THROUGH THE KALEIDOSCOPE: COUNTERCULTURE IN AMERICA AND ITS EFFECTS ON UNDERGROUND PUBLISHING IN MILWAUKEE

by

Lillian Pachner

A Thesis Submitted in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in History

at

The University of Wisconsin Milwaukee

May 2025

ABSTRACT

THROUGH THE KALEIDOSCOPE: COUNTERCULTURE IN AMERICA AND ITS EFFECTS ON UNDERGROUND PUBLISHING IN MILWAUKEE
by

Lillian Pachner

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2025
Under the Supervision of Professor Amanda Seligman

The 1960s in the United States was a tumultuous period of social change. The Civil Rights Movement, the war in Vietnam, sexual revolution, and drug culture shook the foundations of post-war American society. From these tensions and upheavals emerged a powerful counterculture that valued radical self-expression and espoused equally radical politics. One of the most powerful voices of this counterculture was the underground publishing movement. Milwaukee, Wisconsin's underground publishing scene was spearheaded by the underground newspaper *Kaleidoscope.* Running from 1967 to 1971, *Kaleidoscope* exemplified the underground publishing movement. It reported on art, drugs, poetry, music, and politics. Despite the backlash received by the paper since its conception, *Kaleidoscope* defined Milwaukee's counterculture scene during its run. The success and subsequent downfall of *Kaleidoscope* exemplifies the rise and fall of national counterculture. Examining the history of *Kaleidoscope* against the backdrop of American counterculture reveals insights into the origins behind counterculture's creation, and its demise.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my partner, who always inspires me, to my parents, who have held me up since the beginning, and to John Kois, who made all this possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

The 1960s through the mid-1970s were a tumultuous period of cultural upheaval in the United States. The country experienced stark social changes that were sparked by large-scale national movements such as the Civil Rights Movement, social uprisings, the Cold War, and the war in Vietnam. The number of politically and culturally radical Americans was rapidly expanding throughout the 1960s. People, especially those who were young and college aged, began to see their life as completely determined and intertwined with the power structures that shaped the country. They began to see how the upholders of these power structures such as politicians, corporations, clergy, and even teachers, parents, and doctors determined what was socially acceptable and what was considered deviant.[1] As these people woke up to the unfairness of these power structures, they began movements that shook the foundation of white, cisgender, straight, middle-class comfort that Americans who fit into those demographics enjoyed at the expense of those who did not.

This cultural shakeup resulted in the formation of liberal, and often radical movements and institutions. Some of these radical movements were well organized, and official such as the Students for a Democratic Society, a national student-activist organization which advocated for university reforms and supported the upholding of human rights, democracy, and free speech.

These cultural upheavals also created an environment in which members of under-privileged and under-represented demographics (or those who saw themselves as different or in disagreement with standard social and cultural mores) could express their own voice and disseminate their

[1] David R. Farber, *The Sixties: From Memory to History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 3.

stories, art, beliefs, and political views. This nebulous movement of people that rejected these long-standing power structures and cultural standards was called "counterculture." Members of the counterculture believed that the expectations of politeness and civility suppressed authenticity, so they sought to live outside of them.[2]

Counterculture expressed itself through the publishing and distribution of underground, self-made, publications. Around the midpoint of the 1960s, several underground publications such as *The Berkeley Tribe,* and *The San Francisco Oracle* began to publish. These underground newspapers functioned as the voice for the counterculture. They reported on countercultural topics like drugs, sex, art, and politics. Their political reporting often differed greatly from the mainstream press, focusing on criticisms of capitalism and authority.

In his 1970 book, *The Underground Press in America,* Robert J. Glessing argues that at the height of the American countercultural movement professional journalists and educators dismissed the underground press. Glessing asserts that this era of the underground press represented a new form of journalism that carried the potential for causing significant societal and cultural changes. In addition to its historical importance, Glessing also highlights the fact that the underground press held particular importance for marginalized demographics, especially those whose voices and stories were often overlooked by mainstream media such as racial, gender, and sexual minorities. The role that the underground press played in uplifting these voices adds a layer of social responsibility to the underground press movement.[3]

---

[2] Kenneth Cmiel, "The Politics of Civility," in *The Sixties: From Memory to History* (Chapel Hill & London, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 263.
[3] Robert J. Glessing, *The Underground Press in America* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1971), xi.

Glessing also argues that independent and overall non-traditional journalism arose from a combination of societal forces, including technological advances, general political upheaval, anti-establishment movements, and social-intellectual changes.[4] This thesis will expand upon Glessing's argument to assert that these factors, which spurred the creation of the underground publishing movement in the United States, also created a culture in which espousing radical beliefs was briefly acceptable. By 1966, counterculture found itself plastered across the mass mainstream media.[5] Though not everyone agreed with countercultural beliefs, counterculturalists were a popular topic of conversation. In short, while the views held by the counterculture were not themselves popular, the existence of the counterculture was widely known and discussed. Through an examination of how the general public reacted to counterculture throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, this thesis hopes to show that as counterculture grew unpopular with the general public, underground publishing did as well.

In *Smoking Typewriters: The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America*, John McMillian examines the catalysts that led to the creation of the underground publishing scene in the United States. McMillian's work focuses primarily on deeply grassroots underground publications, such as those published on high school and college campuses. Like this thesis, McMillian posits that the mainstream media available at the time was simply unable to fulfill the news, culture, and entertainment needs of the nascent countercultural movement. Mainstream news media could not adapt quickly enough to these needs. Instead,

[4] Glessing, *The Underground Press in America*, xi.
[5] Cmiel, "The Politics of Civility," 269.

social outcasts, or those who disagreed with the consensus of polite society, began creating their own publications.[6]

Despite the explosion of alternative counterculture and underground publishing in the United States, this era was far from the beginning of an egalitarian society in which everyone could speak (and publish) freely. From the start, the countercultural movement faced backlash from people and institutions that were traditional, or conservatively minded. Though the counterculture and the underground publishing movement within it faced this backlash from the beginning, it was spurred into more severity after the summer of 1967, when over 150 riots erupted throughout the country. These riots, done in response to the systemic racial oppression faced by Black Americans, increased the anxiety of white Americans. Regardless of race, many Americans disagreed with aspects of counterculture espoused by underground publications such as anti-government, pro-sex, and pro-drug opinions. Paranoia about leftist ideas such as anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism ran deep as people, especially college students, became more and more vocal about their distrust for the US government, and their disagreement with the US government's intervention in the war in Vietnam. Conservative, traditional Americans grew concerned that their way of life was being threatened. Soon, a "Silent Majority" movement of conservatives, supported and created by Republican President Richard Nixon made their voices heard.

This thesis investigates how the political events, cultural changes, and social movements of the 1960s and 1970s influenced the creation and actions of underground newspapers in Milwaukee. Milwaukee's underground publishing movement was selected as the focus for this

[6] John Campbell McMillan, *Smoking Typewriters: The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 5.

thesis because the rise and fall of Milwaukee's countercultural underground publishing scene follows the same contours of the rise and fall of the popularity of national counterculture. Milwaukee's underground publishing scene acts as a microcosm representing both the origins and the downfall of American counterculture. Analyzing the reasons why Milwaukee's underground publishing scene became successful, and later, unsuccessful, will reveal insights into the origins of counterculture, and the reasons behind its fall into obscurity.

This work will focus on *Kaleidoscope,* Milwaukee's premier underground publication, which ran from 1967 to 1971. This work will examine *Kaleidoscope's* content and history from its conception to its end to investigate how it was influenced and affected by national and state political and cultural trends, events, and movements. In particular, this work will examine how these factors affected the content and publishing ability of the paper. This work will also examine *Bugle American,* another Wisconsin-based underground publication that cropped up as *Kaleidoscope* was ending in the early 1970s.

Despite the breadth of sources available on this topic from several different temporal and geographical perspectives, there is a distinct lack of literature on the history of Milwaukee's rich underground publishing scene. The most comprehensive account of the history of Milwaukee's counterculture fittingly comes from one of Milwaukee's premier underground publications, and one of the main primary sources for this thesis – the November 5, 1975, issue of *Bugle American.* This issue of the *Bugle* is titled "History of the Counterculture in Milwaukee (1960-1975)." It is a compilation of histories of different aspects and episodes of Milwaukee's peak era of counterculture from a plethora of authors. Some authors, such as the one responsible for the introductory entry, Mark Goff, were veterans of the underground publishing scene of the 1960s. Other authors published their entries under pseudonyms such as "Pinky Boyteen," an author and

activist who wrote about the Water Tower Park Riots. Mike Zetteler authored two of the chapters: "A Literary History of the East Side" and "Kaleidoscope: The Oral Freedom League." The latter entry is a short history of the formation of *Kaleidoscope,* with an interview with the paper's creator, John Kois. This chapter provides Kois's perspective and motivations behind the paper. This *Bugle* issue also includes an edited version of John Kois's last interview with the *Bugle* in 1971 following the obscenity lawsuit brought against Kois.[7]

The primary body of source for this project is, naturally, the *Kaleidoscope* newspaper collection held by Special Collections at the Golda Meir Library on the UWM Campus. This collection includes all issues of *Kaleidoscope*. This collection will be used in several ways in this project. Since *Kaleidoscope* covered countercultural topics such as politics, sexuality, art, the police, the Vietnam War, and Civil Rights from a distinctly Milwaukeean perspective, it will help construct a contextual backdrop for this work. This collection will also be used as the main through-line for this thesis, exemplifying the rise and fall of underground publishing in Milwaukee through its own history and reporting. This project will also utilize another collection of Milwaukee underground newspapers: *Bugle American.* The *Bugle American* ran from 1970-1978. Besides reporting on similar issues and topics to *Kaleidoscope,* it also covered the backlash against *Kaleidoscope*, since it outlasted the paper by 7 years. The history of the *Bugle* is intertwined with that of *Kaleidoscope,* not only because they were around at similar times in the same geographic region, but because they both faced violent backlash for their radical content. The fire-bombing of the *Bugle* office in 1975 is essential evidence of localized backlash against

[7] "History of the Counterculture in Milwaukee (1960-1975)," *Bugle American*, November 5, 1975,5.

these countercultural publications. While the *Bugle American* collection is essential to this work, the content of the *Bugle* will not be as central to this thesis as the *Kaleidoscope* collection.

This thesis also includes evidence from an oral history interview with the creator and editor of *Kaleidoscope,* John Kois. In this interview, Kois provides information on *Kaleidoscope's* early history, how they kept it running, and its legacy in the modern day. Kois provides invaluable insight into why *Kaleidoscope* was created, and what the goals of the paper were.

In summation, my thesis will combine the information from these secondary sources about national and local political trends influencing underground publishing with the primary sources *Kaleidoscope* and *Bugle American* to paint a picture of Milwaukee's underground publishing scene and how it was influenced by American politics. The first chapter of this thesis will examine the origins of counterculture nationally and in Milwaukee, setting up the circumstances that allowed counterculture to bloom. It will also discuss the origins of underground publishing, showing how its growth was directly related to the growth of counterculture. The second chapter will introduce *Kaleidoscope* in detail and discuss the history of its founding and operation. The second chapter will also introduce and analyze the constant backlash *Kaleidoscope* faced. The third and last chapter of this thesis will outline how counterculture fell out of popularity in the American zeitgeist, and how those who fought against it leaned more on institutional power, leading to its decline. The third chapter will connect the shutting down of *Kaleidoscope* to this downfall of national counterculture, showing how the two were intrinsically intertwined. It will discuss the growing legal backlash against *Kaleidoscope* and how it differed from the backlash the paper received earlier in its life. Overall, this thesis argues that the tensions of the early 1960s brought forth an era in which counterculture could

thrive for a narrow time in the United States despite existing conservativism. It will claim that institutional and government backed attacks against the counterculture in the late 1960s and early 1970s overpowered counterculture's initial popularity and public acceptance in an attempt to reinstate the status quo that had been rejected earlier in the decade.

Chapter One: The Origins of Counterculture in America

The advent of the countercultural underground press was the result of decades of turmoil, fear, repression, and ignorance. In the decades between the end of the Second World War and the explosion of counterculture, which this essay places around the middle of the 1960s, the culture of the United States reached a breaking point that allowed radical self-expression, arts, and politics to flourish. It is important to address now, early on, that the chronology of this phenomenon, and therefore this thesis, is anachronistic, nebulous, and non-linear. There truly is no set date for the shift from culture to counterculture. By the middle years of the 1960s, counterculture had reared its head throughout the country. Both paradigms of mainstream culture and counterculture constantly overlapped and battled for dominance throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. It is not as simple as saying "one day, everyone thought the same way, agreed on everything, and looked the same, and then one day they didn't." This interwar period between WWII and the height of the United States' intervention in the Vietnam War had many different, disparate, and often completely disconnected explosions of counterculture.

In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, counterculture had the same ill-defined origins. Like the country at large, Milwaukee had several outbursts of counterculture that fractured the facade of polite conformist post-war society and allowed radical self-expression to seep through the cracks. These outbursts of counterculture in Milwaukee and the nation were based largely around national tensions created by white opposition to the Civil Rights Movement and the anti-Vietnam war movement. Race, class, fear, human rights, and personal choice were common threads throughout all of these happenings.

This chapter will discuss these countercultural outbursts of the pre-counterculture era to analyze how they led to a culture in which the golden age of underground publishing in Milwaukee could happen.

The Civil Disorder of 1967 - Milwaukee

On July 31, 1967, Mayor Henry Maier issued a dark proclamation to the city of Milwaukee.

> By authority of the Wisconsin Statutes, I am proclaiming a state of emergency in the City of Milwaukee. All persons of the City of Milwaukee are required to immediately disperse themselves peaceably and depart to their homes. Further, all taverns and liquor stores throughout the city of Milwaukee are hereby closed, and all filling stations and petroleum supply points are also closed. Any person disobeying this proclamation will be arrested and subject to imprisonment. This proclamation will continue in force until further notice.[1]

This sobering announcement came after a night which would change the course of Milwaukee history, a night that revealed to the often-complacent white middle class the tension, resentment, and sheer outrage that had been bubbling under the city's surface. Maier continued, "We have had a night of looting, burning, and killing. I have no estimate of casualties of damage, but from all field reports reaching me, the general area of the disorder was from State Street to Burleigh and from First Street to Fifth Street."[2]

The violence began on Third Street. Two Black women engaged in an altercation on the sidewalk, while others gathered to watch. Eventually, the crowd ballooned to 350 people, and

[1] State of Emergency Proclamation, July 31, 1961, Box 170, Folder 22, Maier Administration, Archives, Milwaukee Area Research Center. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Milwaukee, WI, https://collections.lib.uwm.edu/digital/collection/march/id/1121/rec/1

[2] State of Emergency Proclamation, July 31, 1961, Box 170, Folder 22, Maier Administration.

was popped when two white officers arrived not only to break up the fight between the two women but also to disperse the large crowd. Onlookers, who were largely Black themselves, knew how this could turn out. After decades of disproportionate police brutality committed against their community, white cops in a group of Black citizens was an omen of doom, and a symbol of their oppression. Some onlookers threw garbage, rocks, or bottles at the cops. The police called in reinforcements and subdued the crowd, leaving only some tipped trash cans and broken windows as evidence of the confrontation. The city would have one more night of relative calm before the storm.[3]

The participants of the conflict and the police alike knew that this was not an ordinary night of unrest. Milwaukee was not the only city exploding with racial tensions, and it was far from the first. According to *Selma of the North* by Patrick D. Jones, urban disorders had broken out in Newark, Detroit, and dozens of other cities.[4] Only three days earlier, Detroit, another midwestern city with a large Black population, had ceased its rioting. Everyone knew what was coming, and they knew it was coming soon.[5]

On the following night after the initial confrontation, Sunday, July 30, the city came alive with unrest. The match that started the fire is not agreed upon. Patrick Jones cites civil rights activist Squire Austin, who lived close to the center of the unrest. Austin said, "The rumor we got was that the police had beaten up a kid pretty bad over on Third and Walnut."[6]

---

[3] Patrick D. Jones, *The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022), 144.
[4] Patrick D. Jones, *The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022), 244.
[5] Patrick D. Jones, The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee, 244.
[6] Patrick D. Jones, The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee, 225.

