

Fire in the Hearth

The Radical Politics of Place in America



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The Playground of US Capitalism? The Political Economy of the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1980s

Dick Walker and The Bay Area Study Group¹

The San Francisco Bay Area has always been an anomalous enclave within US capitalism. It is too big, too rich, too left, too swish, too cosmopolitan, too weird, too much fun to live in. Can this really be part of the same country as Youngstown and Dallas? Such bold differences among regions tell us something about the varieties of capitalisms that are possible, unexpected openings for social change, and the elusiveness of forging a viable political response to the diverse situations in which people find themselves. To focus on a single region is not merely to fill in the details in the Big Picture of a world capitalism that develops evenly across the globe. It is, rather, to try to capture the workings of uneven and combined development, which is the way capitalism expands and renews itself globally.

Many of the key developments in capitalism – industrial shifts, class transformations and political struggles – begin in localized settings, from which their effects reverberate to a larger world (Storper and Walker, 1989). Because 'the local becomes the global' where key social and industrial changes are concerned, it is particularly important for the left to understand the lineaments of local economy, society and polity in those places that take a leading role in the capitalism of their time. Like Lancaster² in 1830 or New York in 1920, California has been one of the key poles of capitalist development in the twentieth century; it is now the sixth largest economy in the world, having just passed Great Britain. The San Francisco Bay region forms one end of the coastal urban axis on which

California's fortunes turn.²

California and the San Francisco Bay Area are indicative of many of the most important developments within US and world capitalism in the late twentieth century. Among these are leading sectors such as the electronics, aerospace and biotechnology industries; 'flexible' production complexes such as Silicon Valley and Hollywood; globalized banking and investment; a 'service' economy featuring high levels of tourism, finance and retail activity; a class structure shifted towards technicians, professionals and white-collar workers and replete with nouveau riches; new forms of 'postmodern' consumption and social life; and the massive absorption of new nationalities and women into capitalist production and the class system. In fact, California and the Bay Area in particular have been the hearth of some of these developments, particularly for the United States: new technologies, 'yuppie' culture, the new immigration, the military-industrial complex. Their roots often go back to World War II and beyond, although it is only in recent years that people have begun to speak of a new epoch of capitalism, or what is now commonly referred to as 'post-Fordism'.³

The Bay Area is arguably the quintessential post-Fordist city, but such a claim is both a provocation and a quandary. A provocation because it is a view to be contested in light of other local experiences and possibly proven wrong; and a quandary because it is a challenge to ourselves and our comrades, jolting us into recognizing the significance of things lying just under our noses, and therefore seemingly of less importance than those far away in the global economy or the battlefields of US imperialism. Yet the claim of significance is also hard to accept because the new and the striking are mingled with the commonplace of California urbanism and because the bold successes and emergent possibilities are no more discovered than they are thrown into doubt by economic crisis and the banalization of California life-styles.

The contradictions of the Metropolis-by-the-Bay are considerable: they include more than its summery winters and wintry summers. According to conventional economic wisdom, the Bay Area ought not to be as economically successful as it has been, because the costs of living and doing business here have always been virtually the highest of any major city in the US. Although not known as a manufacturing base, it has surpassed in size such productivist behemoths as Philadelphia and Detroit. Yet once again fears are rife of an economic decline in

the face of new global economic challenges. A further contradiction is that large-scale capital has been firmly entrenched in the economy since the 1850s, yet labor has also been remarkably strong and well organized. The Bay Area has never had the kind of proletarian milieu of nineteenth-century mill towns, New York at the height of European immigration, or Detroit in the banner years of mass production; yet it has supported some exceptional examples of working-class radicalism. Certain segments of the working class of the Bay Area – chiefly white males – have been exceedingly well favored by strong demand and short supply, but others – chiefly Latinos and Asians – have suffered under some of the most oppressive working conditions in US history.

San Francisco and the Bay Area have nurtured an extraordinarily rich cultural milieu, of which the Great Yuppie Awakening is only the latest version. The region has long boasted a worldly flair, bohemian tolerance and polyglot make-up, from the adventurers of 1849 to the gay mecca of the 1970s. But this claim sits uneasily with a record of racism that makes the blood run cold, and a kind of de facto racial exclusion today that belies the liberal reputation of its white majority. The Bay Area has been a pioneer of the American way of urban life, from the mid-twentieth century suburb in all its studied plainness to the new urbanity of California cuisine. It is therefore a place oddly caught between the baroque idealism of 'alternative life-styles' and the crass materialism of rampant real estate speculation, where the latter is regularly discussed in the hot tubs of the former. Finally, nowhere else is the discourse of the left as likely to have entered the mainstream of American ideas and politics as in the Bay Area since the 1960s. Yet leftists find themselves at something of an impasse today, seriously disconnected from the blue-collar working class, the new gentry and even from each other.

The impasse of the left is doubly disturbing because the new faces being shown by capitalism in the closing decades of the century have had some dire political consequences. California has not only brought the world microelectronics and venture capital, it has sent forth the nights of Reaganism and the dark days of Nixon, and much of Carter's cabinet. This is hardly accidental, and flows from many springs of California's political, economic culture, such as dependence on military contracting, weak electoral parties and media mastery. At the same time, it suggests that we ought to look more closely at the reasons for

the weakness of labor and progressive politics in a place like the Bay Area and for indications of resistance, for the city on the bay has never caved in to the New Right, from Reagan's aerial assault on Berkeley in the 1960s to the anti-gay campaigns of the Moral Majority in the 1980s.

The local left is, however, seriously constrained by narrow geographic bases focused on Berkeley, Santa Cruz and San Francisco. Spatial concentration and historic tradition have been sources of strength, of course, illustrating what Dolores Hayden calls 'the power of place' in shaping people's experience of capitalism and responses that grow out of their immediate conditions. But the places that shape most people's lives in the region lie beyond the pale as far as the left is concerned. In emphasizing a renewed attention to the local, then, we do not endorse a narrow version of community activism; instead, we argue for a 'metropolitan vision' to complement the left's relatively more developed national and international perspectives.

Our focus on place derives also from an urban vision that sees capitalism as not only the production of commodities but entire cities (Harvey, 1985a). Capitalism without urbanization is as unthinkable as capitalism without factories (Scott, 1988a). Urban areas serve as vast productive complexes and support systems for industry – and are themselves being constructed and reconstructed, piece by piece. The 'point of production' is therefore not confined to the shop floor – as important as that is – while all the rest can be relegated to the nether world of consumption or labor reproduction; it encompasses whole industrial landscapes, vast stretches of homes, multiple government jurisdictions and far-flung transport networks.

The place on which we focus is, in fact, huge: a ten-county region embracing about 7,800 square miles and 6 million people. It is now the fourth largest urban area in the United States. The City and County of San Francisco, which in the mid-nineteenth century comprised virtually the whole of the urbanized area around the bay (and over half the population of California), has long since been eclipsed in size by its 'suburban' ring. But only part of this ring consists of suburbs in the sense of bedroom communities. Rather, the outer realms of the metropolis are the mighty constructs of twentieth-century urbanism. Oakland and its East Bay suburbs grew spectacularly in the first half of the century, surpassing San Francisco by the early 1950s. San Jose and the Santa Clara Valley exploded after

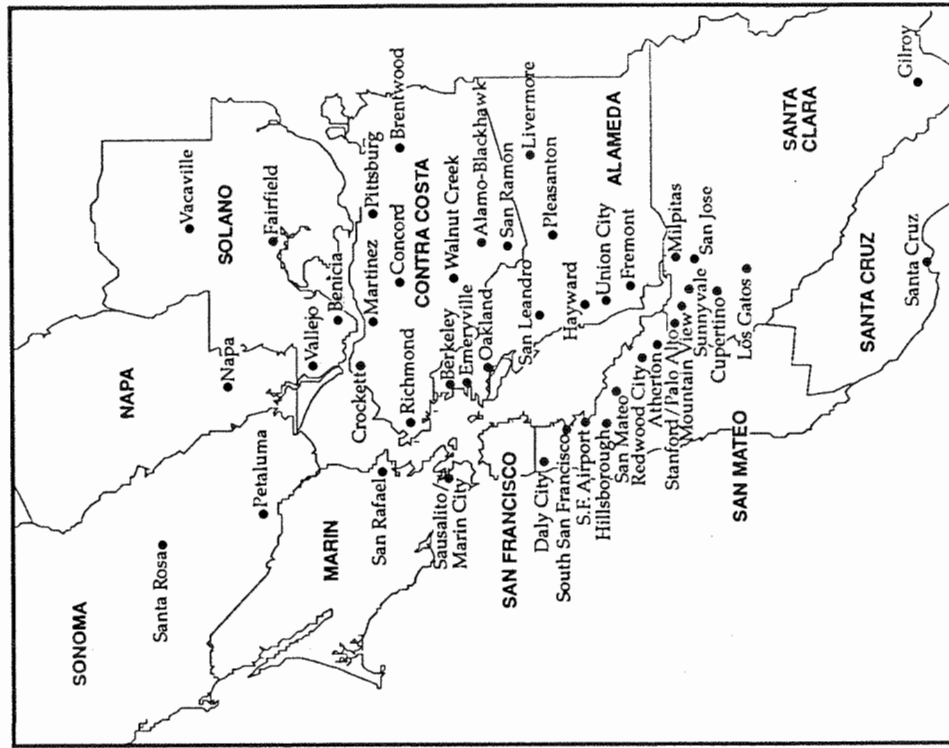


Figure 1 The ten-county San Francisco Bay Area

World War II to become the third great urban realm to be added to the metropolis, passing San Francisco by the early 1960s and Alameda County by the early 1970s. Contra Costa County overtook San Francisco in 1987.⁴ There are more than four pieces to this immense urban puzzle, of course, but the important thing is to see that they fit together, despite their many differences, and that one does not leave 'San Francisco' by crossing the Golden Gate Bridge or the Bay Bridge, as one

once did by stepping onto a ferryboat.

This essay serves, then, both as an introduction to a significant locale and an attempt to show that the Bay Area is distinctive and confounding in several ways. The first is the region's high-growth economic base, particularly its high-tech manufacturing, high-stakes finance and high-life recreation. The second is its upwardly tilted class structure, manifest in legions of yuppies, engorged real estate values and mass-gentrified landscapes. The third is its profoundly transformed working class, including new kinds of immigrants and new forms of work, and the way this has allowed the once-impressive fortifications of working-class organization to be breached. The fourth is the distinctive racial mix and new forms of racial division that now pervade the region, making it both the best of cities and the worst of cities for Asian, Latino and African Americans. The fifth is the vagary of the region's capitalist class, first-born of the west coast of North America and yet a perennial weakening that cannot seem to pull itself together to tackle the growing pains of an overextended and anarchic metropolis. And, lastly, we consider the state of the Bay Area left, caught between a brilliant past and a disoriented present.

The Gilt-Edged Economy

It is fitting that the main pollution threat in southern San Francisco Bay is from thousands of pounds of gold, silver, platinum, cadmium and other precious metals that pour from the sewers of Silicon Valley every year. Even waste has a gilt edge here. The economy of the region has, from its birth in the Gold Rush, been uniquely blessed. In recent years, the twin pillars of the region's economy have been high-tech electronics in Silicon Valley and high-flying finance in San Francisco.⁵ Behind these giants come several other distinctive and favored sectors, such as business services, tourism and higher education, which have propelled the region's rapid growth and shaped its peculiar political economy.

The gross regional product of the ten-county Bay Area was \$141 billion in 1986. If it were a country, it would rank among the fifteen largest national economies (about equal to the Netherlands). Total employment in 1987 reached 3,045,800 (CSAC, 1989); between 1962 and 1982 employment grew 116 percent compared to a US average of 71 percent and a Califor-

nia average of 105 percent (Brady, 1985a,b).⁶ Job growth was much faster in the 1970s, when about 800,000 jobs were added at a rate of 4 percent per year. In the 1980s about 550,000 jobs were added, a rate of about 2 percent a year (Rosen and Jordan, 1988: 6).

Silicon chips and blue chip finance

The main engine of expansion in the Bay metropolis for the last thirty years has been the microelectronics industrial complex of Silicon Valley, including semiconductors, computers and instruments. Silicon Valley is the popular name for the area centered on the Santa Clara Valley, at the northern end of Santa Clara County, and spilling over into Santa Cruz, Alameda and San Mateo counties. Employment in Santa Clara County grew from 251,000 to 832,000 over the period 1964 to 1984, a 5.7 percent annual rate (State of California, 1985; CSAC, 1985). On this base, the population of Santa Clara County grew from 642,000 in 1960 to 1,421,000 in 1987, making it the largest population center in the region. Indeed, some regional planners are concerned about how thoroughly wedded the area has become to its leading sector (Brady, 1985a, 1986).

The Valley is the diversified core of the national and global microelectronics industry. It is the leading center of technical innovation in chip, computer and software design, and a major production zone for such things as microprocessors, disk drives and missile guidance systems (Siegel, 1988-89; Morgan and Sayer, 1988). Silicon Valley is the place everyone else seeks to imitate, as in Silicon Glen (Scotland), Silicon Desert (Albuquerque) and Silicon Forest (Portland), but none of the other high-tech centers in the US such as Route 128 or North Carolina's Research Triangle can match Silicon Valley's size and performance (Glasmeier, 1985). The Valley is now home to a host of new *Fortune* 500 companies: Amdahl, Hewlett-Packard, Raychem and Apple, to name a few. And it continues to generate new stars in the corporate firmament such as Sun Microsystems, Cypress Semiconductor, Weitek and Flextronics. The great strength of the Valley is its immensely rich complex of firms, skilled labor and knowledge, from which comes a stream of innovations as new design and production problems are posed and solved through a collective effort studded with individual brilliance – with a dollop of social conscience and the wallop of venture capital and lust for fame and fortune

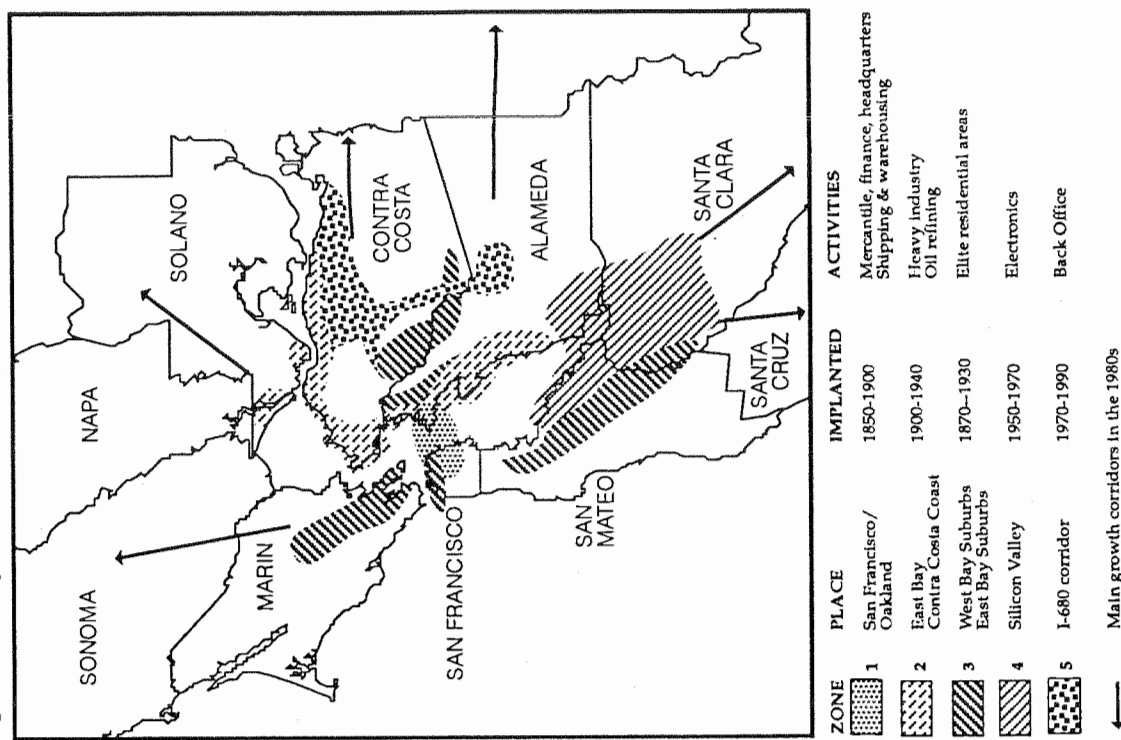
(Saxenian, 1989; Scott, 1988b).

The microelectronics industry has had the world for its playground. Over the last twenty years, the Valley has spun off several major growth peripheries around the western US, including Sonoma County and northern Sacramento County in California, and its companies have installed plants throughout Western Europe and Southeast Asia – first assembly works and now increasingly fabrication and design facilities (Scott and Storper, 1987). It has as well deep ties through subcontracting and marketing to both areas. Indeed, electronics has been the very model of a globalizing industry and of a burgeoning Pacific Rim – although the left has often jumped to exaggerated conclusions about the New International Division of Labor based on short-term trends and certain segments of the industry (Morgan and Sayer, 1988). Its fate has, more recently, been increasingly linked to Japan, through heated competition, inward investment, subcontracting and joint ventures.

San Francisco is only slightly less representative of global financial expansion than Silicon Valley is of high-tech growth. The city has long rested among the elite of 'world cities' in the United States, along with New York, Chicago and Los Angeles (Noyelle and Stanbach, 1984). From the time of the Gold Rush until around 1980, San Francisco was the financial center of the West. It was the only significant independent pole of accumulation west of St. Louis during the nineteenth century. While challenges from Seattle, Los Angeles and other rising cities displaced San Francisco from its virtual financial and trade monopoly in the early part of this century, the city remained the preeminent business center in the West, and even rose to second place (after New York) in the amount of bank assets, surpassing Chicago sometime around 1950 (Borchert, 1978). The principal source of this continued vitality was A.P. Giannini's Bank of America, whose innovative branch-banking and liberal lending policies and, later, credit cards propelled it to become the largest bank in the world for much of the post-war era. The world headquarters of the VISA credit card operation remains in San Mateo.

