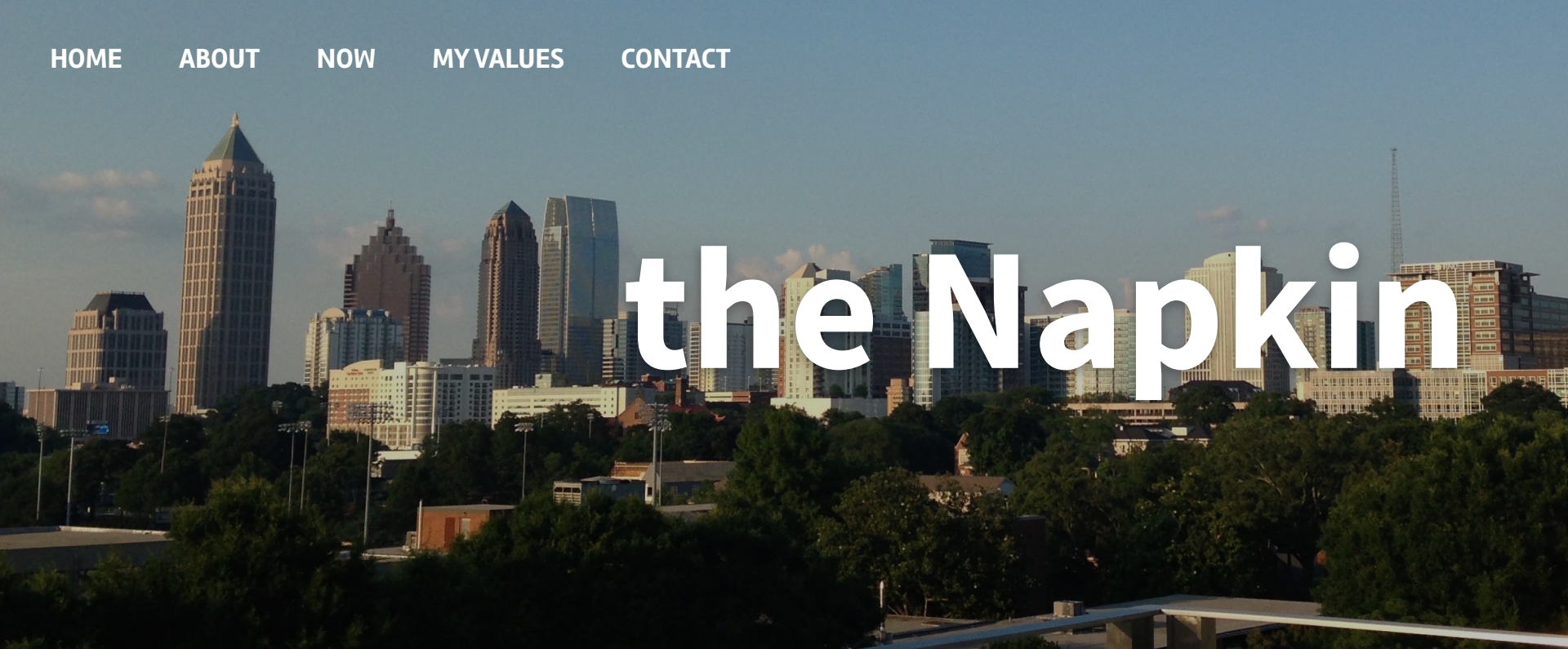




the Napkin

The “Hashbury” Is the Capital of the Hippies

By Hunter S. Thompson. San Francisco.

In 1965 Berkeley was the axis of what was just beginning to be called the “New Left.” Its leaders were radical, but they were also deeply committed to the society they wanted to change. A prestigious faculty committee said the Berkeley activists were the vanguard of “a moral revolution among the young,” and many professors approved.

Now, in 1967, there is not much doubt that Berkeley has gone through a revolution of some kind, but the end result is not exactly what the original leaders had in mind. Many one-time activists have forsaken politics entirely and turned to drugs. Others

have even forsaken Berkeley. During 1966, the hot center of revolutionary action on the Coast began moving across the bay to San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district, a run down Victorian neighborhood of about 40 square blocks between the Negro/Fillmore district and Golden Gate Park.

The "Hashbury" is the new capital of what is rapidly becoming a drug culture. Its denizens are not called radicals or beatniks, but "hippies" – and perhaps as many as half are refugees from Berkeley and the old North Beach scene, the cradle and the casket of the so-called Beat Generation.