This unrest came on the heels of a damning accusations against the city of Milwaukee. It came only two months after Milwaukee Civil Rights lawyer Lloyd Barbee released *Racial Isolation in Milwaukee Public Schools, A Final Report to the U.S. Commission of Civil Rights* in May of 1967. This document was given to the U.S. Commission of Civil Rights, an organization that "informs the development of national civil rights policy and enhances enforcement of federal civil rights laws."[7] This document discusses several issues affecting Black Milwaukeeans at the time, such as school segregation, open housing, and violence against civil rights groups.[8]

The area in which the civil disorder started was in itself a testament to the struggles faced by Black Milwaukeeans. Where nightclubs, theatres, and restaurants once catered to a thriving Black community, there was now only evidence of deterioration in the form of relief agencies, small bars, and corner grocery stores. Among them, vacant buildings stood as a reminder of the neighborhood's decay.[9]

It is essential to note that the Civil Disorder of 1967 and the creation of *Kaleidoscope* are, by all accounts, not directly connected. Kois did not start *Kaleidoscope* to uplift Black voices squashed by the Milwaukee Police Department's "Tactical Squad" and Henry Maier's dark proclamation.[10] However, their temporal closeness is no coincidence. The Civil Disorder of 1967 uncorked something deep in the city that had been waiting to break free, a rejection of the standards of "polite society" that had repressed not only those seeking justice, fairness, and human rights, but also those who were simply different, weird, or otherwise non-conforming to

[7] U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, December 2, 2024, https://www.usccr.gov/.
[8] Racial Isolation in Milwaukee Public Schools, 1967, Box 96, Folder 7, Barbee Papers, Archives / Milwaukee Area Research Center. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. https://collections.lib.uwm.edu/digital/collection/march/id/1508/
[9] Patrick D. Jones, *The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee*,225.
[10] Patrick D. Jones, *The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee*, 225.

the traditional mask that Milwaukee had worn in the decades leading up. The Civil Disorder held up a mirror to Milwaukee and said, “this is who you are.” Those who were comfortable with the way things were, looked at their reflection and rejected it completely, doubling down on their distaste for difference and their insistence that things were fine the way they were. Others embraced their reflection and decided that there was no going back to how things were before. Polite society shattered before their eyes, and they were no longer caged in by its expectations. Suddenly, the hippies of the earlier years of the decades took on a new form. Their hair stayed long, and their veins still ran with marijuana and LSD, but they were angrier, gritter, and arguably more politically aware than the flower children of years past.

Members of the latter group made up Milwaukee’s countercultural scene. A group chock full of eccentricities that made more traditional citizens of Milwaukee deeply suspicious and uncomfortable. Many counterculturalists came from privileged backgrounds and from families whose values they rejected. Many were not poor. In fact, those who could afford a college education were at the forefront of this scene. These countercultural actors will be the main drivers of this work in the coming chapters. For now, it is essential to understand how these actors found themselves in a cultural environment in which expressing their radical ideals was possible.

Conformity and Consensus

This cultural explosion in Milwaukee is itself a mirror for the nation. Since the end of the Second World War, many Americans (mostly white, cisgender, straight men) enjoyed a decade defined by comfort, familiarity, and most of all, conformity to their standards of identity, family, and public presentation. The early years of the Cold War and the looming specter of McCarthyism frightened many Americans into fitting themselves into the cultural boxes deemed

fit by the country's conservative tastemakers. Continual threats from overseas and at home created a society particularly concerned with mitigating safety hazards and upholding personal security. People were determined to find a consensus and conform to it.[11]

Before the cultural boom of the 1960s, conformity was the modus operandi even on college campuses, which have historically been the hotbeds for unconformity and individualism. Professors and students alike had been intimidated by McCarthyism to the extent that many felt it was in their best interest to comply with and not question the status quo. One professor at the University of Michigan put their students through an exercise to measure their level of conformity. The students were given the American Declaration of Independence with the recognizable and easily identifiable first line omitted. The professor asked the students if they would sign the document. Nine out of ten students said they would not sign. Another unnamed professor complained to their students about their conformity, to which the students responded, "Why should we go out on a limb about anything? We know what happened to those who did."[12] This generation of young adults was dubbed by academics as "the silent generation," a fitting term for a demographic frightened into timidity.

It is inconceivable to think that *Kaleidoscope*, a magazine filled with cheeky vulgarity, sex, drugs, rock and roll, and art that really made one ponder the world around them, came out of an era in which people were so scared of upsetting the status quo that they rejected the very radical ideas the country was built on. When examining the years leading up to the creation of the newspaper, and the parallel explosion of counterculture in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and nationwide, the cultural breakthrough becomes more understandable. After a decade of severe

[11] Terry H. Anderson, *The Sixties*, 4th ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2025), 6.
[12] Anderson, *The Sixties*, 6-7.

cultural repression, compulsive conformity, and constant anxiety, many members of American society, particularly those who did not fit into the white, middle class, straight, cisgender paradigm of conformity of the post-war era, grew desperate to have their voices heard and desperate to express their humanity in ways not deemed acceptable by society in the several years prior. Human beings, historically, can only take so much before they snap, and upheave the rules they live under.

Fear and Freedom

Ironically, the feeling that pushed people of the 1950s to conformity—fear—was also the thing that cracked it, causing the cultural explosion of the mid-1960s. In 1957, the Soviet Union successfully tested intercontinental ballistic missiles, most commonly referred to as ICBMS.[13]

ICBMs are long-range missiles with the capacity to decimate populations across oceans. As the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation so darkly puts it: "Russia could hit Chicago with an ICBM launched from the Krasnoyarsk ICBM base, which is located 9,156 kilometers (5,689 miles) away."[14] Suddenly, the Soviet Union was not some far-off boogeyman threatening the United States from across an ocean. They now had the ability to directly threaten Americans with the mass destruction of their own backyards. The seeds of paranoia were sprouting like weeds.

America's fear of the power of the Soviet Union was exacerbated by the launching of the Sputnik satellite on October 4, 1957. In hindsight, the success of Sputnik was a harbinger of scientific space exploration and satellite communication. It was the world's first artificial

[13] Anderson, *The Sixties*, 9.
[14] Fact sheet: Ballistic vs. Cruise Missiles, Arms Control Center, accessed December 14, 2024, https://armscontrolcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Ballistic-vs.-Cruise-Missiles-Fact-Sheet.pdf.

satellite. This small, unassuming metallic ball was able to orbit the planet every 90 minutes and had the capacity to communicate with radio operators around the globe.[15] However, in 1957, Americans who were already steeped in fear of the USSR's growing global influence, military capabilities, and scientific progress saw the launch of Sputnik as an existential threat to the United States' standing as the world's most influential power. The country responded by rapidly pouring money and resources into their own space technology, beginning the "space race" between the two global powers. While the space race largely happened in the background of the burgeoning counterculture movements of the 1960s, it is one of the most defining features of the era. The space race was born out of fear of the unknown and fear of loss of control, two sentiments that Americans were deeply familiar with after years of compulsive societal conformity. While the space race reached its climax in 1969 with the successful American Apollo 11 mission which put the first human being on the moon, the era of counterculture arguably had no similar peak.

Fear did not just come from the threats of overseas nuclear powers. Anxiety and paranoia were sowed on domestic soil as well. Similar to Milwaukee with the Civil Disorder of 1967, the systemic oppression of Black people and communities and the racial tensions that cropped up as a result were also instrumental in the explosion of counterculture throughout the United States. By the late 1960s, the Civil Rights movement had been in full swing for more than 15 years. In terms of laws and policy, progress had been made. The Civil Rights Act had been passed in 1964, prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. In 1965 the Voting Rights Act was passed, promising voting rights to all American citizens of legal

[15] "65 Years Ago: Sputnik Ushers in the Space Age," NASA, October 4, 2023, https://www.nasa.gov/history/65-years-ago-sputnik-ushers-in-the-space-age/#:~:text=On%20Oct.,the%20world's%20first%20artificial%20satellite.

voting age. The Civil Rights Movement would close with the passing of the Fair Housing Act in 1968. These legislative victories, however, did little to remedy the racism that Black Americans faced in their everyday lives. Racial tensions between Blacks and whites were not significantly lessened by the passage of these acts. In fact, the Watts riot in Los Angeles, California erupted the same day the Voting Rights Act was passed.[16] Racism was for all intents and purposes "illegal," but far, far from dead.

It is essential to point out that, while anti-racist and pro-civil-rights protests, demonstrations, and riots were still going strong in the years following the legislative wins of the Civil Rights Movement in the mid-decade years of the 1960s, acts of blatant, violent racism were not slowing down either, especially in the city of Milwaukee. Nineteen sixty-five ushered in increased Ku Klux Klan activity in both Milwaukee, and the state of Wisconsin at large. On June 18, 1965, a burning cross, a common symbol of the Ku Klux Klan, was found alight on the front lawn of a Black family that had recently moved into a predominantly white Milwaukee neighborhood. That next month, the KKK announced that they planned to open an office in Wisconsin. Since 1920, the Klan had established a chapter in the city. By 1924, the chapter exceeded 4,000 members. Racine and Kenosha to the south had chapters, as well as Oshkosh to the north. African Americans, Jews, and other groups targeted by the hate group were surrounded on all sides.[17] Mayor Maier, who would later declare a state of emergency over the city after the 1967 Civil Disorder, responded to the KKK's plans by denouncing them, saying

[16] David R. Farber, *The Sixties: From Memory to History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 120.
[17] "Ku Klux Klan," March on Milwaukee, UWM Libraries Digital Collection, July 7, 2016, https://uwm.edu/marchonmilwaukee/keyterms/kkk/.

"The KKK has historically been anti-Catholic, anti-Jewish, anti-Negro, anti-Polish, anti-German, anti-decency. I'm sure the citizens of Milwaukee will reject this un-American organization."[18]

According to the *Milwaukee Journal,* one of the mainstream newspapers in Milwaukee at the time, on August 9, a homemade explosive destroyed the offices of the Milwaukee office of the NAACP. According to the paper's report, "the explosion knocked down doors, blew out windows, and knocked plaster off the walls." Later, several Klan members from both Wisconsin and Illinois were arrested and charged for the bombing.[19] In the years following the bombing, the NAACP reported Klan activity in Lake Ivanho and Beloit. Later, Klan members appeared at open housing marches in the city in 1967 and 1968. The specter of white supremacy was alive and well in Wisconsin in the latter years of the decade.

The fact that racial tensions were thriving in America came as a shock to many white Americans who naively thought that these civil rights reforms were the decisive remedy to racial tensions in the United States. Black militancy became popular in the late 1960s with the Black Panthers and similar groups – another development against racism that shocked white Americans at large and threatened their position as the most powerful group in the country.[20] Of course, Milwaukee was not the only city during and after the Civil Rights era to engage in anti-racist rioting. Racial tensions erupted in the summer of 1967, leading to what many historians dub the "Long Hot Summer of 1967."[21] Throughout the summer, nearly 160 riots erupted across the country. These riots were the result of the continued and constant mistreatment of Black Americans. The riots of the summer of 1967 were an eruption of frustration with the systemic

[18] Patrick D. Jones, *The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee*, 122.
[19] "Ku Klux Klan," March on Milwaukee.
[20] Farber, *The Sixties: From Memory to History,* 120.
[21] Malcolm McLaughlin, *The Long, Hot Summer of 1967: Urban Rebellion in America* (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 1.

poverty and unemployment faced by Black Americans. The most destructive riots took place in Newark, New Jersey and Detroit, Michigan, but Milwaukee too saw the consequences of this historical mistreatment in the form of great civil unrest.[22] These outbursts of race-based violence and the militant organization of Black communities reminded white Americans of a fear that had been present in the national conscience for decades: The status quo was fragile, and if it is not maintained, chaos and violence would ensue.

Americans learned this fear during the era of McCarthyism. McCarthyism was a reaction to the Communist threat posed by the Cold War. McCarthyism takes is name from Senator Joseph Raymond McCarthy, a Republican from Wisconsin. In 1950, McCarthy joined the anti-Communist political crusade when he claimed to be in possession of a list of 205 "card-carrying Communists" working for the United States Department of State.[23] Soon, McCarthy became the strong face of the culturally repressive movement. He became the chairman of the Senate Permanent Investigation Subcommittee, which led a crusade against alleged Communist influence and infiltration of the American government and workforce.[24] The actions of the greater McCarthyism movement transformed the American perception of the Communist party from simply a political group to an existential threat to democracy and the American way of life.[25] McCarthy and his subcommittee were not known to operate with truth and evidence in mind. Instead, paranoia and hearsay drove the subcommittee's actions. McCarthy and his subcommittee held hearings on Communist subversion in the American government and

[22] McLaughlin, *The Long, Hot Summer of 1967*, 103.
[23] "McCarthyism / the 'Red Scare,'" Eisenhower Presidential Library, accessed December 14, 2024, https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/research/online-documents/mccarthyism-red-scare.
[24] "McCarthyism / the 'Red Scare,'" Eisenhower Presidential Library.
[25] Ellen Schrecker, "McCarthyism: Political Repression and the Fear of Communism," *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (December 2004): 1041–86, https://doi.org/10.1353/sor.2004.0067, 1043.

Communist infiltration of the armed forces.[26] Unlike many political movements the counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s came to object to, even the American government itself acknowledges the ethical failings and general unfairness of the actions of McCarthy's subcommittee. In describing McCarthyism, the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library cites the *American Heritage Dictionary* definition of McCarthyism, which describes the phenomenon as "the political practice of publicizing accusations of disloyalty or subversion with insufficient regard to evidence" and "the use of methods of investigation and accusation regarded as unfair, in order to suppress opposition."[27] This paranoid process led to the undue firing of hundreds of Americans from their jobs, and the exile of many from American society. Most of the people who were victims of this paranoia were ordinary workers who had "associated with the Communist party." It is important to note that these associations were often tenuous or nonexistent.[28]

Under the threat of McCarthy era, it became a question of one's livelihood whether or not they would choose conformity or individuality. Americans who were not necessarily Communist but were mildly critical of American politics were forced to repress their opinions for fear of losing not only their jobs, but their connections in their community. It is no wonder why the Silent Generation emerged from this repressive era.

The War in Vietnam

Black Power movements, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Cold War were not the only reasons that the conformist culture of postwar America crumbled. Perhaps one of the

[26] "McCarthyism / the 'Red Scare,' Eisenhower Presidential Library.
[27] "McCarthyism / the 'Red Scare,' Eisenhower Presidential Library.
[28] Schrecker, "McCarthyism: Political Repression and the Fear of Communism," 1045.

biggest factors was the unrest at home caused by the ongoing Vietnam war, the politics enforcing the United States' involvement, American losses, and war atrocities.

The Vietnam war bad been waged since 1954 between the Communist Northern Vietnamese, their Southern allies the Viet Cong, and the South Vietnamese government. This conflict, which was a limb of wider conflict happening throughout Indochina, was also a ghastly symptom of the Cold War. The Soviet Union was allied with the Communist North Vietnamese, while the United States was allied with the South. In an era where the two superpowers could not fight directly for risk of mutually assured nuclear destruction, they fostered a surrogate war between their respective allies. In 1965, the United States escalated its involvement in the foreign war in Vietnam by introducing American combat units. This decision caused the swift organization of opposition to the war among much of the American public. This opposition grew stronger and more vocal as the war raged on.[29] The anti-Vietnam war movement is to this day considered one of the largest social movements in American history. One could also argue that the Civil Rights Movement was also one of the largest social movements in the nation's history. The fact that both of these social movements happened so close to each other shows the growing tensions in American culture. It also shows that the culture of conformity was developing very deep, irreparable cracks.