San Francisco is the location for 75 major banking offices, and headquarters for 5 of the top 100 US banks (*American Banker*, 1989). B of A still ranks as the third largest bank in the United States in terms of assets, while rival Wells Fargo now ranks ninth. The Pacific coast's regional federal reserve bank is located here, and the city co-hosts the Pacific Stock Ex-

Figure 2 Principal economic zones of the Bay Area



change and is home to many brokerage houses such as Charles Schwab and Dean Witter. San Francisco also serves as headquarters to major nonfinancial corporations, including 14 Fortune 500 companies. Chevron is one of the ten largest industrial corporations in the world, Bechtel the world's largest engineering firm, Pacific Gas & Electric the nation's largest private utility, and Levi-Strauss the world's largest clothing manufacturer. The city's Montgomery Street shares the world's largest venture capital pool with Silicon Valley's Sharon Business Center (Florida and Kenney, 1988). San Francisco boasts one of the country's premier business services complexes, which includes major accounting, law, engineering, data processing, advertising and management consulting firms, such as Deloit and Touche and McKinsey and Company. All of the Big Eight (now Big Six) accounting firms have their regional headquarters in San Francisco.

Total employment in offices in downtown San Francisco is roughly 200,000; 180,000 in 1988 not including the staff of industrial corporations (Rosen and Jordan, 1988). Business services alone grew 425 percent from 27,000 to 142,000 jobs between 1962 and 1982 (Brady, 1985a: 5). San Francisco remains among the premier office centers in the country, and has experienced a major building boom in each of the last three decades, bringing total office space to 54 million square feet, about two-thirds of which is in the core financial district. A record 9 million square feet were added in 1985-88 in the downtown area alone (Rosen and Jordan, 1988).

The San Francisco financial, managerial and business services complex was never particularly local, having its tendrils extended throughout California and the western US. The city's mercantile empire has stretched across the Pacific for over a century. Financial growth here was part of the global financial eruption that occurred after 1970 due to industrial sclerosis blocking former investment outlets, global outreach and 24-hour securities trading, and deregulation and fantastic rates of innovation in financial instruments (Sweezy and Magdoff, 1987; Harvey, 1982; Shapira, 1986; Thrift and Leyshon, 1988). It is the main point of entry for Chinese capital in the US, with deepening ties to the financial centers of East and Southeast Asia, and it has a healthy Japanese connection as well.

In the Bay Area as a whole, the financial-business services complex has spread outward, down the Peninsula, into Marin County, over to Emeryville, and particularly across the East

Bay hills to eastern Contra Costa and Alameda counties, in what is now called the 'I-680 corridor', where some 20 million square feet of new office space were added in the 1980s, filled mostly by San Francisco-based companies, led by Chevron, Bank of America and Pacific Telesis. This dispersal has consisted principally of 'back office' functions that are too expensive to keep in the center city, and which draw on the ample pool of female labor in the suburbs (Nelson, 1986).

Secondary growth sectors

The Bay Area is home to some other exceptionally prosperous industries that back up its Big Two. The petroleum processing and petrochemicals complex along the Contra Costa coastline, including six major refineries, a Dow chemical and plastics plant, and a huge PG&E power plant, dates to the turn of the century, when incoming San Joaquin Valley oil made this one of the premier oil-processing sites in the world for about thirty years. The remaining food-processing and metal-working plants of Alameda County are a legacy of a time when California was the canning capital of the world (backed up by the revolutionary development of capitalist agribusiness in the interior valleys) (Cardellino, 1984) and had built up a considerable regional strength in machining, machine-making and vehicle assembly. The transport, shipping and warehousing functions along the Bay's edge go back to the beginning of San Francisco's mercantile empire, and still include four ports (Oakland, Richmond, San Francisco and Redwood City) and three major airports (San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose).⁷ In both sea and air traffic, the Bay Area ranks among the top five centers in the country. The wine industry of the Napa Valley and the North Bay is world-renowned, and surprisingly well capitalized and profitable. The Bay Area is headquarters to an international construction industry, led by Bechtel, Morrison-Knudsen, Utah Construction and Kaiser Engineers, who set the standard for large-scale projects in the mid-twentieth century with such pioneering edifices as the Boulder and Grand Coulee dams, the Bay and Golden Gate bridges, and the planned city of Riyadh in Saudi Arabia. One also cannot overlook the amount of employment in government work, by local counties, municipalities and special districts, as well as in the many federal and state government regional offices, particularly in San Francisco's Civic Center.⁸

Another group of economic activities that employ large numbers of local workers deserve special mention: tourism, restaurants and retail sales. Often not considered 'industries' because they involve a greater degree of direct 'consumer contact' than traditional manufacture (but see Walker, 1985), they in fact indicate important trends in consumerism and in capitalist penetration of the realm of consumption and other areas of personal life (Harvey, 1989). Recreation and tourism have as their main form a huge hotel and entertainment complex located principally in San Francisco itself. San Francisco presently has around 19,000 hotel rooms, serving about 3 million visitors per year. San Francisco has always been a transient city and has been chock-a-block with hotels since at least the time of the Panama Pacific Exposition (Groth, 1983); much of the hotel space is still occupied by the normal flux of business travelers. But the city has also become one of the nation's leading convention centers and host to a vast flood of tourists from around the world: 28 million visitor days, \$2.8 billion spent and 60,000 jobs. Another sector of note is the restaurant trade, which is extraordinarily large in San Francisco and the Bay Area as a whole: in 1986, per capita spending on prepared food was \$200 higher than in any other city (*Restaurant Business*, 1987).

A further adjunct to this consumer service complex is an exceptional retail sector, with the highest per capita sales of the ten largest metropolitan areas in the US (Rosen and Jordan, 1988: 49). The Union Square-Market Street triangle does the second highest volume of retail business in the country after Midtown Manhattan (about \$1.2 billion annually in sales), and is claimed to be first in sales volume per square foot (*Examiner*, 11 September 1988). Boutique shopping has also transformed Berkeley and parts of North Oakland into a gentrified playground of the East Bay middle class. So vibrant is the Bay Area shopping scene that it, too, breeds hip new retail chains with national profiles, such as Banana Republic, Williams-Sonoma, Esprit and CP Shades. The San Francisco region thrives in the new era of capitalist consumerism by virtue of its wealth and the vast expansion of consumer credit generally, but also by the modernist irony of self-promotion: the city sells itself – the capitalist playground – as a commodity to be enjoyed in measured doses, even fully packaged in plastic, as at Fishermen's Wharf (Walters, 1986). The same goes for Sausalito or the Napa Valley, and this model is being eagerly

imitated by enterprising developers in whatever pockets of quaintness remain, as in Crockett or the Oakland waterfront.

A rather different group of 'industries' serving their consumers mostly on site are educational and medical complexes. The Bay Area is second only to Boston as a center for institutions of higher learning, led by the University of California and Stanford University. These are huge employers in their own right, as well as attracting thousands of students: UC Berkeley alone employs around 15,000 people and has 33,000 students. The medical schools are a major part of this complex, with their research facilities and teaching hospitals. Hospitals, nursing homes and doctors' offices are dotted throughout the region, of course, but a disproportionate number cluster around central San Francisco and Oakland's 'Pill Hill'. A prodigal offspring of the wedding of local university medical researchers and venture capitalists is, of course, the fledgling biotechnology industry. The Bay Area is the leader in this still-infant field and home to its two most famous (and heavily capitalized companies), Cetus and Genentech (Blakely, 1987). Most of the companies in that field are located in Emeryville, South San Francisco and Palo Alto.

It is impossible to ignore, lastly, the military economy of the Bay Area. During the two World Wars, the Korean and Vietnam Wars and the Cold War generally, the Bay Area was built up into one of the principal shipping and supply points for the Army, Navy and Air Force. The Navy has the greatest presence today with a half-dozen major facilities around the bay; the Air Force maintains the huge Travis Air Force Base in Solano County and its 'Blue Cube' satellite control center in Suisun; the Army has cut back to its Oakland supply base, the San Francisco Presidio and Camp Parks. Total employment at local bases exceeded 40,000 in 1987 (Schutt and Siegel, 1988). A remarkable but short-lived burst of growth was generated by turning the Bay Area into the world's largest shipbuilding center during World War II, with the Kaiser and Bechtel yards hiring over 150,000 workers (Nash, 1985). Equally remarkable, and more sustained, was the link forged between scientific research and the federal government by E.O. Lawrence, which produced the atomic bomb. The Lawrence Livermore Laboratory still visits its weapons of doom on the world, and sold Reagan on the Star Wars program.

But the biggest outlet for Defense Department spending in the Bay Area is contracting for aerospace electronics systems

from Silicon Valley companies. Silicon Valley was suckled on defense spending, although it has increasingly gone its own way since the 1960s (Siegel and Markoff, 1985). Total defense spending for the ten Bay Area counties in 1987 was \$8.760 billion (compared with \$19.733 billion for greater Los Angeles). Santa Clara County has the second largest county total for prime DOD contracts in the US, after Los Angeles County, with \$4.437 billion; and the Bay Area takes in \$5.792 billion as a whole, compared to \$18.920 billion for greater L.A. Lockheed's plant in Sunnyvale, employing around 20,000 people, takes in over \$2 billion by itself (Schutt and Siegel, 1988, 1989). The Bay Area did exceedingly well in Star Wars contracts during 1983-88, with \$3 billion, or some 20.6 percent of the US total.

Competition and restructuring

'All that is solid melts into air', as Marx and Engels observed in *The Communist Manifesto*. With growth, capitalism brings change and a fearsome inconstancy in the fortunes of peoples and places (Storper and Walker, 1989). One can never be certain that prosperity will last, even in a place as blessed as the Bay Area. The 1980s were a rocky patch for the region's economy.

Workers have always been the first to know. As the Reagan depression hit in 1982, the long decline of certain heavy manufacturing sectors in California became a rout (Shapira, 1986). Job growth almost everywhere was negative except in Silicon Valley (Rosen and Jordan, 1988: 6). Virtually all steel-works, lumber mills, tire plants and vehicle assembly plants shut down, and cutbacks were severe in food processing, containers and metalworking. Yet the carnage was largely concealed by the electronics and financial booms of the same period. When the huge General Motors plant closed in 1982, the mayor of Fremont declared his indifference because that town had just been hit by the spreading wave of growth from Silicon Valley (*Chronicle*, 1 March 1982). Also overlooked were the grim facts about employment in electronics itself: very rapid turnover, frequent plant openings and closings, and long bouts of unemployment (Shapira, 1986).

By contrast, when the bourgeoisie was hit by economic turbulence in 1985-86, the public outcry was deafening. It has concentrated on three issues: Japanese competition in electronics, the financial ascendancy of Southern California, and

buy-outs of San Francisco-based companies. All three are indicative of important trends in global capitalism and of global restructuring. In each case the challenge is serious but the near-hysteria among some local observers is not warranted by the evidence.

When electronics went into a severe slump in the mid-1980s, leaving millions of square feet of new office space lying empty (Kroll and Kimball, 1986), the reverberations were widely felt. Indeed, the regional high tech economy has only just recovered from the 1984-85 downturn in Silicon Valley. This cyclic over-production crisis raised fears that the Japanese had dealt the Valley a killing blow by their mastery of the production of very large memory chips (DRAMs) and associated equipment (Stowsky, 1987). Rumors of Silicon Valley's incipient death were in fact greatly exaggerated: the Valley revived smartly in the late 1980s on the basis of companies and technologies that go well beyond the now-lumbering semiconductor pioneers (Saxenian, 1989). Important doubts have been raised, however, about the Valley's reliance on new product breakthroughs in lieu of manufacturing followthrough, compared with Japanese industry. Sharp criticism has been directed at venture capital for promoting get-rich-quick schemes for new firms (often premature and at the cost of continuity in older firms), hyper-mobility of skilled labor and managers (highly disruptive to sustained innovation), and lack of adequate coordination among an overly fragmented set of loosely related small and medium-sized firms (Florida and Kenney, 1990; Cohen and Zysman, 1987).

The mighty economic volcano of Southern California has now raised its financial peak above that of its elder competitor to the north. Indicative of San Francisco's financial decline relative to Los Angeles was the near-collapse in the mid-1980s of the Bank of America, which *Business Week* wryly called 'the incredible shrinking bank'. Bank of America got its fingers badly burned by trying to blaze its way ahead of competitors into the international arena in the 1970s, as well as in domestic real estate, oil drilling and farming. Other harbingers of trouble have been the disappearance of the one-time eighth-largest bank in the country, Crocker Bank, and the transfer of the greater part of the Pacific Coast Stock Exchange to L.A. About 5,000 banking jobs were lost in San Francisco in the mid-1980s. To compound the problem, Japan, the capitalist Mount Fuji, has been spewing vast flows of hot money over the globe,

buying local banks (for example, Mitsubishi Bank owns Bank of California and Bank of Tokyo owns California First Bank) and favoring Southern over Northern California with investments.

On the other hand, Bank of America has rebounded of late, thanks in part to an injection of about \$700 million of Japanese capital, after staving off a purchase effort by L.A.'s First Interstate. Hong Kong capital favors the Bay Area over Los Angeles. San Francisco-based First Nationwide Financial Corp. has exploded to become the second largest savings and loan institution in the country, backed by cash from Ford Motor (*New York Times*, 12 Jan. 1989). The Bay Area economy has been growing at about the same rate as L.A.'s in the late 1980s, and has matched L.A. in employment growth rates since the mid-1970s (Rosen and Jordan, 1988: 6-7). But given that greater L.A. is now twice the size of the Bay Area, no one should be surprised that it has finally passed the North in the accumulation of capital.⁹

Another frightening prospect has been the purchase of many of San Francisco and Oakland's old-line companies by outside interests – for example, Crown-Zellerbach, Southern Pacific, Del Monte, Genstar, Pacific Lumber, Natomas and the various pieces of Kaiser Industries (McLaughlin, 1988). Some eighteen of the thirty-two *Fortune* 500 industrial companies headquartered in San Francisco in 1979 have been acquired by outside investors, as have many hotels, department stores and office buildings. Even newer companies have been swallowed: Saga, Shaklee and Cost Plus. In certain cases assets have been stripped, offices closed and profits diverted worldwide. At the same time, the startup of new firms in San Francisco has slowed and the growth of office centers in the South Bay and East Bay further undermines San Francisco's claim to business hegemony in the region. To make matters worse, mighty Bechtel and Chevron both fell on hard times, as the 1982 recession and the world oil bust cut deeply into their business.

Nevertheless, the economic loss due to ownership changes can easily be exaggerated. Many of the merged companies are remnants of an older regional industrial base resting on timber, canning and mining (Malone, 1986); these are no longer growth sectors. Losses are compensated for by the growth of new businesses in the city, many of them started by immigrants. Mergers do not always eliminate local office functions: for example, Del Monte and Kaiser Engineers are still here. Finally, the sword

of mobile capital cuts both ways: Chevron bought Gulf Oil in the largest merger in history; California First Bank bought L.A.'s Union Bank; Southern Pacific was merged with the Denver & Rio Grande Western and headquartered again in San Francisco. San Francisco capitalists have investments nationwide and worldwide, from which they, too, siphon off profits (Pred, 1977). Calculating the net result of the crisscrossing of capital flows is impossible, and the case remains anecdotal (for example, McLaughlin, 1988).

All this highlights the grip of external forces on any local economy, even a prosperous one: deindustrialization in older sectors, intensification of geographic competition, globalization of capital investment. Nonetheless, it is rather disingenuous to fret over the loss of local ownership of capitalist enterprise and real estate, in the manner of the *Bay Guardian*, when San Francisco has been the spider in a web of distant exploitation for its entire history. We should also pause before shedding tears for the Bay Area's 'decline' relative not to the Lilliputians of the world, such as Nashville, but by the Brobdingnagian standards of Los Angeles and Tokyo. Finally, mourning over the passing of older industries leaves one grasping at the past. One should, rather, attend to the transformation and restructuring of capital and capitalist production that lies beyond the immediate crisis, and from which the Bay Area has largely benefited, not suffered. Whether its favored economic status can be maintained by the same engines of growth is difficult to say. But clearly the conditions of labor and life in the San Francisco metropolis have been and will be for some time to come more a product of capitalist success than of capitalist crisis. This fact fundamentally sets the Bay Area political agenda in a way markedly different from talk of crisis and deindustrialization in a manner relevant to less fortunate cities such as Buffalo.

The Empire of Skilled Labor

The Bay Area is the capital of Yuppie America. It is here that the *arriviste* middle class is most disproportionate in size to the general population and has the greatest opportunity to speak in its own voice and to try to establish its own class position – in all its creative ambiguity.

The concentration of well-paid occupations and capitalist income in the Bay Area is extraordinary. The core region (not in-

cluding Santa Clara County) was the fourth richest metropolitan area in 1976, with a per capita income 32 percent above the national average (Judge, 1979: 99). The 1987 per capita income for the Bay Area as a whole was \$21,520, almost 20 percent higher than the average for California.¹⁰

But the yuppie wave rests on more than wealth: it has deep roots in the peculiar economic base and history of the region. San Francisco has been exceptionally favored from the time of the Gold Rush, both in its concentration of wealth and in the power of the populace to extract a portion of that wealth from the exclusive dominion of the capitalist class. Mike Davis calls the Gold Rush 'the only successful revolution of 1848', meaning by this that the 49ers were not a bedraggled group of n'er-do-wells, but rather a surprisingly middle-class group of fortune-seekers, with many a young lawyer, merchant and cleric among them (Dobkin, 1988). Many refused to do manual labor for hire, leaving the booming city with a labor shortage until the slump of the 1860s (Elgie, 1966). Thousands of Chinese were imported to fill the demand for common labor in agriculture, drainage and railroad construction.

Although San Francisco became the city with the highest percentage of foreign-born in the US in the late nineteenth century, it was relatively inaccessible to the most downtrodden European masses; most immigrants here had already been in the US for a time before moving west. These conditions set the stage for vigorous labor movements from the Workingmen's Party of the 1870s (with considerable petty bourgeois elements) to the Building Trades Council after 1900, many of whose members become contractors (Kazin, 1987), demanding good wages and political representation for skilled labor. This narrow but militant base of workers' power also set the white male worker against the beleaguered Chinese and their successors from Asia, Mexico and the US South in a viciously racist defense of labor scarcity (Saxton, 1971); and it omitted most of the numerous unskilled workers who were migrants in and out of the city from jobs in fields and forests throughout the West (although the equally migratory sailors and longshoremen did become well organized, the IWW was virtually absent from San Francisco). At the same time, the successful exercise of working-class power has infuriated the bourgeoisie, and the latter has struck back repeatedly: with the Vigilantes in the 1850s, the first Employers' Association in the US in the 1890s, the Union Labor Party prosecutions of the 1900s, and the American

Plan in the 1920s.

