



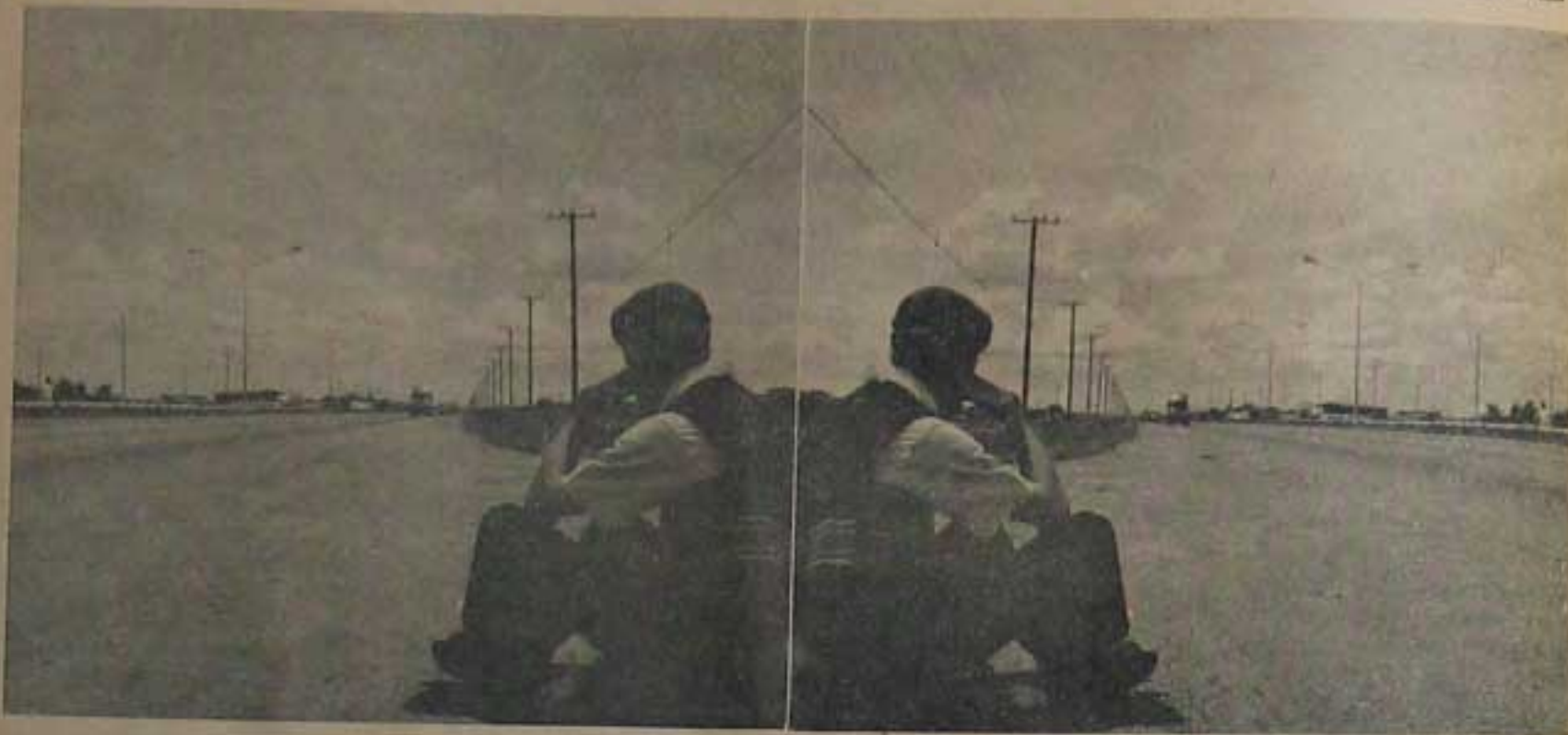
STANDARD

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THE 1932 REVOLUTION

DIARY OF A HIPPY: BRIAN



BY A. A. MAYTREE

THE two of us are sitting in a cheap room at the Thai Song Creet Hotel, drinking beer and talking about hippies.

His name is Brian and he's been in Bangkok for about a month now.

He is about 25, a thin, wiry Irishman with short curly, black hair. His untrimmed moustache droops over his upper lip and into his mouth. When he talks, he chews on the moustache.

I ask Brian if he is a hippy. The question amuses him.

"Everybody knows what a hippy is," he says with a sly grin. "A hippy has long hair, and bell-bottom pants, and a flowered shirt. A hippy has a beard. He wears beads around his neck."

