

Illawarra Unity - Journal of the Illawarra Branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History

Volume 11
Issue 1 *Illawarra Unity*

Article 3

2012

Bohemians, Bridges and Bolsheviks: Radical San Francisco Before Flower Power

Anthony Ashbolt
University of Wollongong, aashbolt@uow.edu.au

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/unity>

Recommended Citation

Ashbolt, Anthony, *Bohemians, Bridges and Bolsheviks: Radical San Francisco Before Flower Power*, *Illawarra Unity - Journal of the Illawarra Branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History*, 11(1), 2012, 27-50.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/unity/vol11/iss1/3>

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au

Bohemians, Bridges and Bolsheviks: Radical San Francisco Before Flower Power

Abstract

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

Bohemians, Bridges and Bolsheviks: Radical San Francisco Before Flower Power*

Anthony Ashbolt

University of Wollongong

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

Kamstra's words reverberate with imagery from the 1960s, yet they are from a novel about Beat life in San Francisco during the Fifties.¹ The passage is but one example of the way in which the city has been marked out as different, as a refuge, a depository of discontent and cauldron of rebellion. Fervent leader of the Christian anti-Communist crusade, Dr. Fred Schwartz, picked out San Francisco in 1962 as a political Gomorrah of the west coast thus presaging similar enlightened comments by moral fundamentalists around twenty years later as the AIDS crisis spread.² And he even revealed his belief that Khrushchev "has chosen San Francisco as the headquarters of the world communist dictatorship".³ Yet, despite Schwartz's paranoia, the Communist heritage in the San Francisco Bay Area was rich and qualitatively different from that elsewhere in America. There is a tendency to promote national dimensions of activism over regional distinctions and peculiarities. Sometimes and in some places, however, the regional foundations of radicalism are more powerful and penetrating than at other times and in

other places. While it is doubtful that Kruschew had chosen San Francisco for anything, he could have done worse.

San Francisco is more noted than most cities in America historically as being open, progressive, tolerant, liberal and bohemian. This has at least something to do with the city's historical status as the key city in the American west, an "instant city" arising out of the feverish swirl of the Californian gold rush.⁴ The sweeping Bay, the discrete and sometimes colourful neighborhoods, a downtown still somewhat restrained by international standards, an image of romance and adventure and edginess (the abyss and cracks in the abyss never far away), the sensation of being on the frontier in more ways than one: all these characteristics have sustained San Francisco's popularity. And they have served as a magnet drawing the disaffected, the marginalized, the deinstitutionalized, the drop-out or dissident, the high-minded or those simply high on any possible range of lifestyles, philosophies, technologies, natural substances or chemicals. Often forgotten, however, is the fact that the city's reputation, its distinctive political culture, has deep roots in the special role played there by radical and labour movements. Without that historical framework, embodying a strong tradition of both political and cultural radicalism, San Francisco would not have figured so prominently both nationally and internationally in the 1960s.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, San Francisco was becoming identified as a "union town", in contrast to its Los Angeles cousin, which was an "open shop" city.⁵ Labor had organized effectively in San Francisco as early as 1849 and by 1863 The Trade Union Council worked there on behalf of fifteen unions.⁶ Carey McWilliams described San Francisco by 1900 "as not only the most tightly organized city in the United States but as the stronghold of trade unionism in the United States."⁷ And the city was a culturally heterogeneous metropolis compared to Los Angeles where foreign groups lived in isolation, in part due to "landspread" and the fact that the harbour there was not directly connected to the life of the city in the same way as it was in San Francisco.⁸ This made the later struggle of communists more difficult and more urgent in Los Angeles than San Francisco because labour was on the way to becoming integrated into the life of the latter city.⁹ San Francisco had

forged the way in the eight hour day struggle beginning in the mid 1860s.¹⁰ So when we arrive at the late nineteenth century, the skilled trades, in particular, had been organized in San Francisco. This was assisted by San Francisco's remoteness, as employers found it difficult to bring in skilled workers who were non-union.¹¹ Paradoxically, then, here was the frontier serving solidarity rather than rugged individualism. Or to put it another way, the frontier was a source of both collective struggle and self-sufficiency. Nonetheless, the labour movement at the time tended to be populist (in the Henry George style) rather than revolutionary. Its language was radical, to be sure, but its anti-monopoly convictions were conveyed partly through anti-Chinese propaganda.¹²

While this article focuses upon San Francisco, the Bay Area as a whole cannot be ignored. Across the Bay from San Francisco, Oakland was the base for the Socialist Party, and its offshoot The Communist Labor Party (CLP) until the early 1920s. The arrest of around twenty movement leaders in the Oakland area during the Palmer raids, together with the gathering police suppression of radicalism there, helped shift the centre of communism in California to San Francisco.¹³ And it is important to note here the fact that the CLP (unlike the CPUSA) had voiced some support for the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) because it is to the IWW that Kenneth Rexroth later pointed as a crucial part of the radical anarchist heritage that helped shape San Francisco's unique political and cultural role.¹⁴ Indeed, Anita Whitney, a leading communist in the Oakland area and active in the formation of the CLP was arrested in 1919 under California's Criminal Syndicalism Act. During the trial the prosecution tried to establish a close connection between the CLP and IWW. Three years earlier, of course, two close associates of the IWW – Tom Mooney and Warren Billings – had been framed for the bombing of a Preparedness Day Parade. It was against the IWW that the Government directed its most vigorous attempts at suppression. Yet, in one of those curious twists of fate, Anita Whitney was to become state Chairman of the (official) Communist Party in 1936. And in 1939, immediately after being released from San Quentin and granted a full pardon by the Governor, Tom Mooney marched alongside Harry Bridges in a celebratory parade in San Francisco. The

Australian born Bridges, as we shall see, had become an iconic figure of the city's radical movement.

All of this is part of a larger story whereby communism in the San Francisco Bay Area had a distinctly regional and independent flavour. This is true also of communism in California as a whole, whether in terms of the CLP or the ascendant Communist Party (CPUSA). Organisationally, Californian communism was somewhat independent of "outside influence", whether from national headquarters or Moscow, to a degree rarely recognized.¹⁵ Ralph Shaffer has suggested that this Californian story might be repeated in regions across America but it does seem to be another case of Californian exceptionalism and it is doubtful that other branches in America exerted as much independence.¹⁶ This slice of regional exceptionalism is repeated in the 1960s with Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in San Francisco becoming increasingly distanced from the National Office shortly after it established a local office in 1965. Before long, it was proudly declaring its regional identity and allegiance.¹⁷ The centre simply did not hold in ways that national histories often pretend.

