

FROM THE GRASSROOTS:  
THE COMPANY OF YOUNG CANADIANS,  
LOCAL ACTIVISM, AND SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT IN CANADA, 1965-1975

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IN FEBRUARY 1970 a group of British Columbian Sierra Club members led by Bob Hunter, Irving and Dorothy Stowe, and Jim Bohlen met to discuss media strategies for their upcoming protest against American nuclear testing in Amchitka, Alaska. Previous tests had already sparked vigorous protests in Vancouver from anti-war, counterculture, and New Left groups, all of which became a significant force in the city's political landscape by the end of the 1960s. Though their primary concern was the blast's threat to world peace, those like Hunter believed that the nuclear fallout and potential tsunami that would result from the tests were both "a potent symbol of war craziness and environmental degradation wrapped up into one."<sup>1</sup> Their problem was how to convey both ideas in a way that would capture the media's attention. Several previous meetings dedicated to finding a catchy name for the group, then named the Don't Make a Wave Committee, had been rather fruitless. However, at that fateful February meeting was a Company of Young Canadians (CYC) field worker Bill Darnell who, in association with his work in community development for the CYC in Vancouver, had become deeply involved in the city's nascent environmental movement. That evening, legend has it, as Hunter and Stowe left the meeting, raising the V sign for peace, Darnell told them to make it a "green peace." The rest, as they say, is history.<sup>2</sup>

Though the CYC's involvement in the birth of one of the world's most prominent environmental action groups was more by fortune than by design, the same forces that led these activists to launch a worldwide environmental movement from their living rooms were similar to those

that infused CYC volunteers. Like those in Greenpeace, the Company's volunteers and leaders drew upon anti-war, New Left, and countercultural suspicions of unlimited economic growth and its deleterious, political, spiritual, and eventually environmental effects, as we will see below. Originally conceived of as the shock troops of Prime Minister Lester Pearson's government in Canada's "War on Poverty," the CYC focused primarily on empowering disadvantaged communities to deal with poverty and disenfranchisement, not environmental concerns. However, as the booming 1960s turned into the economically stagnant 1970s, issues of broadly sustainable development, including ecological sustainability, came increasingly to the forefront of the Company's projects and the community organizations it assisted. Although the term "sustainable development" did not become broadly popular until nearly a decade after the CYC folded operations in 1976, the term is appropriate in describing Company-sponsored environmental projects, since their approach to community development drew upon a growing consensus that economic development programs needed to pay more holistic attention to the economic, social justice, *and* ecological impacts of human activity.<sup>3</sup>

The following study draws upon and extends recent work that examines grassroots environmental activism as well as government support for such ventures in the Canadian context.<sup>4</sup> In doing so it examines how the CYC became midwife to initiatives that began to grapple with the meaning of sustainable development, from projects concerned directly with the environmental effects of air and water pollution, to urban countercultural communes and cooperatives experimenting with recycling programs and organic food. Though most of these CYC-sponsored projects and their affiliated community organizations were concerned primarily with economic and social development, it is argued here that members of the Company, like others in the nascent environmental movement of the

period, were inevitably being drawn towards assessing issues and using strategies that linked people, land, and community in more broadly sustainable ways.

The following analysis of CYC-sponsored environmental activism unfolds in three parts. The first section begins with a brief history of the Company, its activities, and its relationship with the emerging environmental movement. It does so by examining early Company projects, which focused on the deleterious effects of pollution on local communities and the strategies they used to pursue economic development in a more ecologically conscious manner. The second section examines the intersections between the Company's countercultural ZIP (Zero in on People) projects and environmentalism writ large (pollution, recycling, and sustainable food production). Here the analysis focuses on how these Company projects, which were dedicated primarily to sustaining their members' alternative lifestyles, often put ecology at the forefront of those strategies for "living life differently." The conclusion outlines where the present study intersects with what "we know" about early grassroots environmental activism and points the way to avenues of future research.

