



# Counterculture

**Take a giant step outside your mind.**

Taj Mahal

**Does anybody really know what time it is?**

**Does anybody really care?**

Chicago

Living your lifestyle, doing your own thing, was a significant theme of the movement as it blended with the counterculture during the second wave, the four or five years after Chicago. Some became involved in politics, working for causes that attacked the establishment and transferred power to the people: *empowerment*. Others felt politics died with Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy and they became consumed with personal pursuits that freed them from their past: *liberation*. All the while, most experienced an individual transformation that made them "Sixties People," different from the cold war generation. "Remember," Tuli Kupferberg told the emerging new culture: "The *first* revolution (but not of course the last) is in yr own head. Dump out *their* irrational goals, desires, morality."

The counterculture must be defined broadly. The movement developed as a counter to the political establishment: the counterculture was a counter to the dominant cold war culture. After the rip tide the press reported, somewhat ironically, that there were 200,000 "full time hippies" and another 300,000 who shared the practices and beliefs, that some 20,000 were dropping out each year, and that "the number is accelerating geometrically." By the end of the decade hippies had established thousands of communes, hip communities in almost every major city, and they were hitch-hiking around the country and throughout the world—from Marrakech to Kabul to Kathmandu. By the early years of the next

decade perhaps 3 million people felt part of the counterculture, yet they always were a minority within another minority—the movement. While it must be remembered that within the sixties generation were more conservative kids who were eager apprentices for the system, it was the hippies who confronted and disturbed the establishment, regardless of their numbers. “No one knows for sure just how large this massive generational upheaval really was,” wrote a researcher. “We can only be sure that it took place on a scale unprecedented in our history.”

During the second wave the counterculture became a phenomenon that affected many young Americans, and as baby boomers flooded campuses the division between activists and hippies faded like tie-dye. The underground was surfacing, gently infiltrating the movement. What started with blue jeans and work shirts during Freedom Summer had become bell bottoms and peasant dresses by Woodstock. Hip was a sign of the times, a symbol that the sixties generation had shifted from surfing and bundling on the beach to protesting and smoking dope, from “Love me do” to “Why don’t we do it in the road.” After the March on the Pentagon, participant Keith Lampe wrote, “Just two weeks ago we were talking about ‘hippies’ of ‘the psychedelic movement’ on the one hand, and ‘straight peace activists’ or ‘resisters’ as something quite distinct. Now the two are tightly communal aspects of the same thing—and who can hang a name on it? It’s like wind, or water. Superbly leaderless. The bull horns at the Pentagon were passed around almost as freely as the joints and sandwiches and water jugs.”<sup>1</sup>

Many commentators have discussed the origins of the counterculture. Most have mentioned that throughout American history there have been those who do not fit into the mainstream, misfits. In earlier times they might have been roamers, drifters, mountain men, or utopians at communities such as Oneida, New Harmony, or various Shaker or Hutterite settlements. As America urbanized they clustered in cities—bohemians after the First World War, student radicals during the Depression, beatniks during the cold war. Since future hippies were being raised during the postwar era, some were influenced by contemporary intellectuals and poets. Paul Goodman discussed *Growing Up Absurd*, William Whyte challenged students to “fight The Organization,” and beat poets ridiculed society and urged readers to get “On the Road.” “We gotta go and never stop going till we get there,” said one of Jack Kerouac’s characters, and in *Desolation Angels* the author spoke of “a ‘rucksack revolution’ with all over America ‘millions of Dharma bums’ going up to the hills to meditate and ignore society.” Some writers emphasized that the counterculture was a response to technology, that during the atomic age America had become a “civilization sunk in an unshakeable commitment to genocide, gambling madly with the universal extermination of our species.” Others

viewed the growth of hippiedom as a result of a massive sixties generation that came of age. More kids meant more dissension from social norms. Throw in the Beatles, and presto: The Summer of Love.

Most of these writers were social scientists or journalists who traveled to Haight-Ashbury or the East Village, talked to a few weird kids, and then published dozens of academic essays and some 150 articles during the five years after the Summer of Love. Social scientists attempted to stuff hippies into paradigms, dichotomies, or theories, and divide them into categories (visionaries, heads, plastic hippies, communards), while conservatives railed that hippies were the result of “too permissive” child-rearing. Historians read those reports and then explained the hippies to the next generation of students.

It is not surprising that the resulting interpretation has been superficial—sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll. The second wave was such an emotional era that few could rise above silly arguments: Were the hippies good or bad? It never was that simple; just the opposite, for the counterculture came in many shapes and colors, which resulted in many inconsistencies. Three researchers examining the Jesus People wrote that they discovered “some things to praise and some to criticize, but the balance shifts, sometimes drastically, from element to element within the movement.” It seemed easier for many to denigrate the counterculture than to explore it, resulting in many older commentators seeing what they were looking for. As a member of an Oregon commune stated: “Any family, any commune, is like a Rorschach test. What you see when you come here says more about who you are than what it is. Visitors . . . completely miss what’s really going on because they don’t see what these things mean to us.”<sup>2</sup>

What was going on? *Why* did the counterculture flourish during the second wave? *What* were its values and social thought? *What* types of alternative societies did they attempt to build?

“Hippie,” of course, often meant different things to the older and younger generations. Parents usually stated that hippies included everyone revolting against something, or simply revolting to them, and mainstream journalists simply labeled them “dirty, costumed protesters” who had long hair, smelled, and smoked dope. Marijuana was the “staple of hippiedom,” declared *Time*, “L.S.D. its caviar,” and Nicholas von Hoffman added, “if the word means anything, it means a hippie is a dope dealer.” At the end of the decade a journalist summed up the older generations’ level of knowledge of the counterculture when he gave his peers advice on how to spot a hippie: “Well, hippies look like hippies.”

Americans like packages, labels. “Hippie” had been defined, so suburbanites turned away in disgust instead of trying to understand the rebellion. Actually, hippies considered themselves part of an alternative culture

or underground, and they called each other many names, as a flyer proclaimed:

The Paisley Power Caucus of the Peace and Freedom Party will hopefully prove congenial for hippies, Provos, anarchists, beatniks, Diggers, musicians, Zen monks, dealers, utopians, Wobblies, calligraphers, felons, Boo Hoos, and the many UNCLASSIFIABLE individuals who generally share our perspective.

Usage of these terms changed over time and varied with location. Some who felt part of the counterculture called themselves "seekers" or because they used dope, "heads." During the second wave many used "hippie" or another popular term, "freak," a "far out person" who was too odd, too abnormal to be part of the normal society. "Here come the 'freaks,'" declared the Ohio State paper when two were elected president and vice president of student government. The new president wore a red and white striped shirt with blue sleeves covered with white stars and proclaimed they were "freaks, not radicals," while his supporters blew bubbles and hummed "Hail to the Chief."

Freaks cannot be discarded as simply "sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll," because like the broader movement the counterculture included everyone, excluded no one. There were no hippie organizations, no membership cards, no meetings, no age limits, no perquisites. Being a hippie often was an individualistic journey. One did not *have to* drop out for a semester, a year, or a decade to "qualify" as a hippie, or *have to* take drugs, participate in sex orgies, live in a commune, listen to rock, grow long hair. No minimum requirements. No *have to*. While some hippies might not be able to articulate their thoughts or define their existence, most would agree that being part of the counterculture was a frame of mind, like being part of the movement. "Some of the most longhaired people I know are bald," laughed Jerry Rubin, and when a professor at the University of Utah criticized the counterculture, a student responded: "The hippie movement is not a beard, it is not a weird, colorful costume, it is not marijuana. The hippie movement . . . is a philosophy, a way of life, and a hippie is one who believes in this." Some dropped out and became as apolitical as possible, others participated in what they considered was a cultural revolution, but most rejected the values of the predominant culture and then developed and practiced different lifestyles. While this seemed difficult for the older generation to comprehend, it was readily understood by freaks all over the nation.

Moreover, hippies did not need older experts to explain the counterculture—they wrote about it constantly. Careful observers and later historians would have realized that by the end of the decade, as one thoughtful scholar noted: "The lesson to be learned from the turbulent youthquake

is not that long hair or body odor or disrespect for traditional values are undermining the stability of America. The lesson for America is that *something is terribly wrong* with the systems that create such youthful unrest. And who are the most outspoken critics of these systems? Pick up an underground newspaper in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Jackson, Mississippi, Middle Earth, Iowa, New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles."<sup>3</sup>

The most appropriate sources on the counterculture are the articles and books the freaks wrote in underground newspapers and published with obscure presses. Read what they were writing, and listen to their music. Hippies did not put themselves in neat categories, for they dropped in and out of the fluid counterculture whenever they felt like it. Youth did not have to read Paul Goodman to discover that life was absurd, or David Riesman to learn that society was a lonely crowd, or Marcuse or Mills to know that there was injustice and war. All they had to do was to live through the sixties, consider the behavior of the establishment, and tune in to the couriers of the counterculture—the undergrounds and the music.

Underground papers flourished during the second wave. "There is a credibility gap between the press and the people," declared a former journalist for the United Press International and the *New York Times*, John Wilcock, "because the newspaper owners are plain and simple liars. . . . As a result, the Hippies just don't read the national papers." Wilcock began publishing *Other Scenes* while thousands of freaks and activists developed three national underground wire services and over 600 papers which eventually had a circulation of about 5 million. High school kids printed up some 3000 randomly printed tracts, while older siblings created a library of posters, leaflets, and newsletters. Armed with their undergrounds, the counterculture infiltrated the culture, and soon freaks could find each other and spread the word throughout the nation, "from the Heart of Old Dixie," Jackson, Mississippi (*The Kudzu*) to inside the Army security at Fort Knox (*FTA*). The message was Us versus Them, and the publishers knew what side they wanted to be on. Most never pretended to be accurate or to publish "All the News That's Fit to Print." Underground reporters were gonzo journalists; that is, they participated in the event and then wrote the article from their perspective. A sign in the *Berkeley Barb* office read, "Put down prejudice—unless it's on our side."

"Rock music," wrote a hippie in *Space City!*, "is responsible more than any other single factor in spreading the good news." Folksingers, of course, had bridged the musical canyon between the first decade of Elvis and the second one of the Beatles. Folk introduced many themes of the sixties, and then other musicians plugged in their guitars and blitzed the airways. While scholars argued whether the kids were really listening to the lyrics, the counterculture bought records and sang along. "Sound, like

sex and the magic weed, is a turn-on," wrote a head, for not only did it forge a hip community but it challenged the establishment and liberated freaks from the older generation. "For our generation music is the most vital force in most of our lives," wrote Detroit cultural activist John Sinclair. "Its most beautiful aspect is that it gets to millions of people every day, telling them that they can dance and sing and holler and scream and FEEL GOOD even when they have to listen to all those jive commercials and death news reports."<sup>4</sup> To avoid the commercials and war reports—and to spread the word—freaks established and tuned into a few hip FM stereo stations. KMPX and KSAN in the Bay Area, WBAI or "radio unnameable" in New York, and Up Against the Wall FM in Madison were some of the first, and soon other listener-sponsored stations went on the air in many other cities, including Los Angeles, Houston, and Washington, D.C. All playing the music and all giving clues to the counterculture.

Why did a such a small part of the sixties generation during the Summer of Love—less than 100,000 kids—bloom into a garden of millions of flower people during the second wave? The behavior of the establishment stimulated the growth of the anti-establishment. The cool generation of mid-decade became the alienated generation during and after the rip tide.

It began as baby boomers entered "duck and cover" elementary schools, matriculated into crewcut high schools, and graduated into college, "the best years of your life," promised their parents. Instead, "Welcome to lines, bureaucracy and crowds," the *Daily Californian* editorialized as students were herded from advisers to classrooms down the maze toward matriculation. Welcome to rules and regulations. True, the situation at some universities improved, but for most students campus life resembled an article published by Jerry Farber and reprinted endlessly in undergrounds, "The Student as Nigger." Professors would not stand up for students, or to deans and politicians, because they were "short on balls." Instead, teachers terrorized students. "The grade is a hell of a weapon." A student smiles and shuffles for the professor, learning the most important rule of college: "Tell the man what he wants to hear or he'll fail your ass out of the course." Change was slow at many universities. Students, tuition-payers, demanded the end of puerile rules, and often confronted endless delays. Before the Columbia uprising, officials there were more concerned if a coed was sharing an apartment with her boyfriend and breaking rules than if the regulation was an invasion of her privacy. When articulate student journalists asked too many questions, or when they did not show proper respect, administrators fired or suspended them. Examples abound: *Florida Alligator* for writing editorials critical of state politicians; *Queens College Phoenix* for analyzing the power structure in the administration; Johns Hopkins's *Newsletter* for writing a parody ballot

for Man of the Year that included three serial killers with Lyndon Johnson; the University of Texas at El Paso's *El Burro* for a fictitious interview between John Lennon and Jesus. When two students at Monmouth College wrote that a regent was a "political hack," they were suspended from college, and when they returned, arrested for trespassing.<sup>5</sup> Students felt powerless, and many dropped out in their own way. For 120 student government positions at the University of Minnesota not even a hundred ran for election in a university with 45,000 enrolled. Others moved off campus and established undergrounds without censors, or as hip writers for the *Austin Rag* proclaimed: "I'm not a student here, so you can go to hell." Buttons appeared:

I AM A HUMAN BEING  
DO NOT FOLD, SPINDLE OR MUTILATE

There were other sayings that appeared on buttons, bumper stickers, and T-shirts that gave clues to the counterculture:

MAKE LOVE NOT WAR

The older generation was fighting a war, one that many younger citizens felt was illegal, inhumane, and immoral. For draft-age youth, the war forced a response. A young man could either go along with the establishment and join the military, fight the machine by protesting and resisting the draft, or drop out. The first two had not stopped the war, and after Nixon's election it was clear that the conflict would continue for years. What to do? Country Joe McDonald answered, "You take drugs, you turn up the music very loud, you dance around, you build yourself a fantasy world where everything's beautiful."