As Michael Kazin has argued, by 1920 San Francisco was "the quintessential union town" with closed shops in many industries.¹⁸ Yet not all was rosy in the field of labour and an employer's offensive, beginning in 1921, particularly against longshoremen, sailors and construction workers produced what Kazin even refers to as "an open-shop stranglehold".¹⁹ The 1930s, however, witnessed a resuscitation of labour's fortunes and one event stands out in the struggle of organized workers – the 1934 west coast longshoremen's strike. The strike's leader was the wily Harry Bridges who is remembered fondly (and honoured accordingly) to this day.²⁰ Many Sixties radicals were aware of Bridges, the 1934 strike and its historic importance. Some saw themselves operating, to an extent, in the shadow of its legacy.²¹ Thus at least one member of SLATE, the liberal-left student organization established at Berkeley in the Fifties, Herb Mills, was to become (quite deliberately) a leading longshoreman, critic and poet who wrote eloquently about the good old days in San Francisco.²² The connection between the docks and the poets and other writers is itself a fascinating subject.²³ And another of those intriguing historical

threads is provided by Harry Hay, founder of the homosexual rights organization the Mattachine Society in 1950. Hay was on his way to being radicalized as a young man when, during a trip to San Francisco in 1934, he witnessed the maritime strike and its accompanying battles on the waterfront.²⁴ It was this event that turned him to the Communist Party for it was there he found his ideals of social justice being talked about and acted upon. His ideals of sexual justice had to be buried for the time being, as the Party had a strict prohibition policy. It is of more than passing interest, however, that the founder of the modern gay rights movement, which was to find its real home in San Francisco, was radicalized fully by the maritime strike.

Bloody Thursday, July 5, 1934 etched itself indelibly on the radical historic memory of San Franciscans. For this was when police stormed picket lines and a raging battle ensued, with the strikers using bricks and spikes against police guns, clubs and tear gas.²⁵ Two strikers were killed and scores were injured. The National Guard was ordered in that night and the dock area became an armed encampment, almost foreshadowing the events of the 1969 People's Park struggle across the bay in Berkeley. Only the second general strike in American history followed in the Bay Area but it did not spread along the coast and was over in a few days. Yet the return to work did not remove the resolve of the longshoremen who continued their struggle with the waterfront bosses in more selective fashion.

Part of the longshoremen's long and bitter conflict involved a union-controlled hiring hall. This battle over the mechanism of labour hire is precisely to do with not only the dignity of labour but also with the culture of the docks, with removing the 'shape-up' system whereby employers chose "randomly" from a group of workers every morning. While the strike produced substantial gains in wages and hours, initially only partial control of the hiring hall was achieved. This control, however, was extended through future battles (including a 1936 strike) and the hall became central to the vibrant political culture that developed around San Francisco's docks and even established a degree of workers' control that is rarely recognized and certainly not replicated across other industries.²⁶ Bridges was to emerge in 1937 as leader of both the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) and the Californian Congress of

Industrial Organisations (CIO). His union was, amongst other things, proudly multi-racial and this marked a new beginning for the Californian labour movement.

The hiring hall, jointly controlled by unions and employers, established the principle of a preferential dispatch of union members. This centralized method of hiring engendered a greater degree of contact between the longshoremen and a collective spirit that extended into the bars and cafes and general neighborhood surrounding the waterfront. Moreover, the cooperative nature of their work – it was done by gangs – and the skills and responsibilities involved, gave the men a sense of on-the-job community and pride in their labour.²⁷ In short, the 1934 strike helped cement a vibrant working class community on and around the docks. Like most other such communities it was to be diluted if not obliterated during the later days of suburbanization and mechanization but its legacy remains imprinted upon the spirit of San Francisco. And, to some extent, Bay Area radicals in the 1960s were trying to revive something like that sense of community created around the docks in the wake of the 1934 strike. This romantic sense of belonging and identity was for many reasons dissipating in the period following the Second World War.²⁸ So it is not insignificant that the radical critique of the 1960s played on images to do with technocratic control, administrative efficiency, dehumanization and alienation. In San Francisco and the Bay Area as a whole, at least for some with historical memories, this critique specifically signalled the yearning for the type of community that had once existed on and around the docks. Romantic longings of one sort or another (think just of the pastoral sympathies of hippies) permeated Sixties discourse. And it is not insignificant that two key events in hippie history – the first big rock dance in October 1965 and the Trips Festival over three nights in January 1965, were staged at the Longshoremen's Hall near Fisherman's Wharf. The connections between politics and culture can, indeed, be fascinating.²⁹ This is demonstrated clearly by the public projects involving manual labour and art under Roosevelt.

Many artists were employed by the New Deal administration in the 1930s and amongst their most memorable works in San Francisco are the murals in Coit Tower. Some

of the painters were members of the Communist Party and influenced heavily by Mexican muralist Diego Rivera who had been in San Francisco from 1930 to 1931.³⁰ These muralists were working in the Tower at the time of the longshore strike and had a marvellous vantage point on Telegraph Hill from which to observe the struggles on the waterfront below.³¹ Needless to say, workers' battles became a central motif for many, but by no means all, of the murals. Interestingly, the Communist painters followed no national correct line. Rather, they reflected upon local circumstance, reinforcing the relative autonomy of the Californian and, in particular, San Francisco, branches of the Party.³² The Roosevelt public works program not only commissioned projects like dams, art works like the COIT murals but also the Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). One of the Writers Project briefs was to produce a series of guidebooks for various cities, including San Francisco.³³ They constitute an invaluable historical resource. The San Francisco guide, comprising around 500 pages, remarks of the Coit murals that they "are as a whole distinguished by a high level of craftsmanship".³⁴ Moreover, the Guide is remarkably well-informed about labour history and politics: "San Francisco workers are proud of their unions and jealous of union welfare. Employers estimate that half the population of San Francisco consists of union members and their families."³⁵ Written after the bitter 1934 conflict, the sympathies of the authors are clear and the section on labour ends cleverly with a quote from a local business leader stressing the relative peace in San Francisco industry.³⁶ This industrial peace helped guarantee, amongst other things, completion of the Oakland Bay and Golden Gate Bridges in 1936 and 1937 and the guide is detailed and eloquent in its description of them. Take this passage on the Golden Gate:

When the two towers were finished, workmen clambering along catwalks strung between them spun the giant cables from tower to tower. Into the spinning of each of the cables (which measure 36 1/2 inches in diameter) went 27,572 strands of wire no thicker than a lead pencil. To support them, each tower has to carry a vertical load of 210,000,000 pounds from each cable and each shore anchorage block to withstand a pull of 63,000,000 pounds. From these cables

the bridge was suspended by traveler derricks invented to perform jobs of this kind.³⁷

The *Life* photographer Peter Stackpole (son of Coit muralist and sculptor Ralph Stackpole) captured spectacularly work on these bridges.³⁸ And while on the subject of photography, Dorothea Lange's vivid studies of life without work in San Francisco during the Depression were followed by her poignant depictions of the deprivations of farm labour in California.³⁹ Sadly, these photos still speak to our times.

Unlike other major cities, in San Francisco a New Deal coalition of liberal and labour forces continued in the post-World war II years and the unions were, to an extent, becoming built into the administrative life of the city.⁴⁰ This partial absorption of labour into the mainstream boosted San Francisco's image as a progressive city even as it suggested a decline in working class militancy.⁴¹ At the very time when structural changes in capitalism and in everyday life were beginning to have a profound effect upon old left organizations, McCarthyism and cold war ideology generally intervened, threatening the survival of radicalism throughout America.

In the late 1940s, the Communist Party in Northern California, which had a membership of around 2500 to 3000, operated from a labour base particularly in the maritime industry.⁴² Unlike most regions in America, the leadership of the Congress of Industrial Organisations (CIO) in the Bay Area was leftist.⁴³ Most interestingly, Bay Area (and Californian) Communist leadership in the main did not go underground during the 1950s. Elsewhere the CPUSA leaders had, in order to avoid arrest, divorced themselves from the mass organization and operated through underground channels.⁴⁴ Jo Freeman has observed that "During the early years of the cold war the culture of anti-Communism flourished in California...Concentrated in Orange County, it reached even into the liberal Bay Area"⁴⁵ And of course it did but the Bay Area was singularly equipped to resist its charms as the famous protests against the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in May 1960 testify. There existed there, even during the repressive 1950s, a sense of the possibilities of struggle that had simply disappeared from other regions. Thus Jessica Mitford has described a campaign to desegregate housing in an Oakland suburb in the 1950s. It was

led by the Civil Rights Congress, an organization that did not dare rear its head on the east coast.⁴⁶ All this is partly because the CPUSA and its affiliates in the Bay Area were different. This is another instance of radical exceptionalism.

Thus it was that the Bay Area regional Communist strategy at the time departed from national directives. Rather than adopting a ‘zero hour’ commitment that enforced a policy of abandoning the party’s public face so as to resist the “fascist” onslaught, some key Californian Communist leaders tried to sustain communism’s open presence.⁴⁷ Eleven leading Californian Communists, including seven from San Francisco, were arrested in 1951 and charged under Smith Act provisions. The national headquarters of the Party was most displeased that these figures had not obeyed the underground directives.⁴⁸ Paradoxically, however, California lost only one third of its Party membership in the years 1947–56, as against a two-thirds national loss. Perhaps, then, the political strategy adopted on the west coast generally and the Bay Area specifically was a more appropriate response to McCarthyist intimidation. More likely, however, it was a direct result of the political culture in the Bay Area. Peggy Dennis, wife of the Communist leader Eugene Dennis and herself an active member of the Party at the time has remarked that coming out to California during the McCarthyist period was “like a fresh breath” and that their child was most upset when they had to return to New York.⁴⁹ That child was Gene Dennis Jnr., who was to become a Sixties activist in the Bay Area (working particularly with the Black Panthers), a correspondent for *People’s World* and eventually a longshoreman and a poet.

This is by no means to suggest persecution in the period was absent. Kenneth Rexroth’s assertion in 1957 that Congressional witch-hunters are virtually “run out of town” in San Francisco, while prescient, overlooked the various trials that did result in gaolings and also loss of jobs.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, the various HUAC hearings prior to 1960, in particular the 1959 hearings, did pave the way for strong resistance from citizen and labour organisations. So in 1959 for the first time in its history, HUAC dropped its subpoenas and abandoned the witch-hunt in San Francisco.⁵¹ Nonetheless, there is a limit to the number of shocks a political movement can withstand and

the combination of McCarthyism, Khrushchev's revelations about Stalin and the Soviet intervention in Hungary, left the CPUSA in ruins by the late 1950s. Most who had gone underground abandoned the party between 1956 and 1957, as the tension between an underground leadership and the Khrushchev and Hungary crisis proved too great.⁵² Even in San Francisco the Party's influence, particularly in the labour movement, had been cut back severely.⁵³ Nonetheless, the Party's paper in California, *People's World*, published in San Francisco, persevered and retained a radical vision somewhat distant from that coming out of CPUSA national headquarters. This enabled it to enter the 1960s as a committed public organ rather than a mere appendage to a minor sectarian force (although you would never gather that from the vast majority of histories written by the Sixties radicals themselves).⁵⁴ *People's World* carried along a united front banner, endeavouring to appeal to a far wider constituency than that of the Party membership. The paper "had built an influential following" since 1938, through its relatively undogmatic appraisal of events, especially in the field of labour struggles and race relations.⁵⁵ Indeed, as a consequence of the McCarran Act requirement that Communist organisations register with government, *People's World* pretended to be "independent and politically unaffiliated". The same is true of the youth wing of the CPUSA, the DuBois Clubs.⁵⁶ It was *People's World*, according to editor Al Richmond, which established an atmosphere within the Party congenial to an aboveground presence. Significantly, its editor and many of its journalists were to become sympathetic to Sixties radicalism. Take Carl Bloice as an example. He was recruited by Robert Scheer to manage his Congressional peace campaign for the Democratic Party nomination in 1966. Why? Scheer contacted Richmond and requested firmly that the local Communist Party provide an organizer.⁵⁷ Old left involvement in New Left campaigns has been, in the main, underplayed in (if not excluded from) much Sixties historiography.⁵⁸ The most obvious absence in major histories of the Sixties and the civil rights movement is Tracy Sims. She was the key leader of the dramatic and successful campaign against discriminatory hiring practices at the Sheraton Hotel in San Francisco in 1964. Sims was a young black member of the Du Bois Club, effectively the youth wing of the Communist

party.⁵⁹ The point is not to exaggerate the role of the old left in the birth and growth of the radical Sixties in the Bay Area; it is to remember that the new left there drew on a rich historical tradition.