The anti-Vietnam war movement and the Civil Rights movement were not disconnected happenings. The anti-Vietnam war movement sprung from existing movements including the Civil Rights Movement and anti-nuclear activism.[30] In particular, the anti-Vietnam war movement was deeply tied to the Civil Rights Movement. Famed civil rights activist Dr. Martin

[29] M. K. Hall, "The Vietnam Era Antiwar Movement," *OAH Magazine of History* 18, no. 5 (October 1, 2004): 13–17, https://doi.org/10.1093/maghis/18.5.13. 13.
[30] Hall, "The Vietnam Era Antiwar Movement," 13.

Luther King, Jr. made clear his strong dissent from the war early in 1967. He was followed by another famous Black man, boxer Muhammad Ali, who was convicted of "refusing military induction" (draft dodging) in June of 1967. Resisting the draft was a protest in and of itself, and it represented a shift in anti-Vietnam war activism towards the end of the war, which began to favor action over legal protest.[31] The military draft was a significant trigger of disillusion and anger towards the American government's involvement in the war. A closer look at the Selective Service System, colloquially known as "the draft," revealed that conscientious objection to serving in the war effort on religious or moral grounds was not awarded fairly across draftees. The system was more likely to accept those from privileged socio-economic backgrounds as conscientious objectors over those who were poorer.[32] Those enrolled as college students were also often deferred from the draft. Many men escaped the draft by fleeing to different countries such as Canada and Sweden, but this option was not widely accessible to those without resources or support from those in their target countries. This system of allowing college students and wealthy men to stay home meant those without access to wealth and education were disproportionately sent overseas. This system caused a huge disparity in the rate at which Black men were drafted versus white, exacerbating the already festering racial tensions left by the height of the Civil Rights Movement just two years earlier.[33]

As national discontent for the war grew, mass demonstrations against it became more frequent. During this time, mass demonstrations such as those that defined the Civil Rights Movement were typically organized by large organizations and coalitions. Much like the underground publishing movement itself, the anti-Vietnam was movement mostly emerged from

[31] Hall, "The Vietnam Era Antiwar Movement," 14.
[32] Hall, "The Vietnam Era Antiwar Movement," 14.
[33] Hall, "The Vietnam Era Antiwar Movement," 14.

local grassroots sources.[34] The anti-draft movement reached its zenith in 1967. On October 21st of that year, nearly one hundred thousand Americans gathered for an anti-war demonstration at the Lincoln Memorial. Later, about half of the attendees marched to the Pentagon, where they protested for two days. The March on the Pentagon, as it is commonly referred to, led to 600 arrests. That same year, "The Resistance," an anti-draft activist group collected the draft cards of over a thousand men who refused the draft.[35]

In the year after the March on the Pentagon, Milwaukee engaged in its own anti-Vietnam war and anti-draft protest. Like the entire United States, Milwaukee was divided in its opinion on the nation's involvement in the Vietnam war. . Nineteen sixty-eight had been a tense and tumultuous year in the already long, horrific war. In January, Americans had been astonished and dismayed by the Tet Offensive led by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces against the American's allies in South Vietnam. Americans were growing more frustrated and anxiety stricken with every news report. Military and political leaders were promising that the end of the war was near, but the carnage on the television and newspaper was telling a different story. By March 10, 1968, a Gallup poll showed that almost half of all Americans thought that sending domestic troops to Vietnam had been a disastrous idea. Young men and women in the country wondered how America, which was supposed to be a democracy, could go against the beliefs of the majority and continue the war. Often, young men that were sent to fight had no real idea what they were doing there, or why they were there in the first place[36]

[34] Hall, "The Vietnam Era Antiwar Movement," 13.
[35] Hall, "The Vietnam Era Antiwar Movement," 13.
[36] Rina R Bousalis, "The Counterculture Generation: Idolized, Appropriated, and Misunderstood," The Councilor: A Journal of the Social Studies Vol. 82: No. 2, Article 3, (2021): 1–25, 3-4.

Tension surrounding the Vietnam war were further pushed to the edge by the assassination of revered civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 4, 1968. As discussed above, the Civil Rights Movement and the Anti-Vietnam war movement were closely related due to the unfair ratio of Black men being drafted to fight. The public assassination of a much beloved civil rights leader, one whom many saw as the face of the movement, was devastating. However, while the rest of the United States was exploding with conflict after the assassination, Milwaukee stayed relatively quiet. When Dr. King was shot, there was no rioting in the city. Instead, 13,000 Milwaukeeans solemnly marched in honor and mourning. In fact, the last time Milwaukee had seen any significant or violent acts of protest was in 1967 during the Civil Disorder – the event that triggered Milwaukee Mayor Henry Maier to declare a state of emergency over the city.

In comparison to the country at large, Milwaukee's history of Vietnam War related protests is relatively tame. However, Milwaukeeans engaged in one protest that caught the attention of the entire nation.[37]

On September 24, 1968, fourteen Milwaukee activists engaged in one of the most radical acts of anti-draft protest in the history of the movement. The group, historically known now as "The Milwaukee Fourteen," broke into the Milwaukee Selective Service office and, in their words, "liberated" 10,000 draft records from the office's files. Then, they hauled the records into the middle of a busy thoroughfare and burned them with an accelerant they called "homemade napalm." Standing around the burning pyre, they sang "We Shall Overcome."[38]

[37] Tim Thering, "The Milwaukee Fourteen: A Burning Protest against the Vietnam War," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 101, no. 2 (Winter 2017), 30.
[38] Thering, "The Milwaukee Fourteen: A Burning Protest against the Vietnam War," 30.

The Milwaukee Fourteen were unique in that they were religiously motivated to carry out their drastic act. Five out of fourteen activists were Catholic priests. The remaining nine were not clergy, but pious, nonetheless. For this group, the burning of 10,000 draft cards was not simply a protest against the United States government's continued support for involvement in the war in Vietnam. Rather, it was also a statement against the church's inaction and passivity towards the human injustices of the Vietnam War.[39]

It was one thing to burn one's own draft card. It is a noble but deeply personal act of protest to choose to reject the call to service of one's nation for moral, ethical, or religious reasons. The risk of retaliation or punishment for such an act falls solely on the individual dissenter. However, what the Milwaukee Fourteen did is a different story. This was not a protest to protect one's own free will or one's own belief in right or wrong. This was an explicit statement against the United States government's Selective Service System, and the ever-powerful Catholic church, two hugely influential institutions.

The actions of the Milwaukee Fourteen show that, in Milwaukee and the United States at large, a fundamental change in the fabric of American society was occurring. The fear of the McCarthy era had not expired, but people were much less shackled by it. It was as if people decided that the risk of breaking away from American society's repressive consensus no longer outweighed the risks of radical self-expression, and expression of one's personal ethics and morals. It is also pertinent to note that, while the United States was throwing itself full force into the Space Race, the Vietnam War, and the Civil Rights Movement in the mid to late 1960s, the nation was recovering from another trauma that had destabilized American normalcy. John F.

[39] Thering, "The Milwaukee Fourteen: A Burning Protest against the Vietnam War," 30.

Kennedy, a much beloved president had been publicly assassinated in Dallas, Texas in 1963. To many Americans, the Kennedy assassination was simply an unthinkable tragedy. However, this tragedy bolstered the already existing paranoia present in the American population.

In conclusion, the era prior to the countercultural boom of the latter years of the 1960s and the early years of the 1970s were defined by fear, paranoia, and compulsive conformity.

Irreparable Cracks

Three main sources of national discontent defined the pre-counterculture era: race, war, and conformity. These three wellsprings of American unease often intersected and mingled to create whirling eddies of insecurity in the foundations of the familiar American way of life. The Vietnam war poured salt in the wounds of Black Americans who rightly felt they had been disproportionately and forcibly sent off to fight a foreign war for the American establishment, an establishment that had deeply mistreated them since its very conception. This was only made worse by the realization that they were being sent in place of their white counterparts

This was an era defined by mass demonstrations against the status quos of racism, conformity, and deferring to the country's demands and paradigms of beliefs. The fear, boredom, unhappiness, and hurt of the previous decades since the end of the Second World War that had been bubbling under the skin of American society had finally burst forth. The country was sick of the consensus that had been handed down to them from generations satisfied with keeping their heads down and not stirring trouble. For lack of a better word, the country snapped. In the years following, groups of Americans would continue to reject the conformity their parents' society had bestowed upon them. They would not be afraid to voice their opinions. According to David Faber's *The Sixties: From Memory to History*,

> young radicals in America in the 1960s, their numbers greatly expanded by a cold war struggle gone very sour in Vietnam, tended to see all of life's changes as infiltrated and even determined by the binds of the political structures used by all authorities— school administrators, corporate executives, doctors, members of the clergy, television producers—to shape what was legitimate and what was deviant, what was debatable and what was not of collective concern.[40]

It became an existential matter to express one's self and one's own beliefs. After a decade of being told what to think by the powers that be, powers that continuously failed to keep Americans safe, comfortable, and without fear, people grew distrustful and disillusioned. If the people that controlled the country refused to hear the cries of the citizenry, there was no point in working to curate a lifestyle or personality that pleased them. Suddenly, people decided to be who they wanted to be, and not what they were told to be.

After this societal snap, which came gradually over the latter years of the 1960s, a new culture emerged from the ashes of the scattered shards of the polite society destroyed by the tumult of the early decade. This new culture was defined by contrarianism, disagreeing with the standards of life, love, family, and politics bestowed upon them by the social mores of the previous generation.

A New Culture

Counterculture can be defined as a subculture that operates in opposition to the beliefs, standards, and expectations of mainstream culture. However, that short definition is far too narrow to truly be all-encompassing. Counterculture was an artistic, political, and social movement that focused on criticizing oppressive systems of the American state. It was a movement defined by what it was not, rather than what it was. It was non-restrictive, non-

[40] Farber, *The Sixties*, 3.

conformist, anti-establishment, and anti-authority. Artists, musicians, poets, and other types of creatives flocked to the movement.

After World War II, America's financial prosperity, while critiqued by the counterculture movement, was actually the reason it was allowed to thrive. After World War II, Americans, especially college students, had more money and leisure time which allowed them to explore their artistic interests and philosophize on the state of society with their peers. The expansion of the university populations created spaces where highly educated young people could form their own culture, their own philosophies, and overall begin a new social movement.[41]

In 1960s and early 1970s America, counterculture materialized in several forms. One form was drug culture, with a specific focus on psychedelic drugs such as LSD and "magic mushrooms" as well as marijuana – or pot, hash, grass, and reefer – as it was commonly referred to at the time. In fact, marijuana was so popular at the time, that many saw it as the poster-drug of the counterculture movement.[42] The music culture was also an essential facet of counterculture. Rock and folk music in particular was a cornerstone of counter-culturalism. Artists like Neil Young and David Crosby (along with their band Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young) were staples of countercultural music. Their anti-authoritarian and anti-establishment messages cemented them in the culture. Following the Kent State anti-Vietnam War protests and the following massacre of the protestors carried out by the National Guard, Young wrote the song "Ohio," which ultimately blamed President Richard Nixon for the massacre, and deemed the National Guard to be Nixon's "tin soldiers."[43] Another popular musician of the

[41] Christopher Gair, *The American Counterculture* (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).
[42] Damon Bach, *The American Counterculture: A History of Hippies and Cultural Dissidents* (La Vergne: University Press of Kansas, 2021), 52.
[43] Bach, *The American Counterculture*, 52.

counterculture movement was Joni Mitchell—whose song "Woodstock" was a nostalgic remembrance of the famed hippie music festival in 1969.[44] Bob Dylan, Jerry Garcia, "The Band," Eagles, and Creedence Clearwater Revival were all artists who sang about the political and emotional turmoil of the era.

Advocates of the counterculture, sometimes referred to as "freaks," "hippies," "longhairs" and the like, argued for the "liberation of the self in the name of personal freedom."[45] They shed the restraints put upon them by their conformist society. At its most idealistic, counterculture tried to invent a new kind of consensus, a newer, more open version of polite society.[46]

Though many counter culturalists took part in deviant, or often violent behaviors, such as the acts of violent protest discussed before, more often than not, they were young people who simply disagreed with the status quo, and "defied mainstream culture's perception on issues such as war, consumerism, and inequalities."[47] In all, counterculture was a collection of anti-authoritarian and anti-establishment beliefs that manifested in political movements, art, and culture.

Some historians see this cultural snap in a different light. Some believe that simple demographics can explain the dramatic shift. Baby Boomers, the generation that followed the Silent Generation, made up the bulk of the members of the counterculture movement. Boomers arguably grew up in a prosperous time if they were lucky enough to be born into identities that

---

[44] Bach, *The American Counterculture*, 222.
[45] Kenneth Cmiel, "The Politics of Civility," in *The Sixties: From Memory to History* (Chapel Hill & London, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 270.
[46] Cmiel, "The Politics of Civility," 272.
[47]Bousalis, "The Counterculture Generation," 1.

were able to reap the benefits of the conformist society. They, unlike their parents who were all too aware of the causes of national anxiety discussed in this chapter, developed a can-do confidence that pushed them to address the problems that plagued previous generations. They were more poised than their predecessors to take on these issues. Budding counterculturalists who were white took cues from Black civil rights activists, who showed that collective action could make big changes. They also took inspiration from their courage. Of course, there were whites too who felt called to take part in the Civil Rights Movement, such as Milwaukee's Father Groppi. White children in this era grew up watching Black Americans and their allies stand up to heinous violence and severe existential threats. The boomer generation reaped the benefits of their parents' self-sacrifice. The parents conformed, so their children could be free.[48]

So what does all of this mean? What do riots, Vietnam war protests, long hair, cheap drugs, burning draft cards, and anti-establishment music have to do with the advent of the golden age of underground publishing in Milwaukee? Members of the American society, those whose identity, morals, ethics, and interests did not align with the post-war status quo, were aching for an outlet, a way to express themselves. They saw that polite society had irreparably fractured, and the new consensus was that there was no consensus. They were not free to completely shed the white picket fence facade that American society had assigned to them, but they were freer than they had been before. This newfound freedom resulted in the creation of many countercultural institutions. Some were political, such as the New Left Movement and the Students for a Democratic Society. Some were more grass roots, including underground publications such as *Kaleidoscope* in Milwaukee, the main focus of this work. The creators of

[48] John Campbell McMillian, *Smoking Typewriters: T*he *Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America,* 5.

these newspapers, like their counter culturalist brethren, were not afraid to engage in radical self-expression. Soon, underground newspapers popped up around the nation. According to cultural critic Louis Menand, "Underground newspapers were one of the most spontaneous and aggressive growth in publishing history."[49] The underground press, which can be defined for the purposes of this thesis, as any serialized publication not funded by a company or large conglomerate, was an essential feature of the counterculture movement. In *Smoking Typewriters: The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America*, John McMillian argues that the underground press came to be because the mainstream news media of the pre-counterculture era was not fulfilling the news, culture, and entertainment needs of the nascent counterculture movement. Mainstream news media did not adapt quickly enough to the big countercultural shift. Since the mainstream news media could not, or would not adapt, counter culturalists took the news into their own hands.

[49] Quoted in John Campbell McMillan, *Smoking Typewriters: The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America*, 3.

Chapter Two: Milwaukee, Counterculture, and Kaleidoscope

Perhaps the most potent manifestation of the small but strong counterculture in Milwaukee was the *Kaleidoscope* newspaper. *Kaleidoscope* is considered Milwaukee's premier underground newspaper, characterized by its grassroots origins and alternative content. It reported on everything from local music, art, and poetry to social injustice, drug culture, politics, and police harassment. It was the quintessential voice on all things weird, alternative, underground, and countercultural in the city.