### **The CYC and the Origins of Environmental Activism in Canada's Long Sixties**

AS ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORIANS HAVE NOTED, prior to the 1960s much of the environmental movement in North America was dedicated to wilderness and wildlife conservation. As a result, for a generation consumed by issues of social, economic, and political justice, environmentalism remained largely on the sidelines of New Left politics during the rebellious "long sixties."<sup>5</sup> Though environmentalism was in many ways the ethical extension of modern liberalism, the New Left's fundamentally humanistic ethics, which underlay its commitment to social

justice and social change, initially prevented it from treating environmentalism as a serious concern.<sup>6</sup> In many ways this was odd, since much of the impetus in the birth of a “new” Left was the protest against the more immediate environmental impacts of nuclear weapons testing, as well as fear of the physical and environmental devastation of nuclear war. In the late 1950s American anti-nuclear organizations such as SANE and its Canadian equivalent, the Canadian Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards, became intensely concerned with fallout and the presence of strontium 90 in the food chain.<sup>7</sup> In addition, during the Vietnam War much of the anti-war movement was shocked into action by the devastation wrought by the use of chemical agents such as Agent Orange and napalm.<sup>8</sup> But as one of the founders of Canada’s premiere New Left organization, the Student Union for Peace Action (SUPA), James Harding, has recently reminisced, very few of his peace movement colleagues made the connection between banning the bomb and the impact that nuclear power, both “peaceful” and “bellicose,” had on the earth’s environment. As he notes, even many in the “old Left” viewed environmentalists and anti-nuclear power groups as “Luddites who cared little for overcoming human poverty and despair.”<sup>9</sup> Indeed, Harding relates that at the 1964 founding convention of SUPA the keynote address was given by Robert Engler, whose 1961 book the *Politics of Oil* outlined the impact of energy on geopolitical strategies in the Cold War, but no one at the time made the leap to their environmental impacts.<sup>10</sup>

That said, there were elements of both liberal and New Left thought that would ultimately lead many activists to see the interconnectedness between peace, social justice, and ecological harmony. As Robert Gottlieb notes, Herbert Marcuse, Paul Goodman, and Murray Bookchin—three of the most important intellectual influences on the thinking of the American New Left—all poignantly critiqued the impact of modern scientific and

technological progress on both human society and the natural world. The New Left was also influenced by similar critiques from liberals such as John Kenneth Galbraith, Arthur Schlesinger, and Vance Packard, who linked the “American way of life” to its deleterious side effects such as “urban sprawl, air pollution, smog, traffic, [and] noise.”<sup>11</sup> Packard and Marcuse, in particular, saw the affluent consumer society of the period as the creation of “manipulated” rather than “real” needs and that the planned obsolescence that drove it was symbolic of a “society of waste.” These critiques soon gained particular resonance among North Americans, as much of the nascent environmental movement focused first and foremost on the impact of the “wastes” and pollution produced by industry. But as Gottlieb notes, though environmental issues were beginning to emerge in the consciousness of the New Left, they remained under-explored. Only the movement’s growing radicalism and, as Keith Woodhouse notes, “its increasingly anarchist philosophy and countercultural influences opened the door for a sudden turn to ecological issues after 1969.”<sup>12</sup> By the early 1970s many on the left began to see their rebellion against the soul-deadening artificiality of consumer culture in more ecological terms. As a recent volume of essays on links between the Canadian counterculture and the nascent environmental movement has illustrated, nature increasingly became attached to the “politics of authenticity” that drove both the New Left and the counterculture.<sup>13</sup> By the time of the first Earth Day in April 1970, the degradation of the environment became one of the most powerful symbols of the exploitative character of modern capitalist and technocratic societies.<sup>14</sup>