The other half of the hippy population is too young to identify with Jack Kerouac, or even with Mario Savio. Their average age is about 20, and most are native Californians. The North Beach types of the late nineteen-fifties were not nearly as provincial as the Haight-Ashbury types are today. The majority of beatniks who flocked into San Francisco 10 years ago were transients from the East and Midwest. The literary-artistic nucleus – Kerouac, Ginsberg, et al – was a package deal from New York. San Francisco was only a stop on the big circuit: Tangier, Paris, Greenwich Village, Tokyo and India. The senior beats had a pretty good idea what was going on in the world; they read newspapers, traveled constantly and had friends all over the globe.

The word "hip" translates roughly as "wise" or "tuned-in." A hippy is somebody who "knows" what's really happening, and who adjusts or grooves with it. Hippies despise phoniness; they want to be open, honest, loving and free. They reject the plastic pretense of 20th-century America, preferring to go back to the "natural life," like Adam and Eve. They reject any kinship with the Beat Generation on the ground that "those cats were negative, but our thing is positive." They also reject politics, which is "just another game." They don't like money, either, or any kind of aggressiveness.

A serious problem in writing about the Haight-Ashbury is that most of the people you have to talk to are involved, one way or another, in the drug traffic. They have good reason to be leery of strangers who ask questions. A 22-year-old student was recently sentenced to two years in prison for telling an undercover narcotics agent where to buy some marijuana. “Love” is the password in the Haight-Ashbury, but paranoia is the style. Nobody wants to go to jail.

At the same time, marijuana is everywhere. People smoke it on the sidewalks, in doughnut shops, sitting in parked cars or lounging on the grass in Golden Gate Park. Nearly everyone on the streets between 20 and 30 is a “head,” a user, either of marijuana, LSD, or both. To refuse a proffered “joint” is to risk being labeled a “nark” – narcotics agent – a threat and a menace to almost everybody.

With a few loud exceptions, it is only the younger hippies who see themselves as a new breed. “A completely new thing in this world, man.” The ex-beatniks among them, many of whom are now making money off the new scene, incline to the view that hippies are, in fact, second-generation beatniks and that everything genuine in the Haight-Ashbury is about to be swallowed – like North Beach and the Village – in a wave of publicity and commercialism.

Haight Street, the Great White Way of what the local papers call “Hippieland,” is already dotted with stores catering mainly to the tourist trade. Few hippies can afford a pair of \$20 sandals or a “mod outfit” for \$67.50. Nor can they afford the \$3.50 door charge at the Fillmore Auditorium and the Avalon Ballroom, the twin wombs of the “psychedelic, San Francisco, acid-rock sound.” Both the Fillmore and the Avalon are jammed every weekend with borderline hippies who don’t mind paying for the music and the light shows. There is always a sprinkling of genuine, barefoot, freaked-out types on the dance floor, but few of them pay to get in. They arrive with the musicians or have other good connections.

Neither of the dance palaces is within walking distance of the Hashbury, especially if you're stoned, and since only a few of the hippies have contacts in the psychedelic power structure, most of them spend their weekend nights either drifting around on Haight Street or loading up on acid – LSD – in somebody's pad. Some of the rock bands play free concerts in Golden Gate Park for the benefit of those brethren who can't afford the dances. But beyond an occasional Happening in the park, the Haight-Ashbury scene is almost devoid of anything "to do" – at least by conventional standards. An at-home entertainment is nude parties at which celebrants paint designs on each other.

There are no hippy bars, for instance, and only one restaurant above the level of a diner or a lunch counter. This is a reflection of the drug culture, which has no use for booze and regards food as a necessity to be acquired at the least possible expense. A "family" of hippies will work for hours over an exotic stew or curry in a communal kitchen, but the idea of paying \$3 for a meal in a restaurant is out of the question.

Some hippies work, others live on money from home and many are full-time beggars. The Post Office is a major source of hippy income. Jobs like sorting mail don't require much thought or effort. A hippy named Admiral Love of the Psychedelic Rangers delivers special-delivery letters at night. The admiral is in his mid-20's and makes enough money to support an apartmentful of younger hippies who depend on him for their daily bread.

There is also a hippy-run employment agency on Haight Street and anyone needing part-time labor or some kind of specialized work can call and order as many freaks as he needs; they might look a bit weird, but many are far more capable than most "temporary help," and vastly more interesting to have around.

