F A C H A R B E I T

aus dem Fach

Englisch

Thema:
The Hippie Movement

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1. Introduction

Many associations and images pop up in one’s head when he hears the word “Hippie”: strangely clothed young people with long hair and unshaved beards, with flowers attached to their tie-dyed shirts, always smiling and having glassy eyes due to smoking marijuana, driving around in colourfully painted VWs and listening to singers like Bob Dylan or Joan Baez singing about war and peace and a world where all people can live together without fighting against each other. Although this image may be true partially, it is a stereotype. The Hippie Movement was far more complex, more than just sitting together in front of a military installation, singing “Where have all the flowers gone” and smoking “grass”. It did not appear from nowhere, there were several reasons why such an uprising of young people had to take place – and several reasons why it had to fail in the end. This text will look at all those aspects: Chapter two deals with the question what caused the creation of such a movement. In chapter three, the Movement itself is analyzed: What was its philosophy, beside peace for everybody? Chapter four describes the Woodstock festival in a lot of details – it is a perfect example for the “craziness” of the Hippie Movement, a completely chaotic event where every cliché was fulfilled, but which in the end became a myth itself. Finally, chapter five deals with the Hippie movement fading out and its political branch, the “New Left”, destructing itself.

2. The Times, They Are A-Changing

The fifties and early sixties

2.1 Increasing affluence

To understand what caused the creation of what finally became the Hippie Movement, one has to take a look at the situation after the Second World War and in the 1950s. From an economical point of view, everything seemed perfect for the middle-class American: The victory in the war caused an enthusiastic spirit in the people’s minds, in combination with the late after-effects of Roosevelt’s “New Deal” policy, the private industry fully focussing on civil purposes and the possibility to enter trade with Europe again; economic growth rates were extremely high. With this stable economical background, low unemployment rates and growing personal assets, people could have a big family without the risk of not being able to feed the children. The birth rates in the years directly after the war were extremely high, the generation born in the years
between 1945 and about 1957-1960 is known as the “Baby Boomers”. What had been a
dream in the years before now became reality: A nice white house in the suburbs, a
refrigerator and a TV set inside, a huge car in the yard, the kids playing football with
their father in the garden, the mother bringing them chilled Coca-Cola – the perfect idyll
of an affluent society.

2.2. Rising dangers

To some people, this scenario was only the attempt of the average American to veil the
rising political dangers.
The Soviet Union (SU), also a winner of World War II, had become the second
superpower beside the USA. Without the threat of a Nazi empire in Europe, their coalition
had no more common base. Instead, the differences became bigger and bigger: The
contradictory systems of capitalism and communism weren’t able to cooperate. With the
separation of Germany, the Cold War began to reach out his icy fingers, a darwinistic
challenge with two possibilities - win and rule over the world or lose and perish.
The biggest threat to people not only in America but all over the world was the growing
danger of a war led with weapons of mass destruction. Both the USA and the SU were
entering a circle of never ending armament, spending billions of dollars in order to
outnumber the opponent’s so-called “Overkill”-abilities, leading to a situation where both
countries would have been able to wipe out the planet several times. This always present
danger had big effects even in the daily life of the Americans. Shelters were built all over
the country. School children were taught what to do in case of an atomic explosion in a
way not far from indoctrination. Movies were shown in schools, like the famous “Duck &
Cover”, which seems to be a surrealistic mixture of bizarre fun and frightening naivety to
today's viewers: "The bomb can explode everywhere at any time, and we must be ready
[...] If you see the flash, be sure to duck and cover! [...] Cover yourself carefully, [...] even a thin cloth or a newspaper will protect you [...] Stay covered, a civil defense worker will come immediately and help you”.¹

2.3. Growing radicalisation

In this atmosphere of permanent danger, the political culture in the United States began
to radicalize: Communists or persons who were only thought to be too far left in political
ways were persecuted by institutions such as the FBI under J. Edgar Hoover, the House
Of Un-American Activities (HUAC) or the Senate’s Government Operations Committee
(GOC) led by Senator Joseph McCarthy (who didn’t have anything to do with HUAC,

¹ “Duck and Cover”, available at link #1 (see chapter seven)
although his name is always connected to it in the media). This overheated atmosphere in which every politician, every employee in governmental institutions or agencies could get rid of his job by saying something wrong didn’t leave place for a moderate political left. The so-called “Old Left” like the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) or smaller social-democratic parties had to leave the stage of the political theatre. The members of the Democratic Party mostly moved to the political right – being part of the party’s left wing became dangerous. But not only the political situation caused unhappiness in a growing number of young people. Blacks still suffered from racial oppression and segregation especially in the southern states. Slowly, an opposition to these circumstances began to rise which first caused public attention when the black inhabitants of Montgomery, Alabama, including a unknown local priest called Martin Luther King, boycotted the busses of the city to protest against arrest of black Rosa Parks for not sitting in the back of the bus, where blacks had to sit. The success of this common solidly action inspired a lot of people all over the country, especially the students in the universities – the Civil Rights Movement was born, fighting for more rights for every American, not dependent on the colour of his skin. More and more demonstrations and protests first against the segregation and later against all kinds of current US policy took place. In 1959, the “Students for a Democratic Society” (SDS) was founded, which later on became the most important group to organize demonstrations and marches. It was the heart of what was to be known as the “New Left”: A gathering of people which shared common values of peace, solidarity, anti-militarism, anti-capitalism and anti-totalitarianism. Its founding manifesto, the “Port Huron Statement”, began with the words “We are people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit.” This sentence was applicable to nearly every member of the SDS: Young, intellectual men and women, mostly studying something social or political, willing to take the future in their hands. The New Left had no place in the political scene, it was clear that a party with the SDS’ aims could not be successful, so the early movement focussed on direct, non-parliamentary action and opposition such as helping to spread the visions of the Civil Rights Movement in the society and tried to improve the living conditions of America’s lower social classes.