One hundred years of popular struggle – equally against capital and the excluded – have created and defended, against the backdrop of labor skill, labor scarcity, and favorable conditions of accumulation, the high-wage landscape that has been so conducive to the succession of the new empire of skilled labor. A gilded thread runs from the 49ers through the turn-of-the-century building trades to the present bearers of new forms of skill: a relatively favored position within the broad compass of the working class as a whole. This has been an ambiguous struggle, however, with an elision of class identities, a minority role for the mass production working class, and a history of racism.

The contemporary yuppie phenomenon has its class base principally among certain new and/or expanding categories of skilled labor, such as engineers, programmers, health workers, financial consultants and accountants. Their salaries run in excess of \$50,000 per year, and often \$100,000 or more; and they often come in two-earner households with few children, leaving huge disposal incomes. A class analysis of the contemporary yuppie is not a simple matter, and brings us back to the longstanding debate on the left over the position of the 'middle class' (Walker, 1979; Wright, 1985). The new middle class of technicians, managers and professionals is not a class in Marxist terms, but an elevated segment of the working class. This elevation rests, first, on advantages conferred by the division of labor, including skills and the scarcity wages they command, relative autonomy at work to perform unstructured tasks, high geographic mobility and wide job choice, and administrative responsibility and position in management hierarchies. These advantages are regularly levered into additional gains in money, power and prestige by means of professional monopolies, degrees and titles, and entry into the corps of upper management. Much left debate goes awry in failing to separate the division of labor (usually grouped around occupational categories) from class and ends up with a theoretical mule that has no further issue.

To say that capitalism has a two-class structure (three, if one includes individual/family proprietors) reveals much; but it can also be used to obscure things if one acts as if the problem of social difference, hierarchy and class formation ends there. Stratification studies demonstrate that social gradation involves multiple structures of difference including class, division of

labor, race, gender, the state, and more. From this rich substrate various social movements and class-like phenomena can grow and assert themselves as economic, political and cultural forces. US history without its episodic eruptions of a middle class, from the Great Awakening to the Progressive era, would seem very flat indeed. Similarly, Bay Area society cannot be understood without acknowledging the middle class as a major actor.¹¹ At the same time, the so-called middle class is revealed in its full ambiguity as a class force by its combination of fierce upward mobility and strong consumerism with some remarkably progressive cultural and political interventions.

Even a narrow accounting of technical, professional and managerial occupations in the Bay Area yields an impressive figure of 565,000, made up of 322,000 managers and 243,000 technical/professional workers – 22.5 percent of the area's labor force in 1980.¹² The percentage of all white-collar workers, including those in sales and clerical jobs, in the regional job structure at the same time was 62.5 percent, indicating a classic 'service economy' skew that has always been characteristic of California and which continues despite its rank as the number one manufacturing state in the US (see Walker, 1985).

Labor markets and entrepreneurs: class divisions and elisions

The industries that have propelled the Bay Area's recent growth have also shaped its class structure. Skilled labor pools are typical of large metropolitan labor markets, but the high-tech and management-finance sectors have disproportionately high demands for technical, professional and managerial labor (Markusen et al., 1986; Noyelle and Stanback, 1984). Electronics is notorious for its bifurcated labor force, split between hoards of engineers in design and processing and large numbers of unskilled assemblers (Saxenian, 1983; Florida and Kenney, 1990).

Similarly, finance, management and business services demand huge numbers of trained managers and professionals, as well as crafty business types with a nose for money, often carrying MBA degrees. Universities and hospitals are, of course, heavily peopled with MDs and PhDs, not to mention MAs, and biotech is, at this stage, almost exclusively an employer of degree-holding research technicians. Other noteworthy contributors to the ranks of the new skilled labor force are

the general governments (for example, state and federal judges, administrators of federal agencies), the military (especially the roughly 8,000 technicians in the Livermore Weapons Laboratories), construction (project engineers and corporate managers at Bechtel and Kaiser, architects), and shipping (airline pilots, port authority managers). Added to this, of course, are all the managers and bearers of 'expertise' of one sort or another connected with every other industry, in more or less normal quantities.

In the buoyant economy of the Bay Area, many technicians, professionals and managers have been able to transform themselves into capitalists, creating a strong upward elision of the middle class into the bourgeoisie. The new skills group has been busy setting up new businesses from engineering consultancies to disk-drive manufacturers, creating several thousand new millionaires (Florida and Kenney, 1990). Silicon Valley is famous for its multiplication of new firms making everything from custom chips to software, and for the get-rich-quick atmosphere this has generated (Rogers and Larsen, 1984). Indeed, the Bay Area has been held up to the world as the new model for small business and flexible production (Zysman, 1977). The business service complex of San Francisco is not so very different, for there, too, a sea of small fish swarm around the enormous pilings of the great banks and corporations. Many hope to be the next Charles Schwab (the low-margin stock brokerage king), or at least to open a law firm. Biotech is a natural extension of the entrepreneurial lusts of the American medical establishment, with its innumerable independent clinics, mini-medical corporations and psychiatric practices. The recreational activity complex contributes significantly to the spawn of entrepreneurship, with its proliferation of restaurants, shops, bed-and-breakfasts and travel agencies. A particularly self-referential form of yuppie capitalism flowers in San Francisco by turning the fashions of the middle class into widely saleable commodities, such as trendy running shoes or garden tools. Wineries, now numbering in the hundreds, are chiefly an indulgence for the previously wealthy, but have drawn entrepreneurs from all over the country. There are thousands of independent merchants and brokers who mediate the innumerable transactions of goods, labor services, money and paper titles swirling around a major mercantile shipping and financial center such as the Bay Area. Finally, there is the tried and true American road to wealth: real

estate investment and landlordism.

The capitalization of skilled labor is particularly pronounced in the Bay Area, thanks to the heady entrepreneurial environment of high-tech innovation, individualism and venture capital here. The diffusion of capitalist income is striking: San Francisco-Oakland and San Jose rank number two and three nationally in stockholders per capita among the twenty-five largest metropolitan areas (Judge, 1979: 279). These nouveaux capitalist add to the general vigor of the regional economy, but their presence further elides class identities even more.

If it is true that the industrial base shapes the class structure, it is also true that the peculiar class structure of the Bay Area stimulates the growth of its industries. The more engineers pumped out by the universities, the bigger the ready labor pool for Silicon Valley to wax fat on. The more a 'middle class' haven is created along the base of the western hills, the more at home engineers, managers, doctors and their kind feel when settling into Bay Area life. The more a culture of entrepreneurship and a technical milieu is promoted by past successes and the overflowing vat of venture capital, backed up by the ideas of ingenious people, the more new companies are set up with a real chance of success (Storper and Walker, 1989). Add to this the large number of Asian immigrants who arrive with money in their pockets to invest, and the Great American Success story may be replicated a thousand times.

By comparison, the traditional working class seems relatively constricted in the Bay Area's contemporary industrialization. The older categories of skilled workers are, of course, still very much in evidence, but within the confines of the capital-intensive refinery and petrochemical belt of Contra Costa; the local construction industry, fattened on the late, great office boom; aircraft maintenance for United and other big carriers at the airports; some skilled machinists still plying their trade, as often as not making tools for electronics firms; and a host of printers in the publishing trades, putting out computer magazines or office forms in the central Bay Area. But where are the once-great armies of medium- and low-skilled mass production workers? Mostly gone, their workplaces gradually shuttered since the war or finished off in the great wave of plant closings in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In their place we find a whole new mass working-class consisting of white female office workers in San Francisco and the East Bay, Third World female assemblers in Santa Clara County, and new immigrant

waiters, busboys, maids and janitors in San Francisco. Then, too, we find a whole new underclass, predominantly young, Black and male, for whom the burgeoning industries of the Bay Area seemingly have no use at all. We take up these problems further on.

The world the yuppies made

A class is not formed by economics alone, but through a full range of practices in consumption and everyday life. On the cultural front, the Bay Area's aspiring middle class has distinguished itself as a world historical force, at least gastronomically. Whoever thinks of the Yuppie Revolution, thinks of California cuisine, of hot tubs, of cafes and coffee culture, of consciousness-raising seminars, of New Age music, and new health movements such as Breema Body Work. These all flow from the artesian well of indulgence and social innovation in Bay Area culture.

The cultural sources of the modern yuppie run deep. California has a long history as a mecca for health seekers, evangelists and utopians looking for personal and social curatives, and this type of idealism still has purchase in our supposedly secular age. San Francisco, in particular, has a distinguished record as a cosmopolitan and bohemian city where people from somewhere else generate a certain electric energy just rubbing elbows, and where the odd and eccentric are tolerated and even smiled upon. This tradition can be traced back to the Gold Rush, through the original nineteenth-century Bohemian Club (before it became a ruling-class bastion), to its best-known recent manifestations, the Beat Generation of North Beach in the 1950s and the hippies of the Haight-Ashbury in the 1960s. This cultural nonconformity is reinforced by the large intellectual community, and the college town atmosphere extends well beyond the confines of Berkeley and Stanford.

The political and even radical element of this fount of cultural innovation is not to be overlooked. Much of yuppie culture got its start in self-consciously political breaks with Middle America by former New Leftists: political posters became art in the hands of David Goines, experiments with fresh foods became nouvelle cuisine at Alice Waters's Chez Panisse, alternative health care grew from the Haight-Ashbury Free Clinic to embrace a thousand popular curatives. The counter-cultural call for personal liberation was answered in a hundred

ways by a large cohort who came of age in the 1960s and had the economic freedom to run life-style experiments. Indeed, the energy with which the new skills group pursues its dreams of personal fulfillment can be quite astonishing. Along the way some interesting seeds of liberation have been planted, although the trail is strewn with many weeds.

Yuppie culture has spread to the bourgeoisie, especially those wishing to appear young and hip. This mobilization of social innovation as fashion for the rich to consume is of ancient lineage, of course. In wealthy Marin County counterculture threatens to become caricature, as in Werner Erhard's est seminars. This strain in local bourgeois culture also has a long history, personified by corpulent corporate frolics in the buff amongst the splendor of the redwoods at the Bohemian Grove, on the Russian River (Domhoff, 1974). The rest of the working class is affected by the dominant middle-class culture, too. This is especially so for the curiously large craftworker population of the central Bay Area, made up heavily of 'fallen' sons and daughters of the middle class who prefer honest manual labor to office work (painters with PhDs being unexceptional) and coffee from Peet's to any old cup of java.

The yuppies of the Bay Area have a more polyglot make-up than almost anywhere else in the country. Silicon Valley, San Francisco's financial district and the medical-educational complex attract a great many educated foreigners into their skilled labor forces, as well as immigrant capitalists such as Jean-Louis Gasee of Apple Computer. The most exceptional element of white skilled labor is the gay professional and managerial elite who joined the exodus to San Francisco in large numbers during the 1970s. The East Bay and San Francisco both have a respectably large Black middle class, whose social presence and 'buppie' life-style are firmly established. Also striking is the participation of growing numbers of Asian Americans, especially Chinese, in small business in San Francisco, the skilled workforce and management of Silicon Valley, and in the professions. The multinational base of the middle class adds to the cosmopolitan tastes and tolerant outlook of the yuppie, although it undermines the prevailing view of the Bay Area and its middle class as overwhelmingly made up of singles, two-professional households and childless couples. But social integration raises some unhappy questions about Bay Area culture and politics, to which we must return later.

For many, however, the exotic social experiments and cos-

ropolitan good life of the Big City – the cutting edge of the yuppie phenomenon – is something that only now and then touches their lives. Most of the middle class here, as elsewhere in the country, live out their nonwork lives largely in their suburban homes and in their cars during the daily commute. Beyond the 'gourmet ghettos' of North Shattuck in Berkeley and Union Street in San Francisco stretch vast landscapes of convention embodied in tract homes and shopping centers. The Peninsula (San Mateo County) contains vast swathes of Republican virtue, awash with daily commuters to San Francisco's financial district, amid which stand a few islands of the high bourgeoisie, such as Hillsborough and Atherton. The great band of plentitude carries down through Palo Alto into the north and west of the Santa Clara Valley, where their livelihood derives from electronics. Across the Bay, the character of the middle class changes abruptly as one crosses the Oakland Hills: one leaves the Berkeley eccentrics behind in the summer fog and heads for the white heat of the interior valleys of eastern Contra Costa and Alameda counties. And beyond the greenbelts of Marin lie the burgeoning middle-class suburbs of Sonoma County around Petaluma and Santa Rosa.

The politics of an aspiring middle class are notoriously ambivalent, reflecting their middling position between labor and capital. It is wrong, however, to assume that Bay Area yuppies or even their more conventional suburban counterparts are necessarily conservative in their heart of hearts, with just a gloss of urbane trendiness. This contrasts sharply, for example, with the much more conservative milieu of Southern California (Davis, 1986).

Nor are they uniformly in close alliance with the bourgeoisie, despite the elevation of many of their number to capitalist status and the commercialization of yuppie culture. The curious thing is that the Bay Area's skilled elite is probably the most politically progressive in the country, and is notable for its high degree of social and political activism. One index is the course of presidential voting over the last few elections, which has been substantially to the left of any other region of the country. Environmentalism, gay rights, feminism, anti-imperialism, and other progressive notions are readily seized upon and developed by substantial elements of the middle class. Politics and culture merge in a heady brew of free-thinking, even though it tends toward the individualist or libertarian or even dissolute. Evidently, formation of the area's middle class

is shaped by local circumstance in a way that a purely structural analysis of economic classes cannot capture. The strong Bay Area tradition of liberalism and urbanity, for which the empire of skilled labor and successful class struggles are the material base, carries on today in the progressive slant of the Yuppie Revolution.

We shall take up the relation of middle-class progressivism to the politics of the left in a concluding section, but first we must temper our insights into class formation with the difficulties of traditional labor organizing in the economic environment of the Bay region, the divisions introduced by race and urban form, and the contradictions of breakneck growth in this haven of capitalist prosperity.

Recomposition and Retreat of the Working Class

The conditions for labor organizing are in many ways propitious in the Bay Area, which has never been a reservoir of cheap labor. The Bay Area has some of the highest average wage rates in the US. While suppression of wages is always a favorite enterprise of the bourgeoisie, low wages are not always the key to growth in an advanced industrial region (Storper and Walker, 1989). Indeed, strong unions with a serious involvement in industry affairs can be salutary for industry, as shown by the postwar automation agreement in longshoring. On the other hand, vicious wage regimes are by no means foreign to California, as in agribusiness, non-union construction or the sewing trades (McWilliams, 1939).

From 1900, when the Teamsters shut down an employers' offensive, to the First World War, San Francisco was the best labor town in the world, under the suzerainty of the Building Trades Council and occasional labor governments under the Union Labor Party (Kazin, 1987). After a period of retreat in the 1920s, the stronghold of organized labor was restored in the dramatic events of the San Francisco General Strike of 1934, when the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) won recognition and control of the hiring hall (Mills, 1979). The industrial East Bay was also solidly organized by the 1940s, and there was even a brief General Strike in Oakland in 1946. In what was then an agricultural Santa Clara Valley, women cannery workers were organized by the CIO in the 1930s (Matthews, 1985). The role of the socialist

left, and of the Communist Party in particular, in these successes was notable, and, significantly, the CP leadership was never purged from the ILWU during the McCarthy period. The result was a unionization rate of over 50 percent of nonfarm workers in 1957, and still rising – compared to 35 percent and falling in Los Angeles.¹³

The topography of a union town

A distinctive characteristic of union power in the Bay Area has been the existence of strong central labor councils in each county, providing a kind of unity among unions within the American Federation of Labor (and later AFL-CIO) that has often been sorely lacking in American history. Under the late Dick Groulx, Alameda County had for twenty years probably the strongest labor council in the United States. Santa Clara County's council was the first to break with the national AFL-CIO on foreign policy by opposing intervention in Central America. San Mateo and Contra Costa have also had quite strong councils. San Francisco's council, by comparison, fell into some disrepair under the heavy-drinking Jack Crowley of the Morticians union, now dearly departed. The central labor councils have a good deal of political clout and are part of the core of the Democratic Party at the county level.

Several important unions trace their influence from the pre-World War II period. The various building trades have ridden the crest of development waves in downtown San Francisco and the suburbs. The Retail Clerks (several locals) grew powerful on the strength of the supermarket chains, at whose head for many years stood two Bay Area corporations, Safeway (no. 1) and Lucky (no. 3). A merger with the Butchers consolidated the union's position. The Retail Clerks have been quite good at gaining job protections through the state legislature. The ILWU Locals 10 and 6 are relatively small but well organized and highly visible in local affairs in San Francisco and Oakland. The International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 1781 (United Airlines) is the kingpin of San Mateo labor politics, and the IAM local at Lockheed is vital to Santa Clara County's council. Communication has always been close between the councils and the key independents: the ILWU, Teamsters Local 7 and the UAW (now back in the AFL-CIO), all of which have been quite progressive.

The fastest growing unions in the Bay Area over the last

thirty years have been Local 2 of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees and the public sector unions: Locals 250, 535, 715 and 790 of the Service Employees International (SEIU), various locals of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the teachers' unions California Teachers Association and California Federation of Teachers, and the California State Employees Association. Local 2 is now the biggest union in San Francisco. SEIU, based among health care and county workers, has the largest membership in the Bay Area. AFSCME focuses on city workers. NEA and AFT have organized virtually all public school and college teachers. These unions have been generally quite progressive, in large part because of the sector they represent. Local 2, where an insurgency threw out a corrupt leadership in 1977, has many poorly paid Filipino and Latino workers, while the public employee unions have benefited from a human service-oriented group of workers, a majority of them women.

But the union movement in both private industry and government is at an impasse due to the changing character of the economy and of the labor force it hopes to represent. Unfortunately, the problem is covered up by the overall growth of the Bay Area which, by generating steady increases in membership (and quickly papering over major losses), lulls union leaders into thinking all is well. This is far from the case.