Origins

Kaleidoscope was started in Milwaukee in 1967. It was the brainchild of John Kois. Kois spent much of his young adulthood moving around the United States, giving him a valuable perspective on the culture of the country and the beliefs of the people in it. After graduating from Shorewood High School, located in Milwaukee's North Shore area, just a couple miles north of the University of Milwaukee-Wisconsin campus, Kois moved on to college where he, as he describes it, did not succeed. His college years inspired him to go west to chase a bit of freedom. On this he says, "there was a period there where I thought I just needed to, you know, kind of free up, move around a little bit, see what the options are, meet a bunch of people and see where it led and that was all it was." Kois had family in Seattle that he could stay with, so he headed west. After spending some time in Seattle, he stayed one night in Portland before reaching his ultimate destination, San Francisco.[1]

[1] John Kois, phone interview, November 19, 2024.

"Hippies," short for hipsters, were quickly emerging as the center of the countercultural identity. Early on in the movement, the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood of San Francisco, California emerged as the center of counterculture. The hippies' predecessors, the beatniks of the 1950s, included brooding, serious intellectuals.[2] They dressed in black and read Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsburg while waxing philosophically in coffee houses and salons. The hippies rejected this moody intellectualism in favor of brighter clothes, an interest in drugs like marijuana, psychedelics, and cocaine, and eclectic musical tastes. Hippies were known to love dance, theatre, and unique fashion. They were humanists interested in how people could reconnect with nature.[3] Ironically, for a group of progressive free-thinkers, their aesthetics mimicked those found on the old American frontier. They wore homemade clothes made of pieced together fabrics, cowboy leather, Native American beadwork, and handmade crochet or knitted clothes.[4] Later, after the United States became more involved in the war in Vietnam, some wore US Army shirts, not as a show of support for the war, but as an ironic statement against it. It was a way to signal to those unfortunate young draftees that they were against the war, not the soldiers themselves. Additionally, part of the hippie ethos was to be environmentally aware and against unneeded wastefulness. Army shirts were abundant at the time, so aside from their symbolic nature, hippies wore them because they were available.[5]

Hippies were also known to bend the societal rules of gender and sexuality. They all, no matter their gender, wore their hair long. This became such an iconic part of their culture that the mainstream media often took to derisively calling them "longhairs." Hair was perhaps the most

---

[2] Russell Duncan, "The Summer of Love and Protest," *The Transatlantic Sixties*, December 31, 2013, 144–73, https://doi.org/10.14361/transcript.9783839422168.144, 157.
[3] Russell Duncan, "The Summer of Love and Protest," 158.
[4] Russell Duncan, "The Summer of Love and Protest," 158.
[5] Russell Duncan, "The Summer of Love and Protest," 158.

potent and identifiable symbol of the hippies. It became a statement of anti-capitalism, anti-draft, and perhaps most importantly, sexual liberation.[6] Though unproven, it was also thought that hippies were into kinkier, more fluid sex, though this may have been exaggerated by mainstream reports.[7] Either way, they presented themselves as proponents of "free love" and self-expression. When Kois arrived in San Francisco, he was bombarded with the colorful and eccentric hippie culture that thrived there. He says, "they were dressing weird and letting their hair grow. You know, all of the sudden, I realized that this was something really big that was beginning to happen. And I was as ignorant as everybody else up to that point."

Kois happened to arrive in San Francisco on the same day that the Beatles first arrived in New York City. Though the Beatles are considered by many to be the most popular band of all time, cementing themselves as mainstream musical icons, their arrival in America was deeply tied to the explosion of counterculture in the country. Despite their initial outward appearance as clean cut to the modern eye, their floppy hair and boyish charms set them apart from the styles of dress and personality that young men were expected to conform to. Kois sees the arrival of the Beatles in America as a symbolic beginning to the counterculture era.[8]

In general, Kois noticed that music was the linchpin of the hippie community in San Francisco. On the hippies, he said, "you could tell that it was a lifestyle that had been adopted by a lot of people and music was tied to it because you could meet these people by going to any of the concerts of the Grateful Dead or Jefferson Airplane." Music was the uniting force and commonality in a community based on eccentricity and diversity.

---

[6] Russell Duncan, "The Summer of Love and Protest," 158.
[7] Russell Duncan, "The Summer of Love and Protest," 157.
[8] John Kois, phone interview, November 19, 2024.

Eventually, after a few weeks on the road in San Francisco, Kois could no longer afford to keep this nomadic West Coast lifestyle. He realized he needed to go back to Milwaukee. Kois hadn't expected his return to the Midwest to amount to much, but his time spent in San Francisco had inadvertently created a serendipitous opportunity. In his words, the *Milwaukee Journal* called him "out of the blue," having somehow heard that he had just spent a few weeks in San Francisco. The *Journal* approached him with a proposition. They had heard there were some "interesting things" happening in San Francisco in regards to a new but growing cultural movement. Kois confirmed this, telling them what he had seen in the city. He told them that he didn't fully understand it himself, but it was fascinating, and didn't seem like it would be ending quickly.[9] *The Milwaukee Journal* asked him to write a couple of stories on the goings on in San Francisco for their Green Sheet, and Kois said he would. He says, "I never expected that to happen, but then once that happened, all of the sudden I became the expert in Milwaukee on what was happening in San Francisco, and I got all these phone calls and notes and stuff from people saying they liked my articles. I never expected that, but then that gave me another clue as to how big this cultural movement was going to be."[10]

He claims that he had never really expected the countercultural movement of the West Coast to ever hit Milwaukee. According to Kois, Milwaukee is a city that never really "woke up" to the huge cultural changes happening throughout the country. "You didn't expect Milwaukee to wake up" he says, "but, you know, they did...they did, and all of the sudden there were hippies out of the street."[11]

[9] John Kois, phone interview, November 19, 2024.
[10] John Kois, phone interview, November 19, 2024.
[11] John Kois, phone interview, November 19, 2024.

After dabbling in mainstream news media, Kois, radio host Bob Reitman, and a small cohort of other Milwaukee counterculturalists gathered to create their own publication. Kois drew on his experiences in writing on counterculture for the *Milwaukee Journal*, create the iconic and enigmatic *Kaleidoscope* newspaper. The first issue of the paper was published on October 1, 1967. This was the beginning of Milwaukee's most iconic yet controversial countercultural phenomenon.

In November of 1968, *Kaleidoscope* published an article titled "A Short and Somewhat Accurate History of Kaleidoscope" in which the writers took a look back at their origins and their first year of activity. Though it marketed itself as only "somewhat accurate" this article is an indispensable view into the nebulous and inexplicable beginnings of the paper. The article claims that "the need for a Milwaukee-based underground newspaper was apparent early in 1967." The article does not elaborate on this need, but it is apparent that it derived from the same places as the need for underground publishing in other cities across the country. Racial tensions, growing population, distaste for the violence of the Vietnam War likely contributed to a culture in Milwaukee that craved a point of view that countered and questioned the paradigms presented by the mainstream news media. Additionally, local uprisings such as the Civil Disorder of 1967 no doubt contributed to the "awakening" that Kois referenced in the city.

John Kois himself, in an interview with the *UWM Post* in a publication from October 3, 1967, sheds a bit more light on why Milwaukee culture was ready for its own underground newspaper. In the article, Kois states that "a paper was needed more in Milwaukee than other cities." He goes on to describe the underground community in Milwaukee as "better than other cities" but does not offer comparisons. He goes on to say that "The mass media does a good job of ignoring [the underground community]. *Kaleidoscope* will help bring cohesiveness to the

scene and give it visibility." This stance on the mainstream media aligns with this thesis's claim that the mainstream media simply did not, or would not catch up quickly enough to the new needs and wants of the growing counterculture movement. Kois and his colleagues at *Kaleidoscope* were working to fill a gaping void left by the conservative and traditional reporting of the mainstream media.

When asked by *The UWM Post* why he started Milwaukee's premier underground newspaper, he says "Seriously, I don't know. After San Francisco, anything would be a drag so it might as well be Milwaukee." Speaking with Kois in the year 2024 reveals a bit more to the story, but the serendipity of the creation of *Kaleidoscope* remains the same.

The UWM Post issue from October 3, 1967 reported on several countercultural happenings in the city, including the newly minted *Kaleidoscope* newspaper. These articles all came from the "Grassroots" section of the paper, which reported on the more alternative events and news in the city. *The UWM Post*, though it was not itself an "underground" paper, provided some of the most in-depth and accurate reporting on the city's countercultural scene. Aside from *Kaleidoscope*, this 1967 article also reports on the opening of "Milwaukee's first head shop" called Indian Head Shop, located at 1625 E. Irving.[12] A head shop is a store that sells memorabilia, accessories, and paraphernalia related to the consumption of tobacco and cannabis. A head shop, especially in this time, when marijuana was not legal for recreational use, did not sell cannabis itself. This head shop offers another connection between the *UWM Post* and Milwaukee's counterculture. The shop was run by Tom Henke and George Johnson. Johnson was a former editor of the *UWM Post*, and a future news editor of the *Kaleidoscope* newspaper.

[12] "Head Shop Opens on Milwaukee's East Side," *UWM Post*, October 1967, sec. Grass Roots, 9.

In the article, Johnson remarked that he "would like to see the shop become an integral part of the community serving not only the needs of hippies but also the general public."[13] This is an interesting sentiment that speaks specifically to the ways that culture and counterculture interacted specifically in Milwaukee. When only looking at the backlash that was suffered by countercultural institutions such as *Kaleidoscope*, it may seem like the situation was "culture vs. counterculture." In Milwaukee, this is not the case. In fact, in the same *UWM Post* article that reported on the beginning of *Kaleidoscope* and the opening of the headshop, John Kois claimed that many of the newspaper subscriptions they had gotten so far were from middle class businesspeople. In this article, Kois also indicated that the main readership base of *Kaleidoscope* would be high school age teenagers. In the *UWM Post* article, Kois said, that he felt as though the paper would have particular appeal for teens. He elaborates by saying "the [counterculture] scene in Milwaukee is mostly kids...after high school, they split."[14] Kois's sentiment about the countercultural scene in Milwaukee being mostly teens, is something he still stands by to this day, reiterating in recent interviews how younger kids, despite their parents' displeasure with the paper, made up a large chunk of their reader base.[15] Kois also claims that Bob Reitman, who wrote poetry for *Kaleidoscope*, was one of the most important connections between the newspaper and their younger readers.[16]

Reitman started his career at WUWM in 1966 when he started hosting a poetry radio show called *Sense Waves.* Reitman was a pioneer of freeform radio, which is a countercultural institution itself. According to WFMU, a current freeform radio station out of New Jersey,

[13] "Head Shop Opens on Milwaukee's East Side." 9.
[14] "Head Shop Opens on Milwaukee's East Side." 9.
[15] John Kois, phone interview, November 19, 2024.
[16] John Kois, phone interview, November 19, 2024.

freeform radio is “an approach to radio programming in which a station’s management gives the DJ complete control over program content.” They tend to play more underground music that would not typically be heard on mainstream radio stations. More often than not, these radio stations leaned liberal and progressive, more so than the mainstream media.[17] Despite their more radical nature, they were and are still bound by the FCC’s regulations regarding foul language, making it more consumable to younger audiences.[18] This wide-ranging accessibility is undoubtedly part of the reason why Reitman’s show helped introduce a young listener base to the *Kaleidoscope* newspaper.

Like underground newspapers, many of the first freeform radio stations began on college campuses in the late 1950s and into the 1960s. The first freeform radio station was John Leonard’s show called *Nightsounds* which, unsurprisingly, broadcasted from Berkeley, California. Other pioneers of the genre were Bob Fass’s *Radio Unnameable* out of New York, and Lorenzo Milam’s show on KRAB-FM out of Seattle.[19]

After *Sense waves,* Reitman began his iconic radio show *It’s Alright Ma, It’s Only Music*, which derives its name from the famous Bob Dylan tune “It’s Alright, Ma (I’m Only Bleeding).” This homage is fitting, given Bob Dylan’s popularity in the countercultural music zeitgeist of the 1960s and 70s. In the 1970s, Reitman moved onto commercial radio. He found national fame on a show with Gene Mueller, fittingly called Reitman & Mueller, on WKTI. Reitman retired from Reitman & Mueller in 2006, reviving *It’s Alright Ma It’s Only Music* in 2007. This revival took place on WUWM public radio and ran until 2024.

[17] “LCD 21: A Brief History of Freeform Radio,” WFMU, accessed April 8, 2025, https://wfmu.org/freeform.html.
[18] “LCD 21: A Brief History of Freeform Radio.”
[19] “LCD 21: A Brief History of Freeform Radio.”

Reitman's connection and familiarity to the citizens of Milwaukee, made him instrumental in the growth of *Kaleidoscope*. Kois says, that without Reitman talking about *Kaleidoscope* on his radio show, the paper would have never reached its target audience: teenagers. Teenagers were, in Kois's opinion, the most integral part of *Kaleidoscope's* reader base. Kois claims that reaching younger readers was part of *Kaleidoscope's* mission. He says, "A lot of what we were doing was influencing young people in terms of how they could make their mark in society and culture. Basically, we were kind of your big brothers. You know, having freedom of the press is a valuable thing for younger boys and girls. You need to understand what [freedom of the press] means to you. If you're getting involved in something and you want to communicate, you have a right to communicate it."[20] The goal of *Kaleidoscope* was not to connect children with obscene or scandalous materials, as some naysayers loudly suggested during *Kaleidoscope's* run. One of their many goals was simply to show young readers that they had the right and the ability to voice their opinions and concerns. It acted as an example of what freedom of speech and freedom of the press could be. Following decades of compulsory and fear-based conformity, this message was, and is, very powerful.

Kois makes sure to reiterate that *Kaleidoscope's* goal was not to indoctrinate young readers into some sort of marijuana smoking countercultural cult. He says, "It wasn't 'we have something we want to indoctrinate you in or educate you about' instead it was 'we have a different view of things and we want to be able to say it in some format where, if you're interested, you can see it."[21] *Kaleidoscope's* messaging and activism were somewhat passive. It was, most of all, an example of the freedoms that one should have. It wasn't about selling people

[20] John Kois, phone interview, November 19, 2024.
[21] John Kois, phone interview, November 19, 2024.

on the values of counterculture. It was a mirror that showed readers who they could be if they decided to take a look.

The UWM Post's reporting on countercultural happenings in Milwaukee, and its deeply rooted relationship with *Kaleidoscope* is historically precedented despite the often differing tone and content of the papers. Campus newspapers, whether they were officially sanctioned by the university or not, were a close sibling to underground newspapers throughout the country. For example, the *Berkeley Tribe*, which reported on the disaster at Altamont in 1969 reported on the situation from a very different point of view than the mainstream media. John McMillian, author of *Smoking Typewriters*, cites the *Berkely Tribe* was one of the first and most important underground newspapers in the nation.[22] Once again, it is clear that counterculture was spreading from the West Coast, particularly the Bay Area, eastward.

According to "A Short and Somewhat Accurate History of Kaleidoscope" the first weeks of the paper's publication were fast and chaotic. The creators of the paper were quite inexperienced when it came to news printing. Kois was a freelance writer who had done some work on the West Coast, and of course, he had some limited experience writing for the mainstream *Milwaukee Journal*. Additionally, Reitman had extensive radio experience, but newspapers were an entirely different arena. Much of those first few weeks was dedicated to getting their footing. This was made even harder by the fact that Milwaukee had no underground newspaper role models for the creators of *Kaleidoscope* to follow. Not only were they new to this game, but they were the first in the city to attempt it.

[22] John Campbell McMillian, *Smoking Typewriters: The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America*, 3.