2.4. New culture

Not only on a political but also on a cultural level things were changing. Although it was only a subculture of literature, the so-called “beatniks” had a big influence of the upcoming New Left and the Hippie Movement. They called themselves “Beat Generation”, with the meaning of both “beaten” and “beatific”. Their poems were heavily influenced

2 Wikipedia entry about McCarthy, link #2
3 „Port Huron Statement“, link #3
4 Wikipedia entry about „Beat Generation“, link #4
by the mentioned political problems, religions of the Far East and the experiences of World War II, with Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg as their most popular and influential representatives. The philosophy of the Beat Generation was the base of the one of the Hippie movement and the later New-Age-“religions”, although the beatniks had a rather pessimistic view on their topics, they did not try to change anything, whereas the Hippies tried to see the positive things and make the best out of their life, including the protest against current circumstances.

Bob Dylan – The Times, They Are A-Changing

Come gather 'round people Wherever you roam And admit that the waters Around you have grown And accept it that soon You'll be drenched to the bone. If your time to you Is worth savin' Then you better start swimmin' Or you'll sink like a stone For the times they are a-changin'.

Come senators, congressmen Please heed the call Don't stand in the doorway Don't block up the hall For he that gets hurt Will be he who has stalled There's a battle outside And it is rarin'. It'll soon shake your windows And rattle your walls For the times they are a-changin'.

Come writers and critics Who prophesize with your pen And keep your eyes wide The chance won't come again And don't speak too soon For the wheel's still in spin And there's no tellin' who That it's namin'. For the loser now Will be later to win For the times they are a-changin'.

Come mothers and fathers Throughout the land And don't criticize What you can't understand Your sons and your daughters Are beyond your command Your old road is Rapidly agin'. Please get out of the new one If you can't lend your hand For the times they are a-changin'.

The line it is drawn The curse it is cast The slow one now Will later be fast As the present now Will later be past The order is Rapidly fadin'. And the first one now Will later be last For the times they are a-changin'.

This 1964 song can be seen as a critical description of the circumstances in the late 50s and early 60s (unlike his other songs, the meaning of it is exactly the one of the text itself, no abstract interpretation is necessary): The world is facing problems never seen before, there is a big threat by the atomic bomb and the whole country is in rage – the blacks, the Civil Right Movement, the students at the universities not willing to take part in the Cold War, a war without use for anyone but for those who make money with it.
(Dylan deals with this aspect in his “Masters Of War”). In the first verse, he compares this situation with rising water level (“that the waters around you have grown”), he calls upon the people to take part (“you better start swimmin’”) in the current revolution if they don’t want to “sink like a stone”. In the second verse, he addresses the media, the authors, to watch carefully what happens. He doesn’t give them the advice to become active themselves – instead of the politicians to whom he speaks to in verse three. But he only tells them to get out of the way – they don’t have an active part in the current revolution. It is rather led by the young people, and thus, he asks the parents not to try to hold them back if they can’t join themselves. In the last verse, he makes clear that it is not possible to stop what’s going on: “The line it is drawn, the curse it is cast”. He talks about the fact that new (young) people will come to take the power, and the old ones will not have a chance anymore (“The slow one now will later be fast, as the present now will later be past”). All in all, Dylan gives a suitable description of the situation of the eve of the Hippie Movement – the world needs to be changed, and those who will try it are ready.

2.5 He was a friend of mine – The early sixties

The situation in the early sixties was very complex: The Cuban Missile Crisis in the fall of 1962 was the climax of the Cold War, another world war, this time with massive usage of weapons of mass destruction, seemed unavoidable. Only due to the prudence of John F. Kennedy and Nikita Krushchev, a massive conflict could be prevented – the hawks in both governments would have pushed the red buttons immediately. This was the biggest milestone on the street of the Cold War, and it caused more and more people to think about what was happening. A lot of them, mostly young people, came to the conclusion that things had to be changed, that the world couldn’t stand such a big conflict for a long time. But the big protests didn’t start yet, Kennedy was a too big figure, a symbol of a new era in politics, that the masses didn’t want to criticize. But two events changed the unwillingness of the people:

First, Kennedy’s assassination in November 1963. The act of the killing itself was important enough – a leader who dedicated himself to peace being killed was a big shock for the people not only in the USA but all over the world. The message was clear: Violence beat peacefulness. But much more important was that his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, did not stand for anything that prevented people from protesting against him. In fact, most members of the New Left and the other movements made him responsible for the escalation of the Vietnam War – the second event causing the numbers of movement’s sympathisers to rise more and more. The hopes the youth had of Kennedy are expressed in the Byrd’s “He Was A Friend Of Mine”:

6 link #6
This song expresses the deep grief people felt about his death. He was seen as a friend, a person with power who was able to change things to the good – and now he was dead, murdered, and the nation was on the way to an uncertain future.

The first major success of the growing movements was the “Free Speech Movement” at Berkeley University, in the San Francisco area, in 1964. In these years, it was forbidden to express one’s political opinion or anything related to politics at the campus area. A student called Jack Weinberg collecting money for the Civil Rights Movement in front of the university’s main gate was arrested by police – which caused several hundred people to block the road. The policemen and Weinberg sat in the car for over 36 hours, with students all around them giving speeches and just sitting on the road. In the following weeks, the protests grew bigger and bigger until in December 1964, police arrested 800 young people. But the university officials saw that it was impossible to keep up the current restrictions: Since January 1965, a certain place of the area, the “Sprout Steps”, could be used for political discussions and speeches. The success of this act of disobedience was an important factor of San Francisco becoming the capital of the Hippie Movement.

3. If you’re going to San Francisco...

The Hippie Movement

He was a friend of mine
He was a friend of mine
His killing had no purpose
No reason or rhyme
Oh he was a friend of mine

He was in Dallas town
He was in Dallas town
From a sixth floor window
a gunner shot him down
Oh he was in Dallas town

He never knew my name
He never knew my name
Though I never met him
I knew him just the same
Oh he was a friend of mine

Leader of a nation
For such a precious time
He was a friend of mine

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7 link #7
8 link #8
With the Free Speech Movement showing that the students of Berkeley were radical ones who were mostly part of the New Left’s ideologies and San Francisco being one of the most liberal cities of the USA, it was nearly determined that it had to become the centre of the Hippie Movement. The town was already the home of the beatniks, who called themselves “hip”. The young people coming to San Francisco adapted the bohemian lifestyle of their beat idols, whose philosophy and wisdom they admired, but in the eyes of the old beatniks, those youngster’s only purpose of life seemed to get drugs. They called them “junior grade hipsters”, or in short “Hippies” – a term the countercultural youth soon used for itself in a provocative way. In the Haight-Ashbury neighbourhood of San Francisco, they found a suitable home – old and cheap Victorian houses and liberal inhabitants, not too far away from the University of California in Berkeley. Soon, alternative cloths and drugs were sold everywhere (the area was often called “Hashbury”) and people made music on the streets and in the parks. Even a hospital was founded, the “Free Clinic” in which former military doctors cured ill people, often from drug abuse, for free. The term “Freak” comes from this hospital (pronounce “Free Clinic” fast!)¹⁰, first as a name for someone completely drugged who needed help, later as a self-description of the Hippies.