Most kids blamed the war on the older generation. "What's happening," wrote an activist, "is that a whole generation is starting to say to its parents, 'You can no longer get us to kill & be killed for your uptight archaic beliefs.'" Many returning soldiers agreed. Unlike fathers coming home after World War II, Vietnam veterans rarely talked of heroism, duty, honor. Instead, the "endless war" became an endless barrage of horror stories and disillusionment. "I just lost respect for everything after Vietnam," Lieut. Al Wilder commented. "Everything I learned as a kid turned out to be a damn lie." The agonizing onslaught of war tales and images repulsed more and more of the sixties generation. "From Vietnam," wrote Raymond Mungo, "I learned to despise my countrymen, my government, and the entire English-speaking world, with its history of genocide and international conquest. I was a normal kid."

Other kids were distressed by a nation that continued to discriminate

against some of its own citizens. One son asked his parents: "What would you do if a Negro moved in next door?" and they'd say, 'Nothing! We don't mind.' And I'd say, 'What would you do if I wanted to marry a Negro?' and that was completely different. 'No. You can't marry a Negro. No, no. You can't do that.' And I couldn't understand why, because I'd been raised to believe Negroes were just like anyone else. Two and two just never made four."<sup>6</sup>

Young blacks and whites, of course, had been mingling throughout the decade. On civil rights marches and during Mississippi Freedom Summer many participants reported feelings of personal liberation mixed with community, and later interracial contacts increased on campuses, in liberal cities, and in Southeast Asia. "Vietnam aligned us with blacks after years of encountering them only through music," recalled Toby Thompson. "Our parents may have orchestrated Vietnam, but we played it, taking a curious dividend from that horror. We shook hands with black language, marijuana, G.I. hip. . . . The war to erase communism created a fresh sense of community." Naturally, there was some friction between hippies and "spades," as they first were called in Haight-Ashbury. The hippies had been ingrained with the values of the white suburbs and were attempting to lose those beliefs, while many blacks were working to escape poverty and to join the middle class. Nevertheless, black culture influenced many young whites, through not only jazz and soul music but Martin Luther King's emphasis on nonviolence and love, two important themes of the counterculture. Sexual rules and double standards were not as strict in the black community, which appealed to hippies. Young whites also began adopting some black lingo that came from the blues and jazz scene: "man," "get with it," "dig it," while often referring to young females as "chicks" and a girlfriend as one's "old lady."

Interracial dating became more commonplace and hip, for civil rights workers and freaks both advocated a culture that discriminated against no one—a community of brothers and sisters. A sign in the front of the Free Store in Haight-Ashbury read: "When you enter this door, you are a Digger." Everyone. The Youngbloods sang:

Come on people now  
Smile on your brother  
Everybody get together  
Try to love one another right now

Thus, the behavior of the culture boosted the counterculture. Without racism, war, and campus paternalism, the population of hippiedom would have been proportionately about the same size as that of the beats in the postwar society. There would have been more hippies, of course,

because of the enormous number of baby boomers, but the counterculture would have been relatively small, confined to the usual bohemian enclaves of the East and West coasts and a few college towns.

In fact, hippies were a strange sight in most cities before the second wave. "To come to Chicago from New York," wrote an activist after the Democratic convention, "is to come into a town where people still stare at you if you are long-haired." And most citizens treated them with scorn. When hipsters first appeared in liberal cities like Seattle or Minneapolis many businesses were so shocked that they refused service. At a restaurant near the University of Washington a waitress declared, "We don't need or want your business," and called the police. An officer arrived immediately and proclaimed, "If they were niggers, they could get away with it!" But not hippies, who were taken down to the station for no reason.<sup>7</sup> In the South, few hippies would leave liberal enclaves such as Atlanta or New Orleans, and in the Southwest rednecks in Austin shouted obscenities while the Okies in Muskogee boasted that they used hippies for target practice.

Yet the counterculture expanded. National problems persisted, ran amok during the Nixon era, and that confirmed the hippie idea that the country was becoming a wasteland. By the end of the decade, surveys found that most citizens agreed with the statement, "Something is wrong with America."

To many youth, the great American institutions seemed to be failing, and that contradicted their upbringing. The military of the "greatest power on earth," a country that had "never lost a war," could not beat peasants in a tiny nation in Southeast Asia. The "experts" had supported this war. So had the political "leaders" in Washington and many "intellectuals" in New York. "The Right War at the Right Time." Students quickly realized that the draft was unfair. Harvard student James Fallows lost enough weight so his 6'1" frame was below minimum requirements, 120 pounds, while unaware working-class kids passed the physical and were shipped out for 'Nam. After graduation, many students felt that the future held out a job in a sterile corporation, perhaps one that made napalm or polluted the environment. And for solace, the younger generation could turn to their ministers—the older generation who preached love your neighbor in segregated churches and who flinched at the sight of young worshipers not dressed in their "Sunday best."

Furthermore, during the age of euphemism there seemed an overload of inconsistencies, ironies, and contradictions. The nation made a hero of rocket scientist Wernher Von Braun, a former Nazi and enemy, while putting young college graduates in jail for years because they resisted military service that would send them to kill Vietnamese. Young Americans were old enough, 18, to fight a war that they did not create, but not old

enough, 21 then, to drink a beer or vote for their commander-in-chief. Doctors wrote 150 million prescriptions a year for tranquilizers and amphetamines, and parents who consumed caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine condemned youth for "using drugs."

Hippies turned the tables. It was not the younger generation that "blew it," but the older who behaved abnormally, who had lost touch with reality. Kids wondered, who was sane? As they watched popular films on campuses asking that question—*King of Hearts*, *A Thousand Clowns*—the establishment provided them with food for thought. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that language was not obscene as long as it had "redeeming social value." A senator introduced a bill to "outlaw the Mafia." The federal Bureau of Reclamation announced plans to build dams on the Colorado River and flood the Grand Canyon. The federal government subsidized growing tobacco and at the same time paid for advertisements proclaiming that cigarettes were harmful to health and told college students that if they smoked marijuana they would "graduate to heroin." While some officials complained that a stamp picturing Henry David Thoreau made the author look too much like a hippie, President Nixon awarded Elvis Presley with a citation for the singer's contribution in the fight against drugs. The mayor of Cambridge banned the street sale of *Avatar*, claiming that the underground was not a newspaper but a "commodity." A 150 armed officers in Lawrence raided a hippie house near the University of Kansas, arresting 30 laid-back kids, while 200 cops stormed the sleeping campus of SUNY at Stony Brook, woke hundreds in dorm beds, and arrested 33 for possessing "evidence" such as tobacco pipes and psychedelic posters. The governor of New Mexico advocated expelling all freaks, and his counterpart in Tennessee was more blunt, declaring, "It's war. We want every long-hair in jail or out of the state." The forces of law and order left many to agree with David Harris: "If this is the law, then I want to be an outlaw." What happened to the Land of the Free? "I don't get it," wrote a freak in *Rat* after Senator Edward Kennedy drove off a bridge, killing his young female staff worker: "Kennedy has an accident that cuts a chick's life off and it was called a misdemeanor. You smoke tea and it's a fuckin' felony?"<sup>8</sup>

By the end of the sixties, then, the smiling baby boomers who had entered college at mid-decade and attended classes during the days of decision, had graduated into a sea of frustration. "We do not feel like a cool, swinging generation," declared a Radcliffe graduate, "we are eaten up inside by an intensity that we cannot name."

The name was alienation. "America," James Kunen jotted down, "Listen to it. *America*. I love the sound. I love what it could mean. I hate what it is."

Opinion polls revealed a startling growth of alienation among college students during the first Nixon administration. Researchers found that a third felt marriage was obsolete and that having children was not very important, and that the number of those responding that religion, patriotism, and "living a clean, moral life" were "important values" plummeted 20 percentage points. Half held no living American in high regard, and over 40 percent felt America was a "sick society," did not think that they shared the views of most citizens, and even considered moving to another country. During the entire American experience it would be difficult to find a more alienated people than the sixties generation during the second wave.

The counterculture believed that the nation had become a Stepwolf, a berserk monster, a cruel society that made war on peasants abroad and at home beat up on minorities, dissidents, students, and hippies. America the Beautiful was no more; it had been replaced by Amerika the Death Culture. It was no coincidence that many youth no longer stood at sporting events as bands played the national anthem, or that one of their favorite groups took the name the Grateful Dead, or that more kids were using drugs. "What is increasingly clear," wrote one participant, "is that drugs are not a dangerous short-cut to ecstasy so much as they are a device used for coping with modern society. Drugs are . . . a desperate, futile flailing at a society that increasingly rejects humanitarian values." Many agreed with Timothy Leary: "Your only hope is dope."<sup>9</sup>

"There must be some way out of here," sang Jimi Hendrix. Alienation drove students toward the counterculture, for a hippie creed was that institutions and experts had failed. The emperor had been losing his clothes throughout the decade, and after Tet, Columbia, and Chicago, he was stark naked. Bumper stickers appeared on colorful VW minivans:

## QUESTION AUTHORITY

Social ironies are always present in any culture, of course, but those paradoxes had an abnormal impact on the massive sixties generation. These kids had been raised in the cold war culture, where there were concrete rules of "normal behavior" and "right and wrong." Authority. When a teenage daughter questioned if God existed, her father retorted, "As long as you live in this house you'll believe what I tell you to believe." Don't question, play the game. Parents demanded that their children "fit in" and "be normal."

Kids did fit in, but then later critics complained that they were apathetic, that they lacked idealism and moral commitment. Students began to march, to demonstrate, and again the older generation complained. As

Benita Eisler recalled, "when young people became the romantic revolutionaries our elders blamed us for not being, they were confronted by guns and tear gas."

Hypocrisy. There were double standards, for boys and girls, for children and parents, for individuals and government. The struggle had cracked the consensus, student power revealed the contradictions, and the war killed the moral authority of the elders. "It is not only that parents are no longer guides," wrote Margaret Mead, "but that there are no guides."

Young against Old, but it never was that simple, for a number of elders understood the reasons for the counterculture. Martin Luther King felt that hippies resulted from the tragic debasement of American life, the slaughter in Southeast Asia, "the negative effect of society's evils on sensitive young minds." A bookstore manager said of hippies: "I don't blame these people for looking at us and shaking their heads. I think we handed them a lot of tough problems and I'm not sure what I'd be doing if I was growing up right now." A truck driver added, "I get a big kick outa hearin' about 'em, the drugs and shacking up together and given' the big guys hell," and a woman added: "Let 'em go their own way. They're not killing anybody. Our government's the one that's doin' that!"<sup>10</sup>

Many in the establishment criticized the status quo, boosting alienation and the counterculture. Senator J. William Fulbright denounced what he called the president's "arrogance of power," and James Ridgeway demonstrated that many of the finest universities were accepting enormous funds to do research for the Pentagon and CIA in *The Closed Corporation: American Universities in Crisis*. Many authors linked population growth with energy shortages and ecological disaster. The Club of Rome warned about overpopulation in *Limits to Growth* and so did Paul Ehrlich in *The Population Bomb*. Barry Commoner declared in *Closing Circle*, "The present course of environmental degradation . . . is so serious that, if continued, it will destroy the capability of the environment to support a reasonably civilized human society." The future was in peril, as Paul and Anne Ehrlich proclaimed in *The End of Affluence*. In a series of articles eventually published as *The Defeat of America*, historian Henry Steele Commager lamented a government that distorted the truth: "Bombing is 'protective reaction,' precision bombing is 'surgical strikes,' concentration camps are 'pacification centers' or 'refugee camps.' . . . Bombs dropped outside the target area are 'incontinent ordnance,' and those dropped on a South Vietnam village are excused as 'friendly fire'; a bombed house becomes automatically a 'military structure' and a lowly sampan sunk on the waterfront a 'waterborne logistic craft.'"

Students and freaks read novels and commentaries published earlier that became mandatory reading for the sixties generation: the black humor

of Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* or Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle*; Robert Rimmer's cult classic that advocated group marriages, *The Harrad Experiment*; novels inventing utopian worlds such as B. F. Skinner's *Walden Two*, Aldous Huxley's *Island*, or Robert Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land*; and the science fiction of Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clark, C. S. Lewis, and J. R. R. Tolkien. Some young thinkers considered new age technology described by Buckminster Fuller and Marshall McLuhan, while others were interested in the cultural radicalism of Norman O. Brown or R. D. Laing. While some Americans protested, others pondered Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* or studied Erich Fromm's *The Art of Loving*. While U.S. troops fought a war in Asia, others became interested in Native American ideas traced in Carlos Castaneda's *The Teachings of Don Juan* or John Neihardt's editions of *Black Elk Speaks*, or in Eastern beliefs presented in the Chinese oracle *I Ching*, Alan Watts's *The Way of Zen*, Herman Hesse's *Siddhartha*, or Idries Shah's *The Way of the Sufi*. All of those were excellent sellers on campuses and in hip communities, and so were contemporary publications, such as the fables of Richard Brautigan and Richard Bach, or the social commentary of Philip Slater's *The Pursuit of Loneliness* and Charles A. Reich's *The Greening of America*. Regardless of the merits or demerits of these critiques, they boosted the hippie view of America—something was wrong, and a new culture was emerging.

By the second wave the sixties generation was clubbed into reality: The older generation was not practicing what it preached. Nor were some of the younger generation—the activists who had become revolutionaries, who clamored that there was no democracy in America and then shouted down other speakers while yelling Power to the People. As one demonstrator lamented, "the radicals always regard the people . . . as something to be manipulated, exploited, or ignored. 'Get out of the way, people,' they say, 'so we can have our revolution!' . . . Power trips are what we are trying to get away from." It wasn't that the emerging counterculture disagreed with the radical interpretation of America, it was that by the Nixon era that message was irrelevant. Fewer and fewer attended SDS meetings while more and more meandered to the smoke-in and lay in the grass. While the self-proclaimed vanguard was only a tiny percentage of the movement, it eventually provoked many to drop out. "Why did we start collectives?" asked members of the Canyon Collective. "Because we didn't dig being bossed around by bureaucrats whether on the job or in 'the movement.' We were tired of living and acting alone, and wanted to share more of our lives with each other."