He laughs. "Am I hippy? Look at me!"

Brian himself is wearing an old white shirt, wrinkled pants and black loafers (not sandals).

He looks so "straight" that he could have gotten a job at Thammasat University teaching English. But the job won't be open for another month and he's tired of Bangkok already. In two days he'll be taking a freighter to Japan.

Brian doesn't fit the popular, media-shaped definition of a hippy. There are media hippies and real hippies. Brian is a real hippy.

There are a lot of media, or pseudo-hippy, types in Bangkok, some Thai, some "farang."

They're the "flower children" who pack the dance floors at the Balcony and the Fox, dressed in their bell-

bottom trousers and Indian headbands. The ones with the wide leather belts and peace symbols around their necks. They wear long hair, drink imported Scotch, and are loaded with money.

They're media hippies. They've got nothing in common with Brian. You would never find the likes of Brian on their party lists. Brian is a real hippy.

When Brian arrived in Bangkok he smelled like a pile of dirty socks. His clothes were filthy. Unlike many of the pseudo-hippies, Brian doesn't have an air-conditioned car to travel in from place to place. Or the money to buy "Bitter Lemon" cologne to cover up the smell of sweat after hitch-hiking in the sun all day.

Brian has been on the road for four years. He has walked, hitched, ridden third-class trains, oil trucks, and tramp steamers from Dublin to Bangkok.

He picks up odd jobs as he moves along. To stay alive and get money to keep travelling, he has sold his blood in Greece, driven trucks on the Sinai desert, smuggled hash, and here in Thailand even sold Chinese patent medicine from the back of a truck while posing as a doctor of medicine.

In his short life he has tried LSD, opium, marijuana, and all sorts of other medicines and drugs, such as "Romilos."

In Bangkok he never visited the Electric Shadow or the Red & Blue, where the media-hippies hang out. He couldn't afford it. Nor was he particularly interested in those places.

Last year, hippies were banned from entering Thailand because, in the words of one Thai official, "They constituted a threat to the well-being of the Thais, especially the teenagers."

According to the director of one of the leading Thai-speaking language newspapers, "Hippies are the product of a degenerating society."

The Youth, Culture and Sports Minister of Malaysia, Tengku Mohsein bin Abdul Kadir, warned a few months ago that "hippism" was leading to the collapse of the nation, the aim he attributed to Peking-inspired Communists. Hippies were as dangerous as Communists in his eyes.

Every year several hundred hippies like Brian still manage to filter into Thailand and spend a few weeks here at the Thai Song Creet or Starlight hotels before moving on to Laos, Japan, Indonesia and other places.

Most Thais are baffled frightened by the hippies they see here.

The hippies don't want to fit into "society." They are disgusted by the hypocrisy, corruption and greed that is a great part of "society."

They are no better or worse than the rest of society, these modern Marco Polos of Asia.

Here is the story of one of Bangkok's hippies.



"DIARY: 1965-1967"

I left Ireland in 1965. Before I left I was a "pattern grader." I worked in a tailor shop. My father was a supervisor in a factory that made concrete type pipes. A lot of cats emigrated from Ireland in the 50's because of the "closed shops." No one wanted to do what their father did but the only openings were in the trade of your father who could get you in. So I left. I didn't want to work in a factory the rest of my life.

see things. I crossed the channel and avoided France as much as I could—it's bad for hitching. They don't give you rides. I came down through Germany, Munich and Austria instead, and made it to Yugoslavia. There are a lot of hippies in the northern part of Yugoslavia.

YUGOSLAVIAN FLOWERS

I was walking on this road one day and I met this long-haired guy—a Yugoslavian—and this girl who had a broken leg. She had a cast on her leg and it was all decorated with flowers and colors. The girl was a Hungarian. I asked them where to stay for the night. They said stay at our place. They took me to the university to meet their friends. This one cat had just sketched a beautiful flower and when you looked at it close you could see that it was made of print—he had the names of all the flowers in the world on it.

After that I left for the south (of Yugoslavia). When you get to Zagreb, look out. They're Moslems there. Bad people. When you get down south the people are more filthy and squalid and they have these Moslem type minarets or mosques everywhere.

GREECE: THE BLOOD MARKET

After that I got to Greece. It was before the big coup. There's different roads you can take through Greece. It was hard to get to Greece. Hitching is slow in Yugoslavia. A lot of hippies take the train to the border of Greece. On the border, just inside Greece is a town called Tessaloniki. Most hitch-hikers sell their blood at the hospital there, but the hospital's choosy. A lot of cats smoke 'grass' and their blood pressure is low. So the hospital won't take it. So they go to the Red Cross. They pay less, about ten dollars a litre, but it's bread.