The following two years, the non-commercial and nearly non-public time of the Movement, were characterized by living in a way very close to the substantial Hippie philosophy – communal housing (preferably somewhere far away from cities) and free love, uncommon clothing, protesting for peace and against authorities and the Vietnam war, listening to new music and consuming a lot of drugs.

### 3.1 Hippie philosophy

#### 3.1.1 New culture of living

The Hippies established new forms of living together: Communes and free love. Communes were households in which everybody had the same rank, independent of the person’s sex, occupation etc. Ideally, a commune was situated somewhere out in the country: A little farm in the nature, completely build of pure natural materials (houses of wood etc.), growing crops in a very natural way (no use of chemicals), people wearing self-made clothes made of natural fabric. Love should be completely free within such a community, no marriage should be needed and children should not obey a certain couple but being grown up by the whole group. Beside the fact that these communes nearly

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⁹ link #9

¹⁰ „Hashbury“ and „Freak“: email from Artie Kornfeld
never worked in reality, the average American was not very fond of these new forms of living.

3.1.2. My hair like Jesus wore it – Hip style of clothing

Clothing and fashion were a big part of the Hippie’s self-identification. When one thinks about how a Hippie looks, everyone has the same image in his mind: Men with long hair and often beards, both not cut accurately but grown “wild”, women with even longer hair and colourful beads in it. Flowers were also very hip (cf. “... be sure to wear some flowers in your hair”), but even with long hair you often face a pure practical problem: How to fix a single flower? From the point of clothing, nearly everything could be worn if it had the right look: A bit dirty, frazzled, with lots of buttons including of course the obligatory peace symbol. In the early time of the Movement, Army clothing was very popular: The green and brown colours, originally thought for easier hiding in the woods and meadows, showed the mental connection to everything natural and in the same way, wearing camouflage clothing as a peace-loving rebel was something provocative. Later, when the Movement became more and more popular, the originally Indonesian tie-dyeing technique found its way into the hip culture. It was nearly perfect for the Hippie purposes: Nearly every (cheap) fabric could be handled, everyone could do it at home, it gave the possibility to apply creativity, and in the end, extremely colourful cloths were created. San Francisco became a very interesting market for dye producers in the second half of the sixties.

Those colourful styles were applied to everything currently popular: Women wore wide skirts, sometimes tie-dyed, sometimes with “normal” patterns, often showing flowers. In the late sixties, bell-bottom trousers were en vogue, first in the trendsetting Bay Area, later all over the country and all over the world. Wearing cloths resembling to those of Indians were also very common, especially necklaces of nice stones or colourful headbands, which had a welcome second purpose: They kept the long hair from falling into the face.

All those new styles of course caused the disapproval of the older generation – which surely was also a purpose, a radically new appearance to distinguish oneself from the narrow-minded parents and the conservative society. This provocation of course had its effect: A big number of young people were thrown out of their homes by conservative fathers, a boy who didn’t want to cut his hair – unbelievable! Those homeless teens were only assured in their attitude, seeing that the society indeed didn’t want them. They often found their way to the “promised land”, to San Francisco, where the community grew bigger and bigger and no one complained about tie-dye shirts or too long hair.
Hair is also the topic of the above quoted lyric: It is an excerpt from the Broadway musical "Hair", 1968, which was and is not very much liked by Hippies due to its stereotype description of the hip culture. But some of its texts are quite useful – like the above one. It shows how much importance hairstyle had to the Hippies, how creative they dressed it, depending on the own taste. There was only one condition: Hair had to be long, at least longer as the average American liked it to be. The excerpt also deals with the problems between the generations – “My hair like Jesus wore it / Hallelujah I adore it / Hallelujah Mary loved her son / Why don't my mother love me?” - although it also shows the musical’s clichéd treatment of the Hippie culture, too: “Give a home to the fleas in my hair”. Nearly everyone thinks Hippies didn’t wash themselves, were smelling etc. That may be right for the hardest ones of them, but not for the mass: “Yes, we washed our hair. Hey, deep down we were still Baby Boomers from suburbia!”, a unknown contemporary witness says.12

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11 link #10
12 link #11
3.1.3. And it’s one, two three, what are we fighting for...?

The Vietnam War and protest marches

The war in Vietnam was one of the most important factors in the whole Hippie movement and the central political "event" in the late sixties. The USA was never officially in war with North Vietnam, their whole military forces in the area had the status of "military advisors" of the Republic of South Vietnam. Jungle warfare against an enemy knowing the landscape, being at home in the "green hell", was terrible for the young American soldiers, who had been drafted in big numbers, not wanting to fight a war against a country they had nothing to do with and against a big number of the people of the country they had protect from the enemy forces. So this war became the biggest target of the young people’s rebellion.

When the war became larger and larger in the years after 1965, the need for soldiers also grew. A lot of people were drafted, which caused the protest of the rebelling youth. Ironically, those who were the first ones to organize a sit-in or a demonstration against the policy of sending young men to a country far away were the students at the universities – who were all excluded from the draft. But the Hippie movement not only consisted of students, and soon, a lot of young men flew from the army, preferably to San Francisco, and "draft card burnings" were staged in front of the military installations, with a lot of media presence. Destroying your draft card was sentenced with jail up to six years, but the police faced the problem that they weren’t able to take legal action against several thousand young men at one time. Although many were arrested; the most prominent one was David Baez, the husband of Joan Baez.