Those hippies who don't work can easily pick up a few dollars a day panhandling along Haight Street. The fresh influx of curiosity-seekers has proved a great boon to

the legion of psychedelic beggars. During several days of roaming around the area, I was touched so often that I began to keep a supply of quarters in my pocket so I wouldn't have to haggle over change. The panhandlers are usually barefoot, always young and never apologetic. They'll share what they collect anyway, so it seems entirely reasonable that strangers should share with them.

The best show on Haight Street is usually on the sidewalk in front of the Drag Store, a new coffee bar at the Corner of Masonic Street. The Drag Store features an all-hippy revue that runs day and night. The acts change sporadically, but nobody cares. There will always be at least one man with long hair and sunglasses playing a wooden pipe of some kind. He will be wearing either a Dracula cape, a long Buddhist robe, or a Sioux Indian costume. There will also be a hairy blond fellow wearing a Black Bart cowboy hat and a spangled jacket that originally belonged to a drum major in the 1949 Rose Bowl parade. He will be playing the bongo drums. Next to the drummer will be a dazed-looking girl wearing a blouse (but no bra) and a plastic mini-skirt, slapping her thighs to the rhythm of it all.

These three will be the nucleus of the show. Backing them up will be an all-star cast of freaks, every one of them stoned. They will be stretched out on the sidewalk, twitching and babbling in time to the music. Now and then somebody will fall out of the audience and join the revue; perhaps a Hell's Angel or some grubby, chain-draped impostor who never owned a motorcycle in his life. Or maybe a girl wrapped in gauze or a thin man with wild eyes who took an overdose of acid nine days ago and changed himself into a raven. For those on a quick tour of the Hashbury, the Drag Store revue is a must.

Most of the local action is beyond the reach of anyone without access to drugs. There are four or five bars a nervous square might relax in, but one is a Lesbian place, another is a hangout for brutal-looking leather fetishists and the others are old neighborhood taverns full of brooding middle-aged drunks. Prior to the hippy

era there were three good Negro-run jazz bars on Haight Street, but they soon went out of style. Who needs jazz, or even beer, when you can sit down on a public curbstone, drop a pill in your mouth, and hear fantastic music for hours at a time in your own head? A cap of good acid costs \$5, and for that you can hear the Universal Symphony, with God singing solo and the Holy Ghost on drums.

Drugs have made formal entertainment obsolete in the Hashbury, but only until somebody comes up with something appropriate to the new style of the neighborhood. This summer will see the opening of the new Straight Theater, formerly the Haight Theater, featuring homosexual movies for the trade, meetings, concerts, dances. "It's going to be a kind of hippy community center," said Brent Dangerfield, a young radio engineer from Salt Lake City who stopped off in San Francisco on his way to a job in Hawaii and now is a partner in the Straight. When I asked Dangerfield how old he was he had to think for a minute. "I'm 22," he said finally, "but I used to be much older."

Another new divertissement, maybe, will be a hippy bus line running up and down Haight Street, housed in a 1930 Fagol bus – a huge, lumbering vehicle that might have been the world's first house trailer. I rode in it one afternoon with the driver, a young hippy named Tim Thibeau who proudly displayed a bathtub under one of the rear seats. The bus was a spectacle even on Haight Street: people stopped, stared and cheered as we rumbled by, going nowhere at all. Thibeau honked the horn and waved. He was from Chicago, he said, but when he got out of the Army he stopped in San Francisco and decided to stay. He was living, for the moment, on unemployment insurance, and his plans for the future were hazy. "I'm in no hurry," he said. "Right now I'm just taking it easy, just floating along." He smiled and reached for a beer can in the Fagol's icebox.

Dangerfield and Thibeau reflect the blind optimism of the younger hippy element. They see themselves as the vanguard of a new way of life in America – the

psychedelic way – where love abounds and work is fun and people help each other. The young hippies are confident that things are going their way.

The older hippies are not so sure. They've been waiting a long time for the world to go their way, and those most involved in the hip scene are hedging their bets this time. "That back to nature scene is okay when you're 20," said one. "But when you're looking at 35 you want to know something's happening to you."

Ed Denson, at 27, is an ex-beatnik, ex-Goldwaterite, ex-Berkeley radical and currently the manager of a successful rock band called Country Joe and the Fish. His home and headquarters is a complex of rooms above a liquor store in Berkeley. One room is an art studio, another is an office; there is also a kitchen, a bedroom and several sparsely furnished areas without definition.