Restructuring and retrenchment

The landscape of labor is in upheaval from the economic and political earthquakes of the 1980s, and the union movement is losing ground in the process. The indices are clear: unionization of the Bay Area's civilian workforce declined from 34.2 percent in 1975 to 20.4 percent in 1985 – even though San Francisco still maintains a high 36.6 percent rate.¹⁴ The most tangible cause of the crisis of contract unionism is the onslaught on the collective bargaining system installed in the 1930s (Moody, 1989). Reaganism killed the class accord of the postwar era. Labor law and the National Labor Relations Board are now stacked against unions to such a degree that Victor Van Bourg, the leading labor lawyer on the West Coast, calls his business 'trench warfare' (Weinstein, 1989). Almost across the board, employers have been emboldened to challenge union certification, demand takebacks and keep organizers at bay (Harrison and Bluestone, 1988). A glaring example locally is

the Associated Building Contractors' circumvention of unionized labor in residential construction, hugely eroding the building trades. The air traffic controllers in PATCO were wiped out at the Fremont regional traffic control center in Reagan's most direct move against organized labor.

Yet even if US labor law were suddenly rewritten on the Swedish model, the labor movement would be hard pressed by crisis and transition to a new capitalist epoch (Storper and Walker, 1989). Many of labor's long-time blue-collar bastions are gone, having been eaten away over the years as the industrial base has been transformed. Older industries such as canning, brewing and coffee roasting have dwindled or moved out of the area. American Bridge (Bethlehem Steel) was the biggest of many steel plants to close. Alameda County, the center of manufacturing locally for most of the twentieth century, was hit by a tornado of deindustrialization in the early 1980s: 122 plants closed and over 16,000 jobs were lost in 1980–84 (Shapiro, 1986). Vehicle assembly was particularly hard hit: Caterpillar, Mack Truck and Ford are gone now. Many warehouses are also moving to the Central Valley or Nevada, led by GM and Safeway. The Plant Closures Project has tried to fight back against the tide, and has achieved a couple of notable victories, but the tide has not turned (Haas, 1985).

Even those plants that remain can present a whole new set of organizing problems under new ownership, as new companies enter the area, older companies are swallowed through mergers, or joint ventures are created. The simple expansion of the hotel business in San Francisco has brought with it such non-union operators as Marriott and Portman. But the best-known instances of changing bosses are where foreign capitalists are involved. In Pittsburgh, US Steel (USX) has enlisted Korea's Pohang Iron & Steel Co. to revamp its aged plant in a joint venture called USS-POSCO. United Steelworkers Union Local 1440, fearing for its life, took a pay cut, while the Koreans hired a non-union American contractor to do the actual retooling. Protests have been vigorous, but the plant is now up and running. Fremont's General Motors' plant has been reopened as New United Motors Manufacturing (NUMMI), a GM-Toyota joint venture. Many former GM workers were hired back (in much smaller numbers), and the UAW kept its representation. But these new ventures present new challenges, to which we return below.

Work has also been widely transformed through automation

and new divisions of labor. Although the great port of San Francisco was virtually shut down by containerization, the ILWU negotiated the transition and remains a viable union, but it lacks the immense vitality of the old longshore and its mass, popular way of life. The explosion in fast-food outlets, small restaurants and boutique retailing has bypassed the Retail Clerks and Hotel and Restaurant Workers, and the former are just beginning to feel the crunch from the restructuring of the grocery chains. Both Safeway and Lucky have had to pull back towards their home bases, under threat of takeover, to keep in line with the new regionalization of marketing. Product proliferation and inventory automation are making old ways of managing, and union-protected job categories increasingly obsolete. A different kind of restructuring is that felt by the Teamsters with the deregulation of trucking or the upheavals in airlines, including the closure of Oakland-based World Airways.

The restructuring of government has taken its toll on public sector unions, as well. The great wave of public employee organizing took place in the 1960s and 1970s. But the fiscal crisis of the 1970s and the right's onslaught against government social programs and taxes have meant lean years. The public unions have also learned that the taxpayer citizenry can turn a hard bargain if they feel strikes are against their interests, as the San Francisco public workers' strike in 1974 proved.

Meanwhile, whole new industries and job categories have burgeoned. The most important locus of employment growth, working class reconstitution and union failure has, of course, been Silicon Valley, which accounted for 94 percent of the 216,000 net manufacturing jobs created in the region in 1964-84. Without Silicon Valley expansion, manufacturing jobs in the region would have shrunk by 38 percent during the same period - above the national average - rather than by only 13 percent (Brady, 1987). Although Santa Clara County has over 100,000 unionized workers, the rate of unionization there is a paltry 13 percent. The absence of unions in the electronics industries is virtually complete, and the companies remain resolutely anti-union. The principal area of job growth in the East Bay has been the I-680 corridor east of the hills (mostly in Contra Costa County). The office boom has capitalized on a pool of educated, low-paid women, who remain almost completely outside the compass of union organizing (Nelson, 1986).

This is the janus mask of the precipitous decline of organized labor in America: in place of frowning deindustrialization there is the happy face of capitalist expansion into new industries and new industrial places (Scott, 1988b; Storper and Walker, 1989). These newly constituted industrial complexes, which are disproportionately located in California and the southwest, have grown, in part, by virtue of the kind of labor force and employment contracts they have been able to establish. While these are general trends in the present epoch of capitalism, they are exaggerated - because they were pioneered - in places such as Silicon Valley. As a result, the composition of the working class, the politics of work time and the conditions of employment have changed dramatically (Christopherson and Storper, 1989).

First, the labor force is flush with new entrants: Mexican and Southeast Asian immigrants (largely female), young Anglo women, and young degree-carrying (largely male) engineers and technicians from the universities. We have considered the skilled workers above; they are, it should be added, largely white and male. People of color, both US and foreign-born, are heavily concentrated in blue-collar occupations throughout California (Cabezas and Kawaguchi, 1988). The working class is also increasingly female: women have filled approximately two-thirds of the over 25 million new jobs created in the US economy since 1973 (Christopherson, 1988).

Second, the capitalist demand for 'flexibility' in the face of international competition, volatile markets, new technologies, new management systems and better safety regulations has led to greater reliance on temporary, part-time and contract employment, or what may be called the 'externalization of work' (Pfeffer and Baron, 1988; Boyer, 1987). For example, Dow Chemical's Pittsburg plant has a perfect safety record despite an explosion killing 2 and injuring 100 in 1979 because the workers at risk were on subcontract and therefore not officially employed by Dow. Workers in these categories now make up nearly one-third of the US workforce (*Wall Street Journal*, 4 May 1988). The majority of temps are female clericals, but the number of nurses, engineers, accountants and lawyers working as temps has increased, as has the percentage of men in such jobs. The Bay Area has experienced this shift very markedly (Mangum et al., 1985). In 1984 Santa Clara County had the highest concentration of temporary workers in the United States (*Mercury News*, 6 Dec. 1984). San Jose has over

100 temp agencies listed in the phone directory, and the world's second largest temp firm is the Swiss-owned Adia Services, headquartered in Menlo Park (*San Jose Business Journal*, 14 Dec. 1987). Some Silicon Valley firms rely wholly for their assembly workers on temp agencies; Hewlett-Packard has its own in-house temporary labor pool.

Finally, while some workers prefer temporary or part-time work, most of the growth in this domain is involuntary and represents a larger capitalist onslaught against the US working class, taking advantage of unorganized workers and weakened unions. The result has been an increasingly dualized labor market, for which the electronics industry and 'service' sectors are notorious (Saxenian, 1983; Freedman, 1976): on the top, a favored stratum of skilled workers, below, a much larger number of workers hired into lower tier jobs under declining conditions of employment. Worsening employment includes, besides part-time and temporary work, repeated bouts of unemployment among full-time workers: less than 50 percent of the American working class enjoys full-time, year-round employment. Furthermore, most of the new jobs created by the 'great American jobs machine' over the last twenty years have come with low wages, poor benefits and hazardous work conditions, creating what Harrison and Bluestone (1988) call 'the great U-turn' in American income distribution. The grim figures on infant mortality, malnourished children and poverty of women and immigrants in California speak darkly of the harsh underside of the California miracle.

This new working class has only just begun to fight back toward the kind of labor movement strength and level of rewards achieved by the last two generations of American workers (Davis, 1986). Until it does so, the prospects for advance in social welfare and progressive politics will be grim, and the Reaganite agenda of the New Right will remain hegemonic.

Towards a new agenda for labor

The labor movement in the Bay Area, like that across the United States, is on the defensive and has become largely reactive. Bludgeoned by the ascendent bourgeoisie of the New Right, unions are more concerned with protecting themselves from further erosion of rights than in tackling the long-term task of adjusting to altered circumstances. As a result, the

economy of the region has roared past them, leaving the working class increasingly unprotected and politically outflanked. The foremost task facing the labor movement is organizing the legions of the unorganized. This means, above all, organizing electronics and clerical workers in the big factories and offices, the two leading sectors of the Bay economy. It also means reaching out to smaller sectors and workplaces, from software houses to fast-food franchises. Moreover, expanding labor organization involves reaching out to workers in new job categories, with new skills; bringing in those employed part-time and as temporaries; and responding to more 'enlightened' managerial approaches.

Yet the unions, locally as well as nationally, have no real program for mass organizing and providing leadership for a working class confronted by new forms of employment and new styles of management in the era of capitalism now opening up. Organizing success will have to go together with a reconstructed unionism.

For example, organizers working in Silicon Valley have found, to their chagrin, that employers often beat them to the punch by providing paternalistic benefits, leaving workers unconvinced of the advantages unionization might offer other than a kind of back-up insurance policy. Probably the toughest issue is responding to new management methods, which offer many workers greater freedom to exercise their judgement and responsibility in exchange for greater intensity of labor. The case of NUMMI is justly famous in this regard, though much the same thing happens throughout the electronics industry and in office work. The UAW retained its representation at NUMMI under a reconstituted labor process employing Japanese work organization (Sayer, 1986). Everyone agrees that the new labor process is more rational than the old Taylorist methods of American management, but it is much less clear how unions can respond (Brown and Reich, 1989). The answer would seem to lie in the problem: how can unions mobilize the knowledge of their members as effectively as management is doing in order to challenge the managers? In the immediate sense, one ought to appeal to workers' sense of pride in their productive skills, making mismanagement a major issue. Beyond that, however, American unions have to contest the key management prerogatives over products, technology and investment to demand at least the level of participation found among German trade unions.

Another problem requiring innovative answers is the increasing numbers of temporaries, part-timers, and contractees, as well as those suffering irregular full-time employment due to layoffs and bankruptcies. The mass production/big factory model is not well adapted to these conditions, which are more akin to the old shape-up on the longshore or building construction where workers move from job to job under various ties of subcontracting (in which Bay Area labor organizations have some expertise). Although steady full-time work may be the ideal, where it is not be possible workers need flexible protection through certification of skills to control entry, mobile pension funds, and union-certified hiring agencies. Some workers, it should be added, do not regard full-time, same-site employment as a virtue: nurses are presently doing better working through agencies. And some of these identify themselves as professionals – as is common among US skilled workers – and need to be brought into organized labor as part of a longer process of bending class formation back toward working-class hegemony.

The concerns of women workers should also be in the forefront. The union movement has never served the vast majority of female (and minority) workers relegated to secondary labor markets very well (Frank, 1989). Organized labor will have to fight for the social support systems necessary for women to work, including the ability of parents to choose part-time work. In the midst of the bleak picture in Silicon Valley one bright spot shines out: the successful fight by AFSCME Local 101 for comparable wage scales for women working for the City of San Jose in 1980–81 (Remick, 1984). The militant and widely legitimate claim for comparable worth demonstrates the potential of the new working class and new labor relations to spark new forms of labor action and lead workers into a politics of social justice, especially when they are assisted by sympathetic elected officials. This sort of initiative is crucial to organized labor's future. The situation in Silicon Valley is comparable to that of the auto, steel or trucking industries at the beginning of the 1930s: a new, leading-edge industry, with a new workforce (largely immigrants or the children of immigrants) and new kinds of labor relations, and still largely unorganized. Something like the CIO's end-run around the traditional unionism of the AFL of the time is likely to be necessary to achieve comparable results (Moody, 1989).

Divided We Grow

The American city is a marvelous machine for generating growth and subordinating class struggle to the divisive politics of residential exclusion and real estate promotion (Walker, 1981). In this the Bay Area is typical – if not archetypal. Despite its liberal practices on many fronts, the San Francisco metropolitan area has been and remains a city divided geographically, socially and politically. Indeed, the spatial form by which the city grows and transforms its parts actually helps reproduce the inequalities and contradictions of class, race and gender.

The city form that evolved in California, north and south, set the pattern for much of twentieth century urbanization in the United States, in the same way as Second Empire Paris or turn-of-the-century Chicago were models followed worldwide in earlier periods. Scott and Soja (1986) call Los Angeles 'the capital of the twentieth century', but many of the key elements of the L.A. growth machine were shared with the Bay Area. The Bay Area played an important role as incubator of many innovations in the building and organization of the modern city. For example, the cable car was developed in the 1870s to elevate the robber barons of San Francisco to Nob Hill high above the riffraff, exclusionary zoning restrictions were introduced first in San Francisco and Modesto to suppress Chinese businesses in the 1880s, and land use districting to separate housing, commerce and industry was initiated by Mason-McDuffie Realty Co. of Berkeley circa 1910 (Weiss, 1987).

San Francisco began as a city overwhelmingly made up of white men, and the Bay Area continued to have a relatively pale cast for its first century, although it did have a healthy mixture of European peoples, including Irish, Germans, Italians, Portuguese, Greeks and Scandinavians (Wollenberg, 1985). A fierce assault was visited upon Asian and Latin American settlers who might have been used to break the monopoly of white labor (Saxton, 1971). Racism became part of the lingua franca of the labor movement: Chinese immigration was cut off in 1902, and the Japanese were hit with the Alien Land Law, denying them access to farmland, in 1913 (Kazin, 1987).

Filipinos began entering after US colonization of the Philippines, but the Chinese population had ebbed to a low point of 30,000 in all of California by 1920. Japanese Americans were thrown into internment camps during World War II and their

property seized. Mexicans, who had been driven out of California by the Yankee invasion in the nineteenth century, began returning in large numbers during and after the Mexican Revolution; some settled on the then agricultural margins of the Bay Area, such as San Jose and Decoto. Mexican immigration was stopped, however, by deportations, harassment and the depression of the 1930s. No more than a trickle of African Americans came west until World War II, when hundreds of thousands of Black workers were recruited from the South to work in Bay Area shipyards and war industries.

Yet in 1960 San Francisco was one of the least ethnically diverse urban areas in the country, still 83 percent white (Viviano, 1988). A sea-change began with the liberalization of Asian and Latino immigration quotas by the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, and has been fed by economic and political conditions here and abroad ever since. The new immigration is closely tied to the dislocations in Asia and Central America, the rural transformation and industrialization of the newly industrialized countries, the new surge of globalization in world capitalism since 1960, and the recruitment of cheap labor by US industries. Asian Americans in the Bay Area now number perhaps 1.3 million, Latinos just under 1 million, and African Americans about 600,000 (Viviano, 1988).¹⁵ (Official Census figures are notoriously unreliable for communities of color, and do not match these figures.) In an astounding turn-about, people of color are on the verge of outnumbering people of European descent for the region as a whole.

Today, after the new mass immigration from Central America, Mexico, Southeastern Asia, and the Pacific, the Bay region boasts a cosmopolitanism few cities in the world can match. The contrast with the Midwest could not be greater. The cities of San Francisco and Oakland, in particular, have become marvelous swirls of peoples from Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Samoa, the Philippines, China, Japan, Cambodia, Vietnam, Tonga and Thailand, among others. The outer ring of the metropolis is of fairer complexion, but not as much of the popular myth of white suburbs would have it. Five of the ten most ethnically diverse counties in the United States are to be found in the central Bay Area (Viviano, 1988).

Yet a look behind the variegated face of urban street life reveals a less pleasant reality of residential communities dappled in light and dark tones across the map of the urban area. The divided neighborhoods of the inner city have been repli-

cated on a grand scale in the vast stretches of the new city built during the last twenty years of urban boom. The difficult fact is that neither the new immigrant bourgeoisie nor the new immigrant working class is well integrated with its white counterparts. We deal with living space here, and take up political integration later on.

Racial segregation in the metropolis

Most of the Black residential districts (read: ghettos) of the Bay Area date to World War II, although West Oakland's African American population traces its roots to the terminus of the transcontinental railroad, finished in 1869. The largest Black concentration is to be found in the flatlands of the central East Bay, from Oakland to Richmond: roughly 60 percent of the total, or around 350,000 people. San Francisco has around 90,000 African Americans. The Black presence in Oakland and Berkeley is much stronger than in San Francisco, in part because the Hunters Point-Bayview district is so far removed from the Downtown. Yet Black and white remain far apart throughout the urban core: Hunters Point, Richmond and East Oakland are no-man's land as far as most whites are concerned. Oakland and Richmond were prime industrial zones of the first half of the century, but were largely hollowed out by the 1950s, leaving Black workers behind and economic conditions grim.

In the outer ring of the metropolis Blacks are almost invisible. A sizeable block of about 50,000 Black working-class people are found in Vallejo to the north, owing to the presence of Mare Island Naval Shipyard. On the Peninsula, about 30,000 Blacks are pressed up against the tidal flats in East Palo Alto and East Menlo Park. Around 100,000 Blacks live in Santa Clara County, chiefly in San Jose. Marin, Sonoma and Napa counties to the north are overwhelmingly white: a tiny Black enclave in Marin City is all that survives from the model integrated government housing built for Marinship's wartime shipyards (Wollenberg, 1990). Marin developed a new and unseen ghetto, however, as the Black prison population of San Quentin swelled after the War.

Even in the East Bay, Black residential areas have been kept largely within the same boundaries for fifty years. When the white working class moved out to the industrial suburbs of southern Alameda County, few Blacks were able to follow. San

Leandro, Oakland's immediate neighbor, achieved considerable notoriety for its 98 percent white population in the 1960 census, and change still comes hard, as shown by a recent incident in which KKK dolls were brought to a school by white children. The area beyond the East Bay hills might just as well be another country. One Black working-class enclave survives in industrial Pittsburg, but it is being expelled by urban renewal.