In Vietnam itself, the situation was horrible. The war in the jungle, the fight against an often invisible enemy caused extreme psychological problems among the soldiers. A lot of them retreated into a surreal world of their own, some went completely mad, became unbelievably cruel and killed everyone in their way, like in the massacre of My Lai. A far bigger number started taking drugs – marijuana and LSD consume was a very big problem among the military forces in Vietnam. This situation was of course reported to the Americans at home, it caused massive protest – mostly led by the SDS. Thousands of young people went on the street regularly, blockaded roads and governmental buildings, sitting there for days, singing songs, taking drugs – the famous sit-ins which soon became a Hippie myth of their own. Those demonstrations were mostly visited by typical New-Left-members, university students or draft resisters. An average, middle-class American would never have thought of joining a sit-in, although resistance against the war was widely spread among the US population, as nearly everyone had a relative fighting somewhere between Saigon and Hanoi – it just didn’t become public, McCarthy & Co. had left a deep impression in people’s minds.
In his “Fixin’-to-die-rag”, the San Francisco musician Country Joe McDonald deals with the war in a very sarcastic way. The music itself is very joyful, a sharp contrast to the topic. In the first verse, he ridicules about the army’s efforts to recruit voluntaries, which tried to create the image of a holiday camp. The chorus deals with the fact that many Americans and of course many soldiers just couldn’t see a sense in fighting in a country so far away, especially if a big part of the population didn’t want them to protect them from communism. In the third verse, the “Wall Street”, which means the US industry, is accused of supporting the war only for financial purposes – in fact, companies like Dow Chemical (producer of Napalm and Agent Orange) made loads of money with the war. In the last verse, he talks about the conservative parents, the fathers often World War II veterans, who thought it might be best for their sons if they went to the military – independent of the son’s wishes. Bob Dylan also deals with this problem in his song “John Brown”14: “John Brown went off to war / to fight on a foreign shore / his mama sure was proud of him! / He stood straight and tall / in his uniform and all / his mamas face broke out in a grin”.

3.1.4 Purple haze all in my brain – Drugs

Drugs had a very, very big importance in the Hippie Movement. Without LSD (“Lysergsäurediethylamid”, so called “acid”) and its psychedelic effects, the cultural
achievements like songs and paintings would not have been possible. LSD was the most important drug of the actual San Francisco Hippie scene – not marijuana, as it is often thought. The “real” Hippies preferred LSD due to its far more impressive effects, although marijuana was also widely spread, but did not have that substantial position. The drug was developed in 1938 by Albert Hofmann, doing research on ergot alkaloids for medical purposes in the Sandoz laboratories, Basel. Five years after the first creation of LSD-25, which seemed quite useless to him, he followed a “strange intuition” and created it again. On Friday, the 4th of April 1943, he took 250 micrograms of the crystalline powder – and experienced the first LSD trip in history. The following years, LSD was mostly used in psychological therapies until in the early sixties, a Harvard teacher called Timothy Leary discovered it and made it popular among his friends and students. When the Sandoz’ license expired in 1963 (the same year Leary was fired in Harvard and went to New York continuing his experiments), the drug started spreading rapidly among the new subculture. In 1965, the Berkeley chemist Owsley Stanley went to Los Angeles, used his contacts to buy masses of raw material and produced at least 100.000 doses of LSD, some people even speak of numbers up to 10.000.000 doses. He went back to San Francisco and started giving it away to underground groups like the “Merry Prankstes”, led by Ken Kesey, a former student of Leary who had a lot of money due to the success of his book “One flew over the cuckoo’s nest” and was thus able to finance big parties during which LSD was spread for free – the famous “acid tests”. These parties were a big attraction in San Francisco, with hundreds of people being high and psychedelic music being played. The city officials of course weren’t very happy with drug addicts surging in their town and thus, acid became forbidden in the whole USA on 16th of October 1966 (although from a medical point of view, LSD does not, against public opinion, cause physical dependence). The prohibition did not lead to a lower consuming of LSD, with the Hippie movement becoming larger and larger in the late sixties, drug usage grew accordingly.

Jimi Hendrix – Purple Haze

Purple haze all in my brain
Lately things just don’t seem the same
Actin’ funny
But I don’t know why
’Scuse me while I kiss the sky

Purple haze all around
Don’t know if I’m comin’ up or down
Am I happy or in misery?
Whatever it is
That girl put a spell on me

Purple haze all in my eyes
Don’t know if it’s day or night
You got me blowin’, blowin' my mind

15 link #14
“Purple Haze” was the name of Owsley’s most potent LSD creation, and Jimi Hendrix, one of the chemist’s best customers, dedicated a song to it. Accompanied with psychedelic, dissonant guitar sound, Hendrix sings about the effects of the drug: Complete confusion (“Acting funny / but I don’t know why”), hallucinogen images (“Purple haze all in my brain [all around / all in my eyes]”), lost feeling of time (“Don’t know if it’s day or night”) and the risk of a “bad trip”, a horrible drug experience (“Is it tomorrow, or just the end of time”). LSD was often used for “philosophical” purposes, opening ones mind for new intellectual horizons (“You got me blowin’, blowin’ my mind”).

3.1.5. So you want to be a rock’n’roll star – Hip music

Hippie music can be separated in two sectors:
On the one hand the “self-made” music. Sitting together with guitars, tambourines, drums and harmonicas (or anything else which can be used to produce sound) and making music, preferably under the influence of marijuana or LSD, was very popular among Hippies. The songs played were often of Folk origin (Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie etc.) or had their roots in countries far away (like “Kumba yah”). Such “performances” often took place in public areas like parks (there were always some people in the Golden Gate Park making music one could join) or during sit-ins and demonstrations.
On the other hand there was of course a professional music scene. Bands like Jefferson Airplane, The Grateful Dead, The Byrds, The Mamas And The Papas or Creedence Clearwater Revival created a completely new sound, unheard before. The songs were often written and performed under influence of psychedelic drugs, electrical guitars were the most important instruments.