In their earliest days, the Kaleidoscope creators crowdsourced their community support. "A Concise and Somewhat Accurate History of Kaleidoscope" describes how they held meetings at the Avant Garde coffeehouse at 2111 N. Prospect Avenue. These meetings were open to the public so that the creators could attempt to "enlist the support and assistance of anyone who cared."[23] The Avant Garde coffeehouse itself was a countercultural institution in the city. In a news article written by Milwaukee historian Robert Tanzilo, the Avant Garde is described as having "really jump-started the counterculture movement in Milwaukee and had that certain aura that has made it memorable."[24] Opening in 1962, the coffeehouse was a refuge for "beatniks, hippies, and lovers of blues and folk music." Reitman hosted Wednesday night poetry readings at the coffeehouse. Mark Goff, another *Kaleidoscope* writer, began visiting the shop in his teen years. He describes himself and his teenage cohort as "Catholics" who were "looking for refuge, and that refuge turned out to be the Avant Garde."[25] In this article, Goff goes on to say "For people of my age group – we were sort of the bridge between the beatniks and the emerging counterculture – the Avant Garde was kind of a natural place for us to come."[26] The Avant Garde, therefore, was deeply connected to the beginnings and success of *Kaleidoscope*. It was a home base for the kinds of people that needed a newspaper like *Kaleidoscope*, people who were not satisfied with what the current, conservative, and traditional mainstream had to offer. Knowing this, it makes sense that the paper drew its initial support from patrons of the coffeehouse.

---

[23] Kaleidoscope Staff, "A Concise and Somewhat Accurate History of Kaleidoscope," *Kaleidoscope*, November 1968, 18.
[24] Bobby Tanzilo, "Avant Garde Coffee House," OnMilwaukee, March 1, 2005, https://onmilwaukee.com/articles/avantgarde.
[25] Bobby Tanzilo, "Avant Garde Coffee House," OnMilwaukee, March 1, 2005, https://onmilwaukee.com/articles/avantgarde.
[26] Bobby Tanzilo, "Avant Garde Coffee House."

The *Kaleidoscope* creators worked for "sixty hours straight ahead flat out no stopping"[27] to complete the first issue and meet their first deadline.

Kaleidoscope was not the only local paper consistently reporting on Milwaukee's burgeoning counterculture scene. The *UWM Post*, the official student newspaper of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, turned out to be a dependable source of countercultural news. *The UWM Post* was also an important source of information on the backlash *Kaleidoscope,* and the counterculture scene in general, faced from the more traditional and conservative demographic of the city.

Besides the *UWM Post*, *Kaleidoscope* found support from allies outside of Milwaukee. In particular, their printer William F. Schanen, located in Port Washington, Wisconsin was instrumental in the success of *Kaleidoscope*.[28] Often times, the printer did not expect to be paid. Kois says, "We did want to pay the printer where possible because he did a good job, and he believed in [*Kaleidoscope*] for the same reasons [we did]. If we were delayed on a payment or if we had to cancel a payment, he'd be cooperative...he was kind of on our side. He was a good old newspaper guy who believed in the freedom of the press."[29]

The freedom of the press is a theme that is ever present when discussing underground newspapers in the 1960s and 1970s, especially *Kaleidoscope*. When asked if *Kaleidoscope* had an inherent mission, Kois replied that he hated to ascribe a mission to the newspaper in hindsight when there wasn't really any to begin with, but he also says "you know, I mean, part of it was

[27] Kaleidoscope Staff, "A Concise and Somewhat Accurate History of Kaleidoscope," *Kaleidoscope*, November 1968, 18.
[28] "Boycott Is No Problem," *The UWM Post*, September 23, 1969, 2.
[29] John Kois, phone interview, November 19, 2024.

that we wanted to be an example of freedom of the press, and we wanted people to understand that."[30]

In hindsight, the rise and eventually fall of *Kaleidoscope* is a perfect microcosmic representation of the development and backlash against freedom of the press, and freedom of expression during this era.

What was *Kaleidoscope*?

Kaleidoscope covered many topics throughout its short history. The paper covered everything from national politics to art and poetry, always through a radical, eccentric, and overall countercultural lens.[31] The creators and readers of the paper were often called hippies by outsiders, but this is an oversimplification of the creators' goals and identities in terms of the paper. In a 1968 *UWM Post* article titled "Underground Papers Fight for their Lives," Kois suggested *Kaleidoscope* was an alternative to mainstream mass media which "looks for samples to illustrate the angle they want."[32]

Kaleidoscope was not interested in disseminating viewpoints that would benefit the powers that determined the social and political standards of the era. They, more so than mainstream mass media publications, were concerned with helping and informing the community. A great example of this is *Kaleidoscope's* stance on the legalization of marijuana. Kois claims that the paper's stance on the legalization of the drug was to benefit users in the community who were "prosecuted unjustly and are likely to fall prey to crooked pushers or to start on hard drugs."[33]

---

[30] John Kois, phone interview, November 19, 2024.
[31] Anne Mullen, "Underground Papers Fight for Their Lives," *The UWM Post*, February 23, 1968, 11.
[32] Mullen, "Underground Papers Fight for Their Lives," 11.
[33] Mullen, "Underground Papers Fight for Their Lives," 11.

According to an interview with Kois, one of the most satisfying things about his career at *Kaleidoscope* was the connections he made with people in the community. He says "there were encouraging moments because sometimes we actually made a difference...we pointed out an issue and something was done about it, that kind of thing." Originally, Kois, Reitman, and the rest started *Kaleidoscope* simply because the circumstances were right, and Milwaukee didn't have an alternative paper yet. However, *Kaleidoscope* morphed into an effective mouthpiece for the city, and a tool for community organizing. On this point, Kois says,

> We did a lot of meetings with groups, usually groups of slightly older people that were at least open to trying to understand what was happening with the younger generation, and, you know, we would meet with them and some of them were very good meetings. I mean, you know, they were intelligent people. They listened. They kind of began to understand what was happening and, you know, accept the fact that some of it was good. We kind of closed the gaps between the generations.[34]

In all, *Kaleidoscope* was a reflection of Milwaukee at the time, a small city with big opinions, passionate interests, strong politics, and a growing underground scene that rejected the norms of polite Midwestern society.

Obscenity and Local Backlash

When it came to backlash against underground newspapers, accusations of obscenity were a dagger in the side of countercultural publications. Though accusations of obscenity were extremely common in the midcentury, the history of laws against obscenity in print media go back to the earliest years of the United States, long before Vietnam, the Civil Rights Movement, and both World Wars.

[34] John Kois, phone interview, November 19, 2024.

Obscenity laws are those that restrict or ban the circulation of materials (mostly film and print media) that are deemed obscene. If a piece of media is deemed obscene by a court of law, it is then not protected by the First Amendment and does not fall under free speech.[35]

The first prosecution related to obscenity in print media happened in 1821 against a book called *The Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, though this was before any federal anti-obscenity laws were officially enacted. That came several decades later in 1873 with the federal Comstock Act, one of the most remembered and influential obscenity laws in western history which declared obscene material non-mailable.[36] The Hicklin obscenity case of 1868, decided by Lord Cockburn, created a "test of obscenity" that would be used for decades to come. The Hicklin case held that "the test of obscenity is whether the tendency of the matter charged as obscenity is such as to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences and into whose hands a publication of this sort might fall." Essentially, if a text could influence someone to do or think something outside of the standards of moral society, then that media was considered obscene. Despite the fact that the Hicklin case was an English controversy, the effects made their way into American legislation as well.[37] When examining the backlash faced locally and statewide by *Kaleidoscope*, it is clear that these obscenity laws reverberated into the present and affected the underground publication in tangible, often threatening ways.

It would be dismissive and over-simple to say that the circumstances of the changing culture in the country allowed for underground publications like *Kaleidoscope* to thrive

[35] Samuel N. Rosenberg Curator: Nicolas Valazza, "Obscenity Laws in the United States, 19th-21st Centuries," Banned Books, Lilly Library, Indiana University Bloomington, accessed April 8, 2025, https://bannedbooks.indiana.edu/exhibits/show/bannedbooks/obscenity-laws-in-the-united-s.
[36] Henry H. Foster, Jr., "The 'Comstock Load'—Obscenity and the Law," *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science* 48, no. 3 (September 1957): 245, https://doi.org/10.2307/1139582, p. 246.
[37] Foster, "The 'Comstock Load.'" 248.

indefinitely without fear of backlash. The truth is quite to the contrary of that fantastical assumption. *Kaleidoscope* faced mostly local backlash from conservative minded community members since its conception.

The 17th issue of *Kaleidoscope*, dated June 21 through July 11 1968, reports on several instances of backlash against the newspaper very early in its tenure. According to an article titled "Summer Madness" written by John Kois, the *Kaleidoscope* staff had returned from a much needed week-long break to chaos. Kois writes, "Intended as a vacation for the weary and work staff of *Kaleidoscope*, the extra week seemed instead as an invitation to a summer madness. Suddenly, it seemed, everyone wanted to 'get' *Kaleidoscope*, so that what has been intended as a period of rest turned into an overtime and doubletime fight with censor morons, mind fuzz, petty bureaucrats and silly citizens of this 'land of the free.'"[38] Kois continued on to thank the *Milwaukee Journal* for covering a firebombing of the *Kaleidoscope* offices.

Unfortunately, being served a Molotov cocktail on their front doorstep was not an uncommon occurrence. This is supported by the fact that this incident was dedicated only a few words in the article. Additionally, when asked about this bombing recently, Kois brushed it off, by saying it was a regular occurrence. The fact that this group of underground journalists were so used to getting firebombed is a testament to the amount of backlash they received. It is important to note that these firebombs most often caused minimal damage, but they were a frightening message nonetheless. Kois dedicates more of this article to the saga of Elmer Henry and East Side Building manager. Henry claimed that *Kaleidoscope's* occupancy at 1301 East Brady Street was illegal. Henry also threatened that if the newspaper crew did not vacate the building in 48

[38] John Kois, "Summer Madness," *Kaleidoscope*, 1968,

hours they would be padlocked out. Instead of fighting him or proving legal occupancy, the *Kaleidoscope* crew packed and moved everything into storage and began to search for a new office to set up in. A director of a religious student house on the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee campus offered the paper space in their basement. While they were fixing up the space and preparing it for operation, Elmer Henry reappeared and informed them that their occupancy at this religious student house was also illegal. Henry's harassment did not stop there. It turns out that he had also been paying visits to *Kaleidoscope* advertisers, imploring them to remove their ads from the papers.[39] Advertisers, according to Kois, were the biggest source of revenue for the paper, since they charged very little, or not at all, for the sale of individual issues.

Kaleidoscope's hawkers (people who often stood on street corners selling, or "hawking" the paper), also faced backlash in the forms of arrests and harassment from local police. In 1968, Dennis Gall, *Kaleidoscope's* circulation manager, was arrested by Whitefish Bay Police for hawking the newspaper on a local street corner.[40]

Whitefish Bay, a neighborhood located north of Shorewood, where Kois lived and attended high school, was a particular thorn in *Kaleidoscope's* side. The chief of the Whitefish Bay police had refused to grant Gall a permit to sell *Kaleidoscope* in the village, claiming the newspaper was obscene, demonstrating how those old newspaper obscenity laws still tangibly affected the underground publishing scene. After Gall's arrest, Attorney Robert. H. Friebert accused the Whitefish Bay police chief of "censorship" of the paper. This censorship was so blatant that the ACLU sponsored Gall's legal representation, which was being handled by the

[39] John Kois, "Summer Madness," *Kaleidoscope*, 1968.
[40] Dennis Gall, "The Persecution of Kaleidoscope by the Inmates of Whitefish Bay under the Direction of Mind-Cop Meister," *Kaleidoscope*, July 1968, 2.

law firm Shellow, Shellow, and Coffey.[41] The ACLU argued: "There are absolutely no standards in the [transient merchant] ordinance for product evaluation and, of course, there are no standards for determining obscenity. The Chief of Police is alone in his determination." Here, these fluid and subjective standards of obscenity were seen in action. There was no accurate or reliable test by which to determine a piece of print media "obscene." It was simply up to one person's opinion to deem it so. Luckily for *Kaleidoscope*, Circuit Judge Robert W. Landry barred the village of Whitefish Bay from prosecuting Gall.[42] However, a less sympathetic, or more conservative court may have agreed with the Chief of Whitefish Bay Police, causing a legal firestorm that could have irreparably damaged the paper. This would not be the last, or even the most threatening time that *Kaleidoscope* would come up against these ill-defined obscenity standards. In fact, in 1968, the same year that Gall was arrested, Kois was fined $2,000 for publishing "picture of a nude black man and white woman in a position of sexual embrace" alongside a poem titled "Sex Poem." These works were declared obscene by circuit judge John A. Decker and were accused of "exceeding the customary standards of the community."[43] The fine would not be the only consequence of this publication, as the repercussions would follow Kois into the 1970s, and into the next chapter of this thesis.

Schanen, *Kaleidoscope's* printer, also faced local backlash for his contributions to the paper. In 1969, there was a boycott of the printer. Curtis McKay, a Grafton, Wisconsin resident, attorney, and former Republican state assemblyman, represented this group of boycotters in the media. In an episode of WUWM's radio show "Chattertrack," McKay stated, "A group of people

[41] "ACLU Aids Kaleidoscope," *The UWM Post*, February 7, 1969.
[42] "ACLU Aids Kaleidoscope," *The UWM Post*, February 7, 1969.
[43] Deborah Dreyfus, "Decker Rules Kaleidoscope Obscene, Editor Fined $2,000," *The UWM Post*, December 6, 1968.

not only in Grafton, but in other areas feel that this paper, if it fulfills any purpose, fulfills a degrading one."[44] Kois countered by claiming that the boycott has done nothing if not create publicity for the paper. He also stressed that Schanen had nothing to do with the content of the paper itself. He printed it despite the fact that he didn't necessarily agree with everything in it. He agreed to print it, again, sometimes without charge, simply because he believed that the *Kaleidoscope* crew has a right to publish.[45]

This bureaucratic, petty sort of backlash is the majority of what Kaleidoscope faced in its early days. Most of it was small, local, and more annoying than anything else. It wasn't until the backlash reached the state level, instead of local level, that there was really a risk to the newspaper. This slow but steady increase in backlash towards the newspaper, its workers, and others associated with it speaks to the growing counter-counterculture.

[44] "Boycott Is No Problem," *The UWM Post*, September 23, 1969.
[45] "Boycott Is No Problem," *The UWM Post*, September 23, 1969.

Chapter Three: The Downfall of the Counterculture

The Silent Majority

While the local threats to *Kaleidoscope* worked to slow them down and impede their sales, they tended not to be an existential threat to the paper. Even local legal troubles, such as the arrest of Dennis Gall in Whitefish Bay were, in the grand scheme of the backlash against the paper, a minor occurrence. The real, serious threats to the paper were the larger legal battles that the paper faced throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The backlash increasing in frequency and severity corresponds with larger national political trends beginning around the same time. After almost a decade of free love, open drug culture, radical anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist politics espoused by members of the counterculture, conservative America felt that now, they were the unheard and unrepresented voices. Despite the fact that conservative views never went away during the height of counterculture, they were not the focus of the American zeitgeist until their resurgence in the 1970s.

President Richard Nixon, whose tenure in the White House spanned from 1969-1974, became a sort of figurehead of this conservative movement, which he dubbed "The Silent Majority" in a 1969 televised address. In this address, he claimed that the deep national divisions regarding the Vietnam War were caused by Americans losing confidence in the government.[1] In this speech, Nixon acknowledged the discontent with the United States' involvement and actions in the war as expressed by anti-Vietnam war protestors. He referenced these protests and says,

[1] "Nixon Silent Majority Speech Text," Voices of Democracy: The U.S. Oratory Project, University of Maryland, June 25, 2024, https://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/nixon-silent-majority-speech-text/.