The Sixties counter-cultural heritage in the Bay Area has been much more acknowledged. Yet its roots are even deeper than sometimes conceded. As far back as the 1860s there was a clear bohemian spirit nurtured by frontier adventurism.⁶⁰ While initially connected to political radicalism, some of this bohemianism veered off in a quirky direction as a subsidiary element of ruling class life. This is captured by the trajectory of the Bohemian club, established in 1872. One of its founders at the time was the populist Henry George and it began as a centre for writers and artists. By the beginning of the twentieth century, however, it had become a wealthy man's haunt.⁶¹ Yet the bohemian spirit captured by some outside the Club and, in particular, the San Francisco School of Design by the 1890s, is a truer forerunner of later counter-cultural developments.⁶² Jack London, Gelett Burgess, Gertrude Stein and Isadora Duncan are just some of the influential names associated with the School. And it was Jack London who inspired Harry Bridges, future waterfront leader and key figure of the 1934 strike, to leave his home in Australia and finally disembark in San Francisco in 1920 carrying his beloved mandolin. Prior to the 1906 fire, indeed, San Francisco had established a strong reputation as the "Paris of America". A bohemian element survived beyond the fire but the axis then tilted quickly to Greenwich Village in New York. It was to be many years before San Francisco recovered its status at the cutting edge of cultural experimentation and dissent.

The post-1945 years saw a prominent dissident culture, closely connected to dissident politics, reconfigure in the Bay Area. This "rebirth" of bohemianism is fuelled primarily by the San Francisco Literary Renaissance but also by the creation of community radio station KPFA. This station provided a crucial outlet for cultural and political radicals, with Kenneth Rexroth, for example, providing a weekly programme beginning in 1951.⁶³

KPFA was established by the pacifist and humanist Pacifica Foundation, a non-profit corporation formed in San Francisco in 1946.⁶⁴ In an age when art and music were increasingly

subject to the manipulations of monopoly commerce, when politics began to stink of repressive inquisitorial practices, KPFA emerged as a beacon of rationality. It did much to provide time for the sort of dissenting view that was to become prominent in the Sixties. In particular, it provided clear scope for anti-McCarthy campaigners and San Francisco's alternative culture (including giving a "Sunday sermon" spot to Buddhist advocate Alan Watts). That alternative culture was identified increasingly as Beat (colloquially "beatnik", following *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Herb Caen's combination of beat and sputnik) but more appropriately considered as part of a wider avant-garde with the San Francisco Literary or Poetry Renaissance (or just San Francisco Renaissance) at its core. Thus Rexroth and fellow radical poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti tended to disapprove of the "Beat Generation" label, preferring to see the Beats as a moment in an avant-garde poetic regeneration.⁶⁵

While Ferlinghetti, with his City Lights bookstore and publishing house, was a key figure in that Renaissance, Rexroth was arguably the motive force (its father figure, if you like). He was close to communism in the thirties when he worked with the Federal Writers Project, was "outdoor organizer" of the John Reed Club, a member of the Artists' and Writers Union, and became particularly influenced by the IWW and what he saw as its anarchist heritage.⁶⁶ A turn towards pacifism distanced him from this political stream during the Second World War but fitted him neatly for the burgeoning activism of the post-war years including his work with KPFA.

So by the middle of the 1950s San Francisco was once again being seen as a cousin of Paris or, to borrow from John Clellon Holmes, the Paris of the younger generation.⁶⁷ Like Paris, San Francisco was acting as a cultural magnet, drawing people to it with the offer of something new and invigorating. A regional perspective was beginning to triumph even over the initial Greenwich Village sensibilities of Ginsberg and Kerouac. Rexroth fomented this regionalism, even as Ferlinghetti at one stage did not have much time for the "regional point of view".⁶⁸ Rexroth championed the cause of San Francisco to the point where, for him, its only rival internationally, in the cultural field, was Paris. While some fellow writers were keen to embrace a wider Bay Area identity or one that at least included Berkeley

– the poet Robert Duncan, in particular, but also Kerouac in his novel *The Dharma Bums* – Rexroth was a strict San Francisco regionalist: “I always feel like I ought to get a passport every time I cross the Bay to Oakland or Berkeley.”⁶⁹ He suggested, moreover, in his autobiographical novel that “the world pattern of post-War II culture” was developed in San Francisco.⁷⁰ This tends to bury New York abstract expressionism and the New York jazz and experimental theatre scenes and their significance cannot be understated. Nonetheless, there was an important school of abstract expressionists in San Francisco during the late 40s and beyond. It was centred initially around the Californian School of Fine Arts and Clyfford Still, the major non-New York exponent of abstract expressionism. At one stage, Still was joined by Mark Rothko for two teaching terms.⁷¹ Indeed, the claim can be made that even after Still’s move to New York in 1950 that San Francisco was “still, after New York, the major source of *avant garde* painting of quality”.⁷² And one of the painters, Hassel Smith (whom some elevate above Still as “the most influential abstract expressionist in San Francisco”), had a commitment to leftist politics and close connections with the Literary Renaissance through poets like Rexroth and Robert Duncan.⁷³

Moreover, the coming together of poetry and jazz was a significant cultural development. While the origins of this conjunction lie in collaborations between Rexroth and Langston Hughes in Chicago, there was later some experimentation centred on Rexroth in the San Francisco John Reed Club. It became very popular in the city during the Fifties particularly around the poetry of Rexroth, Ferlinghetti and Kenneth Patchen.⁷⁴ Rexroth stresses the degree to which the poet had to know and feel the music for the jazz/poetry performances to work. He describes the difference between the scenes in New York and San Francisco vividly:

...in every Greenwich Village coffee shop and bar for about two years, all kinds of bums with pawn-shop saxophones put together with scotch tape, and some other guy with something called poetry, were, like, you know, blowing poetry, man, dig? And it was unmitigated crap. It killed the whole thing... There wasn’t anything like it in San Francisco because we had done the thing in San Francisco...the stuff

in New York was ridiculous, and of course it's that whole New York commercial scene. That was all it was for. To make the tourists go to Greenwich Village.⁷⁵

This distinction between the freedom and independent creativity of San Francisco and the crass commercialism of New York would resurface in the 1960s, particularly with regard to the music. Yet the New York scene in the 1950s cannot be reduced to mere commercialism. As Michael Schumacher in his biography of Allen Ginsberg observes of 1950:

It was an exciting time to be in New York. An entire culture of postwar avant-garde painters, musicians, writers, and performing artists had taken root in the city. On any given night, such Abstract Expressionist painters as Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock, or Franz Kline might be seen gathering with friends at the Cedar Tavern at Eighth Street and University Place. Musicians such as Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie, Coleman Hawkins, Gerry Mulligan, and George Shearing kept late hours at jazz clubs. Living Theatre founders Julian Beck and Judith Malina anchored a diverse group of artists that included dancer Merce Cunningham, avant-garde musician John Cage, and painter/musician Larry Rivers.⁷⁶

The jazz rhythms and cadences of Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" testify, in part, to this New York debt even though the poem was written in San Francisco and Berkeley, initially performed in San Francisco at the Six Gallery and subsequently (in slightly censored form) broadcast on KPFA.⁷⁷ "Howl" was, indeed, a San Franciscan event that generated a celebrated obscenity trial and presaged the Sixties in more ways than one. It championed sexual liberation, savaged machine civilization and its debris of mental torture, hinted at anarchist critique (with fond gestures towards communism), engaged in a politics of play and generally subverted the norms of society, poetry, good taste and common sense in a powerful and passionate fashion.⁷⁸ Master of ceremonies at the Six Gallery reading was Kenneth Rexroth and he stressed on the night San Francisco's role as a dissident enclave within conformist America.⁷⁹ Another performer at the Six Gallery event, Philip Lamantia, noted later a particularly important aspect of the San Francisco Renaissance – its

strong environmental consciousness combined with a radical mysticism and anarchism.⁸⁰ The environmentalism has strong Californian roots dating back to John Muir and the Sierra Club. Yet it was also linked to a growing awareness of native American practices and these, in turn, fuelled the mysticism (also nurtured strongly by Zen Buddhism).

In his now famous “San Francisco Letter”, Rexroth referred to the “San Francisco Renaissance and the New Generation of Revolt and our Underground Literature and Cultural Disaffiliation”.⁸¹ Such a pastiche of images both reminds one of the opening quote in this article from Jerry Kamstra’s novel and points directly to the Sixties experience. According to Rexroth the “underground culture” was not underground in San Francisco but “dominant – in fact almost all there is”.⁸² So here it is again (and hardly for the last time) – San Francisco as a place where dissidence can be seen openly, be above ground, can dare to speak its name. That dissidence and subversion of the dominant ethos of everyday life was political, cultural and sexual even if all its participants were not aware of the interconnections.⁸³ Thus it was that the obscenity trial surrounding Ginsberg’s book *Howl and Other Poems*, published by City Lights, brought to the surface many issues about free speech, the function of art, sexual politics and the degradation of life which were to reappear prominently in the 1960s.⁸⁴

Rexroth attributed the exuberant qualities of San Francisco to a number of factors, some of which have already been alluded to: the city’s radical political heritage; the pacifist orientation of many intellectuals, partly due to the large number of conscientious objectors who came there after serving in nearby detention centres during the Second World war; the existence of an “independent and skeptical labor force” made up of mobile workers like longshoremen and seamen; the absence of racial conflict and an affluent laissez-faire character of life; and finally an artistic community that was part of the working class rather than a sub-set of academia.⁸⁵ The latter reference was an acerbic barb directed at the New York poetry establishment, whose representatives despised those associated with the Beats.⁸⁶ It is hardly surprising, indeed, that Rexroth singles out New York for stiff criticism. And, as already noted, it is fascinating to see similar criticisms developed by San Francisco cultural radicals

in the 1960s.

Admittedly, a regionalist perspective, particularly one as intense as Rexroth's, is risky. Yet only a few years after Rexroth's 1956 "San Francisco Letter", regionalism and radicalism were intertwined in extraordinary ways. One can point readily to Greensboro, North Carolina, and then San Francisco in 1960. One can also point to Ann Arbor, Michigan, which helped spawn the Port Huron statement (2012 marks its fiftieth anniversary) or Madison, Wisconsin, which nurtured a generation of radical historians. Yet one can keep pointing to San Francisco and the Bay Area throughout the 1960s. It became, to use the words of Henri Lefebvre, "a counter-space...against power and the arrogance of power, against the endless expansion of the 'private' and of industrial profitability..."⁸⁷ The roots of this "counter-space" lie in the special radical history of that city by the Bay.

Notes

- * This is an extended version of a paper presented at the International Society for the Study of Cultural History, Turku, Finland, May 25, 2010.
- 1 Jerry Kamstra, *The Frisco Kid*, Bantam, New York, 1976, p. 150. The reference to Grant and Green (rather than Haight and Ashbury) locates both place (North Beach) and time in San Francisco but for those without such specific knowledge, it might as well be about the Sixties (particularly the reference to "all of society's children", as the Beat influx was miniscule compared to the hippies a decade later).
- 2 Dr. Fred Schwarz, cited in Editorial, *The Nation*, January 27, 1962, p. 70.
- 3 Dr. Schwarz, cited in Fred J. Cook, "The Ultras", *The Nation*, June 23, 1962, p. 573.
- 4 Gunter Barth, *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver*, Oxford University press, New York, 1975. For a critical perspective on the growth of San Francisco as a political and commercial power at the heart of an American Empire, a perspective very different from the one that stresses the exceptionalism mostly explored here, see Gary Brechin's *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin*, University of California press, Berkeley, 2007 [2006]. The military side of San Francisco (as well as many other sides) is brought out in