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The Byrds – So you want to be a rock’n’roll star

So you want to be a rock 'n' roll star? Then it's time to go downtown
Then listen now to what I say Where the agent man won't let you down
Just get an electric guitar Sell your soul to the company
Then take some time Who are waiting there to sell plastic
and learn how to play ware
And with your hair swung right And in a week or two
And your pants too tight If you make the charts
It's gonna be all right The girls'll tear you apart

16 Link #15
The price you paid for your riches and fame
Was it all a strange game?
You're a little insane
The money, the fame, the public acclaim
Don't forget what you are
You're a rock 'n' roll star!

Although the Byrds’ song sounds quite naïve and optimistic, it describes not only the dreams of young people, but also nearly exactly the development of Jefferson Airplane, the most successful San Franciscan band. The founder, Marty Balin, looked around for some people in the clubs to create a band, they played some songs, found an agent (Mathew Katz, who became one of the most hated persons of the Bay Area music scene later due to its exploitive methods) – and their first album, “Jefferson Airplane Takes Off” became a top-seller immediately. With Grace Slick joining the band and bringing to own songs with her, Somebody To Love and White Rabbit, they finally became superstars. The history of the Grateful Dead was nearly similar – they met during an acid test.

3.1.6. This is the dawning of the Age of Aquarius... - Influence of astrology and eastern religions

Hippies took over a big part of the religions of the Far East. They did not adopt a special one, but formed their own mixture of certain pieces of Buddhism, Hinduism etc. Due to the importance of peaceful living (especially in Buddhism) and exploring one’s own mind, they were absolutely ideal for the young people in search for the real truth. Drug taking to gain spiritual insights is widespread among the priests of Hinduism, so the experiences made by them could be easily compared to those of the LSD-taking flower children. Impressed by the massive psychological effects of the psychedelic, hallucinogenic drugs, they searched for a meaning of these new experiences. Another point that explains the success of those religions among the Hippies is surely that they were completely new in the USA – only minorities from other countries had practiced them before, and abolition of Christianity by a big number of young people was also a sign of rebellion (although Hippies also adopted main parts of their former religion – charity and humility suit wonderful in the non-capitalistic hip philosophy).

Another main part of this spiritual part of “being hip” was the astrology. With the “Age of Pisces” (from about 150 BC – 2000 AD) fading out slowly, the “Age of Aquarius” was thought to come and bring a new world. The Aquarius is a symbol for peace, creaticity, changing the old and creating new orders. Thus it was perfect for the Hippies’ ideology, who wanted to change the world with exactly these aims. In the musical “Hair”, the title song is about this topic:
The song expresses all the hopes and wishes people had of the upcoming new age: “Harmony and understanding, sympathy and trust abounding”, “The mind’s true liberation” etc. No matter what was now, the problems would be all gone as soon as the new age was there: “Guided by the cosmic forces, oh, care for us; Aquarius!”. These philosophies found their way into the “New Age”-religions which became popular in the Seventies and Eighties.

### 3.2. From the Summer of Love to Woodstock

The main time of the Hippie Movement began in January 14th 1967 with the “Human be-in” at the Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. It was a big festival, with Jefferson Airplane and The Grateful Dead playing and Timothy Leary speaking his famous sentence “Turn on, tune in, drop out!” Although LSD had been forbidden in October 1966, it was consumed by nearly everyone – together with marijuana, which was illegal anyway. In the following months, more and more young people came to Haight-Ashbury, disappointed by the society, escaping the draft, wanting to change the world or at least their life. The original hip philosophy became a mass product, but it did not develop further.

The media became more and more aware of the situation, and soon, the upcoming summer was declared as the “Summer of Love”, a term never used by Hippies themselves. Lou Adler, the producer of The Mamas And The Papas, planned to stage a big festival in Monterey, the “Monterey Pop” and advised John Phillips, one of the band members, to write a song for it. Scott McKenzie, the singer who was planned to actually perform the song, had big doubts about the festival: “’Why don’t we write a song - well,
why don't you, John, write one - saying something like, 'If you go to San Francisco for the Monterey Pop Festival, like, behave yourselves' - let's not have a big riot up there." So Philips sat down, took a pen and wrote "San Francisco" within 20 minutes. On the day of the recording, McKenzie met some friends who just made some girdles of flowers. They came with him, sat around him in the studio, meditating, and McKenzie sang the song – and some days later, it became a hit\(^{20}\). Radio stations couldn't stop playing it, all over the world, people were dreaming of love and peace in San Francisco. Who knows what had become of the song if Phillips had really written "If you’re going to San Francisco, be sure to behave yourself"....

**Scott McKenzie – San Francisco\(^{21}\)**

If you're going to San Francisco
Be sure to wear
Some flowers in your hair
If you're going to San Francisco
You're gonna meet
Some gentle people there

All across the nation
Such a strange vibration
People in motion
There's a whole generation
With a new explanation
People in motion

For those who come to San Francisco
Summertime will be a love-in there
In the streets of San Francisco
Gentle people
With flowers in their hair

For those who come to San Francisco
Be sure to wear
Some flowers in your hair
If you come to San Francisco
Summertime will be a love-in there

The song expresses the dreams people had of San Francisco, the Hippie scene and the Summer of Love – a beautiful town, "gentle people with flowers in their hair", a place where “summertime will be a love-in”. It also deals with the general mood of the American youth: The country was on a new way, a way to “harmony and understanding” (as it is expressed in the musical “Hair”), “all across the nation / such a strange vibration”, as Philips calls it.

The festival itself became a gigantic success: The town of Monterey was full with long-haired people in colourful clothes, the most popular bands of the decade played, among them Jefferson Airplane, The Byrds, The Who and The Mamas and The Papas. Jimi Hendrix had his first major appearance in America – and founded his myth by burning his guitar. About 60.000 people attended the festival at the Monterey fairground, it became the archetype of the rock-festival.