Denson is deeply involved in the hippy music scene, but insists he's not a hippy. "I'm very pessimistic about where this thing is going," he said. "Right now it's good for a lot of people. It's still very open. But I have to look back at the Berkeley scene. There was a tremendous optimism there, too, but look where all that went. The Beat Generation? Where are they now? What about hula-hoops? Maybe this hippy thing is more than a fad; maybe the whole world is turning on but I'm not optimistic. Most of the hippies I know don't really understand what kind of a world they're living in. I get tired of hearing about what beautiful people we all are. If the hippies were more realistic they'd stand a better chance of surviving."

Most hippies take the question of survival for granted, but it's becoming increasingly obvious as the neighborhood fills with penniless heads, that there is simply not enough food and lodging to go around. A partial solution may come from a group called the "Diggers," who have been called the "worker-priests" of the hippy movement and the "invisible government" of the Hashbury. The Diggers are young and aggressively pragmatic; they have set up free lodging centers, free soup

kitchens and free clothing distribution centers. They comb the neighborhood soliciting donations of everything from money to stale bread to camping equipment. Diggers' signs are posted in local stores, asking for donations of hammers, saws, shovels, shoes and anything else that vagrant hippies might use to make themselves at least partially self-supporting.

The name and spirit derive from small groups of 17th-century English rural revolutionaries, called both Diggers and True Levelers, who had a number of Socialist ideas. Money should be abolished, communal farms could support all those willing to work them, and individual ownership of land would be outlawed. The Diggers were severely harassed and the movement eventually caved in under the weight of public opprobrium.

The Hashbury Diggers have fared a bit better, but the demand for food and lodging is beginning to exceed the supply. For a while, the Diggers were able to serve three meals, however meager, each afternoon in Golden Gate Park. But as the word got around, more and more hippies showed up to eat, and the Diggers were forced to roam far afield to get food. Occasionally there were problems, as when Digger chieftain Emmett Grogan, 23, called a local butcher a "Fascist pig and a coward" when he refused to donate meat scraps. The butcher whacked Grogan with the flat side of his meat cleaver.

The Digger ethic of mass sharing goes along with the American Indian motif that is basic to the Hashbury scene. The cult of "tribalism" is regarded by many of the older hippies as the key to survival. Poet Gary Snyder, a hippy guru, sees a "back to the land" movement as the answer to the food and lodging problem. He urges hippies to move out of the cities, form tribes, purchase land and live communally in remote areas. He cites a hippy "clan" calling itself the Maha-Lila as a model (though the clan still dwells in the Hashbury):

“Well, now,” Snyder says, “like, you are asking how it’s going to work. Well, the Maha-Lila is a group of about three different families who have sort of pooled their resources, which are not very great. But they have decided to pay together and to work together and to take care of each other and that means all of them have ways of getting a small amount of bread, which they share. And other people contribute a little money when it comes in. And then they work together on creative projects, like they’re working together on a light-show right now for a poetry reading that we’re going to give. And they consider themselves a kind of extended family or clan.

"That’s the model. They relate it to a larger sense of the tribe, which is loose, but for the time being everybody has to be able – from time to time – to do some little job. The thing that makes it different is that you don’t have a very tight monogamous family unit, but a slightly larger unit where the sharing is greater.”

The tribal concept makes a lot better sense than simply depending on the Diggers. There are indications, however, that the youthful provincialism of the Haight-Ashbury is due for a forced consciousness-expansion. For the past few months, the scene has been filled up with would-be hippies from other parts of the country, primarily Los Angeles and New York. The real influx is expected this summer. The city is rife with rumors, reliable and otherwise, that anywhere from 50,000 to 200,000 “indigent young people” will descend on San Francisco as soon as the school year ends.

The Diggers are appalled at the prospect. “Where are they going to stay?” says one. “What are they going to do?” A girl who works in one of the Digger kitchens shrugs and says: “The Diggers will continue to receive the casualties of the love generation.” Local officials, from the Mayor down, are beginning to panic. Civic leaders in the Haight-Ashbury have suggested that sleeping facilities be provided in Golden Gate Park or in nearby Kezar Stadium but Police Chief Tom Cahill said no.