- Rebecca Solnit, *Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas*, University of California press, 2010, pp. 31–6.
- 5 See Walton Bean, *California: an interpretive history*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1978, pp. 140–146. When the city became slightly more open to unionism later on, the focus was Hollywood.
 - 6 Kevin Starr, *California: a History*, The Modern Library, New York, 2005, p. 194.
 - 7 Carey McWilliams, *California: The Great Exception*, Peregrine Smtih, Inc, Santa Barbara, 1976, p. 139.
 - 8 Carey McWilliams “The Los Angeles Archipelago”, *Science and Society*, Winter 1946, pp. 41–2.; Carey McWilliams, *California: The Great Exception*, p. 137.
 - 9 Peggy Dennis, *The Autobiography of an American Communist: A Personal View of a Political Life*, Lawrence Hill & Co., Wesport/Berkeley, 1977, pp. 39–40.
 - 10 Starr, *California*, p. 194.
 - 11 Walter Bean, *Boss Ruef’s San Francisco*, University of California Press, 1952, pp.12–13.
 - 12 Alexander Saxton, *Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the anti-Chinese Movement in California*, University of California Press, 1971; Michael Kazin, “The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles”, *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 55 no. 3, August 1986, pp. 376–7, 386–7. As Kazin puts it, “In one of the cruelest ironies of California’s past, unions increased their membership and social power at the expense of workers from another race” (p.387).
 - 13 Ralph Schaffer, “Communism in California”, *Science and Society*, vol. 34, no. 4, Winter 1970, p. 426. Also see Al Richmond, “Anita Whitney – Communist”, *Political Affairs*, April 1955, pp. 44–54. The Palmer Raids were raids targeting the left organized by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer and his eager assistant J. Edgar Hoover.
 - 14 Kenneth Rexroth, “San Francisco’s Mature Bohemians”, *The Nation*, February 23, 1957, p. 159.
 - 15 Ralph Shaffer, “Communism in California”, p. 421. This is not acknowledged by Steven Schwartz in his stridently anti-Communist book *From West to East: California and the Making of the American Mind*, The Free Press, New York, 1998. Yet Schwartz does stress the importance of place and has an almost peculiar affection for the San Francisco Renaissance dealt with later in this paper,

- 16 Ralph Shaffer, "Formation of the California Communist Labour Party", *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 36. 1967, p. 65.
- 17 See my forthcoming treatment of this in A Cultural History of the Radical Sixties in the San Francisco Bay Area: www.pickeringchatto.com/sixties; also Anthony Ashbolt, *Tear Down the Walls: Sixties Radicalism and the Politics of Space in the Bay Area*, Ph.d dissertation, Australian National University, 1988, pp. 98–118.
- 18 Kazin, "The Great Exception Revisited", p. 387.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 395; Michel Kazin, *Barons of Labor: The San Francisco Building Trades and Union Power in the Progressive Era*, University of Illinois Press, 1987, pp. 256–276.
also see William Issel & Robert W. Cherny, *San Francisco 1865–1932: Politics, Power and Urban Development*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1986, pp. 96–100.
- 20 There is a project in his name that does excellent work celebrating Bridges' legacy. and educating the public about labour history. See The Harry Bridges Project: <http://theharrybridgesproject.org/>
- 21 See, for example, Bettina F. Aptheker, *Intimate Politics: How I Grew Up, Fought for Free Speech, and became a Feminist Rebel*, Seal Press, Emeryville, 2006, p. 98–9;
- Jo Freeman, "What happened at Berkeley: How the Cold War Culture of Anti-Communism Shaped Protest in the Sixties", 2004 speech published at <http://www.jofreeman.com/sixtiesprotest/berkeleytalk.htm>
- 22 Herbert Mills, discussions with author 1978–9. Herbert Mills, *Labor/Management Relations: On the Ships and Docks*, Institute for the Study of Social Change, Berkeley, 1978 – Part One, "The Good Old Days", Part Two, "Modern Longshore Operations"; Herbert Mills, "The Social Consequences of Modernization", in A. Zimbalist (ed.), *Case Studies on the Labor Process*, Monthly Review Press, 1979, p. 127–155.
- 23 See Robert Carson (ed.), *The Waterfront Writers: The Literature of Work*, Harper & Row, San Francisco, 1979. One of the key Beat poets, Lew Welch, ended up working on the docks as a longshoremen's clerk.
- 24 Stuart Timmons, *The Trouble With Harry Hay: Founder of the Modern Gay Movement*, Alyson Publications, Boston, 1990, p. 69.
- 25 See David F. Selvin, *The 1934 Waterfront and General Strikes in San Francisco*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1996; Mike Quin, *The Big Strike*, International Publishers, New York, 1979

- [1949]; Samuel Yellen, *American Labor Struggles*, Monad Press, New York, 1974 [1949], pp. 338ff.; Charles P. Larrowe, *Harry Bridges: The Rise and Fall of Radical Labor in the U.S.*, Lawrence Hill and Co., 1972, pp. 65–70; Jeremy Brecher, *Strike!*, Straight Arrow Books, San Francisco, 1974, p.154.
- 26 Herb Mills & David Wellman, “Contractually sanctioned job action and workers’ control: The case of the San Francisco Longshoremen”, *Labor History*, vol.28 no.2, 1987, pp. 167–195.
 - 27 Herbert Mills, “The Good Old Days”; also see Harvey Swados, *A Radical’s America*, The World Publishing Co., 1962, pp. 44–64.
 - 28 The reasons for this decline are numerous, including post-war suburbanization (alongside the general diffusion of industry), but the 1960 Mechanization and Modernization Agreement was crucial: see Herb Mills, “The Good Old Days”; Paul T. Hartman, *Collective Bargaining and Productivity: the Longshore Mechanization Agreement*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1969. Mechanisation and containerization helped shift most longshore operations to Oakland, thus leaving the docks to expanded commercialism Fisherman’s Wharf style.
 - 29 The maker of the valuable documentary *Trips Festival 1966: The Movie*, The Trips Festival, LLC, 2007, is Erik Christensen. He acknowledges attending the Festival for free because of his longshore connections: his mother was Harry Bridges’ secretary and his father, so he claims, had helped found the Scandinavian Seaman’s Union. Interestingly, many of those involved in the 1934 strike were of Scandinavian origin. The *Trips Festival* itself was, to say the least, far removed from radical labour politics. Place does, however, matter and the aforementioned documentary stresses the importance of the Hall, mentioning that it was built in 1958 as “the hiring hall...for the most progressive union in the country”.
 - 30 Anthony W. Lee, *Painting on the Left: Diego Rivera, Radical Politics and San Francisco’s Murals*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1999.
 - 31 Anthony W. Lee, *Painting on the Left*, p. 138. Officially, these muralists were employed by the short-lived Public Works of Art Project that was not financed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA.) The more renowned Federal Art Project (FAP) was a WPA project that employed artists like Pollock, Rothko and (briefly) de Kooning, as well as Rivera in 1940.
 - 32 *Ibid.* pp. 145–6.
 - 33 *San Francisco in the 1930s: The WPA Guide to the City by the*