The following time until the summer of 1969 was everything the Hippies dreamt of: Peaceful living, their own Movement growing bigger and bigger, police being not knowing what to do facing thousands of people taking drugs in the publicity. San Francisco and the Haight-Ashbury were the centre of the hip world, with long-haired freaks everywhere\(^{19}\) link #17

\(^{20}\) link #18

\(^{21}\) link #19
Demonstrations against the war in Vietnam became larger accordingly to the movements growth, and in 1968, the anti-war senator Eugene McCarthy (who had nothing to do with Joseph McCarthy, the “Communist eater”) ran against President Lyndon B. Johnson in the race for the Democrat’s presidency candidate. The New Left suddenly saw a light at the end of the tunnel: McCarthy, who shared much of their ideals, would be able to bring those ideals into real politics – even as a President! Students, Hippies and other New Leftists started to support McCarthy, by shaving their beards, cutting their long hair and walking from house to house, promoting their favourite candidate – a campaign which was soon known as “Clean for Gene”, because the middle-class people those young men and women went to would not have talked to them if they kept their hairstyle, clothes etc. President Lyndon B. Johnson soon declared his withdrawal from the candidacy, it seemed clear that McCarthy would win, but Robert Kennedy entered the race. He and McCarthy had a neck-and-neck race through several primaries – until Kennedy was shot in June. At the Democratic Convention in Chicago in late August, several thousand people were protesting against the war, the whole city was in rage. The demonstrators were beaten up by the police, defeated with tear gas. During those riots on the streets, Hubert H. Humphrey, successor of Kennedy, won the election against McCarthy. The New Left’s chance to enter politics was gone. The elation gave way to deep sadness when right-wing Richard Nixon became President. The “hardcore” Hippie scene began to withdraw from publicity, to withdraw into itself. Although the Movement began to split up and decline, its biggest and most attention causing event was to come up: the Woodstock festival.

4. Three Days Of Peace And Music

The Woodstock Festival

4.1. Preparation

Max Yasgur hadn’t read the ad in a Wall Street Journal of January 1968 which said “Young man with unlimited capital looking for legitimate and interesting investment opportunities and business propositions”. Neither had he heard the names John Roberts
or Joel Rosenman. But it were these two men, aged 26 and 24, who placed the ad and rang his doorbell one day in the early summer of 69 and asked if it would be possible to organize a music festival on his ground in White Lake, town of Bethel, Upstate New York. Joel and John were both sons of rich families from New York and in the 67/68 winter, they were writing the plot of a TV series about two young friends with more money than brain. The ad served the purpose to take ideas for the story from the answers. One of the letters seemed interesting to them, not for the TV series, but for real investment. Soon the Media Sound recording studio was founded in New York. Through this studio, they met Artie Kornfeld and Michel Lang who were always fond of the idea of making a big festival in Woodstock, where all the famous artists like Bob Dylan and Joan Baez lived. Although the two Wall Street men didn’t have a clue about music, artists and big festivals, they were immediately enthusiastic about the idea. But the town of Wallkill, next to Woodstock, originally planned to host the festival, was far less enthusiastic. In fact, the people were horrified of the thought of 50.000 Hippies coming to their little village, taking drugs, making free love and listening to strange music. After weeks of struggling for the permission for the event, it was clear that another site had to be found. Rosenman and Roberts were driving around the hilly landscape of the area, and as they got into a big bowl, a natural amphitheatre, they immediately realized that this was the definitive place to stage a festival. And thus, three days later, they stood in front of the land owner Max Yasgur’s kitchen door.

A contract was signed, 27 days before the “Woodstock Music And Arts Fair”, the official title of the event, took place. 27 days to build up a festival infrastructure for more than 60.000 people who already bought a ticket. The team worked day and night, but when only one week was left, they realized that it wasn’t possible to complete everything. They had to decide whether to build a stage or fences. A festival without a stage was useless, and a festival without fences meant that everybody was able to come in without paying. Rosenman and Roberts decided to build the stage, already thinking about the money they lost in this very moment. On 13th of August, the organizers visited the site. It was the Wednesday before the festival, and already about 75.000 people were sitting on the hill, watching the construction of the stage.

4.2. Friday

Along with this masses of people came of course a lot of traffic. By Friday, half a million people had arrived at the site, and another 500.000 were on their way. The beginning of the event was planned for 16:00, Joan Baez was the first artist to enter the stage. But the problem was: Joan Baez wasn’t there. Neither were all the other artists, every single one was stuck in the gigantic traffic jam. The only ones who had already arrived were Tim Hardin (“If I were a carpenter”) and Richie Havens. Hardin was hanging around so stoned he couldn’t even think of standing on his feet, not to speak about holding a guitar.
So at 5:07pm, Richie Havens entered the stage, already strumming his guitar to the chords of “Handsome Johnny”, not knowing he had to play for over three hours until the first chopper with artists arrived. In the end, he was improvising, completely exhausted, with fingers nearly bleeding. His last song “Freedom” became one of the hymns of Woodstock, although he thought it up on the stage, thinking of a gospel text he heard some time before. When he left at about 8pm, only one artist had arrived: Country Joe McDonald. He stepped out of the chopper and was immediately dragged to the stage by Micheal Lang. Someone picked up the Yamaha guitar Riche Havens had played, attached a tie to it and gave it to Country Joe, who didn’t really know what was going on when he was pushed to the stage. Left out alone there with his band not yet arrived and half a million people in front of him, he began the “Notorious Fish Cheer”: His band, “Country Joe and the Fish”, began every concert with “Gimme an F... Gimme an I...” until the “FISH” was complete. But this, time he shouted “Gimme an F... Gimme an U...C...K”. The crowd was nearly exploding when everyone shouted “Fuck!” several times and caused a scandal in the next mornings newspapers. Half a million young people shouting obscene words was oil on the fire of conservative politicians. His following “I-feel-like-I’m-fixin’-to-die-Rag”, a song critically ridiculing the Vietnam war, was also not useful for increasing the conservative society’s opinion about him, his band and the whole Movement.