“Law and order will prevail,” he insisted. “There will be no sleeping in the park. There are no sanitation facilities and if we let them camp there we would have a tremendous health problem. Hippies are no asset to the community. These people do not have the courage to face the reality of life. They are trying to escape. Nobody should let their young children take part in this hippy thing.”

In March, the city’s Health Director, Dr. Ellis Sox, sent a task force of inspectors on a door-to-door sweep of the Haight-Ashbury. Reports of as many as 200 people living in one house or 50 in one apartment had stirred rumors of impending epidemics in the neighborhood. In a two-day blitz, eight teams of inspectors checked roughly 1,400 buildings and issued a total of 65 deadline notices to repair sanitation faults. But only 16 of the 65 notices, according to The San Francisco Chronicle, were issued to occupants “whose bizarre dress and communal living habits could class them as hippies.”

Dr. Sox had no choice but to back off. “The situation is not as bad as we thought,” he said. “There has been a deterioration [of sanitation] in the Haight-Ashbury, but the hippies did not contribute much more to it than other members of the neighborhood.” Dr. Sox went on to deny that his mass inspection was part of a general campaign against weirdos, but nobody seemed to believe him.

The Haight-Ashbury Neighborhood Council, a nonhippy group of permanent residents, denounced Dr. Sox for his “gratuitous criticism of our community.” The council accused city officials of “creating an artificial problem” and harassing the hippies out of “personal and official” prejudice.

As recently as 1962, the Haight-Ashbury was a drab, working-class district, slowly filling with Negroes and so plagued by crime and violence that residents formed vigilante patrols. Housewives were mugged on the way to the grocery store, teenagers were slashed and stomped in gang rumbles, and every drunk on Haight

Street was fair game for local jack-rollers.

Now, with the coming of the drug culture, even the squarest of the neighborhood old-timers say the streets are safer than they have been for years. Burglaries are still a problem but violence is increasingly rare. It is hard to find anyone outside the hippy community who will say that psychedelic drugs have made the neighborhood a better place to live. But it's even harder to find a person who wouldn't rather step over a giggling freak on the sidewalk than worry about hoodlums with switch-blades. The fact that the hippies and the squares have worked out such a peaceful coexistence seems to baffle the powers at City Hall.

A lot of cheap labels describe what is happening in the Hashbury, but none make much sense: the Love Generation, the Happening Generation, the Combine Generation and even the LSD Generation. The last is the best of the lot, but in the interest of accuracy it should probably be amended to the Head Generation.

A "head," in the language of hip, is a user of psychedelic drugs: LSD, marijuana ("grass"), mescaline, peyote, methedrine, benzedrine, and a half-dozen others that are classified in the trade as mind-stimulating, consciousness-expanding, or "head" drugs. At the other end of the spectrum are "body" drugs: opium, heroin, barbiturates and even alcohol. These are basically depressants, while head drugs are stimulants. But neither type comes with a manufacturer's guarantee, and the Hashbury is full of people whose minds have been jerked around savagely by drugs that were supposed to induce peaceful euphoria.

Another hazard is the widespread tendency to mix two or three drugs at one time. Acid and alcohol can be a lethal combination, causing fits of violence, suicidal depression and a general freak-out that ends in jail or a hospital.

There is widespread concern, at least in San Francisco, about the dangers of so

many people using so much LSD. A doctor at San Francisco General Hospital says there are at least 10,000 hippies in the Haight-Ashbury, and that about four of them a day wind up in a psychiatric ward on bad trips. He estimates that acidheads make up only 1½ per cent of the city's population, but that the figure for the Haight-Ashbury is more like 100 per cent.

The estimate is absurd; if every hippy in the Hashbury took acid every day, the percentage of users in the neighborhood would still be less than 50 per cent. Many of the local squares try grass from time to time, but few have worked up an appetite for LSD; the difference in potency is roughly the same as the difference between beer and grain alcohol. Even among hippies, anything more than one dose of acid a week is considered excessive.

Most heads are relatively careful about their drug diets, but in recent months the area has attracted so many young, inexperienced hippies that public freak-outs are a fairly routine thing. Neighborhood cops complain that acidheads throw themselves in front of moving cars, strip naked in grocery stores and run through plate-glass windows. On weekdays, the action is about on a par with Macdougall Street in Greenwich Village, but weekend hippies and nervous *voyeurs* from the suburbs make Saturdays and Sundays a nightmarish traffic jam. The sidewalks are so crowded that even a mild freak-out is likely to cause a riot.