Chicano communities have grown up largely in places where Mexican immigrant farm workers and cannery laborers toiled in the 1920s and 1930s. The largest *barrio* is East San Jose, with 175,000 out of the 250,000 Chicanos in the county. The East Bay has several centers, in the former agricultural towns of Fruitvale (East Oakland), Hayward, Decoto (Union City), Fremont, and Brentwood (a total of over 200,000 people in Alameda and Contra Costa counties). San Francisco's Latino population is predominantly Central American in origin, and numbers over 100,000 people (although counts are suspect because of refugee status). Their roots go back to the coffee and fruit trade, as well as World War II, but recent arrivals are largely refugees from the revolutions and counterrevolutions in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. Because of the politicization of Central Americans, the Mission district, where most live, has been the political and cultural center of the Bay Area left in the 1980s.

The biggest demographic change in recent years has been the influx of Asian peoples. The six counties with the highest proportion of Asian Americans in the United States are the southern counties of the Bay Area. The Chinese number almost 350,000, Filipinos almost 400,000, Vietnamese 100,000, and the Japanese and Koreans 80,000 each (Viviano, 1988; estimated 1990 populations). There are many smaller groups, including Pacific Islanders and Indochinese tribespeople. (Indeed, the term 'Asian', while preferred to 'Oriental' or various Anglo terms of derision, has itself become a barrier to understanding the rich mixture of peoples from across the Pacific). By county, Asian Americans are proportionately greatest in San Francisco (325,000), but numerically greatest in Santa Clara (350,000); an additional 260,000 reside in Alameda, 165,000 in San Mateo and 100,000 in Contra Costa.

San Francisco is the focus of the Chinese community. The old ghetto of Chinatown has the odd distinction of being both on the Grey Line Tour and the poorest neighborhood in the city, making it a kind of 'gilded ghetto' whose pathologies are dis-

guised by tourism (Takagi and Platt, 1978). The newest arrivals crowd in looking for jobs and cheap lodging, while the better-off immigrants and American-born Chinese have been expanding their area of residence westward into the Richmond district and the Sunset.

Oakland's Chinatown – on its last legs in the 1960s – has experienced a revival due principally to the arrival of ethnic Chinese from Southeast Asia, and the community has expanded from there into central and west Oakland. Large middle-class Chinese communities have also developed in central San Mateo and northern Santa Clara counties. A long Chinese commercial strip can now be found along, ironically, Castro Street in Mountain View.

Filipinos have followed the tracks of an earlier working-class expansion along Mission Street out of San Francisco's Mission district into Daly City and South San Francisco, at the northern end of San Mateo County. It is there, rumor has it, that Cory and Benito and their friends plotted the overthrow of Ferdinand Marcos in the Aquino kitchen. Filipinos have also settled in large numbers in central Silicon Valley and Alameda County. The biggest and wealthiest enclave of Vietnamese – from the first exodus after the fall of Saigon – is in east San Jose. Most later arrivals from Indochina, including Khmers and ethnic tribes, such as the Hmung, are much poorer, and have settled in such marginal housing areas as San Francisco's Tenderloin (which has been transformed as a result), the two Chinatowns, West Oakland, and Richmond. The 50,000 or so Southeast Asians who settled in the towns of the Central Valley, where rents are cheaper but jobs scarce, were virtually unknown to the rest of the world until an AK-47 was unloaded on thirty Cambodian children in an elementary schoolyard in Stockton by a man who blamed his unemployment on Asian competition.

The assignment of peoples to different quarters of the city is not static but is instead a vigorous and often explosive process of housing growth and residential change. For example, sharp conflicts have developed in San Francisco's Richmond district over the replacement of single-family houses occupied by older whites with condominiums to house the extended families of the expanding Chinese community. Racism and class reproduction are often depicted in personal terms, as direct acts of discrimination, control or humiliation. The white working class dominates popular imagery of bigotry for this

reason, because its racism (or sexism or homophobia) tends to be more blunt. And, indeed, we still find such crucial bastions of working-class racism as the San Francisco firefighters or the Oakland garbage collectors. Yet the implicit racial inequalities and barriers of American society are at work behind what often appear as the 'natural' mechanisms of the property market, and the main beneficiaries of this systematic racism are the upper classes whose money and political clout buy them the luxuries of distance, seclusion and exclusion. The resulting geography of wealth and white skin is clear to see in the Bay Area: promontories such as Pacific Heights in San Francisco, islands such as Piedmont (completely surrounded by Oakland), peninsulas such as Marin, and floods of suburban tracts sweeping across the Santa Clara Valley, eastern Contra Costa or northern Solano County.¹⁶

The property boom: an escape valve?

The real estate chase afflicts the Bay Area more than any other region of the United States. Housing demand has grown feverishly for the last twenty years, fed by economic growth and the upward tilt in the job market. Add to this the inevitable speculation in rent and price-appreciation by investors, landlords and owner-occupiers, the freewheeling mortgage lending of banks and savings and loans in the go-go years of deregulation in the 1980s, capitalization of low property taxes due to Proposition 13 (1978), and the rising incomes and falling taxes of the rich in the age of Reagan, and you have a formula for property inflation on a monumental scale.

Housing values roughly trebled in each of the last two decades, in a kind of feeding frenzy among buyers and financiers. House prices are consistently the highest in the country for a metropolitan region, and have been from at least the middle of the last decade. The 1978 median price was \$84,300. In 1989 it was \$261,500, up 32 percent from 1988. This compares with a national median of only \$93,500; a California median of \$200,800 and an Los Angeles County median of \$215,800.¹⁷

The Bay Area thus had the least affordable housing area in the nation in 1989, with only 10 percent of local households being able to afford the median-priced house, compared with 48 percent nationally (and 18 percent in Los Angeles). The property boom thus further undermines the position of the working class and drives another wedge between those older

workers who enjoyed postwar prosperity and access to homeownership and younger workers who cannot buy without help from their parents. It also makes living independently harder for single and divorced women, and favors immigrants with extended families over more isolated American-born workers. The bourgeoisie and middle class have become the only ones able to afford houses in large parts of San Francisco, the central East Bay, the West Bay peninsulas and western Silicon Valley, further strengthening class residential divisions.

This immense pressure-cooker has let off steam in two ways: by gentrification of older central areas and by hyper-extension of the suburban fringe. By these means, the elderly, people of color and the white working class have been rolled back from favored areas of the regional core and forced to seek housing at great distances, involving longer and longer commutes. Presures on the land market have also generated a political response, chiefly in the form of rent control, and anti-growth and anti-densification movements. These have a significant potential for progressive political mobilization, but just as often serve as public vents for private hot air.

In the central districts of San Francisco (Noe-Eureka valleys, the Haight, Western Addition), Berkeley and North Oakland, one finds some of the most thoroughgoing gentrification of old housing and commercial strips in the country. Gentrification has also moved into the neighboring working-class areas of the Mission, Albany, El Cerrito, and central-east Oakland. It even has such outlyers as Point Richmond, Crockett and Pittsburg's Marina Bay. The good side of this process – injections of new money to restore long-neglected housing stock and to breathe life into stagnant shopping streets – has been widely trumpeted, but the other side of gentrification is rising rents, housing displacement, and loss of local shops.

The response to gentrification has been bursts of citizen activism and anger. Typically, neighborhoods rally against particular conversion or densification projects, then subside. Redevelopment is frequently suppressed by throwing a blanket of downzoning over the municipality; but this also prevents well-conceived urban intensification. This energy has been channeled into progressive action in the rent-control and anti-conversion laws of Berkeley and San Francisco, and by creative demands on developers to provide quality design and restoration. But property capitalists are good at evading the cities with the greatest strictures, as evidenced by the fantastic remaking

of Emeryville. Sometimes the contestation over gentrification gets ugly, like the burning of a new retail complex in the Haight. Or worse, it turns reactionary, in the festering anger of a white working class that sees its place taken in San Francisco by yuppies and gays – epitomized by assassin Dan White's seething hatred for his victims, Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk – or in Black property owners crying racism over legitimate rent controls in Berkeley.

A more common response of the working class, particularly young couples just starting out, has been to seek affordable homes on the far periphery of the metropolis, where home prices are still within reach. Long-distance worker dormitories have sprung up as far away as Santa Rosa and Petaluma to the north, Benicia and Fairfield and Vacaville to the northeast, Brentwood and Tracy to the east, and Gilroy and Morgan Hill to the south. People are commuting from as far as Modesto, Santa Cruz and Vacaville, creating a new crescent of metropolitan expansion more than 100 miles from downtown San Francisco. The wave of growth spilling over the interior valleys is accentuated by the roaring property boom in the central Bay Area, but is by no means created by this alone. It is chiefly the result of the long upswing in employment and income that has propelled the region past such metropolises as Detroit and Philadelphia over the last twenty years, compounded by the skewed workforce and class structure of the Bay Area. And this growth takes the characteristic Californian form of amoebic suburban sprawl, in which the driving forces are two-sided.

On the supply side, developer profits come from land appreciation by building premium housing in more central areas and by developing cheaply acquired land at the far edge of the urban area. Better yet, double your money by doing both, as Kenneth Behring did in his nouveau riche, post-modern kitsch East Bay suburb of Blackhawk. The state happily aids the process by expanding water supplies, building roads and redrawing planning maps to fit the circumstances. A case in point, much contested by Oakland and Berkeley, is the building of a new reservoir, Buckhorn, in the East Bay hills to serve the booming area around the Bishop Ranch Business Park and Blackhawk in the southern part of the I-680 corridor.

On the demand side, the social dynamics of class, race and individualism play themselves out in the opening up of new urban space. That is, Americans cope with social needs such as

housing by taking it upon themselves to buy their own single-family home – with a lot of help, again from the state (Weiss, 1990). This eats up a lot of land, and is most feasible where land is cheapest – at the suburban fringe. White Americans cope with social conflict by putting space between themselves and the less fortunate, especially people of color. They firm up these spatial barriers by erecting greenbelts, putting in large-lot zoning restrictions, and creating new micro-city governments to defend a cramped range of 'community' interests. The result is residential segregation, suburban sprawl and automobilization. This is the general drift of the Bay Area, as well, and has long been America's favored 'solution' to the urban contradictions of capitalism (Walker, 1977).

But the story of suburban growth creates a new drama that is played out in the fastest-growing reaches of the metropolis. There, the mingling of supply and demand in the birth of the built-environment is accompanied by acute labor pains. For the virtually unrestricted operation of the property market undermines the purported solution to the contradictions of urbanism. One's home-as-island is quickly swamped by a sea of identical islands; one's commute is rapidly made impassible by a flood of fellow-travelers; the nearby rural environment is soon buried under urban concrete; and a spanking new suburb is soon swept into the maelstrom of urban life. The reaction of the newly suburbanized populace is predictable: resistance to further growth (Logan and Molotch, 1986). Such 'no-growth' or 'slow-growth' movements have hit virtually every township in the Bay region, which as a result can boast the most widespread development controls of any metropolitan area in the US (Dowall, 1984). Indeed, the Bay Area had one of the earliest anti-growth movements among a broad spectrum of its citizenry of any city in the United States – due to a combination of a large middle-class, leadership in environmentalist causes nationwide, and the rapid pace of suburban growth (Greenberg, 1986).

Slow-growth movements are widely characterized, by left and right alike, in overly simplified terms, as solely representing a middle- and upper-class interest in excluding the poor and people of color (Dowall, 1984; Davis, 1989). The capitalist and middle-class base of no-growth movements is unquestionable, but the same is true of rent-control movements, which the left generally favors. Nor is racial exclusion and class-reproduction through community segregation in doubt, but no-growthers frequently target upper-income developments to

oppose. Further, no-growth movements are accused of driving up housing prices throughout the urban area by restricting supply, a largely spurious charge promulgated by ideologues of the property developers (Frieden, 1979). Supply restriction has only a small effect on prices as compared with the force of high incomes, rapid population growth and the American standard of large-lot housing.

What makes the no-growth movement more contradictory, and often lends it a decidedly progressive tinge, is the element of class struggle: a middle-class, consumption-based revolt against the power of property developers (Walker and Heiman, 1981). It raises, moreover, critical questions of urban planning as more than facilitating profit-making in land. This is dangerous for capital, and is fiercely combatted by the leading bourgeoisie of every city where it strikes (Heiman, 1988). Anti-growth movements have, for example, split the Livermore power structure wide open for years (Greenberg, 1986), paved the way for a progressive city council in San Jose in the early 1980s, loosened the vice-grip of Dean Leshner's pro-growth cabal over eastern Contra Costa County (Rauben, 1987), and questioned the irrational water supply policies of local agencies such as the East Bay Municipal Utilities District. Anti-growth movements were successfully resisted by developers in Petaluma and San Jose and Concord; but the constraints on developers tighten, nonetheless. Occasionally, the no-growth struggle takes a sufficiently class-conscious form to suggest that something deeper is amiss in the way US cities are run.

The New Regionalism: Who Rules the Unruly Metropolis?

The cry is out among the opinion-makers and political leaders of the Bay Area: there is a crisis in the offing that can threaten the area's growth, jobs and the quality of life. The background to this disquiet is certainly colored by general concerns for the fate of US capitalism in a shifting global panorama of accumulation. Even California capital, perched on the Pacific Rim, has felt the new challenges of world competition and restructuring (Davis, 1986). Growing apprehension of regional unmanageability and class immobilization resonates at the state level with similar problems in Southern California (see Davis, 1989). But Northern California regionalism is very much rooted in the peculiarities of the Bay metropolis. The growing sense of

crisis begins with the threats to the economic base in the form of external financial and electronics competition, as noted earlier, but it feeds on other sources within the region itself, having to do with growth, politics and class recomposition, and with the ability of the ruling class to respond creatively in the face of economic problems, strains on the urban fabric, and challenges to its hegemony.

The quest for economic leadership

Every successful locale in global capitalism must be alert to competitive challenges, and must summon new initiatives from the bowels of production and the heads of industry, often with a strong measure of collective action. The most important such initiatives for the Bay Area lie with the electronics manufacturers of Silicon Valley, who have been faced with devastating competition from Japan in memory chips, and increasingly in microprocessors and computers. US semiconductor and computer firms have responded in several ways: by moving into new product areas, such as semi-custom chips and open-system computers; by continuing to innovate in basic technologies, such as the RISC chip; and by imitating Japanese quality control methods. They have also responded collectively by creating a Santa Clara Valley Manufacturers Group; a Semiconductor Industry Association; a government-supported semiconductor research venture called Sematech; and a semiconductor-computer manufacturers' consortium to be called US Memories, Inc., for the production of 4-megabit DRAMs. The main strategy of the old-line companies has been to look to the federal government for trade relief. Semiconductor manufacturers Intel and National Semiconductor and instrument- and computer-maker Hewlett-Packard have been in the forefront of the wolf-packing crying unfair competition against the Japanese. They managed to block the sale of bankrupt Fairchild Semiconductor to Fujitsu. (At the same time, National continues to sell Hitachi computers through a subsidiary! (Siegel, 1988)). Intel founder Robert Noyce, head of Sematech, and Hewlett-Packard President John Young, former chair of the President's Commission on Industrial Competitiveness, have been particularly active. When his commission's proposals were ignored by the Reagan administration, Young formed a national Council on Competitiveness to push for a targeted policy of federal aid to specific industries (Siegel, 1989).

Signs are mixed as to the success of bolder initiatives. Silicon Valley lost the contract for Sematech to Austin, Texas, and Sematech itself has hardly gotten off the ground, even with strong Defense Department backing. The US Memories project was stillborn. The City of San Jose has been trying to fill the vacuum with its own initiatives to stimulate interaction among local small firms.

On the other hand, the new startups of the 1980s take the view that open systems, cooperation and continued technical vitality are the only road to continued growth (Saxenian, 1989). Sun Microsystems' manufacturing agreement with Toshiba for its RISC chip design has the critics aghast; but Sun's success thus far has repeatedly fooled critics of its approach to new technology. In the end it is unclear whether Silicon Valley's cluster of splintered firms can generate systematic innovation, especially in production technology, as capably as Japan's large *zaibatsu* (Florida and Kenney, 1990).

San Francisco's business community has been even more like a headless horseman. While B of A has been retrenching, Wells Fargo Bank has been quietly growing but seems content to be number 2, and not to assume a leadership position. Indeed, Wells refuses to lend in Silicon Valley, which it regards as too risky! Meanwhile, the loss or acquisition of many second-tier banks and industrial firms with a local base has left their leadership roles for the regional economy and polity uncertain. Much of the aura of dynamism and leadership emanating from the Imperial City of San Francisco, for so long 'queen city of the west', has dissipated. A vacuum has appeared at the top. There has been a passing of the old guard of bourgeois families. The postwar generation of capitalist leadership – the Swigs, Alioto, Zellerbach, Giannini – is gone.

The same is true at the other end of the Bay Bridge, where the Knowlands and Kaisers led Oakland for so long (Hayes, 1972). Some likely successors, such as Bob Lurie (real estate) and the Haas family (Levi-Strauss) have been preoccupied with the popular question of whether the Bay Area could retain two baseball teams and where a new stadium might be built. Some, such as the Bechtel family, largely opt out of public life. Some are simply not up to it: who would trust Charles Schwab, the discount brokerage king, with public leadership? And many others have been recruited to leading positions in state and national politics, especially during the Reagan regimes in Sacramento and Washington: George Schultz (Bechtel/Stan-

ford), Cap Weinberger (Bechtel), Ed Meese (Alameda County government), Don Clausen (B of A) and David Packard (Hewlett-Packard). The Bay Area's very success may have overextended its bourgeoisie, with one leg in the Bohemian Grove and another across the Potomac (Domhoff, 1974).

A growing dilemma and opportunity for the Anglo bourgeoisie throughout the Bay Area is the delicate question of integrating their minority brethren into the regional ruling class, particularly the burgeoning Asian business community: San Francisco property developers like Leslie Tang and Vincent Tai or David Sen-Lin Lee of Qume Corp. and David Lam of Wyse Technologies. In a place where even Amadeo Giannini, founder of Bank of America, could remain a perennial 'outsider', this can pose a major problem. A strong faction of the Bay Area leadership favors integration as a necessity given the composition of the general population and ethnic ties to the greater Pacific Rim economy. This line has been pushed most strongly by the Silicon Valley-based Asian-American Manufacturers Association, founded in 1980, whose principal ethnic base lies among Chinese from Taiwan, Hong Kong and what are now called 'the nations of the South China Sea' (Viviano, 1988). They argue that more California trade emanates from that area than from Japan. San Francisco Mayor Art Agnos has picked up one of the group's themes by referring to a greater 'San Francisco family' of Asians and Asian Americans who have lived and worked in the Bay Area and now reside abroad – and who could help cement regional ties to the burgeoning economies of East Asia. Indeed, the Asian burghers probably have a greater sense of unity across the Bay Area than their Anglo counterparts.

