critique virtually impossible to ignore.

Ecologically-oriented anarchists are exerting their influence in a number of areas; I include here those anarchists associated with the group Earth First!, whose impact on the radical ecology movement could prove decisive for the growth—and growing coherence—of anarchy in the coming period. (It is also true that the “anarcho-spiritualists,” whose influence I otherwise find quite suspect, tend to share an anti-industrial, ecological perspective.)

Credit should be given to the people who planned and organized the Without Borders Anarchist Conference and Festival. Their efforts resulted in a fairly smoothly-run conference. The organizers remained as unobtrusive as possible and generally allowed events to proceed without interference.

Many of the problems that did arise can be traced to the decision to hold the conference in a city, which made us hostages to the security deposit the organizers had to pay to secure use of the conference space. But given the built-in constraints of an urban gathering, this year's conference site—the Horace Mann Middle School in San Francisco's Mission District—turned out to be a surprisingly good choice.

With an open courtyard and adjoining gymnasium in the center of the building, the Horace Mann space accommodated a wide variety of spontaneous activities, such as games, music and dancing, in addition to the workshops and other planned events.

On the final day of the conference, the closing speeches eventually gave way to a wild, spontaneous snake-dance through the courtyard. Watching the exuberant faces of the dancers I could almost feel the shared sense of friendship, unity and common purpose. An illusion? Perhaps, but let's make that dream a reality.

Available from FE Books: *Situationist International Anthology*—\$15. *Revolution of Everyday Life*, Raoul Vaneigem, \$10. *Society of the Spectacle*, \$2.50

3. The DOA: Contrived Revolt in Berkeley

by Sunfrog

On the afternoon following the fourth continental anarchist gathering in four years, hangovers from the conference held a DOA in Berkeley. Originally intended to be a well-organized occupation of University of California at Berkeley property as a squat, and not another Toronto-style confrontation, the Day of Action came Dead on Arrival.



Other than the brief liberation and trashing of a Coca-Cola truck, this demonstration was a disastrous fiasco. A few people, perhaps self-appointed militant "leaders," led a crowd of anarchists, most completely unfamiliar with the neighborhoods of Berkeley, on an aimless march. Without a sense of purpose, some demonstrators began to take out their anger by running around destroying newspaper boxes and turning over garbage cans.- In the march's first potential confrontation with police near the campus ROTC headquarters, most people just turned

and fled at the sight of less than a dozen cops at most. (In the final confrontation with hundreds of cops in full riot gear between People's Park and Telegraph Avenue, several anarchists provoked the final and most brutal violence of the day by hurling bricks and bottles at the police. Some demonstrators got close enough to engage in hand-to-hand combat with the cops. The police create enough opportunities to terrorize us daily; we do not need to provoke unnecessary physical assaults on ourselves. We took several of our friends to the hospital, and didn't accomplish a thing.

Contrived revolt can never succeed. A few hundred people, predominately from outside the San Francisco Bay area, wearing facemasks, dressed uniformly in black and carrying clubs, invaded Berkeley. Entering a strange town decked out to fight the cops is not radical anarchism unto itself. Most of the anarchists were strangers to each other, making the trust necessary for successful direct action virtually absent at this demonstration.

In this action, I fear only the worst images were conveyed to the local community, and that our tactics simply mirrored those of the State we so vehemently oppose. Property damage and street rebellion spawned by spontaneity and surprise with its roots in the local community can successfully shock the system. An unplanned riot in the same town of Berkeley just a few months earlier did just that.

When we hold daily public meetings for almost a week to plan a riot, as was done at the gathering, we are doomed to fail. The sincere efforts by some of the DOA planners to prevent a riot situation and work in a tight network of affinity groups sadly failed. Berkeley's militant 'zine, *Slingshot*, published a detailed, pre-action guide which included tips on the proper clothing for a street fight (information much more effectively circulated among affinity groups than in a major underground publication).

The problems with the Berkeley DOA go far beyond any philosophical debate between violent/non-violent tactics. It reveals much more that people creating revolution must have trust, security and familiarity among themselves before waging struggle against the State. Revolution must be created in our own communities and not on our summer vacations! (even if we choose to spend our summer vacations with hundreds of other anarchists or even if we live year round without jobs or vacations, revolution cannot come with people we have only gotten to know over the previous days).

An alternative DOA, which took place earlier the same day in San Francisco, got much more accomplished without inflicting serious physical injury on our community. Calling for explicitly nonviolent tactics and working under the slogan Food Not Governments, this action worked with the already existing San Francisco group Food Not Bombs in challenging the illegality of providing free food for the hungry in the parks of San Francisco. We held a picnic with homeless people in the park directly across from the City Hall where a homeless camp had been evicted and arrested for serving free food a week earlier. We left the picnic for a colorful parade through the business district of downtown San Francisco. We chanted slogans ranging from "Tomatoes, Zucchini's, not Lamborghinis" to "Jump, jump! the stock market's crashing" as we playfully pranced, burned fake money, disrupted a normal working day, and confronted a police state against the poor. This demo had all the wildness of a War Chest Tour without the more serious risks.

We concluded our action by planting a vegetable garden and painting in an abandoned lot, the former sight of a welfare hotel destroyed by gentrification. People played music and sang as demonstrators scaled the barbed wire fence which surrounded this lot. The same cops who enforce laws against feeding people, declared the illegality of our guerrilla garden. This action never took on the tone of a boring liberal rally, showing that militancy unto itself does not determine whether an action is radical or not.

One can remain sympathetic with many of the impulses in the militant youth street-fighting milieu of the anarchist movement, and still have learned that revolt cannot be forced or follow the script fantastically formulated by would-be leaders in the anarchist Movement. Serious acts to sabotage the system require the utmost in secrecy. Our public demonstrations as anarchists are better off without "I'm more militant than you" radical show-offs. One thing we can provide in public action is a glimpse of the world which anarchists wish to create. This world includes all the frolic and fun which made a mockery of capitalism and its cops in the infinitely more successful nonviolent DOA which took place a few hours before the bloody Berkeley bludgeon.

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