In Kuwait you get thirty dollars a litre. A lot of hippies in India hitch to Kuwait and sell their blood two times in one week. That gives them sixty dollars and that lasts them six or seven months in India. Food's really

TO LONDON

I got discouraged. Jobs were hard to come by in Ireland so I left home and went to London. There wasn't any work in Dublin. I didn't like living in London. I tried different jobs. I worked with a tailor in London for a while and I got good pay. There were a lot of Irish in England then but they were looked down on. The English have the impression that the Irish are stupid. But most of the Irish in England are laborers and they're all big and drink a lot. They got a lot of money maybe for the first time in their lives and they like to spend it drinking. They come from the rural areas, from the farms in Ireland and they don't know how to dress. They get into pubs with these English cats with the fancy clothes and they get a lot of talk. But they'll fight you if they're insulted.

BACK TO DUBLIN

Well, I returned to Dublin after a while and went to work in a factory. You get good money but it's monotonous as hell. They want you to know the machine you're working real well so that you know it backwards and forwards and can fix it in the dark. The foreman likes that because then he can leave you there the rest of your life.

TO FRANCE

In Dublin I met this German chick and some other people—travelers—and I decided to go to Australia. I realized that what I really wanted to do was travel,



but you know you're in the East. It's the gateway to the East. I met some cats there who hitched down E5—it's a highway and goes from Norway to Kuwait. Istanbul is cheap. You stay in an area called Sultanahmed. Something like that. It's near the topkapi and the Blue Mosque. It's a heavy drug type scene. I slept on the roof of this ratty hotel for twenty-five cents. It's like a terrace and all these cats have their bags spread out on the roof. There's rats and roaches and everything. A few cats died up there from drugs.

"ROMILAS"

There's a cough pill called "Romilas," Roche Co. makes it. It sends you on a really big trip. A lot of cats were using it. They were taking twenty-five caps at a time. Some got scared and paranoid up there and started walking on the edge of the roof and saying they were gonna jump. If you take the stuff regularly over one month, even if it's a few caps you're mind is really messed up. You go to an asylum. If you take it with opium it kills you.

THE INJECTION

This English guy, Dave took "Romilas" and opium when I was there one night. He was asleep on his bed for a long long time and when we tried to wake him up he was in a coma. We got scared. So we got him to a hospital and these doctors wouldn't help him. So we said, "man, are you gonna let him die?" So one guy pulls out this needle and gives him an injection. The poor guy (Dave) pulled up off the bed

has to use a lot of opium every day for two or three months before you get hooked. A lot of Laos use opium. You can shoot it, eat it or smoke it like in Laos. Opium users don't like loud noises. They like things quiet and peaceful. Opium people don't like to be in the company of speed or drinkers. I tried some opium in Vientiane (Laos) when I was up there. In Pakistan if you get dysentery people give you some opium. It stops it. There are different types—there's a clean type for the shifts. I don't mess with opium no—just grass. Kids today experiment with drugs because it's something new. It's dangerous but all explorers are involved with an element of danger. It's one of the few things left to explore. There aren't any jungles left to explore like there used to.

In Istanbul I had some money. I bought some watches in Switzerland at a factory before I got there. I wanted to get a bag full

of dollar watches but they didn't have any. So I got eight of these five dollar watches and sold them for nine dollars a piece in Turkey when I needed bread.

PRINCESS ISLAND

I met some Scandinavian friends that I knew from Frankfurt. They couldn't get out of their hotel till they paid up and they didn't have any bread. They were supposed to be getting some in the bank but it never came. So I bailed them out. Soon we met some more cats—an English cat, an American and a South African—and we went out to these islands in the sea off coast of Turkey and they're called the Princess Islands. But the police came out in a boat and tried to arrest us. We found another island with some empty houses. The houses had beds and cots. So we managed to get into one room and we found some keys. Then we opened all these houses up and took all the beds and furniture to one building and fixed up the place nice. We cleaned up all the dirt and stuff, and lived there for six weeks. I had been on the road about a year.

RETURN OF THE OWNER

But one day this guy shows up outside. He was the owner. He was really mad but we showed



him how we cleaned up the place for him. We gave him ten Lire and a guy with us who was an artist sketched a picture of the guy to pay for the rent. He was really happy. He brought his wife and some of his kids there the next day and the guy drew a picture of each of the kids and the husband and wife together.