"In San Francisco a few weeks ago, I saw demonstrators carrying signs reading: 'Lose in Vietnam, bring the boys home.' Well, one of the strengths of our free society is that any American has a right to reach that conclusion and advocate that point of view."[2]

He took several opportunities throughout this address to take sly digs at the citizens who are against the war, showing that this particular countercultural view was under threat by the Nixon administration. Nixon said:

> As President of the United States, I would be untrue to my oath of office if I allowed the policy of this Nation to be dictated by the minority who hold that point of view and who try to impose it on the Nation by mounting demonstrations in the street...If a vocal minority, however fervent its cause, prevails over reason and the will of the majority, this nation has no future as a free society.[3]

By claiming that those against the United States' involvement in Vietnam are in the minority, he is diminishing the movement, and making it seem as though most Americans are supportive of the war, but their voices are being silenced by a small group of loud dissenters.

In this speech, Nixon specifically targeted the views of young Americans who, demographically, made up the majority of the counterculture movement. In his speech, Nixon said, "And now I would like to address a word, if I may, to the young people of this nation who are particularly concerned—and I understand why they are concerned—about this war. I respect your idealism. I share your concern for peace. I want peace as much as you do."[4] This statement displays clever manipulation. Claiming that only those who are young, and therefore naive and inexperienced, are unsupportive of the war is dismissive of their concerns. This statement implies that it is childish or ignorant to not support the war, and that protesting is an immature pastime for those who do not fully grasp the situation. At this point, it is important to point out

[2] "Nixon Silent Majority Speech Text," Voices of Democracy.
[3] "Nixon Silent Majority Speech Text," Voices of Democracy.
[4] "Nixon Silent Majority Speech Text," Voices of Democracy.

that people who were against the war did in fact skew younger. A 1969 Gallup poll showed that 69% of college students did not favor the war,[5] while 39% of Americans overall in February of 1969 thought it was a mistake to get involved in the conflict.[6] These statistics and the age of the dissenters does not prove Nixon right in hindsight. It is a simple reflection of the demographics of the counterculture movement.

At the close of this speech, Nixon addressed the Americans who still support the U.S. government's involvement in the war and still trust the government to decide what is necessary for quelling this conflict. He says, "And so tonight, to you, the great silent majority of my fellow Americans, I ask for your support. I pledged in my campaign for the presidency to end the war in a way that we could win the peace. I have initiated a plan of action which will enable me to keep that pledge. The more support I can have from the American people, the sooner that pledge can be redeemed, for the more divided we are at home, the less likely the enemy is to negotiate at Paris."[7]

The purpose of the Silent Majority speech is twofold. The first purpose is to appeal to the anti-Vietnam war activists and protestors, showing that he has a plan to end the war. The second purpose is to signal to the "Silent Majority" that they are not alone in their displeasure with the growing distrust of the government and the breakdown of polite society. In some ways, this speech is a call to action for conservative Americans.

---

[5] Lydia Saad, "Gallup Vault: 1969 College Students' Resistance to Vietnam," Gallup.com, October 16, 2024, https://news.gallup.com/vault/230501/gallup-vault-1969-college-students-resistance-vietnam.aspx.
[6] Explorations: The Vietnam War as History, Digital History, accessed April 15, 2025, https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/vietnam/vietnam_pubopinion.cfm.
[7] "Nixon Silent Majority Speech Text," Voices of Democracy.

During the birth of counterculture, the seeds of conservative populism and religious fundamentalism were being planted throughout the country. The nomination of Arizona senator Barry Goldwater as the Republican presidential candidate in 1964 is a prime example. David Farber, author of *The Sixties from Memory to History,* sees Goldwater's nomination not as the dying breath of the conservative conformity of the 1950s, but as an early victory of a conservative movement that would dominate Washington by the 1980s.[8] *The Emerging Republican Majority*, which was published in 1969 by Justice Department aide Kevin P. Phillips, argued that Nixon might usher in an era when Republicans replace the Democrats as the majority.[9] Also in 1969, just about one year after *Kaleidoscope* began publishing, they reported on the appointment of arch-conservative Warren Burger to the Supreme Court. Burger replaced Earl Warren, who, according to the article, "extended the rights of defendants, limited the rights of police and generally aided the battle for civil rights."[10] The article, written by Dennis Gall, reported that Burger supported school segregation and adhered to McCarthy-era conservatism, one of the factors this thesis argues spurred the beginning of the counterculture movement.[11] Though the rise of the hippies was dominant in the national political narrative, conservatives were not-so-quietly making important moves towards power throughout the golden age of the counterculture era.

This chapter argues that, by the 1970s, the curiosity with which much of the American public viewed the counterculture movement morphed into disdain. One of the biggest identifiable catalysts of this shift was the Long Hot Summer of 1967, which turned many white

---

[8] David R. Farber, *The Sixties: From Memory to History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 4.
[9] Robert Mason, "'I Was Going to Build a New Republican Party and a New Majority': Richard Nixon as Party Leader, 1969–73," *Journal of American Studies* 39, no. 3 (December 2005): 463–83, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0021875805000617, 465.
[10] Dennis Gall, "Goodbye Earl Warren," *Kaleidoscope*, July 1969, 3.
[11] Dennis Gall, "Goodbye Earl Warren," *Kaleidoscope*, July 1969, 3.

Americans against the fight for Black equality. Another is the continued protests the Vietnam War, with some resulting in violence and death. These factors emboldened the ever-existing conservative sphere to reach for control of the narrative. President Richard Nixon's election and his "Silent Majority Address," which disparaged Vietnam protestors, exemplifies this shift. On the national scale, attempts to quash voices of the counterculture through institutionally-backed means included the government's legislative response to the Long Hot Summer of 1967 and the military intervention in quelling anti-Vietnam war protests. This institutional power shift deeply damaged the countercultural underground publishing scene in Milwaukee as well, manifesting in arrests and a Supreme Court case. The following pages will discuss the national factors that caused this shift in public attitudes against countercultural ideas and outline its consequences for the country, and for *Kaleidoscope.*

1967 – The Long Hot Summer

The origins of the turning tides against the counterculture movement lie even farther back than Nixon's Silent Majority address. In fact, they may be traced as far back as 1967, a year that many look back on as the height of the counterculture movement. In the summer of 1967, over 160 race riots erupted throughout the nation as a result of the continued systemic oppression of Black Americans. These riots were an explosion of the tensions, emotions, and frustrations caused by systemic poverty, unemployment, unequal housing, and general mistreatment at the hands of white American society. History remembers the riots in Newark, New Jersey, and Detroit, Michigan as the most destructive and violent. The Detroit riot left 43 people dead, and 2,000 buildings destroyed in mostly Black neighborhoods.[12]

[12] Mark McLay, "The Republican Party and the Long, Hot Summer of 1967 in the United States," *The Historical Journal* 61, no. 4 (March 13, 2018): 1089–1111, 1090. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0018246x17000504.

The term "long hot summer" began to be used to describe activities and protests for Black equality that took place during the summer months. This moniker was particularly popularized when, in 1964, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr called a press conference in St. Augustine Florida where he announced the beginning of a "long, hot, non-violent summer of protest."[13] In that same year, newspapers referring to the upcoming "Freedom Summer," a Mississippi voter registration campaign that aimed to increase Black voter participation, was also referred to as a "long hot summer." Eventually, though, the connotation of this phrase became more violent. By the late years of the 1960s, "long hot summer" referred to months of uprisings, destruction, and desperate outcries for equality. These Black uprisings, and national awareness of them, did not begin only in the summer of 1967. This movement of long hot summers can arguably be traced back to 1965, when the largely Black Los Angeles neighborhood of Watts erupted in uprising.[14]

As discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, Black Milwaukeeans also rioted in 1967 in response to mistreatment from police, and systemic oppression related to housing and employment. Some Milwaukeeans were "woken up" by the 1967 Civil Disorder. The polite society they were used to had been shattered, and many accepted and immersed themselves in the changing culture. Others, however, were desperate to keep things the way they were, to not "wake up" to the realities of their unequal society, and work to reconstruct the facade of polite society that had been broken by the wash of violence over the nation.

The GOP's response to the riots was largely punitive. In July of 1967, House Republicans passed a bill that would have made it illegal to cross state lines to incite a riot. Activists took this

[13] Malcolm McLaughlin, *The Long, Hot Summer of 1967: Urban Rebellion in America* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 2.
[14]McLay, "The Republican Party and the Long, Hot Summer of 1967 in the United States," 1094.

as a targeted attack against civil rights leaders, and as an attempt to quell Black militancy.[15] It is important to note that President Johnson himself was no fan of the rioters either. Though Johnson constituted the Kerner Commission, whose goal was to identify the systemic and societal origins of the 1967 civil unrest, he did not agree with the Commission's findings. The Commission found that fear, poverty, and white racism were the at the root of this violent period.[16] Despite the fact that President Johnson created the commission, he never responded to or acted on the commission's findings.[17]

Backlash against these instances of civil unrest was not present only among Republican politicians. White Americans in general responded to these riots with fear and anger. National polls revealed that there was a growing distrust for Black Americans amongst whites.[18] This phenomenon also occurred after the 1965 Watts riot as well, when white support for civil rights, and the Democratic party dropped dramatically.[19] White opposition to civil rights legislation, which had of course, existed before the civil disorders, was reinforced. A Gallup poll indicated that many white Americans favored strong, repressive, punitive measures against the rioters.[20] In their fear of this upheaval of a society that benefitted them at the expense of others, they called for violent measures to re-establish the status quo. Members of the GOP were quickly re-unifying after the landslide defeat of Barry Goldwater by Lyndon B. Johnson in the 1964 presidential election. This white anxiety around the protests presented them with an opportunity

[15] Mark McLay, "The Republican Party and the Long, Hot Summer of 1967 in the United States," 1098.
[16] Susan Gooden and Samuel Myers, "The Kerner Commission Report Fifty Years Later: Revisiting the American Dream," *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 4, no. 6 (2018): 1, https://doi.org/10.7758/rsf.2018.4.6.01, 1.
[17] Gooden and Myers, "The Kerner Commission Report Fifty Years Later," 2.
[18] McLay, "The Republican Party and the Long, Hot Summer of 1967 in the United States," 1099.
[19] McLay, "The Republican Party and the Long, Hot Summer of 1967 in the United States," 1094.
[20] McLay, "The Republican Party and the Long, Hot Summer of 1967 in the United States," 1091.

to gain power in the wake of this massive movement of distrust of the Democratic administration's ability to quell these uprisings.[21]

Just as these civil disturbances broke down the facade of polite society, and helped to birth an era of self-expression, radical political ideas, and activism among counterculturalists, it also deepened the existing anxiety felt by conservative, white Americans, who felt that their way of life, as well as their position of power and level of comfort in their everyday lives were threatened. As the presence of civil rights and counterculture in the news increased, this anxiety did as well.

Introducing *Bugle American*

One must accept that the downfall of counterculture and of underground publications in the United States was not linear. It was not as if Richard Nixon gave his Silent Majority address, and suddenly there was an organized Silent Majority movement that effectively quelled all underground publication activity so that none existed after the turn of the decade into the 1970s. Just as we saw that there was backlash against underground publications even through their golden age, there were pockets of success in underground publishing, especially in Wisconsin, even through the era when the industry was facing the most loud and dangerous backlash.

Bugle American was a popular independent publication founded in 1970 by underground comic artist Denis Kitchen. Kitchen was known nationwide for founding the Kitchen Sink Press in 1969 which published comics from many of the most prominent creatives in the industry.[22] His roots in Milwaukee ran deep, graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee with

[21]McLay, "The Republican Party and the Long, Hot Summer of 1967 in the United States," 1097.
[22] Denis Kitchen, "Denis Kitchen Online," Denis Kitchen Online, accessed April 15, 2025, https://www.deniskitchen.com/.

a degree in journalism in 1968.[23] The history of comics, and the culture surrounding them, closely mimics the contours of the underground publishing movement, and the counterculture movement in general. Comics grew in popularity throughout the country in the early 20th century, but by the post-war period, comics became the target of the moral panic sweeping the nation during the Cold War.[24] Comic artists with progressive, left-leaning views were pushed underground. Born out of this exodus from the mainstream, underground artists started the "Comix" movement which focused on "self-published" and "socially conscious" comics.[25]

From 1970 to 1978, *Bugle American*, more commonly referred to as "*The Bugle*" focused heavily on countercultural topics such as safe drug use and politics. They also covered more generally concerning topics such as public health. *Bugle American*, which takes its name from the Spiderman comics, is a prime example of how underground publications reacted to the growing strength of the conservative voice in the late 1960s.

In general, *Bugle's* tone and coverage was more palatable to the average American than *Kaleidoscope*. *Bugle* was less controversial, less inflammatory, and overall, less outwardly radical than John Kois's creation. Like *Kaleidoscope*, *Bugle* covered arts, literature, music, and politics, but did so with an attitude that did not alienate them from a less radical reader base.[26]

---

[23] John Schumacher, "Happy UWM Graduation!," UWM REPORT, January 7, 2025, https://uwm.edu/news/happy-uwm-graduation/#:~:text=Denis%20Kitchen%2C%20a%20UWM%20journalism,honorary%20degree%20at%20the%20ceremony.

[24] Sean Carleton, "Drawn to Change: Comics and Critical Consciousness," *Labour / Le Travail* 73, 2014, 151–77, http://www.jstor.org/stable/24244249, 154.

[25]Carleton, "Drawn to Change," 155.

[26] Matt Wild, "Remembering the Time the 'Bugle American' Offices Totally Got Firebombed," *Milwaukee Record*, February 23, 2017, https://milwaukeerecord.com/city-life/remembering-bugle-american-office-totally-got-firebombed/.

Despite their departure from *Kaleidoscope's* radical politics and snarky tone, *Bugle* still covered topics that were considered decidedly countercultural. In particular, the early 1970s *Bugle* articles frequently reported on drug culture, and the law enforcement reaction to the rise of drug use in cities over the course of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Early in 1972, *Bugle* published an article about a drug bust in Madison, Wisconsin, the state's capital. This drug bust was reportedly one of the largest that the state had ever seen. This article included a quote from Madison Alderman Paul Soglin, who later became mayor of Madison three times from 1973-1979, 1989-1997, and 2011-2019. Soglin said, "The greatest drug-related crime committed last weekend was committed not by the smokers, but the Madison police officials who showed their willingness to sacrifice the real need of the community."[27] This quote from Alderman Soglin could be considered by many to be politically radical and anti-police officer, but it is not presented as the opinion of the paper. The reporting on this story in *Bugle* mimicked the attempted objectivity displayed by more mainstream news outlets. This is not a political opinion piece one may expect from an underground newspaper. This contrasts with *Kaleidoscope* writers, who tended to insert their opinions and paradigms into their articles. Other articles published by *Bugle* in the early 1970s reveal that drug use and drug culture were arguably the most common topic of reporting for the paper in that era. The January 1972 issue of *Bugle* includes articles titled "Smugglers Too High for Border Control,"[28] "What They Said about Drugs in 1953,"[29] and "Marijuana Immortality Linked."[30] Clearly, drugs were a hot topic of the time, as they had been since the rise of counterculture in the 1960s.

[27] John Christensen, "The Great Madison Drug Bust," *Bugle American*, January 26, 1972.
[28] "Smugglers Too High for Border Control," *Bugle American*, January 1972.
[29] "What They Said About Drugs in 1953," *Bugle American*, January 1972.
[30] "Marijuana Immortality Linked," *Bugle American*, January 1972.