"Some great wind was brewing as we breathed," Jacob Brackman wrote, "not a new generation, but a new notion of generation with new notions



of its imperatives. We would not default, succumb to the certainties of age . . . compromise maturely. . . . We would not be normal. For normality was now disease."

What was normal? What was reality? As fires blazed in the ghetto politicians declared another program, and then voted \$1 billion annually to attack the underlying causes of racism and riots and \$30 billion to attack Vietnamese peasants. The best and the brightest, the wise men, the leaders declared we were winning the war, and weekly they "proved" it by body counts and kill ratios. Walter Cronkite would broadcast those figures to the nation, ending the evening news with "And that's the way it is." Many hippies thought, if that's the way it is, then:

## DO YOUR OWN THING

What was their thing? As disillusionment soared after the assassination of Robert Kennedy, activist Marvin Garson wondered: "What's wrong with the New Left? What happened to all the magic in phrases like 'participatory democracy' and 'let the people decide?'" He answered his own question: "The heartbreaker has been that for some reason people don't WANT to go to meetings, don't WANT to participate."<sup>11</sup>

The stark realization that working in mainstream society would not change *the* world stimulated many activists to being looking inside to change *their* world. As Ten Years After sang:

I'd love to change the world,  
but I don't know what to do,  
so I'll leave it up to you.

During the second wave changing their world usually was done two different ways—some left the cities and began building their own communes and alternative societies, and others stayed in hip communities usually near campuses and became cultural activists.

Universities became filled with people who looked, acted, and talked like hippies. After the Columbia University upheaval, Carl Davidson of SDS suggested that three-fourths of the organization's national membership could be classified as hippies, and at Rutgers and Long Island universities professors noted interest waning from politics. "Now the talk has shifted to cultural revolution. Gentle grass is pushing up through the cement." Students who had been involved in protests began to look inward, and even occupying a campus building became part of a personal revolution. "The idea was to liberate yourself from the confining conventions of life, and to celebrate the irrational side of your nature, kind of let yourself

go," recalled a University of Chicago student. "This was the counterculture coming to us, and it stirred people up and made us feel like doing something dramatic."

To many, doing something dramatic meant doing something *different*, rejecting the values drilled into them as they grew up during cold war culture. "The point is that it was the culture that was sick," said Jentri Anders. "One way to change that is to live it differently . . . just drop out and live it the way you think it ought to be."

Live differently, outside of the mainstream, but of course freaks never could drop out completely. They drove the roads and had to adhere to highway laws, bought land and had to comply with local ordinances. They paid rent, bills, and had to buy food and other goods. Some worked and paid taxes, others used social services, and some got drafted.

Dropping out, then, usually meant dropping the values of the older generation—developing ones for the New America—and counterculture values were a reaction to mainstream ones. If straights said, "My country right or wrong," then freaks shook their heads and said Fuck the War. The Fugs sang "Kill for Peace," the Doors "Unknown Soldier," and Country Joe and the Fish made war sound like a carnival farce:

Come on, fathers, don't hesitate,  
Send your sons off before it's too late;  
You can be the first ones in your block  
To have your boy come home in a box.

All the while the movement chanted along, "All we are saying, is give peace a chance."

If World War II veterans proclaimed, "You have an obligation to serve your country," then freaks felt that they had an obligation to themselves. Arlo Guthrie derided selective service in "Alice's Restaurant Massacre," the story of a young man's draft physical. When the army psychiatrist asked what was his problem, the hippie answered: "Shrink, I wanna kill, kill, kill!" The doctor pinned a medal on him and proclaimed, "You're our boy."

When straights talked about "traditional values," freaks became the movement's cultural shock troops. During the first wave almost all activists had short hair and appeared and behaved rather clean-cut, but hippies delighted in upsetting the older generation with their dress, language, and especially hair. "I never could tell where my husband's sideburns ended and his mustache began," recalled a baby boomer, "but he didn't care as long as it irritated his mother."<sup>12</sup>

Language. What could be more vulgar, more filthy, most hippies thought, than racial hatred and the war. "What is obscene?" one wrote,



Is it obscene to fuck,  
or  
Is it obscene to kill? . . .

Is it more obscene to describe  
fucking,  
An act of love,  
or  
Is it more obscene to describe  
killing,  
An act of hate? . . .

Why is Free hate  
socially acceptable  
While Free Love  
is socially unacceptable?

Which is really obscene?

The shock troops attacked the institutions held dear by most Americans. They ridiculed the military as the “armed farces,” and skewered government in every underground. “Institutions—schools, hospitals, courts—not only do not do what they have been set up to do,” wrote a participant, “but the opposite. They have become the ghouls, vampires, werewolves of our culture, the Frankensteins of our way of life.” Hippies also blasted the church, an attack that had been initiated by many activist theologians such as James Groppi, Paul Moore, and the Berrigan brothers. The Reverend Malcolm Boyd spoke of a small but expanding group of committed men and women who were “forcing changes on the church from the middle and bottom,” and he labeled it the Underground Church.<sup>13</sup> Hippies joined the crusade. While Arlo Guthrie claimed that “the streets of heaven have all been sold,” actors in the rock musical *Jesus Christ Superstar* asked Christ, “Who are you, what have you sacrificed?”

The counterculture aimed to sacrifice the society’s “bigger and better,” “new and improved” thinking. What was progress? “At General Electric,” the ad went, “progress is our most important product.” Was new really improved, or was this progress simply the buy, buy ethic of the throw-away society, a way of life that hippies felt was wasteful and ravishing the environment? The question concerned not only hippies but a growing number of Americans who, like the musicians Spirit, were becoming concerned about the smelly breeze and dying trees. “It’s nature’s way of telling you something’s wrong.” The Guess Who demanded, “Don’t give me no hand me down world,” and Joni Mitchell lamented,

Don’t it always seem to go  
that you don’t know what you’ve got ’till it’s gone?  
They paved paradise and put up a parking lot.

Counterculture paradise usually did not include the vinyl and aerosol institutions, the 9 to 5 gray-flannel day, the continual race for the Almighty Dollar. Freaks wanted to escape the suburban trap, the split-level house, the two kids and a dog, and they wanted to avoid becoming a “Nowhere Man,” as the Beatles sang, who didn’t have a point of view, “who knows not where he’s going to.” And since straights desired to make money, freaks scorned materialism and consumption, a career of mass production: “Plastics,” said an older businessman in *The Graduate*—that was the key to the future. “All of us started to realize,” wrote a hippie, “that the game of life played in school and the Supermarket U. leads only to styrofoam coffins and oblivious servitude. . . . All are well trained towards indiscriminate consumption. Yet the feeling persists—there must be something greater than this!” And so hippies aimed to be “free from property hang-ups, free from success fixations, free from positions, titles, names, hierarchies, responsibilities, schedules, rules, routines, regular habits.” Free . . . Free . . . Free . . .

“I believe one of the major problems of our time is to teach people to do nothing,” Lou Gottlieb stated. “Americans are all karma yogis, people who literally can’t sit still. My mother, if she came upon a catatonic schizoid, would scream at him to get busy. I got that until it absolutely deformed my childhood. It was never enough just to sit still and scratch your balls, enjoying yourself.” Sit back and relax. Think. Go with the flow.

### *Let It Be*

Instead of the straight, normal life, Barry Melton recalled, “We were setting up a new world . . . that was going to run parallel to the old world but have as little to do with it as possible. We just weren’t going to deal with straight people.”<sup>14</sup>

Become a freak. Adopt different values. If the average guy took the straight and narrow road, the superhighway to suburbs, hippies sought a another path, dancing to a different drummer. Since mid-decade many had been exploring. Simon and Garfunkel “walked off to look for America,” and later The Who asked the generation: “Who are you, who who, who who? . . . They call me the seeker, I’ve been searching low and high.” Many became seekers, dropping out for a while, searching for themselves and for America. New spaces. New experiences. New

thoughts. "Thinking is the best way to travel," sang the Moody Blues while Chicago was searching for an answer "to the question, 'who am I?'" Goodbye past. Time to take a giant step, to trip through the *doors* of perception.

Many did, as the second wave became the "Age of Aquarius," a joyous, bright time, a new morning. "Here comes the sun," proclaimed the Beatles, and the musicians in *Hair* sang out, "Let the sun shine." "The hippies have passed beyond American society," wrote an underground journalist. "They're not really living in the same society. It's not so much that they're living on the leftovers, on the waste of American society, as that they just don't give a damn."

They did give a damn about their own culture, however, and they began to build one that expressed values that they felt were positive, healthy—building a peaceful, gentle society that discriminated against no one and that practiced love. "All you need is love," they sang. "Love is other, love is being and letting be, love is gentle, love is giving and love is dropping out, love is turning on, love is a trip, a flower, a smile, a bell." Other values were honesty, tolerance, personal freedom, and fun. Hugh Romney of the Hog Farm stated a hippie truism: "Do anything you want as long as nobody gets hurt."<sup>15</sup>

## IF IT FEELS GOOD, DO IT

A theme of cold war culture (and a later era) was "just say no." The creed was the Protestant Ethic: work. The motif of the sixties was "just say yes," and the canon was the Pleasure Ethic: fun. Live for the moment. Have a Happy Day.

Freaks said yes to many things that their parents had told them to reject—especially drugs and sex. Dope felt good: Dope was FUN. And "dope" was the usual name, as Tom Coffin explained in *Great Speckled Bird*:

Dope not Drugs—alcohol is a drug, pot is DOPE; nicotine is a DRUG, acid is DOPE; DRUGS turn you off, dull your senses, give you the strength to face another day in Death America, DOPE turns you on, heightens sensory awareness, sometimes twists them out of shape and you experience that too, gives you vision and clarity, necessary to create Life from Death. . . . The difference between Stupor and Ecstasy is the difference between Jack Daniels and Orange Sunshine, between the Pentagon and Woodstock, between *The New York Times* and *Good Times*. We all have to make our choices.

While the older generation labeled it "drugs" and put up billboards asking their children, "Why do they call it Dope?," the younger genera-

tion sang along with the Rolling Stones who wailed about the older generations' dependency on tranquilizers, "Mother's Little Helper."

Dope was the freak's little helper that aided their escape from the establishment. "If it hadn't been for grass I'd still be wearing a crewcut and saluting the flag." Escape was important. Frustrated people often relieve anxieties by eating, smoking, drinking, even shopping away their worries: "I Love to Shop!" But not hippies. "Smoke dope everywhere," proclaimed one. "Dope is Great, it's fun, it's healthy. . . . Get every creature so stoned they can't stand the plastic shit of American culture."

Dope, especially LSD, also helped them expand or alter their own consciousness. Timothy Leary recalled his first trip, the "most shattering experience of my life," for it "flipped my consciousness into a dance of energy, where nothing existed except whirring vibrations and each illusory form was simply a different frequency." Ram Dass added, "We've moved in the direction of a whole new model of the human brain. . . . You can travel anywhere, back into childhood, back through evolutionary history, cosmic history, down your own bloodstream or nervous system."

While the Byrds soared "Eight Miles High," others declared that their cosmic trips brought them closer to religion or as an observer wrote, "a spiritual agility and a gracefulness which leads them to believe that they have achieved an unusual unification of the mind, the soul and the senses."<sup>16</sup>

Thus, by taking dope hippies felt different, Heads versus Straights, another form of Us versus Them. "Grass opened up a new space for middle class white kids," recalled Jay Stevens, "an inner space as well as outer space. It became a ritual—sitting around with your friends, passing a joint from person to person, listening to music, eating, talking, joking, maybe making out—all the senses heightened." They felt community being part of the underground. A daughter wrote:

Dear Dad:

Dope . . . potacidspedmetheshitboojointtripped freakfiend. . . . Flip Out. It all runs together; indivisible, etc. etc. etc. from—if you can take it—the world in which we live. Real. World. REAL WORLD. Our world, not yours. The world of everything, dream dance escape thought and blood. A machine has cranked us out. And our father doesn't know how to stop it, much less fix it. . . . There's a LOVE in MY WORLD for the new exciting land that was always far off the map in fifth grade geography. Things aren't always knowable and certain and stifling. To walk through it is its essence, so, Dad, let's TAKE A TRIP.

But trip on certain helpers. While no two hippies would agree, in general they used marijuana and its more potent form, hashish, to obtain a

quiet euphoria and “get high,” or they used hallucinogens or psychedelics such as psilocybin, peyote, and LSD to expand sensory perception and “blow the mind.” Thus, dope that felt good or expanded experience was fine; others that made one sick or addicted were a “bad trip,” a “bummer.” Freaks might avoid depressants and substances that tended to be addicting such as amphetamines, or “speed,” or narcotics such as heroin, or “smack.” New drugs appeared endlessly, and underground editors ran columns like Dr. Eugene Schoenfeld’s “HIPpocrates” and other articles which warned their readers, “Speed kills!” “I would like to suggest that you don’t use speed, and here’s why,” cautioned musician Frank Zappa: “it is going to mess up your heart, mess up your liver, your kidneys, rot out your mind. In general, this drug will make you just like your mother and father.”<sup>17</sup>

Hippies made their own decisions, of course, and they violated the norm because they were rebels and because they enjoyed experimenting. Nevertheless, various surveys reported that at the beginning of the sixties only 4 percent of youth aged 18 to 25 had tried marijuana, and that twelve years later that figure was almost 50 percent; 60 percent for college students; and much higher at some universities: 70 percent at the University of Kansas, and almost 90 percent at Boston University College of Law. Underground papers conducted their own unscientific surveys, and while unreliable, it appears that of those who responded usually 80 or 90 percent smoked marijuana, half to two-thirds had experimented with LSD, and perhaps 10 percent had tried heroin.