- Bay*, introduction by David Kipen, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2011.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 73.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 120.
- 36 *Ibid.*, p. 126.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 47.
- 38 Mark Dean Johnson (ed.), *At Work: The Art of Californian Labor*, California Historical Society press, Berkeley, 2003, p. 40.
- 39 *Ibid.*, p. 28.
- 40 F. Wirt, *Power in the City: Decision-making in San Francisco*, University of California press, Berkeley, 1974, p. 176.
- 41 For a very good survey and analysis of progressive city politics in more recent times, see Richard Edward DeLeon, *Left Coast City: Progressive Politics in San Francisco 1975–91*, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, 1992.
- 42 Al Richmond, editor of the CPUSA newspaper *People’s World*, interview with author, August 1979.
- 43 Al Richmond, interview with author; Al Richmond, *A Long View from the Left*, Delta, New York, 1972, p. 333.
- 44 Al Richmond, interview with author; Peggy Dennis, *The Autobiography of an American Communist: A Personal View of a Political Life, 1925–1975*, Lawrence Hill & Co., Westport/Berkeley, 1977, p. 203; Joseph Starobin, *American Communism in Crisis*, University of California Press, 1975, particularly pp. 214–5. Nonetheless, both Jessica Mitford and Al Richmond recall a number of comrades going underground to avoid arrest: Jessica Mitford, *A Fine Old Conflict*, Vintage, New York, 1978, pp. 135 ff.; Al Richmond, *A Long View From the Left*, p. 299.
- 45 Jo Freeman, “What Happened in Berkeley...”; also see Jo Freeman, *At Berkeley in the Sixties: The education of an Activist, 1961–65*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2004, pp. 12–14.
- 46 Jessica Mitford, *A Fine Old Conflict*, p. 128ff; also Peggy Richmond, interview with author.
- 47 Al Richmond, *A Long View from the Left*, p. 312–13.
- 48 *Ibid.*, p. 314.
- 49 Peggy Dennis, interview with author, February 1979.
- 50 Kenneth Rexroth, “San Francisco’s Mature Bohemians”, p. 159; Jessica Mitford, *A Fine Old Conflict*, pp. 197–217.

- 51 See Frank J. Donner, *The Un-Americans*, Ballantine, New York, 1962, pp. 56–7.
- 52 Joseph Starobin, *American Communism in Crisis*, p. 223.
- 53 Al Richmond, interview with author. As one example, a large Communist contingent in the building and culinary trades had been all but wiped out.
- 54 The most notable recent exception being Du Bois Club member and Free Speech movement activist Bettina Aptheker, *Intimate Politics*, particularly pp. 99–100.
- 55 Joseph Starobin, *American Communism in Crisis*, p. 25; Al Richmond, *Ten Years: The Story of a People's Newspaper*, Daily People's World, San Francisco, 1948.
- 56 Aptheker, *Intimate Politics*, p.100. While Aptheker refers to this accurately as “fiction”, perhaps it did, nonetheless, help enable a relative autonomy.
- 57 Al Richmond, interview with author. Scheer wanted local CPUSA organizer Michael Myerson but he was unavailable. According to Richmond, Scheer insisted the Party find someone else and Bloice was chosen.
- 58 An exception, at least in relation to Bloice, is Peter Richardson, *A Bomb in Every Issue: How the Short, Unruly Life of **Ramparts** magazine Changed America*, The New Press, New York, 2009, p. 61. See also Maurice Isserman, *If I Had a Hammer ... the Death of the Old Left and Birth of the New Left*, Basic Books, New York, 1987. Isserman is very good on the pre-history of the new left but, like most, tends to exaggerate the degree to which it was new and the old left was thus irrelevant in the Sixties. Free Speech Movement activist Jack Weinberg has observed that accounts of that Movement tend to ignore or underestimate the significant role played by old left organisations: Weinberg, cited by Robert Cohen, “The Many Meanings of the FSM”, in R. Cohen & R.E. Zelnick (eds.), *The Free Speech Movement: Reflections on Berkeley in the Sixties*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2002, p. 42.
- 59 Note that Sims' role is ignored in Mark Kitchell's fascinating documentary *Berkeley in the Sixties* (Kitchell Films, 1990) and also in W.J. Rorabaugh's *Berkeley at War: The 1960s*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1989. She is also bypassed in most of the major histories of the civil rights movement, including those that focus on the north. Jo Freeman, in her important memoir, is one of the few to give Sims' admittedly short role proper acknowledgement: *At Berkeley in the Sixties*, p. 100. Michael Myerson has described 18 year old Sims as being “unequaled as

a mass leader in the Bay Area until Huey Newton began the Black Panther Party”: M. Myerson, *These Are the Good Old Days: Coming of Age as a Radical in America’s Late, Late Years*, Grossman, New York, 1970, p. 115. On the Du Bois Club, see George Thayer, *The Farther Shore of Politics: The American Political Fringe Today*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1968, p. 422ff. Interestingly, Thayer referred to the Club as “new left” but, whatever its official status, it was fairly firmly “old left” even as it sought associations with new left organisations.