This comparison should not be taken as a criticism of either style; it simply shows that *Kaleidoscope* and *Bugle* were two different types of papers, reacting to the fast-changing cultures they were operating in. As John Kois said, *Kaleidoscope*, and the articles published within it, were meant to show the youth of the counterculture that there was another way, an alternative to the lives they had been marketed by previous generations. It was meant to show them what society and culture and politics could be if they "woke up" and resisted the oppressive systems existing all around them. *Bugle*, on the other hand, was more of a traditional news outlet that happened to focus on events in the countercultural sphere. It had a bias in reporting, but much less of an obvious agenda than Kaleidoscope.

In comparing *Bugle American* to *Kaleidoscope*, it is essential to remember that for one year in 1970, both newspapers ran at the same time, interacted, and built off each other's reporting. In an October 1970 issue, the *Bugle* published a front-page article openly parodying and mimicking *Kaleidoscope*. The article, published directly under *Kaleidoscope's* iconic name and logo was titled "Off Sexist Pigs."[31] It was a snarky article calling women to organize and revolt for their rights. The parody offended many of the more radical readers of the *Bugle*, who claimed in letters to the paper that this article was mocking women's oppression and liberation. The more conservative reader base of the paper was offended that the *Bugle* was displaying a more political side. The issue following the *Kaleidoscope* parody included some complaints sent in by readers. One reader named Wendel Allen Pugh wrote,

> "*Bugle*: I am not sure of the *Bugle's* responsibility to the 'revolution' or the 'movement' [harkening back to the languages used in the 'Off Sexist Pigs' article], or to the underground press; but I am sure of its responsibility to reporting the news, to

[31] "Off Sexist Pigs," *Bugle American*, October 29, 1970.

objectivity and to its leadership. If any way the *Bugle* suppresses or fails to deal with any of the last three factors it will have committed a serious mistake."[32]

Alan Wartenberg, another *Bugle* reader wrote, "To the *Bugle*: The reaction to the *Bugle* parody left me both surprised and confused. I was told by several friends that the issue was counter-revolutionary, an offense to Women and Gays...after much reflection, however, I am appalled that *Kaleidoscope*, as well as many of its readers, can expect to be immune from criticism in any form, including parody."[33] One can gain a good idea of the reader base of the *Bugle* from these two responses. *Bugle* readers were less radical than *Kaleidoscope* readers, though still politically active. It is also clear from the reader complaints that many viewed *Kaleidoscope* as overly political and overly radical. Many seemed to prefer *Bugle's* more centrist style. The existence of this article may indicate that the *Bugle* too thought *Kaleidoscope* was crossing the line into inflammatory journalism and mocking its hyper-radicalism through parody.

The readers' criticism that the paper was becoming too political exemplifies the differences between *Kaleidoscope* and *Bugle*. People may have complained that *Kaleidoscope* was too political, but they never would have complained that the paper was *becoming* too political, since it was inherently political from its conception. While *Kaleidoscope* was immersed in political and opinionated reporting from its beginning, *Bugle* only sometimes dipped its toes into the political and opinionated. It was a safer publication that didn't alienate either side.

This comparison of *Bugle* and *Kaleidoscope*, again, is not meant to show that the downfall of counterculture meant that counterculture disappeared, it is meant to demonstrate that the counterculture simply changed and adapted. It is essential to note that these *Bugle American* articles were published during and after the peak of Milwaukee's underground publishing golden

[32] "P.O. Box 1725," *Bugle American*, November 5, 1970.
[33] "P.O. Box 1725," *Bugle American*, November 5, 1970.

age. By the time these articles hit the newsstands, many publications, most notably *Kaleidoscope*, were already dead in the water. This is important because it shows the "acceptable" personality of an underground publication in a world that was beginning to show hostility towards alternative styles, people, and counterculture in general. *Bugle's* heavy reporting on drug busts and the effects of marijuana and amphetamines shows a stark departure from the freewheeling and experimental drug culture of the early 1960s. These *Bugle* articles show a growing anxiety around counterculture topics from within the counterculture movement itself.

The Culmination

Despite the *Bugle's* more neutral approach to countercultural reporting, they were still targets of anti-counterculture attacks that, by the 1970s, were growing in frequency and severity. In fact, the *Bugle* faced one of the most devastating attacks in the history of Milwaukee underground publishing.

In the early morning of February 22, 1975, *Bugle* writer Gary Peterson received a phone call from fellow *Bugle* writer Judi Jacobi. When Peterson answered the phone, Jacobi said, "Gary, there was a bomb. The building is gone."[34] An unknown individual, or group, had firebombed *The Bugle's* office in the Riverwest neighborhood. It was completely destroyed. This firebomb and its damage were much more devastating than the one that hit *Kaleidoscope* in 1968. The bomb that hit *Bugle* office set the building alight. Glass was blown from the windows, and the walls were burned out. Furniture, office supplies, and papers lay in charred ruin. The

[34]Wild, "Remembering the Time the 'Bugle American' Offices Totally Got Firebombed."

building was declared a total loss.[35] The *Bugle* staff spent the next day rummaging through the wreckage, salvaging what they could. Within the same week as the attack, John Kois's car was also hit with a firebomb.[36]

The mainstream news media of Milwaukee showed no solidarity with their underground brethren. According to Mark Goff, one of *Bugle's* writers and photographers, the Society of Professional Journalists chapter at the *Milwaukee Journal* held a special meeting in which they declared the *Bugle* to be "not a real newspaper," and voted not to send them any financial aid following the attack.[37] Once again, this shows how powerful institutions were turning against counterculture. The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee came to the paper's aid, allowing them to use university offices to write their next issue, which, incredibly, came out on schedule. Goff said, "we managed to slap the thing together and get the next week's paper out on time."[38] Eventually, *Bugle* moved their headquarters to another storefront, and business continued as usual. Support for the paper after the bombing was not limited to the university. The week of the bombing, Leonard Cohen, a countercultural music icon held up a copy of the *Bugle* and said "some things don't burn!" An image of Cohen and his copy of the *Bugle* made the front cover of the *Bugle's* first issue after the attack.[39] *Bugle* also received a donation from George Reedy, President Lyndon B. Johnson's former press secretary, who later became the Dean of the School of Journalism at Marquette University in Milwaukee.[40] This generous act of solidarity from a

[35] Marti Mikkelson, "Whatever Happened to Milwaukee's Alternative Newspaper, the Bugle?," WUWM 89.7 FM - Milwaukee's NPR, February 9, 2018, https://www.wuwm.com/regional/2018-02-09/whatever-happened-to-milwaukees-alternative-newspaper-the-bugle.
[36] Mikkelson, "Whatever Happened to Milwaukee's Alternative Newspaper, the Bugle?"
[37] Wild, "Remembering the Time the 'bugle American' Offices Totally Got Firebombed."
[38] Mikkelson, "Whatever Happened to Milwaukee's Alternative Newspaper, the Bugle?"
[39] Wild, "Remembering the Time the 'Bugle American' Offices Totally Got Firebombed."
[40] Wild, "Remembering the Time the 'Bugle American' Offices Totally Got Firebombed."

former White House staff member shows that *Bugle* is remembered as a radical underground newspaper, it was not radical enough to alienate former members of the US government.

The perpetrators of the firebombs were never caught, but the *Bugle* staff had their theories. Goff said that the *Bugle* had a few enemies due to the controversial subject matter of the paper.[41] Gary Peterson thought it might be Milwaukee Neo-Nazis, or even a Red Squad of the Milwaukee Police Department. Red Squads were a police initiative that "kept tabs" on radical politics and counterculture.[42]

By the last years of the 1960s, and the earliest moments of the 1970s, counterculture and countercultural institutions like underground publications found themselves in a precarious position. *Kaleidoscope* had fashioned itself as a voice for a movement that was quickly losing popularity among Americans who were shaken and scared by the societal upheavals they had witnessed throughout the decade. Backlash against the counterculture, which had once been vocal, but relatively small and ineffective, was growing in power and efficacy. While pearl-clutching parents and local police were a thorn in the side of *Kaleidoscope*, these parties had little power in actually shutting down the paper. It was not until the State Supreme Court of Wisconsin got involved that *Kaleidoscope* faced a true existential threat. In 1972, John Kois was taken to court by District Attorney Peter Genrich for charges of obscenity.[43] Kois was accused of publishing a piece titled "Sex Poem," along with two small artistic nude photographs in *Kaleidoscope's* August 1968 issue. By this time, Kois had already left *Kaleidoscope*, having resigned in spring of 1971.[44] According to the court, the poem was "an undisguisedly frank,

[41]Mikkelson, "Whatever Happened to Milwaukee's Alternative Newspaper, the Bugle?".
[42]Wild, "Remembering the Time the 'Bugle American' Offices Totally Got Firebombed.".
[43] *KOIS v. WISCONSIN* (Supreme Court of the United States, June 26, 1972).
[44] "John Kois: The Last Interview," *Bugle American*, November 1975, p. 94.

play-by-play account of the author's recollection of sexual intercourse."[45] Kois was brought up on charges and convicted for violating a Wisconsin state statute which prohibited the dissemination of "lewd, obscene, or indecent written matter, picture, sound recording, or film."[46]

In the end, the United States Supreme Court eventually sided with Kois, and the State Supreme Court sentence of a two-year term in prison and a fine of $2,000 was reversed. The nude pictures were protected under the Fourteenth Amendment due to the fact that they were "rationally related to a news article within the paper."[47] The poem too was deemed "not obscene" under the *Roth v. United States* test, which determined it "bears some earmarks of a serious attempt at art."[48] In the end, Kois's conviction was overturned.

Justice William O. Douglas said of this case;

> In this case, the vague umbrella of obscenity laws was used in an attempt to run a radical newspaper out of business and to impose a two-year sentence and a $2,000 fine upon its publisher. If obscenity laws continue in this uneven and uncertain enforcement, then the vehicle has been found for the suppression of any unpopular tract. The guarantee of free expression will thus be diluted and in its stead public discourse will only embrace that which has the approval of five members of this Court.[49]

Douglas's warning about the dilution of the guarantee of free expression was correct. The charges were brought against Kois on February 5, 1971, and *Kaleidoscope* published its last issue on November 11, 1971. It is evident, therefore, that this case, and the negative press is brought upon the paper, was a fatal blow to *Kaleidoscope.* This was not the only issue of *Kaleidoscope* that caught the eye of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. The court case against Kois described another incident of reported obscenity involving a *Kaleidoscope* staff member. In a

---

[45] *KOIS v. WISCONSIN* (Supreme Court of the United States, June 26, 1972).
[46] Wis. Stat. § 944.21 (1) (a) (1969)
[47] *KOIS v. WISCONSIN* (Supreme Court of the United States, June 26, 1972).
[48] *KOIS v. WISCONSIN* (Supreme Court of the United States, June 26, 1972).
[49] "The $100,000 Photos," *Kaleidoscope*, May 1968.

May 1968 issue of *Kaleidoscope*, the paper published an article titled "The $100,000 Photos" which outlined the arrest of *Kaleidoscope* photographer Jim Bowers for possession of obscene material. The obscene materials in question were negatives of a couple engaging in a sexual act, taken by Bowers for possible use in *Kaleidoscope*.[50] While waiting for the court to determine next steps, Bowers allegedly heard that his bail might be set as high as $100,000. The article claims that the astronomical bail price was influenced by the fact that the couple in the photos was a Black man and a white woman.[51] Eventually, Bowers' bail was officially set at $250 dollars, and his trial set for June of 1968.[52] Allegedly, a *Kaleidoscope* reader had overhead a vice squad officer (an officer in charge of handling crimes related to drugs, sex work, and gambling) asking for information about Bowers at the police Traffic Bureau prior to the arrest, meaning that *Kaleidoscope* was being targeted by the local police.[53]

It would be an oversimplification to exclusively blame the court case against Kois in 1972 for the end of *Kaleidoscope*. Besides the bad press, the death of *Kaleidoscope* can mainly be blamed on lack of money, internal conflicts, and a changing culture. In an interview with *Bugle American* in 1971, Kois explained how he had severed ties with the paper in the spring of 1971. He said, "It had been obvious that *Kaleidoscope* was much less than what it had been, much less than it could be. What *Kaleidoscope* was capable of had been achieved. The community had disintegrated. The framework was no longer valid...finally, I realized it was hopeless...and I was really anxious to start taking care of my own head and start restoring some of what had been lost."[54]

---

[50] "The $100,000 Photos," *Kaleidoscope*, May 1968.
[51] "The $100,000 Photos," *Kaleidoscope*, May 1968.
[52] "The $100,000 Photos," *Kaleidoscope*, May 1968.
[53] "The $100,000 Photos," *Kaleidoscope*, May 1968.
[54] "John Kois: The Last Interview," *Bugle American*, November 1975, p. 94.

Kois knew that the culture had irrevocably changed in the three short years since *Kaleidoscope* started. By the early 1970s, the staff at *Kaleidoscope* knew that the paper needed to completely reinvent itself to stay afloat. On this Kois said "[*Kaleidoscope*] had to be totally redefined or put out of its misery."[55] Kois, still a young man at 30 years old, signed *Kaleidoscope* over to Dennis Gall in May 1971. Gall purchased ownership of the paper from Kois for $1, a symbolic passing of the torch. The era of Gall as main editor was very short-lived however, as the paper went practically bankrupt by 1972. In another interview with the *Bugle*, Kois said, "the ultimate downfall was money." At the end, *Kaleidoscope* was $15,000 in debt, and sources of payment had run dry. *Kaleidoscope* published its 105th and final issue in November of 1971.

John Kois's words about a changing culture that *Kaleidoscope* no longer fit into summarizes one of the core ideas of this thesis: as American society rapidly changed from the mid-1960s through the 1970s, counterculture did as well. These rapid countercultural developments meant that a radical publication like *Kaleidoscope* was poised to quickly fall out of fashion. Paired with institutional power shifts, it is understandable how *Kaleidoscope* dominated the underground publishing scene in Milwaukee four only a few years, then ended abruptly.

The amount of power accumulated by the opposers of counterculture logically meant that the backlash would be more powerful and threatening. This is how the story of *Kaleidoscope* played out with *Kois v. Wisconsin*. The opposition used to be at most, local police and boycotting citizens. Eventually, *Kaleidoscope* was facing the Goliath of the state supreme court. This is true for other aspects of counterculture as well. This phenomenon most famously played out at Ohio's Kent State in May of 1970.

---

[55] "John Kois: The Last Interview," *Bugle American*, November 1975, p. 94.

The decision to send the National Guard to quell the protests at Kent State was directly related to the United States' continued involvement in the Vietnam War. In his Silent Majority address of 1969, President Richard Nixon promised to end the war in Vietnam. It appeared he was making good on this promise throughout 1969, as America's involvement in the war was winding down. In April 1970, however, the United States invaded Cambodia, expanding the war and pushing its continuation. The Cambodian invasion was announced on April 30, 1970. The next day, Friday May 1, anti-Vietnam war protests erupted throughout the nation, especially on college campuses. Kent State held an anti-war rally at its Commons, a green space in the middle of the campus. That evening, protestors and local police engaged in a violent confrontation in downtown Kent.[56] The destruction that occurred during this confrontation included fires, bottles thrown at police cars, and broken windows.[57] Downtown bars were closed amid the violence, which only worked to worsen the situation. Finally, the events culminated with the police using tear gas to push the protestors back to campus.[58] The next day, the Mayor of Kent asked the Ohio governor to send the National Guard to Kent. When the National Guard arrived in Kent late at night on Saturday, they were met with chaos. An ROTC building was burning to the ground, surrounded by over a thousand protestors. National Guardsmen occupied the campus throughout the following day, Sunday May 3. On May 4, campus protesters gathered again at the Commons for another rally, one that had been called for at the end of the May 1 rally before the events in downtown Kent occurred. The University informed the student body that the May 4 rally was not allowed, but nevertheless protestors began to gather in the Commons around eleven in the

[56] Jerry M. Lewis and Thomas R. Hensley, "The May 4 Shootings at Kent State University: The Search for Historical Accuracy," OCSS Review, 1998, https://omeka.library.kent.edu/special-collections/items/show/4440, 2.
[57] Lewis and Hensley, "The May 4 Shootings at Kent State University: The Search for Historical Accuracy," 2.
[58] Lewis and Hensley, "The May 4 Shootings at Kent State University: The Search for Historical Accuracy," 2.

morning. By midday, 3,000 people had gathered.[59] Around noon, the gatherers were ordered over bullhorn to disperse. A Kent State police officer drove a jeep into the rally, telling protestors they must leave. The protestors retaliated by throwing rocks and shouting. When this did not work, the National Guard began to march on the crowd, armed with weapons and tear gas. Eventually, the crowd was pushed onto a football field. The Guardsmen made their way to the top of a hill adjacent to the football field, called Blanket Hill. From atop Blanket Hill, about half of the Guardsmen opened fire. Some shot at the ground, some at the air, but some fired directly into the crowd of protestors. Four students were killed and nine others were wounded.[60] The massacre at Kent state is remembered as one of the defining moments of the anti-Vietnam protests, and against counterculture. It is also a perfect microcosm of the downfall of the counterculture movement, representing how the opposition to counterculture was backed by institutional power.