Friday was completely dedicated for the Folk singers, simply due to the fact they played mostly alone – picking up a singer with his guitar by helicopter is far easier than transporting a whole band. Arlo Guthrie, completely drugged, told the cheering masses that the New York Thruway had been closed due to the heavy traffic. This Folk day of the festival finished with one of the absolute stars of the scene, Joan Baez. Originally, Bob Dylan was planned to play, but he had a motorcycle accident some weeks before and was hardly able to walk at those memorable days in August. Ironically, the whole festival only took place in New York due to Dylan living there – far more Hippie visitors, even more than those 500.000 which actually were there, could have been reached if the event had taken place in the San Francisco Bay Area. Thus, the main act of Woodstock wasn’t there – but Joan Baez also did a wonderful job. The masses, listening to her in the middle of the night, simply got crazy about her performance. She told a lot of personal things, like some stories about her husband David who had been arrested for burning his draft card (cf. chapter 3.1.3. Baez also played a song for the American Draft Resistance Movement, together with the black Folk singer Jeffrey Shurtleff : “We’d like to sing a song for the governor of California, Ronald Reagan (they pronounced it “Ray-Guns”)...” – and then they started singing a slightly modified version of The Byrd’s “Truck Driving Man”: “He don’t like resistance I know / he said it last night on a big TV show/ [...] / He’s a drug store truck driving man / he’s the head of the Ku Klux Klan”. Not to mention that the Californian government was not pleased. At 2am on Saturday morning, Baez left the
stage, about the same time a tractor drove over a sleeping 17 year old boy who was immediately dead. The driver has never been identified.

4.3. Saturday

On Saturday morning, the first thing the crew did was to put up a medical section: Three tents, one for drugged people to calm down, one for those who cut their feet due to broken fragments of glass and one for people who injured their eyes by staring in the sunny sky, a typical Woodstock phenomenon. Meanwhile the New York State government declared the Yasgur farm a disaster area, so the National Guard flew in doctors, nurses, medical equipment and food. What an irony: the army helps to let a Hippie festival take place!

From the musical point of view, Saturday was reserved for the heavy rock groups such as The Who and The Grateful Dead. The completely unknown Mexican guitarist Carlos Santana and his band played in the afternoon. His performance was rather mediocre, but when everybody thought they had finished, Santana shyly addressed the audience with “We’ve got another tune for you... it’s called Soul Sacrifice...” – the crowd nearly exploded during this 13-minute guitar masterpiece full of rhythm and Latin-American fire.

Late at night, the organizers faced a huge problem: the management of The Grateful Dead, The Who and Janis Joplin refused to let their artists play because they heard Woodstock Ventures Inc. had financial problems due to the festival being declared free on Friday. They wanted to see cash. So Rosenman phoned around, but which bank could pay 100.000$ at midnight? In the end he reached Charlie Prince, manager of the local branch of Sullivan County National Bank. Prince broke into his own bank to look for money, and in the end, he found a whole bag of cash which had been forgotten to be locked. John Roberts wrote a check over “50 or 100.000 Dollars”, Prince gave him the money and the show could go on. The last ones to perform that day were The Who, introducing their new album “Tommy”. During the show, Abbie Hoffman entered the stage, wanting to speak to the crowd about a teen having been sentenced with ten years in jail for marijuana possessing. Pete Townshend, the guitarist, didn’t recognize him and smashed him with his guitar until Hoffman left the stage. He was one of the two persons hurt by violence during the whole festival (the other one was an old judge being beaten up by a stoned Hippie), thus Woodstock was the most peaceful event in the whole history, only two violently injured persons on half a million people.

4.4. Sunday

Sunday morning began with “breakfast in bed for 400.000” as Wavy Gravy, one of the helping crew which consisted mainly of members of the Hog Farm commune, announced to the crowd. Simple food consisting of wheat grits flavored with peanuts was given out
to everybody. Jefferson Airplane, which were originally planned to play at Saturday, made the beginning. Grace Slick addressed the crowd with “Good morning people... it’s a new dawn! You have seen the heavy groups, now comes morning maniac music...” and sang a version of “Somebody To Love” which consisted of more “Good morning”-shouts than actual lyrics.

Later that day, Jimi Hendrix, who had taken a big amount of LSD, walked through the crowd, talked with girls – and no one noticed. Someone brought him to the medical tent, and when he laid there for more than 30 minutes. Finally someone noticed this small black guy, joking about him looking like Hendrix. Only now the nurses noticed who he was. In the evening, a big thunderstorm hit the area, the electricity had to be switched off to prevent damage, and everybody behind the stage worried about the towers with the loudspeakers and stage lighting which were (due to the limited time left the week before) constructed not very safely. The towers kept standing, but the site was covered with mud, on some places more than 30cm. The audience didn’t care, the general mood was still very, very good.

The festival came to an end on Monday morning. Most of the people had already left, and only about 20.000 kept staying there, listening to Jimi Hendrix and his legendary performance of “The Star Spangled Banner”. A guitar tune representing the America of the late 60s, disrupted, deranged, his guitar imitating crashing jet planes and falling bombs, a cacophony of pure noise with fragments of the national anthem, the feeling of the youth converted into music. These memorable three minutes and thirty-seven seconds were and are a milestone in the history of rock music. With Hendrix leaving the stage, the festival was over. The Yasgur farm looked like a World War battlefield and Woodstock Ventures faced debts of a couple of million dollars. The family of John Roberts paid everything in the end, but with Michael Wadleigh winning an Oscar for his documentary movie “Woodstock”, which was also a big success in the cinemas, millions of dollars were earned, and finally, there was even a slight gain.

Woodstock was a big mark in the history of the Movement, it was its peak, the fulfilling of all the Hippie dreams – a big crowd, just listening to music, practicing free love and being on drugs for three days, but it also marked the beginning of the decline of the Hippie Movement. It caused the creation of “Woodstock Nation”: a nation only existing in the minds of people, far away from Wall Street brokers only looking for money, far away from blacks being beaten up by cops, far away from nuclear missiles appearing in the sky. It was a nation of love and peace and music, a home for everybody. Woodstock Nation only had and has one fault: It never existed outside the heads.

By the time we got to Woodstock
We were half a million strong
And everywhere there was song and celebration
And I dreamt I saw the bombers and jet planes
Riding shotgun in the sky
5. The Needle And The Damage Done

The end of the Movement

Although Woodstock fulfilled everything the Hippies expected and dreamt of – a chaotic event full of music, love and peace – it was clear that the Movement in its original form couldn’t exist any more. The masses had discovered hip culture, and the same way this
culture found its way to public acceptance, the real Hippies started to withdraw into their imaginary “Woodstock Nation”. Mass culture assimilated most of the peripheral things of the Movement, but it did not adopt its essentials. Being hip became a trend, running around in old clothes and with flowers in the hair was something a lot of people were fond of soon – but it was only a trend, not a philosophy of life. Trends don’t last for long, early in the Seventies, being hip gave way to the upcoming Disco era. Being deeply deranged by this sellout of their very own identification, the real Hippies began to radicalize in several ways.