Yet Asians pose a threat as well as an opportunity in the eyes of the Anglo business class, as both economic competitors and potential mass immigrants. Anglo ideology on the proper treatment of local Asian American minorities draws heavily on prevailing opinion about their countries of origin, and all the ambiguity that view entails. And, despite the supplications of the enlightened sectors of the bourgeoisie, equality even for the favored sons and daughters of Asia remains a solidly liberal or even radical reform that has to be fought for by people of color, as the recent fights over Asian American admissions and course requirements at Stanford and Berkeley show.

The costs of growth come due

The Bay region has been as much a victim of its own success as of outside economic forces. A great tidal wave of growth has swelled the downtown highrises and swept the city outward over hundreds of square miles of new territory. Ranchlands, hillsides and farms have disappeared under hundreds of new subdivisions, office parks, and shopping centers. Water supplies have been stretched to the breaking point in the East Bay, while the sewage load on the South Bay – even though highly treated – threatens to overwhelm the absorptive capacity of that poorly circulating basin. Air pollution has grown worse again, after a decade of improvement due to the Clean Air Act. There are virtually no sites left for garbage disposal within the built-up area of the metropolis, leaving cities to pay exorbitant rates to truck their mountains of waste to peripheral sites, such as Altamont Pass, east of Livermore.

The touchstone of the growth bind is traffic. It is readily apparent to everyone that growth over the last twenty years has filled the vintage 1940–60 bridges and freeways to the bursting point. Suburban expansion, combined with more two-worker households, has extended the average two-way trip from forty-three miles in 1983 to sixty miles by 1986 (Bay Area Council, 1986). Portions of Interstates 80 and 680 are in an almost continual state of traffic jam, lane additions are already in the works, but even the State Department of Transportation seems unsure what to do. One hears talk of reviving the southern crossing (a bridge south of the Bay Bridge), a second level on the Golden Gate bridge, and commuter trains from Sacramento, Gilroy and Tracy. The Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system is finally being extended to the San Francisco airport, but is under enormous political pressure to grow in every possible direction in order to service every possible land developer and speculator. Meanwhile, recent scandals at BART and AC Transit (the East Bay's public bus system) have added to the aura of demoralization around mass transit after years of neglect and dwindling revenues, due to Proposition 13's property tax limitations and Republican budget-cutting. The state has been frozen in its tracks for years, and regional transit improvements are being financed today mainly via local sales taxes and bridge tolls (both regressive).

The housing crunch also stimulates popular discontent and capitalist fears. While homebuyers scramble to get on the train

as it pulls rapidly out of their class station, business worries that housing inflation is a cause of industrial decline in the Bay Area. (No-growth movements, it is further contended, make the problem worse.) This is much banded about with regard to Silicon Valley, and is the position of the recently formed Bay Area Economic Forum. The argument is that expensive housing drives up wages, reducing industrial competitiveness and triggering an exodus of factories for far-away places. The evidence does not support the contention, however. While some facilities are certainly located outside the Bay Area for cost savings on land and labor, Silicon Valley continues to attract and spawn new plants faster than it spins them off (Saxenian, 1989).¹⁸

Industrial core areas such as Silicon Valley grow for reasons having little to do with input costs; in fact, high incomes and high house prices are more the outcome of industry growth than a barrier to it (Storper and Walker, 1989). If costs were the key issue, the Bay Area's perennially high-cost economy would have atrophied long ago. High house prices and long commutes are more a question of personal hardship on the working class than of economic survival for the region.

Behind the scenes, finance capital has also been paying a price for rampant growth. While many California banks and savings institutions have waxed fat on the property boom and the largest savings and loans are disproportionately to be found here, the casualties of speculative excess are many. Crocker Bank and Bank of America lost heavily on real estate; the largest single S & L, Financial Corporation of America (American Savings and Loan of Stockton in the Bay Area) had to be sold for salvage; Bell Savings of San Mateo went belly up in the Silicon Valley bust; Fidelity Savings of Oakland had to be sold off to Citicorp. Presently, 32 of the 189 S & L's in California are insolvent (*Chronicle*, 21 June 1989).

Political fragmentation

The question of who rules the Bay Area has been reopened by growth and a shifting economic base, both of which have left the traditional geographic centers of power, San Francisco and Oakland, in a greatly diminished position. The matter of political 'regulation' of the metro and state economy and is openly contested, or, worse, falls between several chairs. San Francisco faces a dilemma it has struggled with in the past: can the center hold? It did earlier in the century, despite greater eco-

nomic growth in the East Bay. Whether it can in an even larger metro region is questionable. While the city sustains several advantages of central location and historical primacy, it also suffers from some serious difficulties of access, land costs, and jurisdictional size. Bourgeois fears over the loss of the prestigious center are regularly voiced by spokesmen from such policy centers as the Bay Area Council and the Hoover Institution (*Tribune*, 29 March 1987). Managing the relations between San Francisco and the rest of the metropolis will be crucial to whether the Bay Area region stumbles or keeps growing.

It is surprising how much the industrial realms of the metropolis go their different ways and appear to their participants as different worlds (cf. Soja, 1988). Silicon Valley's power structure evolved, like its semiconductors, rather independently of the rest of the region – despite critical areas of overlap (Traustine, 1979). Most of Silicon Valley's leading capitalists, such as Andy Grove (Intel) and Charles Sporck (National Semiconductor), are more embroiled in electronics industry policy than in asserting a vision of the Bay Area as a whole (David Packard is a notable exception). Silicon Valley politicians also have their local base foremost in mind. Recently, San Jose has made a furious push to become the business services center and symbolic 'downtown' of Silicon Valley through a huge redevelopment effort after years of decline. To promote this project, Mayor Tom McEnery has declared San Francisco to be a has-been and San Jose to be the new heart of the metropolitan area. Such competitive chest-thumping from one of the supposed bright lights in local politics does not bode well for regional leadership from that quarter.

The independence of Silicon Valley recalls the relative autonomy of the East Bay and the long-standing rivalry between Oakland and San Francisco. This schism has nearly torn the region in two, in marked contrast to the way the feuds between Hollywood and Downtown L.A. fell within the same political jurisdiction (Davis, 1987). San Francisco lorded it over Oakland for the first fifty years, but lost much of its industry to the East Bay after the great earthquake and fire of 1906. Oakland has gotten its revenge in other ways, such as allying with Los Angeles against Bank of America's move south or to constrain San Francisco's port. It finally decimated San Francisco's once-mighty port by capturing the container business almost completely over the last thirty years (Mills, 1979). San Francisco's pet plan of the 1940s for a BART system to

bring suburban commuters downtown was diverted through downtown Oakland as a condition of Alameda County joining the system (Adler, 1980). The spirit of competitive nastiness and infighting between San Francisco and Oakland lies, even now, just beneath the surface, as illustrated by the nadir of petty bickering reached by Mayors Feinstein and Wilson over the placement of a General Services Administration office building – a struggle that Oakland eventually won. Even a regional agreement among the Association of Bay Area Governments to create a biotech information center in 1988 had to be passed without stipulating any specific location – due to East Bay-West Bay rivalry (*Tribune*, 16 Dec. 1988).

Even on one side of the Bay coordination is often well-nigh impossible. The mighty and politically insular port of Oakland has been riven by dissension over whether to hold its land for port uses or to develop waterfront properties for office and retail uses. Long-time Chair Walter Abernathy resigned in disgust at the failure of Oakland leaders to support competitive infrastructure investment. The ports of Richmond and Oakland are bitter rivals, and the managers at AC Transit and BART have feuded for years. The elite of the I-680-corridor generally regard Oakland and Berkeley as foreign lands; the Oakland *Tribune's* Black publisher-editor, Bob Maynard, tried dropping the name of Oakland from the masthead in a futile effort to garner subscribers over the hills.¹⁹

The challenge of popular insurgencies

Central city politics present the best-publicized challenges to business hegemony and unbridled capital accumulation in the Bay Area. Popular disenchantment with downtown interests is high in San Francisco after the largest office build-up in the city's history. A political touchstone is Proposition M, passed in 1986, which puts strict limits on downtown building – after twenty years of struggle by anti-high rise activists. The city's electorate has never been easily tamed by appeals to civic boosterism and capital flight. The sweeping victory of the liberal Art Agnos as mayor over the hand-picked successor of probusiness mayor Diane Feinstein in 1988 raised the spectre of a revived political mobilization of 'the neighborhoods' against Downtown that was cut down along with Harvey Milk and George Moscone in 1978. Yet even Agnos's support for a new downtown baseball stadium was not enough to save it from

defeat in November 1989.

Rent controls instituted in the late 1970s (during the last great property boom) have put a damper on apartment speculation and rent gouging in Berkeley and San Francisco, although they have been repeatedly defeated in Oakland. Statewide drives by real estate interests have been unable to overturn existing residential rent control laws, but they succeeded in eliminating Berkeley's pioneering commercial rent control law and preventing the spread of such controls to other cities. A recently mooted proposal by Berkeley's indefatigable Marty Schiffrin bauer to slow housing price inflation created a firestorm of hysteria among the Third (Real) Estate.

Popular impediments also lie in wait to derail efforts by transportation planners to solve the transit snarl. CalTrans's efforts to widen I-80 have been knocked into a cocked hat by local opposition. Much to everyone's surprise, Berkeley Mayor Loni Hancock was able to persuade the business enclave of Emeryville to join Berkeley in refusing to allow work to proceed through their jurisdictions. Emeryville's leadership is no friend of radical causes, but is worried that its recently developed yuppie consumption spaces will not be well served by the planned improvements.

At the same time, the suburbs have not been quiescent. A now-perennial disturbance to business hegemony is the eruption of opposition to rapid development. Some seventy ballot measures to control growth have been placed before local voters in the 1980s, compared with seventeen in the previous decade (*Chronicle*, 19 Oct. 1988). For example, Walnut Creek, in the heart of the Contra Costa office belt, has passed a new growth-control initiative, and most of the middle-class towns such as Palo Alto have strong downzoning. Even the conservative city of Alameda is in turmoil over the expansion of the Harbor Bay complex.

One of the curiosities of the Bay Area has been its singular resistance to military ideology despite the role of defense spending in the region. The Livermore Action Group's campaigns against the Lawrence-Livermore labs is a case in point. Another recent instance was the fight over homeporting the battleship *Missouri* in San Francisco. Cap Weinberger's Defense Department wanted to position this greying symbol of America's military prowess in an oppositional city to prove that militarism was back in vogue. After a local campaign against the plan, it was dropped by the Bush administration. An inter-

esting fight is now shaping up over the disposal of the Presidio of San Francisco by the Army as part of the same budget cutting. Decisions concerning this last great stretch of undeveloped land will be indicative of the powers and interests at work in contemporary San Francisco.

It is unclear, as always, how much popular opposition has actually hampered capital. Most movements questioning growth get rolling after the damage is done, leaving local residents to clean up after the developers. Similarly, neighborhood politics and anti-downtown movements have probably done little real harm to business interests in San Francisco. The building booms of the 1970s and 1980s were hardly slowed by political interference. Proposition M and Agnos's victory in San Francisco signaled the passing of the office boom for economic reasons and capitalist disarray as much as a progressive resurgence.

The regionalist drive

All these issues are encompassed within a single call, from certain quarters, for a new attention to regional interests and the political suppression of 'parochial' demands and local powers. Precedent for the regionalism movement may be found in the decade or so after World War II (Scott, 1959). Then, the Bay Area Council was formed by corporate leaders, the Bechtels were planning BART, the state freeway system was being laid out, and the Blyth-Zellerbach committee was created to push for Downtown redevelopment (Hartman, 1984). That kind of coordinated capitalist effort to guide the development of the Bay Area has long been absent.

A series of conferences and reports have appeared in the last several years decrying the problems of the region, such as economic recession, overspecialization in electronics, traffic congestion, and housing inflation (Bay Area Council, 1988; Brady, 1985). A sense of urgency is being conveyed to the leading citizens of the region: 'while the world economy has grown ever more competitive, we have grown complacent' (Brady et al., 1989). Hidden amongst these dire warnings are suggestions that what is needed is more regional (or subregional) planning and more intergovernmental cooperation (*Tribune*, 29 March 1987, 6 October 1988; *Chronicle*, 19 October 1988). Education is also being singled out for its role in providing skilled labor, technical innovation and integration of new peoples into the

workforce (*California Tomorrow*, 1988; Brady et al., 1989).

Leading the charge are the Bay Area Council, the main local corporate think tank, and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), a weak advisory body looking for a mission. Together they formed the Bay Area Economic Forum, chaired by Robert Parry, CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco. The Haas family foundations are backing a study group called *Bay Vision 2020*, chaired by former UC Berkeley chancellor Michael Heyman. The state has also been mobilized. Five cities in northern Santa Clara County joined together in the Golden Triangle Consortium in 1986 to coordinate planning. A Bay Area economic mission to Asia in early 1989, called 'Northern California's first regional roadshow' by the *San Francisco Examiner*, featured San Francisco Mayor Art Agnos, San Jose Mayor Tom McEnery, Oakland officials, business executives and university representatives.

In Sacramento, the California legislature is gearing up for some kinds of intervention in local governance, promising what may be a new Progressive Era of improved managerialism. Hearings have been held, statements issued and bills drawn up toward what is being called 'the new regionalism project' (Walters, 1988; California Senate, 1988). The governor has created a public/private California Economic Development Corporation to promote the state; it has issued a report covering the usual regionalist themes and calling for a 'new societal compact' for restructuring business and government (CEDC, 1988). Symbolism can be as important as substance in the effort to build a regional consciousness, and political struggles can erupt over the process of creating monuments and myths for the city (Harvey, 1985b), as in the case of the USS *Missouri* or the China Basin baseball stadium proposal in San Francisco.

Political implications of the regionalist campaign

In some ways, of course, nothing much has changed: jurisdictional fragmentation, the shift to suburbs and Silicon Valley, the lack of urban planning, housing price inflation and growing traffic have been apparent for years, even decades. Why is everyone suddenly waking up to it? Certainly, the great growth wave of 1975-85 strained the infrastructure, transformed the region and left a bitter taste in the slump of 1985-87. But the region is manifestly not in dire trouble. What is most apparent is that there is a breach in capitalist class hegemony in a top-

heavy region with too many competing centers of business power, too much change in the landscape of capital, and too many unruly popular movements.

It is unlikely, furthermore, that the local bourgeoisie can ever achieve more than a loose coalition of interests and the establishment of a very general agenda: the centrifugal forces in US capitalism and US cities are just too great. There is no MITI to intervene, as in Japan in the 1950s and 1960s. Regional government has not been feasible in the US in this century (Scott, 1959).

Nonetheless, the business class needs to demonstrate some measure of unity, aggressiveness and cleverness for Bay Area fortunes to be sustained. No region can long succeed without some mobilization of and leadership from its capitalists. Regional leaders must project and protect the interests of the whole Bay Area and of its various sectors in competition with other fast-growing and innovative areas. Within the region there has to be some coordination and sustained attack on general problems such as highway building and port coordination, particularly where public funds are required to pay for solutions. There needs to be a reassertion of hegemony to head off alternative class and political agendas. Regionalism helps politically in striking back on selective fronts such as Proposition M and rent control. And, finally, regionalist ideology can be useful in recruiting new members of the bourgeoisie and the middle class to leadership roles and the inner circles of the capitalist class. Conversely, by projecting themselves as interested in the general (local) welfare, non-Anglo burghers vying for recognition can shed the stigma of having foreign or minority interests foremost in mind.

An enlightened middle class can easily be seduced by the ideological maneuvering to restore hegemony. Exemplary in this regard are the writings of Kevin Starr – the leading organic intellectual of the Bay Area renaissance – who is featured regularly in the *San Francisco Examiner*. Starr is a master at cultivating regional consciousness by blending pride of place with sense of social purpose among his readers through the clever use of historical vignettes, local curiosities, criticism of tomfoolery and touching stories of idealism. For example: the 'Oakland estuary integrates into one urban landscape the constituent elements of Bay Area culture. ... [O]ne moves into Oakland Estuary past the Alameda Naval Air Station and the Naval Supply Center. History itself thereby welcomes you'

(Starr, 1989b). At the same time, he promotes a conservative social agenda calling for less bull from below and more leadership from above, greater collective purpose and the call to duty among the better elements (Starr, 1989a).

The seductions of regionalism are particularly strong among liberals who recognize the costs of growth and understand the need for social planning – but lack a radical critique of capitalist urbanization. The California Tomorrow group has long represented a liberal tendency among the region's bourgeoisie to plan for growth while protecting some of the natural amenities that so attract people to the area. The regionalist debate touches a particularly fulsome chord with environmentalists. In the spring of 1989, People for Open Space/The Greenbelt Alliance called together a 'regional issues forum' (by invitation only) to explore the possibilities for a regulatory commission for land use, on the old Progressive Era model of an expert body above politics. But the core environmental problems of the Bay Area, which are in every way 'regional', curiously fail to make the agendas of the town-criers of regionalism, whether it is toxic wastes in Richmond or radiation wastes in Livermore, dredge spoils or the garbage pile-up (see, for example, CEDC, 1988).

There is a place, of course, for regional cooperation and planning, just as there is for industrial policy, in a progressive or socialist vision. The construction of livable cities is not something that can be left to the market and the profit motive. Metropolitan problems need metropolitan solutions, and there is always the danger after a long growth boom that the economic basis of the area may become unstuck. The cries of a ruling class in distress may actually be a favorable indicator of openings for progressive political action in the future, which the left should not ignore, just as in the past the inability of the Bay Area's leaders to forge the kind of united class front achieved by the Los Angeles Merchants and Manufacturers Association in the early years of the twentieth century was a blessing for working-class and progressive forces (Wiley and Gottlieb, 1982). But regionalism must be shorn of its capitalist allegiance to the existing class configuration of power and ways of doing business before it can be attached to a just political agenda (Heiman, 1988).