- 60 Albert Parry, *Garrets and Pretenders*, Dover, New York, 1960 [1933], p. 213.
- 61 G. William Domhoff, *The Bohemian Grove and Other Retreats*, Harper & Row, New York, 1974, pp. 1–59. Domhoff describes in vivid, somewhat disturbing, detail the peculiar rituals that the mostly male members of America’s illustrious power elite would partake in.
- 62 Richard Miller, *Bohemia: The Protoculture Then and Now*, Nelson-Hall, 1977, p. 219; also see Oscar Lewis, *Bay Window Bohemia*, Doubleday, New York, 1956 and Clarence E. Edwards, *Bohemian San Francisco*, Paul Elder and Co. San Francisco, 1914.
- 63 Richard Candida Smith, *Utopia and Dissent: Art, Poetry and Politics in California*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1995, p. 57.
- 64 Eleanor Mckinney, “The Early Days of KPFA” and Vera Hopkins, “Pacifica Historian Looks Back”, *KPFA Folio*, April 1979.
- 65 Neil Cherkovski, *Ferlinghetti: A Biography*, Doubleday and Co., New York, 1979, p. 127; Bruce Cook, *The Beat Generation*, Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York, 1971, p. 6. For a fine study of the Renaissance, see Michael Davidson, *The San Francisco Renaissance: Poetics and Community at Mid-Century* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989).
- 66 Kenneth Rexroth in David Meltzer, *San Francisco Beat: Talking With the Poets*, City Lights Books, San Francisco, 2005, pp. 230–4; Richard Candida Smith, *Utopia and Dissent...*, pp. 32ff. Candida Smith assumes that a turn towards the IWW necessarily involved a rejection of Communism. It did with Rexroth but we have already seen that one branch of the party in the 1920s was heavily influenced by the IWW. And the ILWU slogan, given to them by Harry Bridges, “An Injury to One is an Injury to All” was borrowed from the IWW. This is not, of course, to enter the debate about whether Bridges was officially a member of the CPUSA. It is, in the end, irrelevant. And Bridges made no apologies for

working closely with Party members on union affairs.

- 67 John Clellon Holmes, "The Philosophy of the Beat Generation", in Seymour Krim (ed.), *The Beats*, Greenwich Publications, New York, 1960, p. 24. Holmes, of course was a novelistic chronicler of the Beats in his novel *Go*, published in Britain as *The Beat Boys* (with suitably lurid cover), Ace Books, London, 1959 [1952].
- 68 Lawrence Ferlinghetti in D. Meltzer (ed.), *San Francisco Beat*, p. 68.
- 69 Jack Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums*, New American Library, New York, 1959 [1958] – Kerouac, Ginsberg and Philip Whalen shared a house in Berkeley in 1955–6; Kenneth Rexroth, "San Francisco Letter" (1957) in E. Mottram (ed.), *A Rexroth Reader*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1972, p. 260. This letter was the opening piece of a special issue of *Evergreen Review* devoted to the Beats: vol. 1, no. 2, 1957, p. 5–14. Somewhat more recently it has been re-published in John Miller (ed.), *San Francisco Stories: Great Writers of the City*, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 1990, pp. 179–186.
- 70 Kenneth Rexroth, *An Autobiographical Novel*, Doubleday and Co., New York, 1966, p. 182
- 71 Dore Ashton, "An Eastern View of the San Francisco School", *Evergreen Review*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1957, pp. 148–158; Richard Candida Smith, *Utopia and Dissent...*, pp. 90–137. Interestingly, the work of the abstract expressionists had been exhibited in museums in San Francisco and a few other American cities prior to the Museum of Modern Art's recognition in a 1947 show.
- 72 Dore Ashton "An Eastern View of the San Francisco School", p. 158. Stylistically, abstract expressionism developed differently in San Francisco with action-painting, gestural extravagance if you like, a significant absence: see Candida Smith, *Utopia & Dissent...*, p. 97.
- 73 Candida Smith, *Utopia and Dissent...*, p. 107.
- 74 Rexroth, in D. Meltzer (ed.), *San Francisco Beat...* pp. 240=1.
- 75 *Ibid.*, p. 242. Rexroth did acknowledge that "an awful lot of trash" could be experienced in San Francisco but mostly, he argued, the jazz and the poetry combination worked reasonably well.
- 76 Michael Schumacher, *Dharma Lion: A Critical Biography of Allen Ginsberg*, St. Martin's press, New York, 1992, p. 125
- 77 Schumacher, for instance points to the influence of Parker and Davis, as well as John Coltrane and Lester Young: *Ibid.*, p. 207
- 78 see Jonah Raskin's excellent book *American Scream: Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" and the Making of the Beat Generation*,

University of California Press, Berkeley, 2004. Raskin grounds "Howl" and its reading at the Six Gallery in the history of San Francisco radicalism and does see it also as a precursor of Sixties radicalism in the region.

- 79 Raskin, *American Scream*, p. 15.
- 80 Philip Lamantia in David Meltzer (ed.), *San Francisco Beat*, pp. 146–7.
- 81 Rexroth, "San Francisco Letter", in E. Mottram (ed.), *A Rexroth Reader*, p. 259.
- 82 Rexroth, "San Francisco's Mature Bohemians", p. 159.
- 83 For a very good history history of sexual radicalism in San Francisco see Josh Sides, *Erotic City: Sexual Revolutions and the Making of Modern San Francisco*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2009.
- 84 Cherkovski, *Ferlinghetti...*, p. 109.
- 85 Rexroth, "San Francisco's Mature Bohemians", pp. 159–60; Rexroth in D. Meltzer (ed.), *San Francisco Beat*, pp. 230–1. Rexroth even claimed, "the reason the Haight-Ashbury developed was that it was red San Francisco. It was full of retired longshore organizers whose kids now smoke pot and sing Pete Seeger...and blacks ... it's a genuinely integrated neighborhood." (p. 257). The full story, of course, is more complex than that.
- 86 An interesting insight into the academic-Beat relationship is to be found in Dianne Trilling, "The Other Night at Columbia: A Report from the Academy". *Partisan Review*, Spring 1959, pp. 214–30; also see Morris Dickstein, *Gates of Eden: American Culture in the Sixties*, Basic Books, New York, 1977, pp. 3–4. Ferocious attacks upon the beats and their art can be found in, amongst others, Norman Podhoretz, "The Know-Nothing Bohemians", *Partisan Review*, Spring 1958, pp. 305–18 and John Hollander's review of Ginsberg's *'Howl' and Other Poems* ("a dreadful little volume"), *Partisan Review*, Spring 1957, pp. 296–8.
- 87 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1982, p. 382.