A majority of the sixties generation, then, tried marijuana, and many more attempted to liberate themselves from the older generation’s sexual mores. Elders had taught children Puritan values, that sex was reserved for married adults. Youth must avoid premarital sex and promiscuity, and rumors abounded that masturbation caused everything from blindness to hand warts. The sledgehammer to prevent such behavior was GUILT. Hippies rebelled, calling those ideas “hang-ups” and advocating “free love.” Of course, they did not invent the idea, for armed with birth control pills the sixties generation had been experimenting at college and sexual freedom leagues had been established earlier in the Bay Area and New York City. But freaks expanded the idea so sex seemed freer than at any time in memory. “Let’s spend the night together” wailed the Rolling Stones, while Janis Joplin advised her sisters to “get it while you can.” For the first time the airwaves were filled with blatant demands for sex, and while kids began wearing buttons—“Save Water, Shower with a Friend”—hippies clarified the idea of liberation. “A legal contract for a sexual relationship is, if not out of date, at least beside the point for most of us.” This was different from a college kid “getting laid,” they claimed; free love meant a couple “making love,” any time, any form, out of wed-

lock, and especially without guilt. “Make love,” wrote a freak, “not to one guy or chick who you grab onto and possess out of fear and loneliness—but to all beautiful people, all sexes, all ages.” They watched the film *Harold and Maude*, where a zestful woman of 79 taught a young man to be sensual, to live, and they agreed with the idea that “If you can’t be with the one you love, then love the one you’re with.”

Hippie writings often were sexist by later standards, since the counterculture developed before women’s liberation. Sales of underground papers soared when they began publishing “personal” columns in which men would advertise for “groovy chicks who like to smoke weed and ball.” In New York City, Underground Enterprises established a dating service called FUK, “For Turned-on people only. Heads Do the Matching.” Guys could apply by sending five dollars, “girls apply free.”<sup>18</sup>

The second wave, however, was influenced by the rise of feminism, and hippies became aware of equality in free love, and more tolerant of all forms of sexuality—masturbation, homosexuality, bisexuality. Sexual liberation meant that all private acts between consenting people should be legal and probably attempted. The underground press also rejected the elder’s fear of nudity, dirty and shameful, and filled pages with nude couples skinny dipping in ponds, sunbathing, and holding hands and singing. Since nudity outraged the older generation, that was reason enough to take off clothes. “Here I am,” proclaimed a freak, “see me; so what is new?” Hippies established nude beaches and communities. Freedom. Fun. Playfulness. One wanted to clean up politics so he ran for president nude with the slogan, “What have I got to hide?” To prevent police from attacking and beating demonstrators, the Shiva Fellowship in San Francisco advocated disrobing.

Free love was complemented by dope, for many hippies felt that psychedelics and marijuana were aphrodisiacs that heightened sexual pleasure. While that was debated endlessly, passing around a joint did decrease inhibitions and increase relaxation and intimacy, feelings that were attractive to youth raised during the uptight postwar era.

Making love and smoking dope was behavior usually conducted behind closed doors; dress was for the public, and it was a symbol. Hair represented rebellion from the crew-cut cold war era, and identity with the new generation. “Almost cut my hair,” sang Crosby, Stills, and Nash, but instead they let their “freak flag fly,” because, as Nash later stated, “if they had long hair you knew how they thought, that they were into good music, a reasonable life, that they probably hated the government.” Hair, and dress, sequestered them from mom and pop, declared independence. Hip men threw out sport coats and ties, and hip women abandoned cosmetics and undergarments and for the first time in memory revealed the soft contours of unbound bodies. “Long hair, beards, no bras and freaky

clothes represent a break from Prison Amerika," declared Jerry Rubin. Clothes became costumes and costumes became clothes.

The older generation was appalled, complaining, "you can't tell the boys from the girls," and oh, those "dirty, filthy, smelly hippies." During the veteran's era after World War II and Korea, the sight of a beard on a businessman even raised eyebrows. But freaks had different ideas about dress and cleanliness. While they did bathe, of course, they were not dismayed by the smell of the human body, for it was normal, part of getting back to nature and a revolt against middle-class TV-commercial values. They felt that deodorant, cosmetics, perfume, cologne were phony, Madison Avenue: "Aren't you glad you use Dial? Don't you wish everybody did?" Don't care, said the freaks, saying that people should smell their bodies, for each individual's scent was different. Learn about yourself: "You're beautiful." If they desired a scent then they lit incense or wore musk oil, a secretion of the male musk deer. Hippies also abandoned polyester clothing in favor of leather and cotton, and they ate fresh, natural foods without preservatives and grown organically.

Not "uptight," but "laid back" in dress and also in lifestyle. Many critics labeled hippies "lazy," and parents claimed, "You're throwing your life away. You don't know how hard it was for us. . . ." But that missed the point about hip ideas of work and play. "Life should be ecstasy," said Allen Ginsberg, and hippies worked to escape daily drudgery and to discover their own pleasurable existence. "What's your thing?" Many held jobs that they liked, and others labored to build their vision of the future, either part or full time. Margy Kittredge asked, "Why should we work 12 or 16 hours a day now when we don't have to? For a color TV? For wall-to-wall carpeting? An automatic ice-cube maker?" And Tuli Kupferberg summarized, "Believe me when I say, if you enjoy it, it can still be good; it can still be 'work' (only we'll call it 'play'). Play is as good as work. Work has been defined as something you *dislike* doing. Fuck that. Do the Beatles *work*? Who cares."<sup>19</sup>

Another counterculture value was brotherhood. "He ain't heavy, he's my brother," they sang, while *North Country News* editorialized, "You and I are part of the dawning of an age of sharing and co-operation." There were many problems facing the new culture, and the only way to resolve them was "working together and trying to—LOVE ONE ANOTHER RIGHT NOW." Neil Young advocated more understanding as he tried to bridge the gap between fathers and sons, crying out, "Old man take a look at my life, I'm a lot like you." "Come together," sang the Beatles, as they reminded their generation that "the love you take is equal to the love you make."

During the days of decision the activism was demanding, even violent,

but during the second wave the idea was simple—live gentle. Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young:

Our house is a very, very, very fine house  
with two cats in the yard  
life used to be so hard  
now everything is easy 'cause of you.

Counterculture values continued developing as the second wave flooded through the Gates of Eden and toward the Age of Aquarius. What resulted was a vague social thought that merged values with other ideas, a social thought that was never static but always flowing and bubbling since one of the ideas was the continual need to experiment. "Change jobs, spouses, hairstyles, clothes; change religion, politics, values, even the personality; try everything, experiment constantly, accept nothing as given." An endless experiment: How? Search out, seek what had not been allowed, what was not real. As Tim Leary said, "it becomes necessary for us to go out of our minds in order to use our heads." Far Out, wrote a hippie,

BLOW YOUR MINDS!  
dont hang all day in the closet  
with your hats . . .  
FOR CHRIST'S SAKE allow yourselves  
to be a little crazy  
stop making so  
much sense . . .  
do something wrong . . .  
wear unmatched socks . . .  
go ride an elevator just for fun . . .  
think about trees . . .  
imagine how the sun would taste . . .  
smash your transistor radios . . .  
go out to the airport and wave goodbye  
to people you dont know . . .  
throw away your tubes of suntan lotion . . .  
unzip your faces and let the sun  
reach your grey minds . . .

Hippies agreed with Plato's ancient maxim that a life unexamined is not worth living. "Never forget that the greatest battlefield of them all is right within you, in that treasure-room called consciousness, where all future developments lie hidden, sometimes to be revealed in all their

glorious magnificence!" While searching for the sun, Ramon Sender and Alicia Bay Laurel wrote:

Open yourself to the possibility of having visions. Then prepare for them by feeling your own being and your own environment. The wisdom of all ancient teachings lives in your heart. When you relax enough to hear it, this wisdom can rename you, reclothe you, give you dances, exercises & meditations, ceremonies & recognitions of divinity in everyday life that make your whole day an act of being radiantly blissful.

Hippiedom was gentle for some, groping on a sunny afternoon, throwing frisbees with friends, and for others it was a continual excursion as they donned backpacks, put out their thumbs, and caught the disease—wanderlust. "If the vibes are good, I'll stay on," Joanie said about New Jerusalem commune, "if not, I've heard about a Zen group in the Sierras I'd like to look into." The quest did not end at U.S. borders. The demand for passports doubled, and by the end of the decade about 800,000 young Americans were traveling in Europe while over a million were thumbing throughout the nation. "We weren't fleeing home," said one, "we were seeking one."<sup>20</sup>

Another aspect of hip social thought was humor. Freaks smoked dope and giggled, ate hashish brownies and giggled, drank homemade wine and giggled. After the straight and narrow 1950s, freaks celebrated the weird. Buttons: "Reality is a nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there," "People who live in glass houses shouldn't get stoned." At Cornell they challenged the mayor of Ithaca to an arm-wrestling match because they believed in "armed struggle," while the "Manhattan Indians" at Columbia demanded the return of the Indian head nickel, no classes on Sitting Bull's birthday, and complete amnesty for Geronimo. Freaky students attended ROTC drills where they lampooned the cadets by playing leap frog or blowing bubbles. New York hippies advocated a "loot-in" of Macy's department store, and the *Barb* spread the Great Banana Conspiracy, claiming that kids could get a legal high by drying banana peels, and smoking the inside scrapings; the Food and Drug Administration did experiments and declared that the fruit was a good source of potassium and fiber. While activists wore buttons demanding "Free the Chicago 7," freaks pinned on "Free the Indianapolis 500," and others delighted in making preposterous statements: "It will be an LSD country in fifteen years," claimed Tim Leary, and the "Supreme Court will be smoking marijuana." Freaks laughed all the way to the Cheech and Chong movies. "As for this 'don't trust anyone over-30' shit," wrote James Kunen, "I agree in principle, but I think they ought to drop the zero."

Hippies desired an anti-materialistic lifestyle. "I wanted to simplify my life as much as possible," one communitard stated. "It wasn't hard to drop out. I had a lot of things to get rid of—a car, a hi-fi, a million useless things. . . . I got rid of it all. It was like getting a good load off." Living cheap became an art, and being poor was hip in America's throw-away society. Stores traditionally selling second-hand goods, Salvation Army and Goodwill Industries, witnessed scores of longhairs in their check-out lines. Freaks also scavenged. When residents at Drop City commune needed metal to build their geodesic domed homes, they dismantled an entire unused bridge. The Heathcote Community wrote about "The Fine Art of Trashmongering," finding useful things in the neighborhood or at the junk yard, and reported the free plunder from just one evening: an elegant stuffed lion, needing only a wash; a pencil and watering can; and a "blue blazer, nearly new condition, and emblazoned with the words 'College Bound,' which we removed."<sup>21</sup>

Some freaks were employed, usually holding temporary jobs to earn "bread," saving up for a few weeks, and then retiring, which became a familiar pattern during the second wave. With the economy growing and jobs plentiful, it was easy to find temporary employment, and as hip became style small businessmen grew less antagonistic toward hiring long-hair helpers. Also, many could find employment in an expanding number of hip business or social services that were not concerned about appearance. Soon freaks were selling records and delivering the mail.

Then they got paid, and hippies argued about money and profit. Critics often mocked them for denouncing capitalism while establishing hip businesses or working for a paycheck. This seemed like an inconsistency, but freaks came in all types and could not completely drop out of American society. Usually they felt that capitalism equaled greed, and so a few advocated "ripping off the system," meaning that it was all right for poor freaks to accept food stamps from the government, even to steal from private businesses as if they were Robin Hoods. The "Peoples Operators" informed readers of *Quicksilver Times* how to cheat the phone company and give the "largest pig monopoly in the world another big headache." But others disagreed. "I just don't trust a ripoff mentality. . . . Once a guy starts ripping off the phone company, or welfare, or a foundation, or a supermarket, he kind of gets the habit, and he'll be ripping you off next thing you know." Instead, most hippies attempted to live a simple, antimaterialistic existence, and to promote this many underground publishers sold for cost or gave away their papers. *Contempt's* price was "from each, to each," *Leviathan* was free to political prisoners, and *Little Free Press* was "totally free. . . . If we want freedom, let's quit using money because the rich control the money; so they control us." Others, however,

were not so sure. "Make all the money you want. Make billions!" wrote a hippie in *Planet*. Money equaled energy, and "if WE don't get that energy, someone else will."

Such debates were never resolved, and they were most vicious when they concerned selling hippie culture. After the Psychedelic Shop in San Francisco opened it received a note: "You're selling out the revolution. . . . You're putting it on the market." But more offensive were hip promoters and musicians cashing in, because that conflicted with a cardinal belief—the music should be free. Underground journalists realized that rock festivals symbolized the struggle between two cultures, capitalism versus hippiedom, but freaks felt that promoters turned "festivals of love" into "festivals for profit." By the end of the decade the *Seed* reported that "freaks are getting more and more uptight with the rampant shucksterism involved in most of the festivals," complaining that a "whole swarm of sideburned entrepreneurs is preparing to capitalize on the hip culture's twin addictions: rock music and tribal gatherings."

Some freaks became activists when they felt that they were being "ripped off." They picketed theater chains that raised prices for the popular movies, *Easy Rider* and *Woodstock*, and instead of paying admission fees for concerts a few began to "gate crash." Others boycotted expensive concerts. The \$14 admission price for a festival at Carbondale, Illinois, was condemned by an underground reporter who realized that musicians needed "bread" but questioned Sly and the Family Stone and The Band demanding \$25,000 "in small bills, in advance" for a forty-five-minute set. "Holy shit, who was that that first said rock is getting a little commercial?" Indeed, as one hippie capitalist lamented, "Being a promoter these days is a bummer deal. You take it from the straights on one side and the crazies on the other."<sup>22</sup>

While issues concerning money and profit were debated endlessly, social thought about the environment was not: Hippies were environmentalists. They did not invent the movement, of course, for many citizens became concerned about pollution throughout the decade, but hippies boosted ecology and practiced such values. In Eugene, cultural activists created Cyclists Revolting Against Pollution, CRAP, "clean-air guerrillas" who drove in groups "to show people there are ways to move other than foul automobiles spewing death." But more often they established "people's parks." "HEAD for the Park," wrote a Seattle hippie, "a park is for living things, squirrels, children, growing things, turned-on things, people, love, food, lush green colors, laughter, kites, music, God, the smell of life." Hippies formed a coalition with the Hog Farm, Wartoke Unlimited, Ecology Action Council, Sierra Club, and numerous underground papers to establish Earth People's Park. The idea was that all "the people" would send one dollar, and a permanent living space for the generation

would be purchased and built in New Mexico or Colorado.<sup>23</sup> The flyer proclaimed:

#### EARTH PEOPLE'S PARK

is not a music festival  
is work and love and generosity and devotion and play  
is you doing it whoever you think you are  
is not being negative  
has no time schedule  
is immediate and spontaneous  
is not possessive nor possessed  
is great humility  
is as serious as the universe and the life it sustains  
will last as long as your hair. . . .