Like their American counterparts in the New Left, the directors and volunteers of the Company of Young Canadians were also initially motivated by issues of social justice and civil rights. The Company was established by the Pearson Liberal government in 1965 to act as the foot

soldiers in Canada's very own war on poverty and echoed President Lyndon Baines Johnson's promise of maximum feasible participation of the poor and disenfranchised in the battle. Though Liberal politicians and backroom organizers spoke of creating a radical organization that would work with poor and disadvantaged communities to help them tackle the problems they faced, for the most part they envisaged that the CYC would place young idealistic Canadians in existing social service agencies, much like the Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) program organized by the administration of President John F. Kennedy. In that sense, the government intended to harness the idealism of the sixties generation not to challenge existing programs, but to "increase their effectiveness and supplement their work."<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the government's rather mundane conception of the Company was most evident in its 1965 Speech from the Throne, when Pearson claimed that the CYC's volunteers would soon be known as "Eager Beavers."<sup>16</sup>

However, it soon became quite clear that such a mandate had very little resonance with many young Canadians, particularly those interested in fighting a war on poverty. To them, the idea of a Canadian "Peace Corps" was at best a hopelessly liberal "do-gooder" organization that would perpetuate the same paternalistic and middle-class, Band Aid solutions that had clearly failed to solve the problems of poverty and disenfranchisement. At worst, it smacked of an American-style imperialism, which by 1966 was manifesting itself in its most violent and destructive forms in the jungles of Southeast Asia. What these young and idealistic Canadians had in mind was something quite different, namely more social action-oriented community development programs, such as those initiated by the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in American inner cities in 1964 and carried on in Canada by SUPA in the summers of 1965 and 1966. By the time the first CYC volunteers entered their projects in the fall of 1966, the younger, more

radical members of the Company's governing council had manoeuvred the Company away from its social service ethos towards a philosophy that would see CYC volunteers act as catalysts for social change. That would occur only if Company volunteers could extend both the promise and the practice of democracy to the "grassroots" by helping local people identify, focus, and develop democratic solutions to the problems that plagued them and their communities. "Only when people [were] involved in the decisions that affect them," claimed CYC Executive Director Alan Clarke, "would effective and long lasting social change ... take place."<sup>17</sup> If that meant disrupting social relations in those communities and occasionally "shaking the power structure," then so be it. Indeed, during a recruiting drive on the campus of the University of British Columbia, CYC Associate Director Stewart Goodings went so far as to claim that Company volunteers would be "shit disturbers," although he did add the qualifier "constructive."<sup>18</sup>

With this change of ethos the CYC instantly became "one of the most daring and imaginative pieces of social legislation in North American history."<sup>19</sup> It also became immediately and intensely divisive. From the start many young radicals retained their early skepticism that real social change could be conducted on the government's dime. SUPA veteran Jim Harding perhaps best described this feeling when he claimed that those who had left SUPA for the CYC had "Cashed In [and] Dropped Out."<sup>20</sup> To those like Harding, the CYC was a hopelessly "liberal institution" that was "*not radical*, [but] ... co-optive and it cannot do 'real' community organizing."<sup>21</sup> In addition, during its early years, the CYC made headlines for all of the wrong reasons: administrative blunders, questionable spending, allegations of drug use by volunteers, and anti-war protests by volunteers outside the American Consulate in Toronto.<sup>22</sup> Instead of clean-cut eager Peace Corps types, the CYC delivered foul-mouthed bearded hippies who protested against foreign wars and led love-ins on government property.<sup>23</sup> If that

were not enough, in October 1969 allegations arose that Quebec separatists, including prominent members of the FLQ, had infiltrated the CYC and were using it to foment revolution on the streets of Montreal.<sup>24</sup>

To everyone's surprise the Company survived a scathing parliamentary inquiry that dredged up all of those allegations from fiscal mismanagement to *felquiste* infiltration. Though it would go on to lose its formal independence and be challenged by a whole range of other government youth and community development programs, most notably Opportunities for Youth (OFY), the Company quietly entered its most fruitful period of community organization. Between 1970 and 1976, when it and OFY fell victim to the Trudeau government's anti-inflation program, the CYC tripled the number of volunteers it put in the field while increasing the number of community-sponsored projects they worked on from 24 to 185 in all ten provinces and two territories.<sup>25</sup> By the time it wrapped up operations its projects and volunteers had been on the frontier of the fight against urban renewal, the establishment of community-run social services (Cool Aid), alternative education (Rochdale College), and the development of community radio and television (Radio Kenomadiwin), had reinvigorated the nation's cooperative movement, and finally, had contributed to the emergence of a whole new generation of First Nations leaders, including future Assembly of First Nation's grand chief, George Erasmus. As the story of the founding of Greenpeace told at the outset illustrates, it also had a hand in nurturing the development of Canadian and global environmental activism from the grassroots.