The Impasse of the Left

The Bay Area has been a center of capitalist growth, labor organization, cosmopolitan social trends, and progressive politics in the United States. These friendly currents have helped to keep the left more buoyant here than most places in this country – even though the record is unquestionably mixed. Conversely, the left has contributed immensely to the stream of social progress here, and has laid a deep foundation on which subsequent movements have been able to build. This is exactly the kind of historic legacy the left and the working class in the United States have generally found so difficult to sustain (Davis, 1986). We will now look at several of the elements that have made for a strong left and progressive presence in the Bay Area in recent years. The radical explosion of the 1960s was the jumping-off place for the present, followed by a series of vibrant social movements in the last twenty years. To these must be added the toeholds gained in electoral politics and in solidarity across racial lines. Finally, we return once more to the insinuation of the left in the ascendent middle class. In all cases, however, the legacy is a mixed blessing and presents any number of contradictions for a left politics in the region. It is thus that the left finds itself at an impasse today. We therefore turn, at the end, to some proposals outlining the direction the left ought to move, as indicated by the current political geography of the Bay Area outlined so far.

The legacy of the 1960s

The local working class and left have a string of historic victories to their credit that includes the constitutional reforms of 1879, Knights of Labor organizing in the 1880s, the Building Trades Council's political hegemony from 1901 to 1914, the San Francisco General Strike of 1934, and resistance to anti-communist hysteria in the 1950s. That legacy carried over to the New Left of the 1960s in important ways, with the New Left becoming, in turn, the inspiration for much that followed.

During the 1964–74 period loosely known as 'the Sixties', the Bay Area harbored an extraordinarily complex and vital political movement of the New Left. It became a stronghold of an anti-Vietnam War movement that, while originating among students, grew into a mass, cross-class, cross-race opposition to US war policy. Oakland was the center of the Black Panther

Party and other revolutionary national organizations of African Americans that had a base in the lower end of the Black working class and challenged racial oppression. This was the most advanced of the nationalist struggles among different minority groups, although there was significant activism also among Chinese (the Cultural Revolution), Filipinos (the International Hotel campaign) and Chicanos/Latinos (Los Siete and the United Farm Workers). Nationally, the most successful unified campus movement among people of color was the Third World strike on the San Francisco State University campus.

The Bay Area was at the cutting edge in electoral experiments, using propositions and initiatives to promote progressive goals, organizing for community control and district elections, and initiating efforts to control the police through police review boards. The region was equally a center of experiments in a counterculture that featured communal living, socially conscious rock 'n' roll and the hippies of Haight-Ashbury. Finally, out of the universities and the general milieu came a generation of politicized intellectuals who challenged the hegemony of academic conservatism, self-serving professional associations and the media through such vehicles as *Ramparts*, the *Berkeley Barb*, *NACLA-West*, *KPFA* and *Mother Jones* magazine.

New issues, new ideas and new participants give the recent past a distinctive flavor. Yet nothing quite like that breadth of common purpose and depth of militancy has occurred since the 1960s, despite continuing ferment on many fronts. Ironically, in this the left shares something with the capitalist class, whose regional impasse has left space for middle-class ascendancy socially and a good bit of room for progressive and radical political movements.

Movements of 1970s and 1980s

A number of substantial movements grew out of the sixties but developed fully only after the ferment of that period was over. The 1970s and 1980s cannot be seen as a quiescent period in popular struggles. New political issues have continued to revitalize and reshape left and progressive politics in the Bay Area. Gay liberation, women's rights, environmentalism, occupational health, rights of the disabled and rent control shook up the body politic in the 1970s, and were joined in the 1980s by the peace movement, the Livermore Lab actions, divestment from South Africa, support for Palestine, and opposition to US inter-

vention in Central America, among others. We can only touch on some of these movements here.

San Francisco's place in the emergence of a gay liberation movement is undisputed. As gay men migrated into the city in large numbers – upwards of 100,000 – they successfully coalesced into a self-proclaimed cultural and political force here (Castells, 1983). The movement took a distinctly left turn behind the leadership of Harvey Milk as it assumed the mantle of 'the neighborhoods' fighting Downtown capital as well as fighting for gay rights against the forces of reaction statewide. As a result, gay men have the curious distinction of being the only progressive constituency of white males in the US. Tolerance toward gays and lesbians is quite general in the Bay region, as shown by the recent public coming-out of Fremont's School Board chairman, although violent attacks by homophobes continue. The political potential of the gay community has been dealt two stunning body-blows with the assassination of newly elected Supervisor Harvey Milk in 1978 and the loss of so many people, including a generation of leaders, to the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s. Yet Harry Britt, political heir to Milk and a self-proclaimed democratic socialist, remains the biggest vote-getter on San Francisco's Board of Supervisors, while the mobilization for AIDS research and patient support has become a model for the rest of the country.

Environmentalism is another movement closely associated with the Bay Area and is rooted deeply in public consciousness here. While chiefly a white middle-class concern, environmentalism has spread to working-class and minority communities with the widening anger over toxic waste pollution. Bay Area environmental battles have always had important left elements and have posed radical challenges to capitalism in several ways. Property developers have been greatly constrained in certain areas: filling of Bay tidelands was halted as early as 1965, and coastal development was regulated by a state commission after an initiative in 1972. The Bay Area left has been very active in the struggles to ban pesticides such as EDB, DBCP and Alar, and to control occupational health hazards, thanks especially to occupational health activists; it has raised the issue of toxic pollution by the supposedly clean electronics industry in Silicon Valley, led by the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition (Siegel and Markoff, 1985); and it led the ballot initiative drive to pass a sweeping statewide toxic substances control act in 1986. The titanic struggles to stop further water development,

especially the referendum defeat of Peripheral Canal (a plan to expand the State Water Project) in 1982, have also had a strong left element, and have greatly discommoded agribusiness and the state (Storper and Walker, 1982).

The women's liberation movement has steadily transformed gender politics on the left, and has had a very broad impact in American society. The Bay Area was an important early center of feminist activity through such vehicles as Bay Area Women Against Rape, the Women's Health Clinics in San Francisco and Berkeley, the Center for Women's Music and the Women's Building. The East Bay has, in particular, been a focus for the alternative women's community and support for lesbian couples, single-mothers, and women moving into traditionally male occupations. San Jose was the site of a nationally pacesetter comparable worth agreement. The women's struggle has plugged into the labor movement and helped revitalize it by organizing places where women work in large numbers, such as hospitals, restaurants, schools and universities. Further, the comparable worth victory came during the administration of Mayor Janet Grey Hayes, one of many women filling electoral posts in the region, such as former Mayor Dianne Feinstein of San Francisco, Mayor Loni Hancock of Berkeley, Congresswomen Barbara Boxer and Nancy Pelosi, and San Francisco Supervisors Nancy Walker, Doris Ward and Angela Alioto. After a period of doubt and political malaise after the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment, women are again organizing here, as they are nationally, in response to 'right-to-life' attacks on women's health clinics and around the legal defense of women's right to choose (Tax, 1989).

International solidarity movements have played an especially significant role in the Bay Area. The level of internationalism is equalled only in Washington, Boston and New York. Central America has been the focal point for organizing, no doubt due to the fertile combination of radicalized immigrants and the area's strong legacy of anti-imperialist struggles from the 1960s. The anti-intervention movement unified most of the region's left activists, who worked through Sister City declarations, medical and technical aid efforts of the most diverse kinds, ballot measures on US foreign policy, union actions and people-to-people programs. A large number of people here have a vision of the Bay Area as part of the Americas as a whole (Burbach and Núñez, 1987). The divestment movement also swept up many activists in 1985-86, stimulated by popular

upheaval in South Africa, and produced the largest student protests at UC Berkeley since 1971. After significant victories at both city and state levels, however, the South Africa support movement died down again. The Palestinian cause has been an arena of contention here, as throughout the United States, due to the refusal of most American Jews, progressives and unionists to engage in any critical appraisal of Israel's policies. Important left politicians such as Harry Britt, Loni Hancock and Tom Bates have capitulated to the Israel lobby. Ballot measures on Israel/Palestine failed in both Berkeley and San Francisco in 1986.

In short, the energy of new movements over the last twenty years has been impressive, and the issues raised have undoubtedly broadened the social vision and the sophistication of the left. Yet with this growth has come a division of left and progressive forces into many streams, often with little mixing and a loss of a socialist vision about the unity, class base and anti-capitalist character of an organized left opposition. In addition, the internationalism of the Bay Area left has served as a valuable antidote to Reaganism at its high tide but has come at some cost to local political activism.

Electoral politics

The upheavals of the 1960s generated a number of politicians who owe their careers to the left: Ron Dellums, who went from the Berkeley City Council to Congress (Kelley, 1989); Gus Newport and Loni Hancock, past and present mayors of Berkeley, who ran at the head of the Berkeley Citizens' Action (BCA); Lionel Wilson, mayor of Oakland, who rode the mobilization achieved by the Black Panthers into office; the late John George, Alameda County supervisor, and his successor, Warren Widener, once the BCA-backed mayor of Berkeley; the late George Moscone, mayor of San Francisco; San Francisco Supervisors Nancy Walker, Carole Ruth Silver and Richard Hongisto (the former sheriff); Assemblyman Tom Bates of Berkeley; Oakland City Council member Wilson Riles, Jr., and several Berkeley City Council members. Experiments in electoral politics at the end of the 1960s were consolidated into a dominant party, BCA, in Berkeley, and a sustained presence in San Francisco and, to a lesser extent, Oakland.

These electoral successes represented a dramatic turnaround from the preceding decades of solid Republican control of both

Oakland and Berkeley politics and the lordship of the reactionary Knowland family (owners of the *Tribune*) over East Bay politics (Hayes, 1972; Bush, 1984). Of course, there have also been major setbacks: the betrayals of the progressive cause by Lionel Wilson, Warren Widener and Carol Ruth Silver, once in office; the assassinations of Milk and Moscone; and the loss of hard-won district elections in San Francisco and their imposition, over BCA's opposition, in Berkeley. And, it must be noted, that outside the regional core, nothing approaching a self-proclaimed left politics exists.

The left's electoral presence rides on a wider progressive current in which the Democratic Party is dominant and is itself frequently led by its most liberal elements. Democratic presidential candidates have carried San Francisco and Alameda counties in every election except 1960, in a state which has gone Republican during most of this century. Even Silicon Valley, long a Republican stronghold, is drifting into the Democratic column (*Examiner*, 11 Sept. 1988). The congressional delegation includes such consistent liberals as George Miller, Pete Stark, Norman Mineta, Barbara Boxer and Nancy Pelosi, from various corners of the Bay region. San Francisco's Phil Burton had a virtual hammerlock on state party politics and congressional redistricting for years until his death. Willie Brown, a Black Assembly member from San Francisco, controls the State Assembly from his position as Speaker. Progressive electoral politics in San Francisco continued to show a remarkable vitality at the close of the 1980s, as evidenced by the stunning election victory of Burton-protégé Art Agnos in San Francisco, accompanied by a virtual sweep of the Board of Supervisors by liberal to left candidates.

But the new Agnos regime inherited an empty cupboard from its more conservative predecessors, and was immediately forced to redirect its efforts toward fiscal solvency – hardly the way to launch a bold new social offensive. BCA has been caught in a similar squeeze for many years, trying to keep up social services and school quality in the face of Proposition 13, Reagan's social budget-slashing, and repeated deficits. It continues to hold a majority on the city council, but lost control of the school board in 1986; happily, the new school board majority is proving comparatively incompetent and is unlikely to last in the face of considerable Black community mobilization. But the limitations of running local governments and serving legislative constituencies are readily felt.

Equally apparent is the current lack of a left agenda for local government that rings true in light of the both the conservative consensus nationally (and lack of federal money for social problems), and local problems of housing cost inflation, traffic congestion and banking decline that seem quite beyond the powers of local government to deal with. BCA has done a workmanlike job of presiding over the lean years for local government in the 1980s, partly by mobilizing the citizens of Berkeley to tax themselves extra for libraries and schools. Yet the left has, in a sense, been locked into the role of an 'institutionalized opposition'. Worse, one sees in Agnos or Hancock the incipient dangers of elected officials taking on the priorities of business (for example, Agnos's interest in trade missions) or conservatives (for example, Hancock's embrace of the 'war on drugs').

In Oakland, African Americans were able to gain control of local government under Mayor Lionel Wilson, but only through an alliance with business that has created a political machine of limited social vision. The broader Wilsonian alliance has also been tainted by corruption in the administration of AC Transit and the Peralta Colleges. The Black middle-class leadership is trapped by the predominant racial stereotype of Oakland – its much talked-about 'image problem' – and the way the city has been left out of the region's growth. During the liberal administration of Governor Jerry Brown there was, briefly, a program to target state aid to Oakland, but this disappeared with the rightward shift in state politics after 1978. Rather than challenge racism and the national neglect of poverty directly, Oakland's Black politicians have fallen behind the real estate promoters' idea that downtown redevelopment/revitalization is the key to city revival, and have wasted millions of dollars on botched renewal schemes. A depressing example is the prevailing mentality is the effort to shoo the Black homeless out of Lafayette Park, just west of City Hall, to uplift a district slated for a new Bonwit-Teller department store and 'Victorian row' offices (*Tribune*, 13 March 1989). (Much the same redevelopment mentality plagues Black officeholders in industrial Richmond).

The Oakland Black left has had champions in Ron Dellums, the late John George, and Wilson Riles, Jr. Yet Dellums, who is the only avowed socialist in Congress and an invaluable thorn in the side of the military establishment (witness Ed Meese's attempt to smear him on a false charge of possession

of cocaine in 1981), has not been as effective as a rallying point for local political causes as he has in serving a national left constituency (Kelley, 1989). John George was a brilliant gadfly for good causes, but was always isolated on the Alameda County Board of Supervisors (his replacement by the board with the much-despised Warren Widener was a blow to the Delums-BCA forces). Riles, too, has been a lone voice in Oakland city government. His campaign to unseat Mayor Wilson, who is seeking a fourth term in office, is a project of the East Bay Rainbow Coalition that faces an uphill battle. Oakland remains a terrible reminder of the control that conservatives can retain on politics in a city with a nonwhite majority and desperate economic conditions.

The Rainbow Coalition and Jesse Jackson's 1988 presidential campaign raised the hopes of many Bay Area radicals for a rebirth of the Black and white electoral alliances of the past, and even a push farther into the uncharted territory of a multiracial coalition for progressive change. Jackson carried San Francisco and Alameda counties in the California Democratic primary. Unfortunately, the Rainbow has not come together as a strong organizational core here, and the promise remains unfulfilled.

Many on the left have been so infuriated by the craven behavior of the Democrats over the last decade, and so convinced that playing the loyal opposition has been a fool's quest (Davis, 1986), that they still find it hard to ally with a Rainbow or a Jackson candidacy set within the Democratic Party — despite the dramatic left turn which this represented for the party in 1988. While most people on the left locally were personally excited by Jackson's successes, they were not galvanized into action in any major way. The virtual absence of any Jackson campaign presence at the Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice in April 1988 was a sad index of this inability to change directions with the shifting political tides.

Racial schisms

The left has not escaped the complex web of racism in Bay Area. As we have noted, the cosmopolitan image of Bay Area often clashes with reality of the marginalization and isolation of peoples of color. Historically, the remarkable thing is how much of the local progressive legacy is a story dominated by white men: the Workingmen's Party, the Knights of Labor, the

Building Trades Council, the 1934 General Strike, the Beats, the Free Speech Movement, the hippies, the gays. That isolation has been breached, at certain points, as in the integration of the Longshoreman's union, white radical support of the Black Panther Party, the election of Gus Newport as mayor of Berkeley, the push for divestment from South Africa, or in work with Central Americans in the solidarity movement. In these examples lies a strength and a hope for building alliances between communities. The cosmopolitan left is, unfortunately, too often unable to bridge the gulfs that exist between peoples.

For example, Berkeley seems more split today than during the school integration and insurgent politics of 1960s and 1970s. Part of this rests on the shifting social geography of the metropolis: in Berkeley, Blacks declined from 30 to 20 percent of the population from 1970 to 1980, and are likely to register less than 15 percent in the 1990 census. Even Oakland's Black middle class is having trouble holding its turf, as shown by the displacement occurring as Anglos and Asians move into the High Street corridor of central East Oakland. (Tensions between Blacks and Asians are now greater than those between Blacks and Latinos). But part of the problem is political, and lies in the inability to arrive at a common program that unites Black and white interests.

A common theme running through recent political battles is a clash between white opposition movements and African American concern with economic development of poor neighborhoods. In Berkeley, Blacks and whites split over waterfront development by the Santa Fe Corporation, and over a tax redistribution qua redevelopment scheme to aid Black south Berkeley. In North Oakland there is a fight over tearing down the old Merritt College (a building of some architectural merit and putative starting place of the Black Panthers) and replacing it with a shopping mall in a Black neighborhood with poor access to retail shopping.

In San Francisco, environmentalist opposition to homeporting the battleship *Missouri* ran into the Navy's promise of more jobs for Blacks and unionists. That both sides have a case makes these issues intractable without a means of settling disputes and, more importantly, having greater control over the course of business planning and investment. Local political leaders have generally exacerbated the situation: in Oakland and San Francisco, Mayors Wilson and Agnos support the developers in question, and Feinstein was completely behind

the Navy. In Berkeley, a weakened BCA has not been able to resolve the dispute internally. But in every case the conflict could have been ameliorated, if not resolved, by white activists showing more interest in Black problems, developing better ties to organized labor, distributing critical information on who really stands to gain, and providing a critical analysis of developer and government claims about jobs. It's not as though this situation had never arisen in the past or had never been dealt with successfully (Walker et al., 1979). A similar critique of failure to cross racial and class lines has been made of many AIDS activists (Rist, 1989).

The failure of the left to touch Asian American politics is more complete, and parallels the exclusion of those of Asian descent from electoral power in the Bay region. One Japanese American holds a congressional seat, one Chinese American a seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors; a Chinese, James Ho, is deputy mayor of San Francisco. Filipinos hold one seat each on the city councils of Hercules, Milpitas and Union City. (The lack of political representation of Latinos in San Jose, San Francisco, Hayward, and other cities is equally appalling.) This political isolation is due in part to the continued orientation of many Asian immigrants to politics back home and in part to a reluctance of many Asian American community leaders to seek electoral office (Viviano, 1988). Both are readily understandable in light of the recent entry of most Asians to this country and their need to cement an economic position here. The situation is likely to change under pressure from such organizations as the Chinese-American Democratic Club of San Francisco, the Chinatown Resource Center, Asian Inc., and the Filipino-American Political Association.