Municipal buses no longer use Haight Street on weekends; they were rerouted after mobs of hippies staged sit-down strikes in the street, called mill-ins, which brought all traffic to a standstill. The only buses still running regularly along Haight Street are those from the Gray Line, which recently added "Hippieland" to its daytime sightseeing tour of San Francisco. It was billed as "the only foreign tour within the continental limits of the United States" and was an immediate hit with tourists who thought the Haight-Ashbury was a human zoo. The only sour note on the tour was struck by the occasional hippy who would run alongside the bus, holding up a

mirror.

Last year in Berkeley, hard-core political radicals who had always viewed hippies as spiritual allies began to worry about the long-range implications of the Haight-Ashbury scene. Students who once were angry activists were content to live back in their pads and smile at the world through a fog of marijuana smoke – or, worse, to dress like clowns or American Indians and stay zonked for days at a time on LSD.

Even in Berkeley, political rallies during 1966 had overtones of music, madness and absurdity. Instead of picket signs and revolutionary slogans, more and more demonstrators carried flowers, balloons and colorful posters featuring slogans from Dr. Timothy Leary, the high priest of acid. The drug culture was spreading faster than political activists realized. Unlike the dedicated radicals who emerged from the Free Speech Movement, the hippies were more interested in dropping out of society than they were in changing it. They were generally younger than the political types, and the press dismissed them as the “pot left,” a frivolous gang of druggies and sex kooks who were only along for the ride.

Then Ronald Reagan was elected Governor by almost a million-vote plurality. Shortly afterward, Clark Kerr was fired as president of the University of California – a direct result of Reagan’s victory. In that same November, the G.O.P. gained 50 seats in Congress and served a clear warning on the Johnson Administration that despite all the headlines about Berkeley and the New Left, most of the electorate was a lot more hawkish, hard-nosed and conservative than the White House antennae had indicated.

The lesson was not lost on the hippies, many of whom still considered themselves at least part-time political activists. One of the most obvious casualties of the 1966 elections was the New Left’s illusion of its own leverage. The radical-hippy alliance had been counting on the voters to repudiate the “right-wing, warmonger”

elements in Congress, but instead it was the “liberal” Democrats who got stomped.

So it is no coincidence that the Haight-Ashbury scene developed very suddenly in the winter of 1966-1967 from the quiet, neo-Bohemian enclave that it had been for four or five years to the crowded, defiant dope fortress that it is today. The hippies, who had never really believed they were the wave of the future anyway, saw the election returns as brutal confirmation of the futility of fighting the establishment on its own terms.

There had to be a whole new scene, they said, and the only way to do it was to make the big move – either figuratively or literally – from Berkeley to the Haight-Ashbury, from pragmatism to mysticism, from politics to dope, from the hangups of protest to the peaceful disengagement of love, nature and spontaneity.

The credo of the Haight-Ashbury was expressed, about as well as it can be, by Joyce Francisco, 23-year-old advertising manager of the new hippy newspaper, The San Francisco Oracle. She was talking a few months ago to a columnist from the establishment press, trying to explain what the hippy phenomenon meant: “I love the whole world,” she said. “I am the divine mother, part of Buddha, part of God, part of everything.”

“How do you live?” the columnist asked.

“From meal to meal. I have no money, no possessions. Money is beautiful only when it’s flowing; when it piles up it’s a hang-up. We take care of each other. There’s always something to buy beans and rice for the group, and someone always sees that I get grass or acid. I was in a mental hospital once because I tried to conform and play the game. But now I’m free and happy.”

Next question: “Do you use drugs often?”

“Fairly. When I find myself becoming confused I drop out and take a dose of acid. It’s a short cut to reality; it throws you right into it. Everyone should take it, even children. Why shouldn’t they be enlightened early, instead of waiting till they’re old? Human beings need total freedom. That’s where God is at. We need to shed hypocrisy, dishonesty, phoniness and go back to the purity of our childhood values.”

The columnist then asked if Miss Francisco ever prayed.

“Oh, yes,” she said. “I pray in the morning sun. It nourishes me with its energy so I can spread my love and beauty and nourish others. I never pray *for* anything; I don’t need anything. Whatever turns me on is a sacrament: LSD, sex, my bells, my colors... that is the holy communion, you dig?”

The columnist wasn’t sure if she did or not, but she passed on the interview for the benefit of those readers who might. Many did. Anyone who thinks all the hippies in the Bay Area are living in the Hashbury might just as well leave his head in the sand.