To frame all the backlash against countercultural actions such as protests and institutions such as underground publications as "conservative" or solely the fault of the actions of conservative institutions like the GOP would be a mischaracterization of the reality of the situation. The backlash against the counterculture did not become more existentially threatening because the backlash became more aligned with conservative values than it was before. The backlash grew in efficacy and danger as it grew more institutionalized and less individualized and more national and less local. People throughout the height of the counterculture era held beliefs that differed and countered those espoused by the figureheads of the movement; however, those opposers were not organized or backed by powerful institutions like the Supreme Court, the US Government, or the military. Naysayers calling for the boycott of *Kaleidoscope's* printer

[59] Lewis and Hensley, "The May 4 Shootings at Kent State University: The Search for Historical Accuracy," 3.
[60] Lewis and Hensley, "The May 4 Shootings at Kent State University: The Search for Historical Accuracy," 5.

had no real societal pull, but the Supreme Court did, just as the National Guard and Kent State did. They were backed by very real institutional power accrued over generations. The battle between culture and counterculture was, in the beginning, a battle between the beliefs and values of laypeople, of neighbors, of parents and children. By the end, it was a local paper versus the institutional power of the Supreme Court, and college students versus the US military.

It is less clear whether the attacks against the offices of the *Bugle* and against John Kois in 1975 fell into the category of person vs. person of person vs. institution. It depends on the narrative of the attacks that one believes, for which definitive evidence does not exist. If these attacks were carried out by individuals who disagreed with the papers, as was likely the situation in the small 1968 firebombing of *Kaleidoscope*, then this situation was not institutional. It was uncharacteristically violent, damaging, intimidating, and fear--inducing for an attack carried out by local naysayers of the paper. However, if the suspicions that this attack was carried out by a Red Squad within the Milwaukee Police Department are true, then the attack is more institutional, and more closely aligned with the anti-countercultural attacks like the *Kois v. Wisconsin* Supreme Court case and the massacre at Kent State carried out by the National Guard. This would be institutional given the nature of Red Squads, a disparate and disconnected but national phenomenon of anti-counterculture groups within police departments across the country. Though Red Squads were not necessarily connected to each other or controlled by an umbrella agency or law, their nature as a national phenomenon makes them a part of the fabric of the overarching institutional fabric of American law enforcement. They were not a group of local cops or civilians with a home-grown ideology, they were a part of a large movement that happened nationwide.

Whether or not the 1975 attack against the office of *Bugle American* was carried out by a Red Squad may never be known, but the existence of Red Squads themselves speaks to and supports the idea that opposers to counterculture were becoming more unified and organized as the 1960s came to a close. The opposition movement was growing in strength derived from powerful institutions, and the consequences were tangible.

Conclusion

Underground publications like *Kaleidoscope* and *Bugle American* came about because many Americans had views, identities, and beliefs that were not being represented in the mainstream print media. These Americans, who made up the counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s, were emboldened to share their voices by the breakdown of polite, McCarthy-era American society.

American society after the Second World War was shaped by fears of foreign and domestic Communism, racial inequality, and strict social standards. During the height of McCarthyism, many Americans were fearful of sharing their anti-capitalist and anti-Imperialist views due to threat of retribution.

This culture of conformity in the post-war era was broken down by factors such as the Civil Rights Movement and the overarching fight for racial equality and the Vietnam War. These factors caused the American public to question the status quo. The Civil Rights Movement showed white Americans that the inevitability of their power and privilege was being questioned and broken down. Their legal status as a privileged class was no longer guaranteed as the Civil Rights Movement fought for codified laws against white supremacy and inequality. It showed that the American government could be swayed by a unified voice against oppression.

The protests against the Vietnam war similarly revealed to the general public that the American government and the could be questioned and opposed. It showed that deferring to the government's decisions, as President Nixon implored Americans to do in his Silent Majority address, was not the only option.

Suddenly, it was possible, even fashionable, to eschew social norms, and question the American status quo. Out of this era of fear, discontent, and repression, a new way of life emerged. A counterculture grew in opposition to expected cultural norms and beliefs. It was an artistic, social, and political movement that critiqued the oppressive systems of the country.

The counterculture also encouraged radical self-expression. Artists, poets, musicians, and creatives of all types flocked to the movement. Underground publishing is a potent manifestation of the beliefs and creativity of the movement.

Counterculture in Milwaukee followed the lead of the rest of the nation. The explosion of counterculture in Milwaukee was spurred by the manifestations of national tensions created by the Vietnam War and the fight for Black equality. The Civil Disorder of 1967 and anti-Vietnam war protests such as the actions of the Milwaukee Fourteen awoke especially young white Milwaukeeans to their ability to reject the cultural norms set forth by the authorities of society. These anti-government and anti-racist demonstrations gave permission, in a way, for people to truly express their identity and their opinions, even if they countered societal norms.

Kaleidoscope itself exemplifies counterculture in its reporting. During its heyday, *Kaleidoscope* reported on national politics, art, poetry, drugs, social inequity, and local happenings around the city. *Kaleidoscope* was founded because John Kois looked at Milwaukee and saw that the city was bursting with the same tensions as the rest of the country. He looked at his home town and decided it truly needed a countercultural voice. Despite the fact that Kois never thought that hippie culture and counterculture would ever reach Milwaukee, *Kaleidoscope* found short lived, but immense success in the city.

Though the backlash against the paper was persistent and damaging, the paper pushed on for four years. Throughout its run, *Kaleidoscope* acted as a voice for Milwaukeeans who rejected the mainstream and sought a different worldview, one that did not uphold the tenets of a society they saw as oppressive and repressive. Kois and his collaborators sought to create a unifying voice for the counterculture movement in Milwaukee. *Kaleidoscope* was simply started to show readers that there was another option besides adhering to the expectations of society that previous generations had placed upon them. It was meant to open people's eyes to the fact that they did not have to bow down to the expectations of cultural authorities. They had the agency to express their beliefs, identities, and interests.

Kaleidoscope was selected as the focus of this thesis because its run exemplifies a microcosm of the birth and death of counterculture itself. The origins of *Kaleidoscope,* and the reasons it was started, closely mimic the origins of American counterculture. *Kaleidoscope's* untimely closure too, follows the contours of the downfall of the popularity of counterculture.

As the 1960s came to a close, mainstream culture's view on counterculture began to change. It was no longer a flashy but harmless phenomenon, reported on with an air of curiosity. It became a threat to the authorities' control of the American people. Soon, the backlash against the counterculture, and countercultural institutions such as underground publications was backed by powerful institutions like the police, the military, the courts, and the government. When President Nixon criticized and dismissed the protests against the Vietnam War, he in turn empowered those who were against the counterculture. The conservative Silent Majority, who had always been present, but quieter during the height of counterculture, began to raise their voice against the perceived anti-American sentiments of the counterculture.

In Milwaukee, this shift from local, less powerful backlash to strong, institutional backlash backed by the courts spelled the end of the golden age of underground publishing in the city. During *Kaleidoscope's* peak of popularity, the backlash came from local cops and concerned mothers. These groups were an annoyance to the paper but did not pose an existential threat. When the backlash came from the Wisconsin Supreme Court however, the paper faced its end.

While another Milwaukee underground publication, *Bugle American,* survived into the 1970s, it was markedly less radical than its predecessor, showing that *Kaleidoscope* was only allowed to exist during a very narrow window of general countercultural acceptance.

Kaleidoscope's financial troubles, aside from the Supreme Court Case, are also indicative of how the culture was changing. Interest in the paper was waning, and the support from readers and advertisers was no longer powerful enough to maintain the paper.

Overall, the rise and fall of Milwaukee's premier underground newspaper *Kaleidoscope* represents the growth and decline of counterculture itself. *Kaleidoscope* was created to give a voice to the growing counterculture, and it ended when the opposing voice grew more powerful. It was born out of the strife and tensions of the post-war era but could not sustain itself once the country settled back into the status quo. Once normalcy regained its footing, the voices of counterculture fell to the wayside.

References

Newspapers and Magazines

Bugle American

Kaleidoscope

The UWM Post

Websites

"65 Years Ago: Sputnik Ushers in the Space Age." NASA, October 4, 2023. https://www.nasa.gov/history/65-years-ago-sputnik-ushers-in-the-space-age/#:~:text=On%20Oct.,the%20world's%20first%20artificial%20satellite.

Digital History. Accessed April 15, 2025. https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/vietnam/vietnam_pubopinion.cfm.

Fact sheet: Ballistic vs. Cruise Missiles. Accessed December 14, 2024. https://armscontrolcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Ballistic-vs.-Cruise-Missiles-Fact-Sheet.pdf.

Kitchen, Denis. "Denis Kitchen Online." Denis Kitchen Online. Accessed April 15, 2025. https://www.deniskitchen.com/.

"LCD 21: A Brief History of Freeform Radio." LCD 21 | A Brief History of Freeform Radio. Accessed April 8, 2025. https://wfmu.org/freeform.html.

"McCarthyism / the 'Red Scare.'" McCarthyism / The "Red Scare" | Eisenhower Presidential Library. Accessed December 14, 2024. https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/research/online-documents/mccarthyism-red-scare.

Mikkelson, Marti. "Whatever Happened to Milwaukee's Alternative Newspaper, the Bugle?" WUWM 89.7 FM - Milwaukee's NPR, February 9, 2018. https://www.wuwm.com/regional/2018-02-09/whatever-happened-to-milwaukees-alternative-newspaper-the-bugle.

"Nixon Silent Majority Speech Text." Voices of Democracy, June 25, 2024. https://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/nixon-silent-majority-speech-text/.

Saad, Lydia. “Gallup Vault: 1969 College Students’ Resistance to Vietnam.” Gallup.com, October 16, 2024. https://news.gallup.com/vault/230501/gallup-vault-1969-college-students-resistance-vietnam.aspx.

Schumacher, John. “Happy UWM Graduation!” UWM REPORT, January 7, 2025. https://uwm.edu/news/happy-uwm-graduation/#:~:text=Denis%20Kitchen%2C%20a%20UWM%20journalism,honorary%20degree%20at%20the%20ceremony.

Tanzilo, Bobby. “Avant Garde Coffee House.” OnMilwaukee, March 1, 2005. https://onmilwaukee.com/articles/avantgarde.

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, accessed April 11, 2025. https://www.usccr.gov/.

Wild, Matt. “Remembering the Time the ‘Bugle American’ Offices Totally Got Firebombed.” *Milwaukee Record*, February 23, 2017. https://milwaukeerecord.com/city-life/remembering-bugle-american-office-totally-got-firebombed/.

Zonyx report: Zetteler’s history of Milwaukee’s kaleidoscope. Accessed September 18, 2024. https://zonyx.net/TEXTS/KscopeStory.html.

Books and Articles

Anderson, Terry H. *The Sixties*. 4th ed. New York, NY: Routledge, 2025.

Bach, Damon. *The American counterculture: A history of hippies and cultural dissidents*. La Vergne: University Press of Kansas, 2021.

Bousalis, Rina R. (2021) "The Counterculture Generation: Idolized, Appropriated, and Misunderstood," The Councilor: A Journal of the Social Studies: Vol. 82: No. 2, Article 3. Available at: https://thekeep.eiu.edu/the_councilor/vol82/iss2/3

Carleton, Sean. “Drawn to Change: Comics and Critical Consciousness.” *Labour / Le Travail 73*, 2014, 151–77. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24244249.

Cmiel, Kenneth. “The Politics of Civility.” Essay. In *The Sixties: From Memory to History*, 263–90. Chapel Hill & London, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994.

Curator: Nicolas Valazza, with the collaboration of Samuel N. Rosenberg. “Obscenity Laws in the United States, 19th-21st Centuries.” Omeka RSS. Accessed April 8, 2025. https://bannedbooks.indiana.edu/exhibits/show/bannedbooks/obscenity-laws-in-the-united-s.

Duncan, Russell. “The Summer of Love and Protest.” *The Transatlantic Sixties*, December 31, 2013, 144–73. https://doi.org/10.14361/transcript.9783839422168.144.

Farber, David R. *The Sixties: From Memory to History*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Foster, Henry H. “The ‘Comstock Load’. Obscenity and the Law.” *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science* 48, no. 3 (September 1957): 245. https://doi.org/10.2307/1139582.

Gair, Christopher. *The American Counterculture*. Edinburgh University Press, 2007.

Glessing, Robert J. *The Underground Press in America*. Bloomington, London: Indiana University Press, 1971.

Gooden, Susan, and Samuel Myers. “The Kerner Commission Report Fifty Years Later: Revisiting the American Dream.” *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 4, no. 6 (2018): 1. https://doi.org/10.7758/rsf.2018.4.6.01.

Hall, `M. K. “The Vietnam Era Antiwar Movement.” *OAH Magazine of History* 18, no. 5 (October 1, 2004): 13–17. https://doi.org/10.1093/maghis/18.5.13.

Jones, Patrick D. *The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022.

KOIS v. WISCONSIN. (Supreme Court of the United States June 26, 1972).

“Ku Klux Klan.” March on Milwaukee - Libraries Digital Collection, July 7, 2016. https://uwm.edu/marchonmilwaukee/keyterms/kkk/.

Lewis, Jerry M., and Thomas R. Hensley. “The May 4 Shootings at Kent State University: The Search for Historical Accuracy.” OCSS Review, 1998. https://omeka.library.kent.edu/special-collections/items/show/4440.

Mason, Robert. “‘I Was Going to Build a New Republican Party and a New Majority’: Richard Nixon as Party Leader, 1969–73.” *Journal of American Studies* 39, no. 3 (December 2005): 463–83. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0021875805000617.

McLaughlin, Malcolm. *The Long, Hot Summer of 1967: Urban Rebellion in America*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

McLay, Mark. “The Republican Party and the Long, Hot Summer of 1967 in the United States.” *The Historical Journal* 61, no. 4 (March 13, 2018): 1089–1111. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0018246x17000504.

McMillan, John Campbell. *Smoking typewriters: The Sixties underground press and the rise of Alternative Media in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Schrecker, Ellen. “McCarthyism: Political Repression and the Fear of Communism.” *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (December 2004): 1041–86. https://doi.org/10.1353/sor.2004.0067.

State of Emergency Proclamation, July 31, 1961, Box 170, Folder 22, Maier Administration, Archives / Milwaukee Area Research Center. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Milwaukee, WI, https://collections.lib.uwm.edu/digital/collection/march/id/1121/rec/1

Thering, Tim. “The Milwaukee Fourteen: A Burning Protest against the Vietnam War.” *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 101, no. 2 (Winter 2017).

Interviews

Kois, John, phone interview, November 19, 2024