

CHAPTER
17
SECTION 1

Section Summary

THE COUNTERCULTURE

The **counterculture** of the 1960s grew out of social and political changes, including the Beat movement, the civil rights movement, and opposition to the Vietnam War. Members of the counterculture were called hippies. Hippies contradicted society's traditional restrictions. They also promoted peace, love, and freedom. This created a **generation gap**, or misunderstandings between the older and younger generations.

Hippies had enormous influence on American society. Their style of dress, long hair, attitudes, art, and literature flavored the styles and opinions of the whole nation. Music of rock bands such as the **Beatles** defined the decade.

Hippies' rejection of society's restrictions on sexual behavior created a "sexual revolution." Some hippies also rejected traditional living situations. They lived together in small communities called **communes** where people shared their interests and resources.

The center of the counterculture was the **Haight-Ashbury** district of San Francisco. Many hippies came to experiment with drugs and listen to rock music and speeches by political radicals such as **Timothy Leary**, who encouraged drug use. Some hippies sought new avenues to spirituality, exploring Eastern religions or seeking to live off the land in harmony with nature. These beliefs made an impact on the growing environmental movement.

By the late 1960s, many hippies had become disillusioned with the excesses of the counterculture and had rejoined the mainstream, but their decade of rebellion continued to influence the growing "rights revolution."

Review Questions

1. What social and political events inspired the counterculture?

2. How did hippies explore their spirituality?

READING CHECK

What district in San Francisco was at the center of the counterculture?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

Find the word *contradicted* in the underlined sentence. Look for clues in the surrounding words and phrases. Use these clues to help you figure out what *contradicted* means.

READING SKILL

Identify Main Ideas In what ways did the counterculture influence American culture?