In normal circumstances, the mushrooming popularity of psychedelics would be a main factor in any article on hippies. But the vicious excesses of our drug laws make it impossible, or at least inhuman, to document the larger story. A journalist dealing with heads is caught in a strange dilemma. The only way to write honestly about the scene is to be part of it. If there is one quick truism about psychedelic drugs, it is that anyone who tries to write about them without firsthand experience is a fool and a fraud.

Yet to write from experience is an admission of felonious guilt; it is also a potential betrayal of people whose only “crime” is the smoking of a weed that grows wild all over the world but the possession of which, in California, carries a minimum sentence of two years in prison for a second offense and a minimum of five years for

a third. So, despite the fact that the whole journalism industry is full of unregenerate heads – just as many journalists were hard drinkers during Prohibition – it is not very likely that the frank, documented truth about the psychedelic underworld, for good or ill, will be illuminated at any time soon in the public prints.

If I were to write, for instance, that I recently spent 10 days in San Francisco and was stoned almost constantly... that in fact I was stoned for nine nights out of 10 and that nearly everyone I dealt with smoked marijuana as casually as they drank beer... and if I said many of the people I talked to were not freaks and dropouts, but competent professionals with bank accounts and spotless reputations... and that I was amazed to find psychedelic drugs in homes where I would never have mentioned them two years ago – if all this were true, I could write an ominous screed to the effect that the hippy phenomenon in the Haight-Ashbury is little more than a freak show and a soft-sell advertisement for what is happening all around them... that drugs, orgies and freak-outs are almost as common to a much larger and more discreet cross section of the Bay Area's respectable, upward-mobile society as they are to the colorful drop-outs of San Francisco's new Bohemia.

There is no shortage of documentation for the thesis that the current Haight-Ashbury scene is only the orgiastic tip of a great psychedelic iceberg that is already drifting in the sea lanes of the Great Society. Submerged and uncountable is the mass of intelligent, capable heads who want nothing so much as peaceful anonymity. In a nervous society where a man's image is frequently more important than his reality, the only people who can afford to advertise their drug menus are those with nothing to lose.

And these– for the moment, at least– are the young lotus-eaters, the barefoot mystics and hairy freaks of the Haight-Ashbury – all those primitive Christians, peaceful nay-sayers and half-deluded “flower children” who refuse to participate in a society which looks to them like a mean, calculated and soul-destroying hoax.

As recently as two years ago, many of the best and brightest of them were passionately involved in the realities of political, social and economic life in America. But the scene has changed since then and political activism is going out of style. The thrust is no longer for “change” or “progress” or “revolution,” but merely to escape, to live on the far perimeter of a world that might have been – perhaps should have been – and strike a bargain for survival on purely personal terms.

The flourishing hippy scene is a matter of desperate concern to the political activists. They see a whole generation of rebels drifting off to a drugged limbo, ready to accept almost anything as long as it comes with enough “soma.”

Steve DeCanio, an ex-Berkeley activist now doing graduate work at M.I.T., is a good example of a legion of young radicals who know they have lost their influence but have no clear idea how to get it back again. “This alliance between hippies and political radicals is bound to break up,” he said in, a recent letter. “There’s just too big a jump from the slogan of ‘Flower Power’ to the deadly realm of politics. Something has to give, and drugs are too ready-made as opiates of the people for the bastards (the police) to fail to take advantage of it.”

Decanio spent three months in various Bay Area jails as a result of his civil rights activities and now he is lying low for a while, waiting for an opening. “I’m spending an amazing amount of time studying,” he wrote. “It’s mainly because I’m scared; three months on the bottom of humanity’s trash heap got to me worse than it’s healthy to admit. The country is going to hell, the left is going to pot, but not me. I still want to figure out a way to win.”

Meanwhile, like most other disappointed radicals, he is grimly amused at the impact the hippies are having on the establishment. The panic among San Francisco officialdom at the prospect of 200,000 hippies flocking into the Hashbury this

summer is one of the few things that ex-Berkeley radicals can still laugh at. Decanio’s vision of the crisis was not written as prophecy, but considering the hidden reality of the situation, it may turn out that way: “I can see Mayor Shelley standing on the steps of the Civic Center and shouting into TV microphones, 'The people cry bread! Bread! Let them turn on!' ”

The New York Times Magazine, May 14, 1967

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