But Asian American community leadership is, not surprisingly, mainly upper class and far from radical. Worse, there are still sharply reactionary elements among the Vietnamese, Hong Kong Chinese, Chinatown's Six Companies and Indo-Chinese tribespeople that make any alliance with the left impossible at this time (Takagi and Platt, 1978). For example, Tom Hayden had to cancel a talk in San Jose after a death threat by local Vietnamese rightists. The struggle with Marcos in the Philippines had some resonance among the Anglo left, and the Southeast Asian Resource Center is an important source of left analysis in the US. On the other hand, the brutal suppression of the Democracy movement in China has driven progressive Chinese into the arms of the Taiwanese and Hong Kong bour-

geoisies. As it stands today there is nothing like the past levels of interest in Vietnamese or Chinese struggles, nothing comparable to the romanticization of Latin American politics, language and culture, and no La Peña of displaced Maoists or Filipinos as a left gathering place and source of popular political education.

On the whole, then, the bonds of the white left with people of color – especially the new immigrant segment of the working class – need a good deal of strengthening. Certainly the diversity of peoples in the Bay Area can be a source of support for progressive movements, owing to the obstacles of racism facing even bourgeois and middle-class minorities. A good example is the long struggle for bilingual education in the 1970s (and against the reactionary English-only state ballot initiative passed by the voters in 1986). Our guess is that a new alliance across racial barriers requires, to get off the ground, the independent mobilization of people of color as workers, citizens and professionals around the problems of their lives in the United States. This may happen with the redirection of energies of second-generation Asian Americans towards prising open opportunities in their new home country, as exemplified by the present struggles around university admissions, hiring and 'ethnic studies' course requirements. It may happen through increased unionization of Asian American workers, as in the case of Local 2 of the Hotel and Restaurant Workers. It may happen through a revived African American struggle for justice after the years of Reaganite depravity. It has not yet happened here via the Rainbow Coalition, despite hopeful signs.

The gentrification of politics?

The continued liberalism of the political culture of the Bay Area is quite remarkable. For example, the disastrous Dukakis run for the presidency in 1988 was a triumph locally, carrying eight of the area's nine counties by substantial margins. A wider spectrum of the citizenry here readily embraces such things as environmentalism, tolerance about sexual preference, women's rights, and racial equality here than almost anywhere else in the country. These attitudes compare favorably with the ideological conservatism of so much of southern and rural California, which regularly favors conservative initiatives such as Proposition 13, the Victims' Bill of Rights, and efforts to restrict the rights of people with AIDS.

That the progressive legacy is so widely diffused here rests in not inconsiderable measure on the favored status of the Bay Area as the Playground of Capitalism, and of the yuppies drawn to the high-tech sandbox. It may be hard for many on the left to swallow the idea of a putative middle class as a progressive force, but in the political context of the Bay Area, the yuppie tide has lifted many boats. This is our puzzle: one simply cannot sustain the thesis that the left current here over the last thirty years rests solely on the traditional working-class and trade-union base, as vital as that has been. The gentrification of the Bay Area runs even to the heart of the left itself, and its many middle-aged professionals. One cannot gainsay the attractions of the good life in the Playground, and here leftists can resist proletarianization in the same way the 49ers did. Indeed, an irony of the New Left is that many of its ideas, proponents and followers have 'gentrified', and in so doing strengthened the middle-class base for progressive politics.

This is not exactly a 'bourgeoisification' of the left, however, and here our conception of changing class and industry structure in contemporary capitalism matters. The left's model for political struggle has long been the CIO and the left parties of the 1930s – a good model but not the only one to draw on (Davis, 1986; Moody, 1989). It is worth considering the parallels between a place such as the Bay Area and nineteenth-century Paris, with its legions of skilled workers, small merchants, bohemians, internationalists and leisured classes, and with a long tradition of revolutionary upheaval (Harvey, 1985b). Such a comparison is certainly as strong as comparisons of the Bay Area with Detroit in the high tide of Fordist mass production. To say this is not to embrace the Prudhonist ideal of a socialism of workshops, nor to denigrate the role of less skilled mass production workers (and mass consumers) in progressive and left politics, past and future. This is, after all, a modern industrial metropolis experiencing the contradictions of growth and change in a new era of capitalist development; it is not a reversion to an earlier path long forgotten, as some would have it (for example, Piore and Sabel, 1984).

But the Fordist model, for all its importance, was never universal across industries or places, and is under assault throughout the capitalist world today. It is not just to the big factories, heavy industries and manual workers that one should look for a base for left politics. In the ranks of the 'middle class' lie many modern skilled workers who are open to liberal

and even radical appeals, and whose skills can be invaluable to any political mobilization.

Nonetheless, middle-class liberality can easily fade when pressed by direct challenge to class pretensions and libertarian proclivities. As Berkeley's electoral left has discovered, the town's growing gentry is more conservative on local issues than on national and international ones; even many Democrats who vote loyally for Ron Dellums will oppose Berkeley Citizens' Action on city issues. And there is remarkably little sympathy for the practices necessary to maintain a ruling political party such as BCA: individualistic voters are suspicious of 'machine' politics (a laughable accusation given BCA's threadbare infrastructure), and individual activists such as John Denton or Myron Moskowitz readily break off to form their own tendencies or join the opposition.

Moreover, it is all too easy for a gentrified left to lose contact with the bulk of the working class, who are not yuppies and do not live in gentrified communities, and who still form the indispensable foundation for progressive and socialist advance in the United States. The many middle-class intellectuals among us do not always relate well to folks who live in Hayward, shop at K-Mart and listen to country music. It can be even harder to connect with a working class that is shunted off to far suburbia, or has different national or racial roots. It is harder yet where unionization has diminished and the old workplaces and firms have disappeared.

This is not to say that all leftists are yuppies, by any means: the presence of the traditional working-class left in older unions such as the ILWU and newly burgeoning ones such as SEIU remains substantial. Also, many New Leftists, hopeful of becoming the new workers' vanguard, went into factories and unions to do the hard work of day-to-day organizing. Some are still there, although the vanguard parties are largely gone. More important, the restructuring of industry and work, and the recomposition of the working class and of the spatial organization of production and community life have eroded past achievements and linkages forged by the left.

There remains a sizable socialist left in the Bay Area, which, though checked by the conservatism of the 1980s, has not become anticommunist or withdrawn from politics. While some fellow-travelers in the movements of the 1960s have thrown in their lot with the bourgeoisie and are now happily engaged in real estate investment, on the whole the true 'Contras' of the

Bay Area left, such as Eldridge Cleaver, David Horowitz and Peter Collier, are few in number. What role the remaining left can play in revitalizing a broad progressive movement in the area, and for the country as a whole, remains to be seen.

Whither the left?

The review of the political economy of the Bay Area presented here can help provide a few pointers for future efforts by the left, although we mean to be indicative rather than rhetorical. To begin with, this look at the Bay region is premised on a view of the importance of becoming rooted in local affairs, even while maintaining a national and internationalist outlook. The vitality of the issues raised – and the number of unanswered questions – should sustain that premise for those of us with local roots. More than this, however, an important laboratory for present and future capitalism is to be found here under our noses – a grand experiment in new forms of industrial production, labor relations and class construction. The Bay Area is not just peculiar – in the way that New Orleans is an American oddity – but is central to the contemporary dynamics of capitalist production, consumption and class formation.

We have argued that the economy has changed as it has grown, and that it rests on new forms of industrialization, in the widest sense of the term. This does not make it in any way 'post-industrial', much less 'post-capitalist'. But the new era of capitalism represented so vividly here does require new kinds of responses. The labor movement is hard-pressed to come to grips with altered terms of employment, revamped working conditions, and a constantly shifting division of labor. In general, what is wanted is, above all, a new mass mobilization of the working class – comparable to the CIO organizing drives of the 1930s – in the new industries and expanding sectors, including electronics, banking and hotels. The Bay Area is part of an emergent heartland of the new industries, in the same way that the Midwest was the heartland of early twentieth-century US industrialization.

But this new mass mobilization will have to be different from that of the 1930s in several respects. It cannot be other than a rainbow movement, if it is to reflect accurately the new social composition of the working class and of the peoples of the region. An immense and vital potpourri of peoples mix

here, but they do not easily combine in fruitful ways. The left has a crucial responsibility to find avenues for them to work together for social change. Racial unity, gender equality and sexual tolerance are the basis for the new California we seek. A vision that makes race and gender central does not represent a retreat from class analysis and a socialist movement based in the working class (Navarro, 1989). On the contrary, the increasingly cosmopolitan nature of the working class and the Bay Area in general is a vibrant and potentially explosive substratum on which to galvanize the future class struggle.

At the same time, the left has to cope with the upward skew of the class structure in the Bay Area, and with the advantages and disadvantages that come with the very favorable lot drawn by so many who work here. From our place-based perspective, it is a mistake to write off the yuppies too quickly as legions of the right waiting for their marching orders. The progressive elements of new skilled workers can provide a source of support to the left in addition to the traditional working class and labor unions – something much less in evidence in, say, Detroit or Cleveland. Further, it should be admitted that many of the issues raised in the pursuit of the gentrified life in the Playground have been absorbed into a wider progressive and even socialist agenda: healthy food, recycling, historical preservation, and so forth. But the left has to work continually to focus middle-class projects on claims against capital and to strip them of self-indulgent faddishness and denial of just redistribution towards working people and the poor. This is not a call for a 'historic compromise' with centrists in which the left takes a moderate position to appear more reasonable to the middle class; it is, instead, an assessment of the possibilities inherent in the ongoing process of class formation for constructing a left agenda that appeals to the broadest definition of the working class, including its most skilled and least class-conscious elements.

Finally, the left must have a metropolitan vision that recognizes that the ways of the city are fundamental to the ways of working, the ways of life and the political formation of working people. The left needs a vision that extends beyond the city limits of San Francisco and Berkeley to encompass the factories of Silicon Valley and the refineries of Contra Costa. It must look into the wide belt of working-class suburbs, whose ambivalent interests so often divide workers and races against one another. It needs to come to grips with the debate over the

growth of the whole urban area – when major development issues arise, most activists have no sense of the regional scope of the problem – in order to turn dissent toward the growth machine into a critique of unbridled capitalist accumulation. The left can unite with the widespread popular revulsion against hazardous substances in the urban environment. And it must take care not to be sucked into the conservative agenda of bourgeois regionalism, however, as the costs of unplanned urban growth mount. Perhaps what is needed is a left counterpart to the Bay Area Council that can put forth a vision of the regional political economy that goes beyond opposition to challenge the power of capital to say where development occurs.

Despite considerable achievement by the local left, there is no denying the malaise induced by Reaganism and the rightward swing of American politics in the 1980s. The organized left has atrophied, from the implosion of the Democratic Workers Party to the tiredness of the Democratic Socialists of America. A great deal of energy went into party building in the Bay Area during the 1970s, but it has been a failed project. Large demonstrations can still be periodically mounted, as shown by the Spring Mobilizations for Peace, Jobs and Justice circa 1985–88 or the Women's Day march of 1989, but there is no sustained presence in the streets. On the other hand, the Bay Area remains a vital center of what may be called 'left political interest groups', often very well organized around particular issues, and able to publish valuable newsletters or books, as in the case of the Central America Research Institute, the Center for the Study of the Americas or the Food First Institute, or to provide essential services, as at the Center for Independent Living, the Worker's Clinic, or the Haight-Ashbury Free Clinic. After New York City, the Bay Area probably offers the richest kaleidoscope of left groups and institutions in the US, from KPFA radio to the Data Center. Yet one senses a fragmentation of effort and failure to sustain the kind of cross-fertilization that existed in the 1960s. What is needed is a new basis for unity and mutual affirmation without sectarian purposes. It will take a newly constituted left to help lead the way out of the impasse.

If the 'era of new thinking' unleashed in the Soviet Union and spilling over the world is to resonate here, it means that some new thinking is required about our own circumstances and the challenges facing us. One can adapt to the times in thinking about what constitutes industry, the working class,

progressive movements and constructive political work without falling prey to the absurd revisionism that denounces hard-won Marxist insights and the achievements of previous socialist struggles as bunk (for example, Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). It is also necessary to think anew about what it means to have a socialist future. It is no longer clear that we have a good answer: what would a future socialist city, a humane and democratic Bay Area metropolis look like? There is a new world to win, but what would we do with it if we won?

Notes

1. The Bay Area Study Group – Dick Walker, Roger Burbach, Steven Hiatt, Phil Hutchings, Elizabeth Martinez and Tony Platt – came together at the urging of Roger Burbach to take a fresh look at regional political and economic issues. We greatly appreciate the extensive input of those who read and commented on the manuscript: Andy Barlow, Tom Brom, Bill Domhoff, David Harvey, Bob Heifetz, Jeff Lustig, Vicente Navarro, Lenny Siegel and Charles Wollenberg. Thanks, too, to Marty Manley and John Trinkl for valuable information freely given, to Tim Surgeon, Liz Vasile and Rod Newmann for research assistance, and to Sheryl Freeman for cartography.
Special thanks are due Mike Davis for his encouragement and input, and for his love of the well-turned phrase.
2. For discussions of amazing Los Angeles, see the work of E. Soja, 1986, 1987; A. Scott, 1986, 1988a; and M. Davis, 1987, 1989.
3. A much-debated term. For an entry into the debate, see Pione and Sabel, 1984; Scott, 1988b; Williams et al., 1987; Storper and Scott, 1988; Walker, 1989; and Storper and Walker, 1989.
4. The population of the nine-county area (excluding Santa Cruz County) has grown as follows: 1940, 1,734,000; 1950, 2,681,000; 1960, 3,639,000; 1970, 4,628,000; 1980, 5,180,000; 1990 5,911,000 (est.)
5. 'San Francisco' refers to the city and county of that name. 'San Francisco Bay Area', 'San Francisco region', 'Bay Area', and 'Bay region' all refer to the metropolitan area. The US Census now includes ten counties in the metro area: San Francisco, Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Mateo, Sonoma, Napa, Santa Clara, Solano and Santa Cruz. Occasionally figures will refer to the nine-county area, less Santa Cruz, or to smaller parts of the region, as indicated.
6. Employment growth based on the nine-county area. For comparison, the Houston metropolitan area in the same period grew 295 percent; Los Angeles, 95 percent; and Chicago, 29 percent. Based on data from the US Department of Commerce, *County Business Patterns*.
7. For the ten-county area in 1983, wholesaling employed 145,000 workers, transport, 160,000 (CDC, 1985).
8. Total government employment in the ten counties was 487,000 in 1985 (CDC, 1985).
9. San Francisco has long benefited by having its banking tentacles deep in the surplus value of booming Southern California – as well as Silicon Valley and Central Valley agribusiness. Ironically, L.A.'s growth was heavily funded by

San Francisco capitalists such as Henry Huntington – a classic example of capital overflowing ('switching') into new geographic areas (Harvey, 1982).

10. Marin and San Mateo counties ranked first and second in per capita income among counties on the Pacific Coast, Santa Clara sixth, Contra Costa eighth, Alameda eighteenth. However, rural Northern California has eight of the twenty poorest counties in the Pacific Coast Region (US Department of Commerce, 1988).

11. We therefore retain the terms *middle class* and *yuppie* because of their general currency in American political discourse, but in full awareness of the difficulties inherent in using the terms too freely. Would it really help matters if we used the term *labor aristocracy*? Surely not.

12. Defined as architects, engineers, physical and social scientists, doctors, dentists, planners, lawyers, judges, and health and engineering technicians – that is, excluding all teachers, librarians and counselors, all nurses and therapists, social, recreation and religious workers, and writers, artists, entertainers and athletes – and all managers except self-employed retail owners. Numbers taken from US Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Run No. 831119 on 1980 US Census sample estimate, Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory.

13. Figures are for the five-county central Bay Area and the county of Los Angeles.

14. Comparable figures for all of California are 41 percent of all workers unionized in 1951, falling to below 20 percent by 1985. Unionization of manufacturing workers fell from 27.6 percent to 21.5 percent, 1979–85; and all workers from 22.1 percent to 19.2 percent, 1979–85.

15. By contrast, the percentages of Latino and Asian-Pacific peoples among the 8 million people in Los Angeles County are nearly reversed: 27 and 12 percent, respectively.

16. On residential segregation by class in the Bay Area, see Feldman (1981). Significantly, however, class segregation is frequently overridden by racial divisions and gender-mixing across class in the same household.

17. Figures from the Federal Home Loan Bank Board and California Association of Realtors.

18. Note that Annalee Saxenian, whose research was the main evidence for the self-destruction view of Silicon Valley's growth (1983), has changed her views on the matter.

19. The fracture of the region is well indicated by the closed realms within which its newspapers circulate: the *Examiner* in the city, the *Times-Tribune* on the Peninsula, the *Mercury* in San Jose, the *Tribune* in Oakland/Berkeley, the *Lesher* papers in Contra Costa, and so forth. Only the *San Francisco Chronicle* has a wide circulation, but its persistent mediocrity is a good index of the decrepit state of San Francisco's ruling class. The best paper is now the *San Jose Mercury*, as might be expected from the rising star of Silicon Valley.

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2

Berkeley: From the April Coalition to the Clean Underwear Gang

Gus Newport

Berkeley, California has a national reputation: the People's Republic of Berkeley, home of the Free Speech Movement and People's Park. This image projects so brightly that the media often ignores Berkeley itself in favor of a 'better story', the Berkeley of legend. Yet the struggles in Berkeley politics over the past twenty years are worth reviewing for what they suggest about the realities of progressive coalition politics in urban America - realities that are sometimes at odds with what people think they know about the city.

Berkeley is a city of 100,000 on the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay; like Oakland to its south, Berkeley flows down from the affluent hills that rim the bay to the working-class flatlands along the bayshore. The city is built around the University of California at the foot of the Berkeley Hills and around an industrial sector that is part of the long industrial belt extending along the bay's east shore from Hayward north to Richmond. Berkeley has a diverse population that is approximately 65 percent white, 19 percent Black, 8 percent Latino and 8 percent Asian.

In the early 1950s, Berkeley was a Republican town, controlled by business and the Chamber of Commerce. In the late 1950s and early 1960s moderate Democrats took control (although elections are officially nonpartisan) and with the change of leadership came greater support for social programs. Berkeley's shift toward more radical politics began in response to the Civil Rights Movement; Berkeley has a long tradition of