The political resistance became more and more extreme. With demonstrations and sit-ins becoming rather fairs than expressions of political will, with young people going their not due to their opinion but to the fact of protesting just being cool, extreme New Leftists soon looked for new ways to gain public attention. As the SDS slowly broke apart because of inner conflicts, its radical communist members founded a group called “Weathermen”. It was named after a line of Bob Dylan’s “Subterranean Homesick Blues”\(^22\), “You don’t need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows”. Although it had nearly no support within the population and absolutely none within the peaceful Hippies, the “Weather Underground” caused a very bad publicity for the New Left (or rather what had been left of it) and its political aims by doing a series of bomb attacks on US governmental installations such as the Pentagon. With this background, the last hope of achieving political importance passed away, particularly with Nixon being president. The New Left faded out.

A certain number of “hardcore” Hippies left the USA after they saw no more future for the Movement in their home country. Most of them went to Asia, where the religions that had influenced them had their origins. Especially Goa in India became a place of pilgrimage for Hippies. They lived there undisturbed, could use their drugs, develop their philosophy and music – 20 years later, the Techno and Rave movements spread over the world from Goa.

But the bigger part of the “beautiful people” stayed in the States. As described above, they started to become more and more unrealistic, only dreaming, living in “Woodstock Nation”. Hard drugs became more and more popular – the extremely dangerous heroine and cocaine. The results were catastrophic: In contrary to marijuana, of whose abuse only one person has died yet (in 2003, after smoking six joints a day for 16 years) and LSD, whose lethal dose is not known up to today, especially heroine can lead to a quick death easily. Janis Joplin (4th October 1970, overdose of heroin) and Jimi Hendrix (18th September 1970, choked on his vomit after taking sleeping pills) were the most popular victims of the exploding drug abuse. Neil Young dedicated a song on his 1971 album “Harvest” to Danny Whitten, a member of his band who died of heroin. One day on Young’s 1971 tour with his band Crazy Horse, Whitten was so high during rehearsals that

\(^{22}\) link #20
he couldn’t hold his guitar any more. Young gave him 50 Dollar and bought him a ticket back to LA – where Whitten used the money to buy pure heroin, which killed him\(^{23}\).

\[
\text{Neil Young – The Needle And The Damage Done}^{24}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{I caught you knockin'} & \quad \text{I sing the song} \\
\text{at my cellar door} & \quad \text{because I love the man} \\
\text{I love you, baby,} & \quad \text{I know that some} \\
\text{can I have some more} & \quad \text{of you don’t understand} \\
\text{Ooh, ooh, the damage done.} & \quad \text{Milk blood to keep from running out.}
\end{align*}
\]

Although Young wrote this song for Whitten, it can be seen as an example for the drug “careers” of many musicians and “normal” people: Being one time addicted to the drug, one can’t get rid of it (“I love you baby can I have some more?”). With the loss of bands to actual reality, many Hippies focused only on drug taking, became criminal to get the money, lost sight of the rest of their life. As they saw their political actions becoming entertainment for the masses, the last sense of their life vanished. More and more became addicted (“I watched the needle take another man”) and threw away their lives, hopes and dreams of a better world (“But every junkie’s like a settin’ sun”). Instead of trying to bring their philosophy to the masses, they fled into a deceptively easy to handle world created by drugs. To become popular without being taken serious was the Hippie Movement’s own death sentence.

\section*{6. The spirit still goes on…}

35 years have passed now since Woodstock, 35 years since young people huddled together in the mud of the Yasgur farm, listening to music about love and peace and drugs, seeing their dreams fulfilled and their problems fading away, at least for those memorable three days in August. Three days of peace and music, three days of harmony and understanding, three days of smoking joints and purple hazes that became a myth in popular culture themselves. Even more time has passed since Scott McKenzie walked into

\footnotesize
\(^{23}\) link #21  
\(^{24}\) link #22
a recording studio, his guitar in his hand and flowers in his hair, and sang his hymn for San Francisco, the capital of a movement that wanted to change the world. Indeed, the world has changed since then. The Iron Curtain has been pulled to pieces by angry people chanting “Wir sind das Volk!” , the Soviet Union and with it the threat of a nuclear war have vanished into dust, the nature around us is being protected more and more – but still a lot has to be done in the future especially concerning our blue planet. Although, this is not the only problem mankind is facing in the year 2005. The difference between the rich and the poor countries becomes bigger and bigger. People in Africa are still starving and today even suffering from AIDS. In this atmosphere, extremism can spread among the enraged poor. Muslim terrorism is a threat to the global peace, and the reactions of the world’s remaining superpower, the USA, are not always suitable. The decisions made in Oval Office are criticized by more and more people, as it could be seen during the Iraq War, when the biggest demonstrations since the Vietnam War took place not only in the States but all over the world.

The youth of the world is beginning to come together in organizations like Attac to protest against the injustices mankind is facing.

It is starting to ask questions again.

The times, they are a-changing!

The Summer Of Love was just the beginning
That’s when the light started breaking through
The Summer Of Love is just a memory now
But even though those times are gone
The spirit still goes on in me and you

(from “Summer of Love” by Jefferson Airplane, 1987)

6. With a little help from my friends

- Sources -

Oh, I get by with a little help from my friends
Mm, I get high with a little help from my friends
Mm, gonna try with a little help from my friends

(From: “With a little help from my friends”, The Beatles, 1967)
As far as it is not marked in the text, the whole information has been taken from two books:

Chapter four about Woodstock is based on information given in two movies:
Additional information about the festival has been taken from www.woodstock69.com

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<td>These lyrics can also be found in the booklet of the CD “The very best of the Byrds”, Sony Music, 1997</td>
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Special thanks go to Richie Havens and Artie Kornfeld, two protagonists of the Hippie scene who kindly answered some questions and helped me with this work.