Counterculture social thought also included a spiritual quest. As institutions and authorities appeared to be faltering, many asked: What is moral? What is amoral? Their answers and experiments took them on a voyage that ranged from Astrology, to Hare Krishna, to LSD, to Taoism, to Zen—and back to Jesus. The idea of an underground church appealed to hippies. It was not that the new generation no longer believed in a supreme being, but that they felt that answers to salvation no longer could be found at the established altars. Hip Protestants in the Bay Area proclaimed that they were "actively involved in creating the alternative church in the alternative culture. . . . Submarine Church Action Network is one expression of the hope shared by that motley assortment of youth, issue-oriented churches, switch-boards, liturgy-freaks, communards and other assorted folk who are the church saying yes to the future. . . . The submarine church is surfacing."

During the Summer of Love, Christian freaks opened a coffee shop in Haight-Ashbury, the Living Room, where they helped kids on dope and talked about Jesus and the Bible. The idea spread rapidly because some hippies identified with Christianity, especially the primitive type practiced in the first century when it was an anti-establishment religion. They noted this in undergrounds and flyers:

#### FOLLOWERS OF JESUS

WANTED

Jesus Christ

*Alias: The Messiah, The Son of  
God, King of Kings, Lord of  
Lords, Prince of Peace, etc.*

Notorious leader of an underground liberation movement.



The notorious leader was wanted for food distribution without a license, interfering with businessmen in the temple, associating with known criminals, radicals, subversives, street people, and for claiming to have the authority to make people into God's children. His appearance was the "typical hippie type—long hair, beard, robe, sandals," and he was listed as "extremely dangerous." As one freak commented, "Did you ever happen to think what would happen if Jesus were to come down to earth again. What would the typical American think? He would probably be thinking, 'Look at that disgusting hippy. Probably high on something, preaching peace, happiness and good will.'"

Many freaks were attracted to underground religions because they felt unwelcome at their parents' church, which they thought was hypocritical. Long-hair members of the Submarine Church attended a Methodist service in St. Louis. When one rose to give witness, the pastor stopped the proceedings and called the police, who apprehended all bearded youth; 30 were led out of the church and 20 were arrested for "disrupting a religious ceremony." Christian singers Love Song put such episodes to music: "Long hair, short hair, some coats and ties. People finally comin' around. Lookin' past the hair and straight into the eyes."

During the turmoil of the second wave, many youth found comfort in the saying, "Jesus loves you," and they became known as Jesus People or Jesus Freaks. While never a unified movement, most agreed with the daughter of a wealthy businessman, "I'd been searching for an answer, something to give meaning to my life. I tried drugs, Zen, a dozen other things, but none of it worked. Then I met the Children of God, and I just gave up everything and joined them. I knew this wasn't just a way of passing time on Sunday, this was God's truth being lived."<sup>24</sup>

God's truth usually meant that Jesus People were religious fundamentalists but not social conservatives, while other hip religions usually preached a much more liberal theology. Catholic laymen at Duquesne and Notre Dame universities formed small study groups and began questioning doctrine and formalities, and many began thinking about St. Francis of Assisi, who left a wealthy Italian family to live in poverty. Some Jewish youth began considering Hillel, the first-century B.C. prophet who urged modesty and peace, while others joined the *havurot* movement, fellowships that emphasized experimental worship and communal living. Other hippies developed an interest in Hare Krishna, Zen Buddhism, and the beliefs of Native Americans. "A day will come when a people with white skin will walk our lands," stated a Native American prophecy, "their hair and clothing will be as ours and they will adopt our customs. We will know them because even their name will sound like our name . . . Hopi." Most hip religions usually were tolerant of other creeds and did not have a rigid deity. They often emphasized the discov-

ery of the inner self, helping one to "get it together," while seeking affirmation and individualism within a group of brothers. *I Ching*: "What is required is that we untie with others, in order that we may complement and aid one another through holding together. . . . Common experiences strengthen these ties."

Counterculture social thought generally had two parallel themes that often appeared in the lives of many hippies. Some revolted and searched for personal liberation, and the freedom that they practiced often was unstructured, libertarian, even anarchistic. Through experimentation, they often grew into what they felt was a more independent and holistic person. Others rebelled, tasted freedom, and rushed to a more authoritarian form of counterculture. These freaks often joined others in spiritual retreats or ashrams, where leaders developed a more structured, disciplined day, and where members practiced religious beliefs aimed at personal growth or inner development. Both of these avenues aimed to balance self-realization and fulfillment with community, and the eventual results depended on each individual.

All the while, hippies developed their alternative society—some dropping out by going to the country while a larger number remained in the city and became involved in cultural activism. Both built various types of hip enclaves that they called communes, cooperatives, collectives, or experimental communities, all difficult to define because freaks interchanged these names and because those living arrangements always were evolving. While there probably were over 2000 rural and at least 5000 urban communes by the end of the decade, no one knows the number because most communards wanted to be left alone and usually would not reply to surveys.

Earlier in the decade pioneers established a few rural communes. Gorda Mountain at Big Sur, California, was an open-land community where everyone was accepted; Heathcote was an educational experiment, a school of living, in Maryland; while psychedelic artists outside of Trinidad, Colorado, constructed Drop City, a community of geodesic domes. By the Summer of Love, Lou Gottlieb had established Morning Star outside of San Francisco for anyone who wanted to practice "voluntary primitivism," and other colorful freaks established the Hog Farm, "an expanded family, a mobile hallucination, a sociological experiment, an army of clowns."

But the stunning growth of communes appeared during and after the rip tide. Assassinations, demonstrations, strikes, beatings—violence—all blended together and provoked many more to drop out, and that included many former activists like Raymond Mungo, Marvin Garson, and Marty Jezer. A communard at Grant's Pass in Oregon recalled "innocent people getting clubbed. Then we began to understand that all those protests just



weren't going to do anything except breed hate." Another added, "I had done the political trip for a while, but I got to the point where I couldn't just advocate social change, I had to live it."

Activists such as Tom Hayden called them escapists—dropping out meant copping out—but these builders of the dawn were not listening. Aware that they were politically powerless, they no longer cared about changing the establishment. "Like it's so obvious that civilization is doomed," a communitard said, "and we don't want to go with it. . . . We're retribalizing. . . . it's the beginning of a whole new age." The new age would be different, said Jezer, for they were building communities, "learning self-sufficiency and rediscovering old technologies that are not destructive to themselves and the land. . . . And we are doing this, as much as possible, outside the existing structures, saying, as we progress, a fond farewell to the system, to Harvard, Selective Service, General Motors, Bank of America, IBM, A&P, BBD&O, IRS, CBS, DDT, USA and Vietnam."

Eventually, many different types of people joined the "back to the land" movement—artists, visionaries, ecologists, radicals, academics, vegetarians, gays, organic farmers, Vietnam veterans, urban professionals, and women searching for more liberation, along with some who left personal problems behind such as a past of drug abuse or a bad marriage. Many were students. At the end of the decade a survey of college youth found that a third were interested in spending time in a commune or collective and almost half wanted to live for a while in a rural setting. Most communitards were in their twenties, middle-class, had attended some college. Almost everyone felt trapped in mainstream society, alienated from the policies of their government and from materialistic, technological America. They usually were searching for new values in their own community. "What they all had in common was the highest human aspiration," stated one observer, "to be free."<sup>25</sup>

They adopted a very American approach. They headed for the wide-open spaces that held the bare promise of a fresh start. As they looked forward, they also looked back, hoping for a more primitive way of life, and along the way they developed many types of communes. Some hippies took over abandoned towns, such as Georgeville Trading Post in Minnesota, while others developed new villages such as Pandanaram in Indiana, and 300 moved from the West Coast and established The Farm in Tennessee. But most communes were much smaller, a few buildings. Hip professionals and architects constructed Libre, futuristic homes located beneath the mountains of southern Colorado, and others created two dozen fresh-air communes near Taos, New Mexico. Urban escapees established numerous cooperative farms in southern Oregon that aimed to become completely self-sufficient, while seven farmers annoyed by "the

life-style typified by electric toothbrushes and BHT additives" formed Active Acres Co-operative in Wisconsin. Followers of psychologist B. F. Skinner began building a society based on behavioral principles at Twin Oaks in Virginia. Hare Krishna disciples developed New Vrindabasn in West Virginia, while fundamentalist Christians established a Children of God settlement on a ranch near Brenham, Texas. Maharaj Ashram in New Mexico practiced yoga techniques and concepts, and The Farm blended Zen Buddhism with Hindu philosophy and a touch of Christianity. In fact, during the second wave there were so many communes that the North American Student Cooperative Organization, Alternatives! Foundation, and many other groups published directories, newsletters, bulletins, and undergrounds such as *New Harbinger*.

Lifestyles varied at the communes, but in general counterculture values were practiced, or at least attempted. Work and play was a community effort, sacrifice and sharing was encouraged, and eventually some form of pattern or organization developed. "If you are lucky," Stephen Diamond wrote during his third year at Chestnut Hill, "a natural order and rhythm will develop. But it takes time, time to work out painfully all the personal hassles and complications that result from a structureless society, a community that has no previous textbooks to follow as guidelines." Communitards naturally experimented with personal freedom and liberation. Some of the early communes advocated completely free love, where all members engaged in sexual encounters and where group sex or bisexuality might be accepted. Harrad West in Berkeley and Talsen in Oregon were "group marriages," spouses or singles who switched partners, and Bryn Athyn in Vermont practiced "sexual coziness" where members supposedly "played with each other's sexual parts without fear or guilt." But much more common were communes where hippies became partners, agreeing on various sexual arrangements, while at some only monogamous couples could reside. Many communitards used dope, and perfected the idea of "grow your own," while some later settlements abstained from using any drugs in an attempt to become completely natural or self-reliant. Daily routine varied from anarchy at Wheeler Ranch to structured schedules at Lama Foundation. Visitors were welcome anytime at some communes and they became little more than "crash pads" for hitch-hiking freaks. To prevent that, other communes established visiting hours, some restricting guests to the weekends, while others only allowed those who adhered to their strict rules.

Most of those heading back to the land had been college kids or urban dwellers, and they soon realized that they knew little about rural living. To help them build their New America, Steward Brand published one of the most popular manuals, *The Whole Earth Catalog*. The first page declared that the establishment had failed, and that the catalog was aimed

to supply tools that would help an individual “conduct his own education, find his own inspiration, shape his own environment, and share his adventure with whoever is interested.” The catalog was filled with goods that could be ordered by mail—American wood stoves, Danish earth shoes, Australian wind generators—and it gave practical advice about tools, resources, and books that could help one become an organic gardener, give a good massage, learn to meditate, construct a tepee, or perform a do-it-yourself burial: “Human bodies are an organic part of the whole earth and at death must return to the ongoing stream of life.” There was advice on helpful books to order: *Livestock and Poultry Production*, *The Book of Country Crafts*, *The Natural Foods Cookbook*, *The New Religions*, *The Old Farmer’s Almanack*, *Champagne Living on a Beer Budget*, *Over 2000 Free Publications*, *Volkswagen Technical Manual*. And letters from readers told others how to make vinyl cement, mix up a batch of molasses-based plastic, or find free lumber. Brand included poems and directions: “Choose one: [ ] Bang [ ] Whimper.” The book helped the new generation “get into something,” learn a new hobby or trade. “The total effect is evangelical,” wrote one reviewer, “conjuring up a way of life.” Eventually, the catalogue went through four editions and even won the National Book Award.<sup>26</sup>

Burns also inspired others to publish guides. Alicia Bay Laurel wrote *Living on the Earth* for “people who would rather chop wood than work behind a desk.” Written with the help of communards at Wheeler Ranch, the book contained celebrations, storm warnings, formulas, recipes, rumors, and country dances. *Domebook* discussed plans for constructing alternative homes and structures while *The Foxfire Book* and *Mother Earth News* explained aspects of rural life. To help freaks form or find an appropriate commune, one could read *The Modern Utopian*, which had a Communal Matchmaking Service. Urban cooperatives also developed important guides, such as various handbooks printed by the Communication Company in Columbus, Ohio.

Many times more freaks resided in urban hip communities where a counter-society flourished. Old Town in Chicago, Peach Street in Atlanta, West Bank in Minneapolis, Pearl Street in Austin, near Dupont Circle in Washington, D.C., and other areas in university towns such as Ann Arbor, Boulder, Eugene, Isla Vista, Ithaca, Lawrence, and many, many more that resembled Berzerkly or Miffland in Mad City. These communities were easy to find. Ask any longhair, and soon one would be walking down a street where below the STOP sign was painted WAR, where someone was throwing a frisbee for a dog, and where a few freaks would be rapping—talking—on the porch of a brightly painted old house. American flag curtains floating in the breeze. Crosby, Stills, Nash and

Young melodies drifting out to the street, along with the smell of musk or grass.

During the second wave urban communes proliferated in large American cities. Hippies shared apartments, rooming houses, or large homes, often in older districts or close to universities. As a hippie said about Madison, “the frats are dying fast . . . and some of them have been taken over by collectives—frats turning into communes!” Shared living arrangements always had been part of college life; it was convenient and appropriate for an era of antimaterialism. “Money’s your problem?” asked Raymond Mungo. “Move in with thirteen other people, it’s cheaper. And more interesting.”

