

## Sex, Drugs, & Rock 'in' Roll

“. . . [Jerry] Ruben [a political radical and UC-Berkeley grad-school dropout recently turned on to LSD in the counterculture] predicted the Be-In would demonstrate that political and cultural radicals could come together; both wanted, he believed, to leave behind “games and institutions that oppress and dehumanize and help cultivate ‘new values and new human relations.’ [Allen] Cohen [editor of San Francisco’s *The Oracle*] predicted that ‘Berkeley political activists and [its] hip community and San Francisco’s spiritual contingent and contingents from the emerging revolutionary generation all over California would engage in ‘a Gathering of the Tribes for a Human Be-In.’ The *Berkeley Barb*, quickly prophesied, ‘the spiritual revolution will be manifest and proven. In unity we shall shower the country with waves of ecstasy and purification,’ squashing fear, ignorance, capitalism, empire, and violence.’ The fifth issue of *The Oracle*, with a decidedly more psychedelic twist, heralded the event. . . .

He [Cohen] wrote, ‘now that a new race is evolving in the midst of the old, we can join together to affirm our unity, and generate waves of joy and conscious penetration of the veil of ignorance and fear that hides the original face of humankind.’ To that end, the Be-In, and similar events, Cohen continued, could produce a

sea change in thought that would lead to the end of the Vietnam war ‘and revitalize many dead hearts.’ Cohen hoped Kunkin and other underground press editors would ‘help the echoes of this event reverberate throughout the world,’ enabling all of them to ‘move closer to the revolution. . . .’

One press release asserted, ‘For ten years, a new nation has grown inside the robot flesh of the old. Before our eyes a new free vital soul is reconnecting the living centers of the American body.’ The note declared that ‘Berkeley political activists and the love generation of the Haight-Ashbury will join together . . . to powwow, celebrate, and prophesy the epoch of liberation, love, peace, compassion, and the unity of mankind.’” . . .

To help promote the festival [The Summer of Love], and at Adler’s behest Phillips, carved out a song, ‘San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Some Flowers in Your Hair’), which Scott McKenzie recorded. Released on May 13, 1967, the song shot up the pop charts in both the United States and Europe. Although later panned by many critics, the Phillips’s hopeful but wistful tune captured something of the atmosphere surrounding the anticipated Summer of Love. . . . This, moreover, merely replicated something that was occurring across the United States. Seemingly, an entire generation was ‘in motion,’ possessing ‘a new explanation.’ . . .

The same day that Scott McKenzie's rendition of "San Francisco" was released, the Council for the Summer of Love delivered an announcement asserting that 'this summer, the youth of the world are making a holy pilgrimage to our city, to affirm and celebrate a new spiritual dawn.' This was but a small part of a worldwide spiritual awakening.' San Francisco was the temporary 'focus for this awakening,' which was 'a gift from God.'"

~ Robert C. Cottrell, "From the Human Be-In To The Summer of Love" (in *Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll: The Rise of America's 1960s Counterculture*)