I grew a beard on the island. All sorts of cats came out later. They heard about the place in Istanbul. But we kept things under control and kicked out any cat that didn't fit, that we couldn't get along with, or who messed up things with the Turks. The island was beautiful. It was called "marmara." Finally things went bad with the police and the rest of the people on the island and I left.

STUDENT CARDS

In Istanbul a student card is only seventy-five "krush." You get a big cut on the railroads and things with a card. There were a lot of cards around and they were cheap. Like in Bangkok you can get one down at the railway station, around the Thai Song Cret Hotel, for only a dollar—half the price. And you can be thirty years old and get one still. And you don't have to be a student.

In Istanbul they were taking

the real cards to a printer who prints up a bunch of blank cards. Then they get a guy to make a rubber stamp like the original and they are ready to sell. In India you get fifty per cent off on trains, and a lot of airlines give you a twenty-five per cent reduction.

PAKISTANI HASH

I left Istanbul a few months later and made my way to Kabul (Afghanistan). I was broke but I met some cats there who had stayed on the island and they had gotten some money from home in Tehran. So they helped me. I hitched to Pakistan. When I was there I scored eight kilos of hash for them. I knew the stuff. I bought the best grass available at ten dollars a kilo. It sells for 1,000 dollars a kilo in Europe if you push it yourself. For scoring they gave me one kilo. So I returned to Europe by hitching. I sold some of the grass in Istanbul and sold my blood again in Tessaaloniki. I spent ten dollars from Istanbul to Copenhagen. Copenhagen is a good place to sell hash. It's a good market. I travelled really cheap; mostly eating yoghurt and fruit and raisins. I didn't have to beg.

TEA IN AFGANISTAN

I stayed in Afghanistan on the way back for a while. The people are really nice. The eating places don't have any chairs, just a carpet to sit on. They smoke hash in the tea shops. If you get rapping with them they share the pipe with you. If a man gets a meal, he shares it with you. You eat with your hands. They don't have knives and forks and spoons. But you have to be careful not to keep your left hand in the bowl, your left hand you use to wipe your butt, for dirty work. The right hand is used for delicate work and for eating, you sort of shake the rice in your fingers and throw it into your mouth. You really make a mess of it at first. You throw it all over your shirt.

TROUBLE IN IRAN

Nobody likes Iran. They aren't nice people. Don't get off the track at all. It's really hard to get a lift. The trucks stop and they want money or articles of your clothes—they point to things like your watch and ask for it.

I was scared of every border. I shaved off my beard. Most people going from Afghanistan to Iran are carrying hash. They even ask you point blank at the border.

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cheap there. Goa is really cheap to live, they don't spend any bread getting to Kuwait because they hitch. You just have to buy food. So they go down there maybe two times a year and they get enough bread for a year.

HUNGER

A lot of cats get messed up in India though. The food makes them sick. A lot of Scandinavian cats go to India and try to do it without any bread. It's really hard, without begging in the streets. Their bodies get sick. But hunger sharpens you too. The first few days are hell. Then

it passes. After a while you don't even notice it. You learn to live on one meal a day. You hear it all the time. One cat says "Are you going out to eat?" and the other cat will say, "No, I've already eaten today!"

PORRIDGE AND CHEESE

In Norway, man. I had this fantastic food and really cheap. Only three kroner—milk, porridge, and cheese and all you could eat. You got to concentrate on high protein. Try and eat greens and onions. Oranges. If you eat oranges before you go to sleep it will keep you from getting

bad colds when you sleep in your bag on the ground. Vitamin C is the key. You can live on peanuts, nut- and raisins. You gotta vary your diet. Maybe eat bananas later in the day. Look for protein food—fish, eggs, meat, stuff like that. But when you get hepatitis you can't eat protein food. I got it in India and you feel like you're dying. You want to go home.

ISTANBUL

I went across northern Greece to Istanbul. It's a one day hitch from the border of Greece to Istanbul. When you get to Istanbul

like someone put a spring in him, then he died. He was dead—stone dead. They killed him. I try to avoid getting sick. I don't have any faith in doctors when I'm traveling. They don't give a shit for you.

DRUGS

I tried LSD on the road. But you can't get addicted to LSD. I was addicted to opium for two years and I kicked it. I thought it would be bad, but it wasn't too tough. I just stopped it. A cat

DIARY OF A HIPPIY

(continued from Page 13)

"Do you have any hash?" In Iran it's a five year sentence if you're caught. But if you're an American the consul will swing you out free but you have to pay a big fine. But the Irish are so poor they don't even have a consul from Italy to India.