Although sharing was the rule, money usually was a problem. In the country, many communes survived by growing crops and selling or bartering their natural foods with locals; others had wealthy benefactors; a few close to liberal communities collected unemployment or food stamps. Bear Tribe adopted Native American methods and attempted to live off the land, while members of The Family took a hundred dollars to Las Vegas and won thousands, enough to begin their commune in New Mexico. Some communes developed around rock groups; the Grateful Dead supported one in northern California near Mendocino. Many established some sort of business. The Canyon Collective published and was supported by *Workforce*, and Bitterroot Co-op in Montana made and sold pottery. Mount Olive in Missouri raised livestock and manufactured fence posts, and Twin Oaks sold hammocks. The Farm established a construction and a publishing company, and Ananda Cooperative Village, a “self-realization community” in California, sold incense, crafts, luggage, and rented rooms on their 70-acre retreat to those studying yoga. In town, freaks often worked and lived in craft or trade cooperatives. Many hippies sold underground papers and lived at the press, such as at the *Washington Free Press* or Atlanta’s *Great Speckled Bird*. The Yellow Submarine in Oregon made granola, while Maharaj Ashram opened a whole-foods restaurant, Nanak’s Conscious Cookery, in Santa Fe. Freaks also resided at their head shops, bookstores, garages, or at their workshops for films, records, or papers. The Lama Foundation published religious books. Young architects in Sausalito, California, developed the Ant Farm, and south in Menlo Park others formed the Portola Institute as a “nonprofit cooperative to encourage, organize, and conduct innovative educational projects.”

There were many other types of urban collectives, and the inhabitants of each dwelling worked out arrangements to share various aspects of daily living. Many were political collectives, such as the Kate Richards O’Hare Collective near Cornell University, which was based on socialistic ideals; the South End commune, formed by SDS members in Boston; or Reba

Place, a Christian social action commune in Evanston. Members worked in their communities on various programs, and at times formed umbrella groups such as the Seattle Liberation Front. Many hippies developed college communes or collectives, where some went to school and others worked, both usually part time, and where they organized for campus reform. Religious adherents established numerous spiritual communes. Feminists eager to discuss women's issues and work toward radical democracy developed Bread and Roses Collective in Boston and gay men formed the 95th Street collective in New York. Soldiers returning from Vietnam organized the Veteran's Collective in San Francisco.

Many city hippies, thus, were cultural activists. They were concerned about war and race, of course, but also about building their alternative culture. The Trans-Love Energies Unlimited, "a total tribal living and working commune" in Detroit, was developed by John and Leni Sinclair with artist Gary Grimshaw. The commune produced rock dances and concerts, light shows, posters and pamphlets, and the underground *Sun*. It also served as a cooperative booking agency for rock groups, and Sinclair became the manager of the rock group, MC-5. Eventually, the commune moved to Ann Arbor and formed the White Panther Party, a cultural revolutionary group devoted to an assault upon mainstream culture "by any means necessary, including rock and roll, dope, and fucking in the streets."

In each hippie community there were some common themes, and one was the idea of free services. Free universities expanded in campus towns, an idea that Free Speech Movement activists began earlier at Berkeley. "Prerequisite: Curiosity" was the sign at the University of Man at Kansas State, as teachers throughout the nation volunteered lessons on everything from abstract art to mechanics. Sinclair taught jazz and contemporary poetry at the Artists' Workshop's Free University of Detroit, and Steve Gaskin gave classes in the Bay Area on "North American White Witchcraft," "Magic, Einstein and God," and to help hippies get into shape, "Meta-P.E." Others volunteered. A hip San Francisco directory listed 30 free services—including crash pads, a foot clinic, a drug hotline, the Animal Switchboard—while volunteers in Minneapolis established YES, Youth Emergency Service, and others in Milwaukee developed Pathfinders for Runaways. Hip attorneys organized legal aid services such as the Counterculture Law Project in Chicago.

Another theme in these communities was hip businesses. Freaks consumed, of course, and that meant that goods had to be bought and sold. They usually tried to be selective when purchasing goods, favoring businesses that appeared sympathetic to their values and did not discriminate or pollute, that supplied meaningful employment, or that contributed to improving society. While they would boycott or picket a corporation like

Safeway for buying grapes or vegetables from farms which paid migrant workers piecemeal, they would make their purchases at local family-owned stores, farmers' markets, or cooperatives. If the marketplace did not offer companies that sold their type of goods, then it was natural that some of these children of businessmen would establish their own ventures: record, book, or clothing stores; "head shops" that sold drug paraphernalia, posters, buttons, and almost anything weird; farm and food cooperatives; even a few construction companies and FM stereo radio stations.

Hip capitalists were the merchants of novelty, and they established many businesses. Since they did not trust the establishment media, they printed their own. One of the most successful was *Rolling Stone*, which had a circulation of a quarter million by the end of the decade and lucrative advertising contracts with national record companies. Ten years later *Mother Earth News* boasted a circulation of a million. Other undergrounds also had large circulations, such as the *Berkeley Barb*, *Fifth Estate*, *Great Speckled Bird*, *L.A. Free Press*, *The Rag*, and the *Las Vegas Free Press* boasted that with 25,000 readers they were the largest weekly newspaper in Nevada. While a few young musicians profited from singing their message on records, many others sold their values on T-shirts, buttons, and posters. A hippie could make a purchase in person at the Love Poster shop in New Orleans or by mail order from the Dirty Linen: "Here's a little something for Mother's Day. . . . Send for five posters (\$5) and we'll send a sixth one free to the mother of your choice," which included Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu, Lady Bird Johnson, or General William Westmoreland. The Edward Horn company advertised a thousand buttons for \$70. One could design her own, or pick from the standard "Peace Now" to the more timely "Majority for a Silent Agnew" to "I Am Cured, I'm Not a Hippie Anymore."

Some eked out a living by writing or publishing sarcasm and humor. Robert Crumb produced Motor City comics and LSD-inspired characters in Zap Comix; he invented a popular symbol for the age, the "Keep on Truckin'" slogan. Gilbert Shelton thought that he had hit the big money when the *Los Angeles Free Press* paid him a hundred dollars a week. Shelton and three friends invested \$600, bought a printing press, and began an "underground publishing empire" called Rip Off Press. Gonzo journalist Hunter S. Thompson published books, including his classic *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, and Calipso Joe of Los Angeles established Handicap Pictures since "Everyone of our pictures is a 'Handicap.'" Produced in "True Bloody Color," these short films included titles such as "President Johnson the Defoliate President" and "Damn the Constitution-Undeclared Wars—Full Speed Ahead." Satirist General Hershey Bar spoke at rallies to "give war no quarter" because it "ain't worth a dime."<sup>27</sup>

Freaks established free markets on some campuses and many clothing and especially food co-ops in their urban enclaves. The "Great Food Conspiracy," the *Plain Dealer* called the "Madison Avenue-Pen Fruit-Kelloggs Korn Flake . . . chemical coated plastics in fancy boxes." During the era of white bread and preservatives the undergrounds urged readers to buy at movement food stores such as Willamette People's Food Cooperative in Eugene, Ecology Food Co-op in Madison, Cambridgeport Food Co-op near Harvard, or the Liberated Area in Richmond, Virginia. Hip cooperatives specialized in natural, organically raised foods with no preservatives—bulk honey, pearl barley, rolled oats, stone-ground wheat flour, herbal teas, fruits, vegetables, and new mixtures of cereals such as Crunchy Granola, the "Breakfast of Revolutionaries!"

Dope, naturally, was a movement business. Undergrounds from *The Mystic* (Fargo-Moorhead, North Dakota) to *Monolith* (Huntsville, Texas) ran articles on availability of the best local marijuana. The "Spring Market Report" in *The Spectator* (Bloomington, Indiana) put it like this: "The Market picture is bullish over all, with a falling off of activity in some commodity exchanges due to seasonal scarcities, and recent busts across the country, of some production centers." Head shops selling drug paraphernalia proliferated. The Entrepreneur in Chicago, Family Dog in San Francisco, Pipefitter in Madison, Third Eye in Los Angeles, and The Trance in Columbia, Missouri, all sold pipes and cigarette papers made from rice, maize, licorice, even hemp—the brand name was "Acapulco Gold." A thousand tabs of acid could be bought for a dollar each, transported inland from the coast, and sold to street vendors, for double or triple the price. Abbie Hoffman informed the masses how to deal dope in his underground best-seller *Steal This Book*.

Most movement businesses just survived financially, but a few made healthy profits. Various editions of *The Whole Earth Catalog* sold a million copies, and sales of the Family Dog head shop in the Haight topped \$300,000 during the Summer of Love. Celestial Seasonings, founded by hippies who enjoyed drinking their own tea, eventually sold \$16 million of natural teas and herbs annually, making one of their founders a youthful millionaire. Ticket sales at Bill Graham's Fillmore and Winterland auditoriums in San Francisco could reach \$35,000 a week, and the Middle Earth Light & Power Co. grossed about \$25,000 a month staging light shows at the Electric Circus in New York.<sup>28</sup>

Hip business merged with the counterculture, of course, at the rock festivals. Music was important, but so was the feeling—a gathering of the tribes doing their own thing beyond the customs and laws of the Establishment. After the success at Monterey, festivals spread, and during the next year they were staged at Newport, California, Sky River in Washington, and Miami, and during the last summer of the decade, the carnivals

moved inland to Denver and south to Georgia, Texas, and New Orleans. The Atlanta Pop Festival attracted over 100,000, and the same number appeared at the Atlantic City Pop Festival. The Seattle Pop Festival offered additional attractions such as parachutists, helicopter flower-drops, and nightly fireworks.

But it was Woodstock that was destined to become the most famous of the era, to live on in mythology. "It was like balling the first time," wrote a participant after the festival; "historians will have to reckon with it" for "these young revolutionaries are on their way . . . to slough away the life-style that isn't theirs . . . and find one that is."

Woodstock began as a commercial enterprise. The four producers offered Max Yasgur \$50,000 to use his thousand-acre farm near Bethel, New York. They hoped that 50,000 people would come to "The Woodstock Music and Art Fair: An Aquarian Exposition," and pay \$18 for three days to hear over two dozen bands, including Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Joan Baez, Arlo Guthrie, Canned Heat, The Who, the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Country Joe and the Fish, Ten Years After, and Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young.

Yet Woodstock became much, much more. Before the first band began to play, a pilgrimage of young people streamed toward Yasgur's farm in unprecedented numbers, clogging the roads for miles, creating the most massive traffic jam in New York history. The kids rarely honked, and instead took out their guitars and tambourines and played songs, shared foods and drinks, and passed joints in perhaps the most patient jam of the decade. Vehicles slowly passed by: Volkswagens with riders hanging outside, a microbus with freaks on the roof smoking a gigantic water pipe, psychedelic motorcycles, a van painted like a tiger, another like a speckled trout. The generation streamed onto the farm, to alfalfa fields and pastures, pitched tents and tepees. Eventually 400,000 were camping, and as far as any one could see there were young people "walking, lying down, drinking, eating, reading, singing. Kids were sleeping, making love, wading in the marshes, trying to milk the local cows and trying to cook the local corn."

"We were exhilarated," one participant recalled. "We felt as though we were in liberated territory." They were, and since their numbers overwhelmed local authorities, the young quickly established their own culture with their own rules, rituals, costumes, and standards of behavior. An observer noted that the cops were like "isolated strangers in a foreign country," and they made little attempt to enforce drug or nudity laws as the counterculture blossomed. "We used to think of ourselves as little clumps of weirdos," said Janis Joplin. "But now we're a whole new minority group."<sup>29</sup>

The gathering of the tribe, however, also was ripe for disaster. Over-

crowding created nightmares. Sanitation facilities were inadequate and some waited an hour to relieve themselves. Toilets overflowed. The hungry crowd consumed half a million hamburgers and hot dogs on the first day and food ran out, as did almost all drinkable water. Dope was sold and given away openly, and many consumed too much. Medical supplies became dangerously low. All the while the traffic jam meant that musicians, medicine, doctors, and food had to be flown in by helicopter at tremendous expense. Officials grew concerned, and thinking there would be a riot, the governor considered sending in the national guard. Then, the rains came, and came, and people huddled and slept in meadows that turned to mud.

Before the music began the first evening, a voice boomed out of the speakers: "We're going to need each other to help each other work this out, because we're taxing the systems that we've set up. We're going to be bringing the food in. But the one major thing that you have to remember tonight is that the man next to you is your brother." For many participants, the growing sense of community turned this rock festival into an unforgettable countercultural experience. "Everyone needed other people's help, and everyone was ready to share what he had as many ways as it could be split up. Everyone could feel the good vibrations."

That included many of the older generation. Bethel residents had feared a hippie invasion, but after watching the kids their dread dissipated and townspeople lent a hand. They opened soup and sandwich kitchens, left their hoses on for drinking and bathing, and donated medical supplies. *Life* admitted, "For three days nearly half a million people lived elbow to elbow in the most exposed, crowded, rain-drenched, uncomfortable kind of community and there wasn't so much as a fist fight." And the *New York Times* added, "Hippies have never been so successful . . . never before had they so impressed the world that watched."

Woodstock, of course, affected each participant differently. Twenty years later some recalled that it changed their life, others remembered only rain and mud. One recalled "Sunny, a nursing student from Boston. We shared love with each other in a way I have never forgotten and never bettered. Sunny, if you are out there, write." In a vague way, most leaving the rainy festival felt warm, and they sang along with Joni Mitchell,

We are stardust  
We are golden  
And we've got to get ourselves  
Back to the garden

If freaks could stay in the garden, cultivating their culture, many thought that it could happen—a cultural revolution. "Woodstock is the

great example of how it is going to be in the future," Tim Leary wrote to John Sinclair. "We have the numbers. The loving and the peaceful are the majority. The violent and the authoritarian are the minority. We are winning. And soon." Hippie culture was having an impact on the idea of revolution, for cultural activists began talking about the development of a Youth Nation committed to nonviolence concerned about one another, an idea popularized by Abbie Hoffman in his *Woodstock Nation*. Steve Haines of the *Berkeley Tribe* advocated more festivals, using the receipts to buy land and supplies to build large regional communes for one to two thousand freaks, and Sinclair talked about various tribes of black militants and white cultural activists signing treaties as the first step in developing a Sun Dance Nation. During the Indian summer after Woodstock it appeared to many that some sort of cultural upheaval finally was under way that would bring about a New America.<sup>30</sup>

Whatever fantasies were being toked up that autumn, they floated away as the mainstream press broke a cold-blooded story from California: "Sharon Tate, Four Others Murdered," proclaimed the *Los Angeles Times*: "Ritualistic Slayings." To many in the establishment, this was the beginning of the end of the hippies—and of the sixties.

During the next months police reported crimes committed "by a group of hippies known as 'The Family' under the leadership of Charles Manson." *Newsweek* labeled the trial the "Case of the Hypnotic Hippie." *Time* wrote about "a weird story of a mystical, semi-religious hippie drug-and-murder cult led by a bearded, demonic Mahdi," and ran an article about "Hippies and Violence," quoting a doctor that hippies "can be totally devoid of true compassion. That is the reason why they can kill so matter-of-factly. . . . Many hippies are socially almost dead inside." Presto: millions of American were convinced. Manson was a hippie, and longhairs could be killers.

Most citizens did not read the fine print, for as the trial continued other reporters uncovered many disturbing facts. Manson's mother was a prostitute, a heavy drinker, and he never knew his father. During his first 35 years he spent more than 20 either in foster homes, juvenile detention centers, or in prison. By the time he was 20 a state psychiatrist labeled him a sociopathic personality, "very unstable emotionally and very insecure," not a good candidate for probation. Nevertheless, he was paroled, and drifted to Haight-Ashbury after the Summer of Love. Older than many others, he could impress and control young, unstable kids. Eventually, he had about twenty followers, all of them from unhappy families and mostly teenage runaways. Manson had a large sexual appetite, often having intercourse three times a day. He had the ability not only to lure young girls into bed, but to convince them to find more for him as proof of their devotion. He and his followers drifted down the coast to Los

Angeles, and then out to the desert where they resided, occasionally going back to see friends in the city. The year of the Tate murders he had been arrested four times, and had made a point of stopping priests and claiming that he was Jesus Christ. Manson and his followers—as demonstrated by numerous psychological reports, court documents, some articles, and subsequent books—were mentally ill.<sup>31</sup>

Most of the counterculture could identify psychosis and were appalled by Manson's actions. *Rolling Stone* writers David Felton and David Dalton loathed him, and they leveled the blame for his behavior on the "society's perverted system of penal 'rehabilitation,' its lusts for vengeance and cruelty, that created him." Members of a Topanga Canyon community complained to the *Los Angeles Times* that hippies "pride themselves on their reputation for mutual love and peacefulness and they curse Manson for the notoriety he has brought the 'long-haired people.'" Another freak complained that the mass media lived "on sensationalism and scapegoats" and that Manson "has become the fall guy in the political battle between conservative America and the radical youth movement. He is now a social category, a demon hippie, a symbol of 'What can happen to your son or daughter.'" "

The silent majority remained fascinated with the Manson story. It raised a horrific possibility—"hippies with guns"—and it also had another ingredient that lured readers—sex. After visiting numerous hip enclaves, a social scientist observed, "The idea that communal life is a sexual smorgasbord is a myth created and sustained by the media. Much of the media fascination with Charles Manson and his covey of willing women can be explained by the fact that he personally staged many men's fondest sexual fantasies." That seemed to be the case, and it was experienced by a 36-year-old journalist who went undercover by growing long hair and a beard to report on the counterculture. Instead of *Black Like Me*, Richard Atcheson wrote, his report should have been called *Hairy Like Me*, for men of his age dressed in "Brooks Brothers suits, with heavy brogans, attache cases and short hair, would approach me in bus stations or rail terminals or hotel lobbies, pick up conversations with me, and start almost at once to inquire into my sexual habits: did I get much, did I give it to them in the mouth, how many inches did I have. . . . These guys just seemed to assume that because I was hairy I was some kind of incredible stud, getting laid constantly." Atcheson's experiences helped him to understand why so many citizens loathed hippies: "They are presumed to be sexually free, and they have to be hated for that."<sup>32</sup>

Manson remained in the headlines that December as the Rolling Stones announced a free concert at Altamont Speedway near Livermore, California, a festival that many older citizens felt was the second example

that proved a point that they suspected all along—the counterculture was going mad.

Just four months after already famous Woodstock, hip Californians were eager to have "Woodstock West." "We're all headed the same way," Andy Gordon wrote, "drawn by the power of the Woodstock myth. Gotta make it to that historic get-together. Altamont! The magic hits me—it's like Shangri-La. Xanadu."

But nirvana did not appear for most participants, and some described a reality closer to Hades. The audience was enormous, about 300,000, and most were good-natured, sitting on the surrounding hills, far from the stage. People got high, and there were very few arrests. The problems appeared closer to the stage, where about fifty became violent. Shari Horowitz reported: "Scanning the audience, I could see the chaos mounting—drunken brawls and bad acid trips. . . . I felt a sense of loss. My people hadn't the strength to transcend rudeness and get it all together." Numerous bands played in the afternoon, and the scene became more chaotic. In perhaps the most short-sighted move in the history of rock concerts, the Stones gave \$500 worth of beer to the Hell's Angels with orders to guard the stage. When the crowd moved closer to the music, when some drugged kids began to dance wildly, the motorcycle thugs beat them, busting pool cues over heads, causing so much commotion that bands stopped the music and asked for peace. "Please people," said Grace Slick of Jefferson Airplane, "please stop hurting each other." At dusk, the Stones finally appeared, and while Mick Jagger sang "Street Fighting Man," the Angels grabbed a young black, Meredith Hunter. Reports conflicted; he did or did not have a gun at the love-in. Never mind, the black-leather gang stabbed him repeatedly and kicked in his face. Horrified and stunned, the crowd did nothing. Hunter died in a pool of blood.

Altamont disgusted many, especially those in the counterculture. "Pearl Harbor to the Woodstock Nation" wrote one participant, and Gordon noted just how far down the psychedelic path the counterculture had stumbled in almost three years since the Human Be-in: "scabrous, syphilitic Hell's Angels, and a few luscious random teenie-chiclets, with a hippier-than-thou look. And not a smile in a carload." After the music began, "I saw they were no longer joining hands and dancing together in spontaneous joy, as at the first gathering of the tribes." Commercialization had massacred the tribes, for at Altamont the magic between the hip community and musicians had evaporated. The people no longer were the show; they simply were the audience, and that agonized many. The younger generation was acting like the older one. A cultural activist wrote that the concert "exploded the myth of innocence," and many other underground writers felt that Altamont signaled "The Failure of the Counter



Culture." Robert Somma lamented that it was the "last gasp from a dying decade. . . . It made you want to go home. It made you want to puke."<sup>33</sup>

Three weeks later the decade chronologically ended and during the next year, *Business Week* claimed, "Middle America has come to view festivals as harbingers of dope, debauchery, and destruction." State and county officials drafted regulations aimed at preventing rock festivals, and conservatives turned up their attack on the counterculture. "You can be the irresponsible creature you are, the drones living off the work of others," the editor of *Christian Economics* told hippies, "only because most people are not like you." Conservative Tom Anderson was more livid: "Dear spoiled, deluded, arrogant, brainwashed brats and know-it-alls: I am sick of you," and he gave some advice: "Learn to speak Russian. And Chinese." Oddly enough, the Russians agreed and became strange bedfellows with conservative Americans. One Soviet historian referred to hippies as bourgeois bloodsuckers living off society, adding that "no one with any common sense can believe that the hippies and Yippies are capable of effecting any changes in American society." And even more odd, the negative interpretation was promoted by many older scholars who wrote popular books assigned in college classrooms during subsequent years. "No one was more of the 'love generation' than Manson," an expert on American youth declared, while a historian described hippies as "countless thousand disturbed youngsters" whose experiences generally were "stupid, pointless, and self-defeating." Altamont was "another disaster" similar to Charlie Manson: "Of course hippies were not murderers usually."<sup>34</sup>

Obviously, the older generation was fuming by the end of the decade, for after the law and order fifties, the rebellious kids naturally aggravated parents. "I'm tired of the tyranny of spoiled brats," proclaimed a professor, and closer to home a father complained about his son:

First, he resisted efforts to get his hair cut (that's a mild statement of the fact) and showed an unusual fascination with anything to do with drugs. Next thing, he started going out of his way to look like a refugee from the Nigerian War (I later discovered he was adopting the bum style which had just begun to catch on). One afternoon, I found out he was the editor of an underground newspaper at the high school, which . . . had an offensive and obscene name. During the discussion of that project, he informed me that he had joined a Marxist group at the college nearby and soon we started receiving "The Militant" at home. As soon as school was out that year, he announced that he was leaving home to form a commune. He returned after four days "to regroup," but the short absence caused his mother great distress. About that time, he told me that he could not stay in the evenings because he had to be at a prayer meeting. This I interpreted as an insult to my

intelligence and a slur at religion. I lost my temper and took a poke at him.

The younger generation swung back. A mother pleaded with her daughter, "Our lines of communication are down, but I still hope for a way to get through to you." And then she asked her child to explain her freaky behavior, requesting, "I feel this is a personal letter not to be shared with your friends. Tear it up, throw it away or keep it; but don't put it on display." The daughter responded by sending the letter to *Second Coming*, and the editor printed it because "We feel that our parents have something to say: READ THIS STONED!!!!"

The middle continued to collapse. The generation gap expanded, perhaps to the largest size since the 1920s. When two researchers asked a mother if she would like to comment on her hippie son who lived in Kabul, Afghanistan, she responded: "I have nothing to say about him. He's gone. Far away. Dead."<sup>35</sup> An opinion poll asked citizens to list the most harmful groups in the nation, and the result: Communists, prostitutes, and hippies.

Citizens reacted to the hippie threat in many ways. Country-western singer Merle Haggard condemned the counterculture in his hit tune, "Okie from Muskogee," and singer Anita Bryant held "rallies for decency." Southern Methodist University officials attempted to stop mail posted to the campus address of *Notes from the Underground*, while a group of alumni and students threatened violence if the "filthy sheet causing embarrassment" did not stop publication. Businessmen across the country put up door signs, "No Shirt, No Shoes, No Service," while Marc's Big Boy in Milwaukee hired a cop to make sure that no one with beads, beards, flowers, sandals, long hair, or funny glasses was allowed inside to buy a double hamburger. Police harassment was common. In Charlotte, North Carolina, officers raided hippie houses, searched them without warrants, made numerous vagrancy arrests, and stopped only after so ordered by a federal judge. Boston cops arrested 200 freaks on the Commons for "idleness," and officers in Nevada arrested three long-hairs with money for vagrancy and held them for fifty days before the trial. Police routinely frisked, fined, or arrested young hitch-hikers while commuters yelled "Go to work!" In Milwaukee authorities raided underground newspaper collectives and arrested staffers for printing "offensive" material, and in New Orleans they even arrested a hip female in jeans for "wearing the clothes of the opposite sex." Hip life was particularly tough in the South and some rural areas where appearance alone seemed enough to provoke attacks. While filming *Easy Rider*, Dennis Hopper and other hairy actors were harassed in southern cafes, but two long-haired journalists also noted: "It didn't seem to matter much where we



went in the country, we were never more than one or two words away from a fight. In Arizona it was 'You can't come in here like that!' In a restaurant outside Indianapolis the waitresses plastered themselves against the walls and shrieked: 'We're closed! We're closed!' It was doubly amazing because the two of us together scarcely weigh two hundred pounds, we're just skinny little guys and . . . we spent the whole summer obviously scaring people to death."<sup>36</sup>

More serious repression ensued, and an easy target was arresting freaks on drug charges. Earlier in the decade the federal government had assembled the Ad Hoc Panel on Drug Abuse, which reached the conclusion that "the hazards of marihuana *per se* have been exaggerated and that long criminal sentences imposed on an occasional user or possessor are in poor social perspective." Nevertheless, state and federal officials commenced a massive campaign. Authorities busted editors of *Raisin Bread* and *Fifth Estate* for possession of marijuana, but a more famous incident concerned John Sinclair. He gave some grass to an undercover agent in Detroit, and a month later was charged with "dispensing and possessing two marijuana cigarettes." After two and a half years of judicial wrangling the trial came to court and he was declared guilty after an hour of jury deliberation and sentenced to ten years in the state prison. Sinclair appealed, but the judge would not free him on bond, deeming him a security risk and transferring him to a prison almost 300 miles from his wife and friends. The treatment was so severe that the publisher of the mainstream *Detroit Free Press* wrote Sinclair's mother a letter of sympathy and a state representative informed the prisoner, "I have introduced a bill which would repeal all penalties for drug use." John Lennon and Yoko Ono participated in a rally that drew 15,000 people chanting, "Free John Now," and after he spent two years in prison, federal courts threw out the case.

Communes also were attacked. Bikers raided Oz, a rural commune in Pennsylvania, and they beat and tortured the males and then sexually assaulted the females. After residents complained, authorities in Sonoma County, California, descended on Morning Star, charging violation of building and health codes, and demanding that owner Lou Gottlieb make expensive changes in facilities. When he balked, officials ordered all persons to clear the land or pay \$500 a day in fines. Eventually legal fees cost Gottlieb \$14,000, and he deeded the land to God. The county declared the deed invalid and brought in bulldozers and leveled the buildings. The "War of Sonoma County" was waged against Wheeler Ranch. "We are very much like the Vietcong," said Bill Wheeler. "We're an underground movement. We're going to take some very hard blows," and they did. Supposedly searching for runaways and military deserters, two dozen policemen and narcotic agents invaded the commune without a

search warrant, arrested one young female, and charged four men who objected with assaulting an officer. That was one of many raids during the next few years, as Wheeler said, climaxing with "150 pigs in a pre-dawn assault. Many people were awakened staring up the barrel of a gun. . . . Some seventeen people were arrested on drug charges alone, mostly for cultivating marijuana. One person got arrested for ginseng root in a capsule, another for vitamin pills." Although the warrant was deemed illegal, and most arrested were acquitted, the legal and psychological expense of the war was too high and the commune disintegrated.

The reaction could be brutal. Someone bombed Trans-Love Energies Commune in Detroit; others did the same to the office of Houston's *Space City News*; someone else shot out the windows of *San Diego Street Journal*, prompting a hippie to declare: "Freedom-loving law'n Order Amerika is showing its true colors." Rednecks in Atlanta occasionally drove past hippie crowds and sprayed them with buckshot, and young Hispanics tried to drive hitching freaks off roads in New Mexico. At the outskirts of Taos was the General Store, a hip information center and clinic where commune members posted a message: "The locals aren't smiling, especially at hippies. You may have heard stories of violence in Taos—believe them." Thugs brutalized hippies, castrating some and even killing one. "Don't come to New Mexico," communards warned, "and if you are already here with nothing to do—LEAVE!"