THE BORDER INCIDENT

I had the kilo of grass on my body. It was hot in July. I made a belt of ripped up sheets around my chest and strapped it tight so it wouldn't bulge. I could hardly breathe at the border going into Iran. I was riding in the front of a big truck. After we got through the border I took it off and put grass in my duffel bag. But three kilometers on down they had another border check. I was scared to death. This car stopped the truck and made the driver open the boxes he was carrying and he opened packs and smelled inside boxes and then told me to get out.

The grass was lying right on top of my duffel bag and he told me to open it up so he could look in. So I put my foot on the bag

and said "No" and started screaming and bitching and shouting about how I was tired of being stopped and that we had just been checked back down the road and that I was sick and tired of all this searching and poking and prying and I wasn't going to open my bags up again. (I remembered some Germans had done it once and got away with it) I put my foot on the bag and he tried to drag it out but he gave up and let us go. And we took off again.

LUCK OF THE IRISH

It's nice to have an Irish passport. All the border cats think that Irish are just drinkers, not dope runners.

BOAT TO BORDEAUX

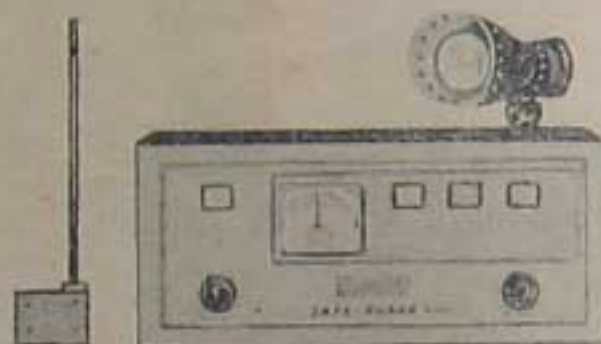
I went all the way to Scandinavia on that kilo. That winter I got back in Copenhagen and hopped a boat to Norway and after a month there I decided to get on a ship and go wherever I was going. You can always get a job on a ship in Norway. They were short of workers in Oslo and so I heard about it and rushed across the country and got on this ship that was going to Bordeaux. The sea was a bitch in the winter. It was freezing and the the days on board were like a prison. I met a lot of sailors and they had been all over the world but they never left the docks. All they see is the bars and the docks in a town. They didn't see anything of the country outside of the docks. And they only stayed for two or three days in one place and then they shipped out again.

TRAVELER'S CHECKS

I spent Christmas in Munich after the boat trip and I met a friend of mine there who had 100 dollars. I had fifty dollars and so we decided to put it together and get some traveler's checks. I needed 100 dollars to get back to Ireland.

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He was a South African who had been a mercenary in the Congo and knew how to get some bread. I spent a week learning to copy his signature but he was left handed and I was right handed so it was very difficult. Finally we reached a compromise—a compromise signature that both of us could do. When I learned how to do his signature, he gave me a bunch of documents and papers from his wallet and kept anything that had his picture on it. Then he took the 150 dollars and went into the American Express Office and bought traveler's checks. When he walked out he handed me the checks and I went to two or three banks and cashed them and got 150 dollars. They asked me for my passport but I said I forgot it at the hotel but I showed them the other papers I got from my friend's wallet. So they let me sign the checks and the signatures looked the same. So I got the money 150 dollars.

When I got back, my friend went to American Express and said that he had lost the checks and his wallet in a crowd to a pickpocket or something. They gave him new checks for 150 dollars. So we were both richer.

THE COOKS TOUR OF LONDON

I tried it once more with "Cooks" cheques in London on my way back to Ireland. I was the one who bought the checks but they arrested my friend when he couldn't do the signature. I knew I was in trouble so I went back to my pad and cleaned my stuff out. The police came a half hour later and found some incriminating letters he wrote to his friend, telling him what he did and it was all there in the letter. I shouldn't have done it again but I needed the bread.

AMSTERDAM AND REPATRIATION

I went back to Amsterdam but ran out of money again. I sold my watch and my ring and some other stuff but finally I had to go to the Irish embassy in Amsterdam and ask to be "repatriated." They take your passport and give you the money for a ticket to Ireland and you have to pay them back before you get your passport again. I finally got back to Dublin. It was the spring of 1967 and the flowers were blooming.