"It's a nightmare," said Dennis Hopper about the violence. Then he urged the kids to "go and try to change America, but if you're gonna wear a badge, whether it's long hair, or black skin, learn to protect yourself."<sup>37</sup>

Regardless of the reaction, hippies did not fade away during the second wave. Repression might make them move on to more friendly communities, but it did not bring them back into the mainstream. Just the opposite. Nor did the counterculture end because of Altamont or Charlie Manson or the demise of hippiedom in Haight-Ashbury. Most freaks were not interested in a long-haired psychotic; the millions who did not go to Woodstock or Altamont were not concerned about what happened at music festivals; and the rise and fall of the Haight did not define the entire counterculture experience. Instead, hippiedom expanded exponentially. Freaks did their own thing. Detroit's *South End* put it like this: "We are a generation that is sucking in life in gulps while others are trying to swallow. We are making the American cultural revolution." And as we shall see, these cultural activists infiltrated the very foundations of the Establishment—business, religion, even the United States Armed Forces. During the early 1970s hippies were participating in public "smoke-ins" in many communities, while cultural activists were establishing nude beaches and people's parks, running for city councils, and holding

university conferences on their own lifestyles. "Flower Power," wrote an observer, "is as revolutionary as Black Power, and after it America will never be the same again."<sup>38</sup>

Nor would many young Americans. They were changing, some hopping, and some singing along with John Lennon. If they could make "Imagine" a reality, then, as the Moody Blues told the new generation, they were "On the Threshold of a Dream."

What was dream? What was reality in the counterculture? Did they get back to the garden? Some times. Some places. Other times and other places they did not. As mundane as it sounds, hippies were simply people who possessed all the human frailties as those in the Establishment.

Yet it was true that for many of the sixties generation, the counterculture was just a lark, a time to smoke weed and get laid, a long party. The hippie lifestyle of dope, free love, music, and values of brotherhood and sharing invited phonies, freeloaders, runaways, drug dealers, smackheads, and various self-appointed preachers and zealots. There were weak people who were lost, who could not think for themselves, those who would allow others to boss them, those who would join cults and submit to various hip heroes and gurus. A thousand rock stars, a hundred thousand lost groupies. And there were the criminals who grew long hair, the vicious bikers and drug runners who stalked teens searching for a free high and free love. Ed Sanders noted that the counterculture was a noble experiment but that so many were vulnerable, "like a valley of thousands of plump white rabbits surrounded by wounded coyotes."

There were many casualties who never understood "freedom." "Freedom is a difficult thing to handle," wrote communard Richard Fairfield. "Give people freedom and they'll do all the things they thought they never had a chance to do. But that won't take very long. And after that? After that, my friend, it'll be time to make your life meaningful." Freedom was not free, it took responsibility to make a meaningful life. It was easy, even vogue, to revolt against authority, but then what? Many never answered, and to them freedom meant any behavior, no matter how self-destructive, rude, amoral, or crazy. Examples were legion: Bored teens strung out on endless trips, picking up pills on the street and popping them. Young mothers who blew marijuana smoke into the faces of their infants. The guy who claimed that sexual liberation meant that it was far out that he taught a five-year-old girl to give him oral sex, or men who walked up to unknown females and asked, "Do you want to fuck?" That word itself became a verb, noun, gerund—became meaningless in overuse. To some, sexual freedom meant little more than getting laid, using another person for their own gratification. "We called it the free fuck club," one female recalled. "These guys talked about love, screwed us, and then zoomed off for more cultural revolution," often leaving behind a "preg-

nant old lady." To some others, freedom meant any kind of behavior at any time. "It was the only commune I ever felt forced to leave for fear of my safety," wrote Hugh Gardner about New Buffalo, "after a night spent in a sweat-filled sleeping bag while one of several psychopathic personalities in residence at the time walked around in the dark randomly shooting a rifle at targets unknown, some not very far from my head." A social scientist observed, "Part of the problem is that hippies, like all movements, attract a disproportionate number of followers who are genuine misfits—persons who are poorly equipped to survive in any culture."<sup>39</sup>

While mainstream citizens condemned hip behavior, so did the hippies. Ed Sanders wrote about an army of sick youth in *The Family*, and David Felton condemned numerous Mansons, or what the counterculture referred to as "control freaks" or "acid fascists," in *Mindfuckers*. Many others were disappointed about the phonies—the outside agitators of the counterculture—the "young hoods, alias transient hippies, alias teenyboppers, alias kick-kids . . . who were intent upon wrecking their minds and bodies in order to give all hip people a bad name." Self-criticism mounted after Altamont, and many wrote about their culture's behavior, about disparity between rhetoric and values. "I think we have fallen prey to the sickness which we fight," lamented Jon Eisen, and Jon Landau added: "We tell ourselves we are a counterculture. And yet are we really so different from the culture against which we rebel?"

Part of the hip problem was a common attitude. An "illusion of superiority," Eisen continued. "It was almost as though identification with the new culture, with long hair and serious differences with your parents meant that somehow you possessed a superior way of life and a superior insight into the nature of the universe. . . . It hurts a little to write this, for I'm writing about myself and my friends, my people." The attitude led some to think that *anyone* outside of the straight world was part of some Woodstock Nation where everyone loved one another. "We are not One," a freak in Dallas admitted, "we never have been One, there is conflict Within Us and Without Us." The attitude led many others to pervert hippie values. Frauds declared that it was all right to "rip off capitalist pigs" when they stole from merchants, or cried "power to the people" and gate-crashed rock festivals, or spoke of "free love" as they wrestled females to the ground—eventually they created a thousand rationalizations for selfishness.<sup>40</sup>

More than attitude, hip behavior caused problems. The emphasis on experimentation often meant pushing life to extremes. Eventually, most freaks realized that dope had diminishing returns, was no longer an experiment, but others found the ultimate downer. Too many overdosed in too many ways: Mama Cass, Jim Morrison, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Al Wilson of Canned Heat, Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones, Keith Moon

of The Who, and Pigpen of the Grateful Dead. Those were only the most famous, for untold numbers had bad trips, or worse. Some still are scared. No alien to drugs, Neil Young warned his generation that "every junkie is like a setting sun." Some never left the endless line of dope peddlers on Telegraph Avenue; others could never leave their own Haight-Ashburys.

Problems became apparent at communes and collectives. Many freaks admitted that they had a difficult time sharing everything, overcoming jealousies and hatred, and at times stronger personalities often dominated the weaker as free-flowing anarchy slipped toward authoritarianism. Youth reported bickering and ego trips at many underground papers, and interpersonal relations strained quickly at free-love communes where one shared soul and body. Talsen, for example, lasted only a year and eventually became a settlement of Jesus People. Neil Young closed his open ranch because he had too many people hanging around who "lived off me, used my money to buy things, used my telephone to make their calls. General leeching." Freeloading forced many communes to build gates, even post guards, and communards wrote to *The Modern Utopian* asking that their addresses be deleted from directories.

Some communes lasted weeks, others lasted years, some still exist. At most of them, however, life was much more difficult than hippies imagined when they left the city. "I remember having soybeans for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and nothing else," recalled Cynthia Bates of The Farm. "Having kids made you more sensitive to the lack of necessities . . . how long could you live in a house with 50 other people?" Especially a house with no running water, no flush toilet, no electricity. After a while, many began to ask, What's the point?

Communal life was hard physically and also psychologically. "In the commune there is nothing you can hide," a member admitted. "Some people can't take it," and Elaine Sundancer added, "We need some way to come together. We speak of a gathering of the tribes, but the Indians were supported by traditions from since the world began, and we're out here on our own."

Moreover, hip became fad. Like the freaks themselves, this trend began on the coasts and spread inland. Some hippie fashion, uniforms of leather and brass, cost more than business suits from Brooks Brothers. Radical chic became hip chic, meaning that more longhairs looked the part or preached counterculture values, but fewer practiced them. When businessmen marched to work in suits with flared trousers wearing paisley ties, when pick-up drivers grew ponytails, the cultural revolution was in demise, and with it the community and its values of sharing and trust. Communes and collectives locked doors as theft became too common in hip communities. After a someone stole radio and taping equipment from Abbie Hoffman, he announced his resignation from the counterculture:

"I know one thing. I don't use the phrase 'brothers and sisters' much anymore, except among real close friends and you'll never hear me use the word 'movement' except in a sarcastic sense."

Perhaps this should have been expected. These children of the postwar era often tried, but usually could not escape their past. Most had a very difficult time reversing twenty years of upbringing, conditioning, and socialization. While they dreamt about becoming a tribe, sharing body and soul, a communitarian at Cold Mountain Farm in rural New York admitted "we probably made love less than when we lived in separate apartments in the city. . . . Even though we created our own environment at the farm, we still carried with us the repressions of the old environment, in our bodies and our minds." After the demise of commune LILA, Charles Lonsdale recalled, "Much was learned by many people about sharing, love, and trust, but it was all too far in advance of our skills in human relations and understanding."<sup>41</sup>

How can the counterculture be evaluated? Reliable surveys and statistics on this amorphous blob do not exist, so it is difficult to judge. Subsequently, most assessments have been personal and emotional. Many of the older generation loathed the children for rejecting traditional values, and many kids loathed the parents for holding on to what they considered archaic beliefs. To some, the sight of a longhair or one death from an overdose was too much and they condemned the entire cultural experiment. To others, just seeing a policeman or another death in Vietnam was too much and they condemned the entire Establishment. The result was the largest generational gap in memory—the "war at home," one observer labeled it, who suggested that the nation's greatest internal conflict was "not between the rich and the poor, or the black and the white, or even the young and the old, but the people with long hair and the people with short hair."

To the longhairs, the question of whether the counterculture was a failure or success missed the point. Hippies were not taking a college course, trying to pass an exam, earn a grade, get ahead. The counterculture looked at it a different way. "How good were communes?" Compared with what, they asked, the best or the worst families in America? The fact that they experimented with their lifestyle was success enough for most of them, for they no longer were normal. They were different, had dropped out of the rat race, challenged their past. They had considered their existence on planet Earth, and in some ways, many had changed their lives. "If, through participation in the communal experience, individuals feel more alive and fulfilled (greater awareness of self and others, etc.), such a commune must be deemed a success," wrote Richard Fairfield. To hippies, then, the political revolution shifted to an individual revolution, and some felt proud that they had taken the chance, such as the communards

at Twin Oaks who published a booklet declaring *The Revolution Is Over: We Won!*

Those people probably had won—for themselves—while others were not so sure. From his commune in Vermont, Marty Jezer described the pros and cons of the counterculture:

At its best the amorphous and vaguely defined movement we call the counter-culture is working, and that there exists now, in cities and on farms everywhere in the country, a visible alternative community that is creating new ways of living out of a tired, frightened, and dying land. (There is another, darker side to the counter-culture symbolized by Altamont and Manson; rock-star millionaires; the dehumanizing attitudes longhaired men still have for women; the heavy consumer-trip so many people are on, buying bellbottoms and beads, records, tape machines, flashy new cars with peace stickers on the bumpers to make it all seem all right; the continued high price of dope and the availability of speed, smack, and other bums; the ambitious and competitive ego-tripping, disguised in groovy garb and mystical language, but still a mirrored reflection of the dominant values of the old way; and more: all the baggage, possessions, psychic junk and garbage we carry with us from the past.) But despite the glorification of a life-style that so often manifests style at the expense of life, there are people moving ahead, experimenting with and leading lives that a few years ago they'd never have dreamed possible.

The counterculture eventually changed the sixties by altering cold war culture, but it also had a more immediate impact on the movement during the second wave. Jerry Rubin mused that “grass destroyed the left” and created a youth culture, and in a sense dope clouded the political focus. “The New Left no longer exists,” SDS founder Richard Flacks said at the end of the decade. “The ideals of the New Left have now merged into whole new cultural situations in enclaves like Isla Vista, the youth communities outside the system, which may or may not have coherent politics.” Little seemed coherent as the movement splintered into numerous factions, as earlier organizations and initial leaders continued to fade. Some older activists grew frustrated, dropped out, and began building their own society. As former SDS president Carl Oglesby recalled: “There were a lot of good, righteous people showing up in places like Vermont and New Hampshire in those days. Lots of parties, great reefer, good acid. Lovely friends . . . I remember it with great fondness. It was almost the best part of the struggle. The best part of the struggle was the surrender.”

Some surrendered. Some did not, for many baby boomers were coming of age during the second wave and the counterculture idea of continual experimentation created different possibilities and activities. Cultural re-

bellion and political activism continued to merge and flourish. The underground *Win* described the budding alliance:

Win was originally just for the peace movement  
but how can you separate the peace movement from the people  
On the streets  
On the farms  
in Canada  
in prison?  
how can you write about the peace movement without writing  
about drugs, astrology, communal farms, rock music,  
painting the Con Ed building black?

A community was emerging, “the people” cooperating for a common goal that usually concerned their empowerment or liberation in a New America. While some activists remained concerned with national affairs, others shifted their involvement toward themselves, their people, their neighborhoods. A new motto appeared for the movement: Think Global, Act Local. “Back in the city, it was like you were a Weatherman type or a plastic hippie or you didn’t do anything but talk revolution,” said a freak who left Brooklyn for Eugene. “Here . . . all these alternatives have come into being. They may be small, they may not be all that new, but there is some progress you can put your finger on. Beginnings rather than endings.”

And as they built their communities, they continued searching for alternatives, experimenting, considering their existence. “I’m hip!” said one veteran hippie, sitting under a tree, reading a book.<sup>42</sup> “But lately I’m beginning to wonder just what hip is, you know, what is it all about. I get this feeling I’m just not where it’s at anymore. Maybe none of us here is where it’s at. . . . Mind you, I don’t know what it is, but . . . leave everyone to his own dreams. . . .”

The  
Movement

and

The  
Sixties

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