When the CYC began operations in the fall of 1966, environmental concerns remained a blind spot on the Company's radar of important or emerging issues. Its founding document, the CYC "Aims and Principles," contained nary a reference to environmental or ecological issues, themes, or ideas. The issues that dominated the document were poverty, injustice,

and inequality. As such the CYC saw itself not in terms of sustaining anything, but quite the opposite; it was an organization dedicated to overturning the status quo through radical social change at the grassroots level. Where the CYC saw itself grappling with issues concerning the impact of technology and progress—two concepts central to the emerging environmental movement—these were subordinated to issues of social justice, not sustainability. The Company made it clear that it was not in revolt against technology, the machine age, or industrialization. Technology, the “Aims and Principles” argued, had often been a liberating force by improving living conditions for many people. Like SDS’s infamous Port Huron Statement, which it largely echoed, the CYC’s critique of modern technocratic society was not based on its deleterious environmental effects, but its effects on the spirit and soul of humankind.<sup>26</sup> One volunteer, Jay Jervis, made that connection by comparing his previous uninspiring work as a salesperson for a toilet supply company to his new life as a CYC volunteer. As he recounted in an internal CYC newsletter, “It bothered me because people were being sold a lot of crap. And maybe that’s what this system is all about. A whole vast industrial complex built on human excrement.” Anyway, he concluded, “I decided to become a shit disturber and joined the CYC.”<sup>27</sup> Both Jervis and the “Aims and Principles” made clear that technology, like any other force in society, needed to be harnessed to human needs and, more importantly, to human control.<sup>28</sup>

These ideas of human needs and human control were central to the Company’s approach to community development. Rather than imposing agendas on the communities in which it worked, CYC volunteers were to use the techniques of social animation to help ordinary people to take greater control of their world and the issues that concerned them most. But community development and social animation techniques were not always conducive to organizing around environmental issues. As a result, the only

Company-sponsored venture that dealt in any way with environmental issues was one small part of the larger Cape Breton Project, which operated in the working-class communities surrounding the coal mines and steel mills in and around Sydney, Nova Scotia. In the community of New Waterford, CYC volunteer Patricia Paul worked with residents on issues of water pollution created by the town's new breakwater. Built to protect the fishing fleet that docked and unloaded its catch in the town's harbour, the breakwater interrupted the flow of the town's sewage pipe that extended out into the ocean. As a result, the sewage not only polluted the harbour preventing fishermen from cleaning their catch, but it also began backing up in the streets and homes of local residents, threatening the town's inhabitants with typhus and cholera.<sup>29</sup> To make matters worse, the local coal company had deposited large amounts of slag on the shoreline. As a result, many New Waterford residents identified pollution as their "#1 concern." However, outside of Paul's project, the majority of Cape Breton Project volunteers spent the majority of their time and efforts focused on socio-economic problems, including poor housing, dropping out of high school, and lack of recreation facilities and opportunities for area residents. To be fair to CYC, these were the issues the community identified as their priorities, and if residents were unwilling to take on the polluters they had already identified, then it was not the place of CYC organizers to tell them to do so.<sup>30</sup>

By the early 1970s, however, the CYC's attention to environmental issues began to change. By that time, greater public concern with air and water pollution was emerging in Canadian communities, both large and small, where the most noticeable effects of pollution could be seen daily.<sup>31</sup> As a result, the Company began to work with community organizations in Canada's main metropolitan centres, who were concerned with pollution emanating from industries adjacent to inner city residential

neighbourhoods. These factories and refineries were found to be emitting high levels of lead and other heavy metals into the local environment, as evidenced by higher incidences of lead poisoning and lung disease among area residents. For many families, especially those with young children, their first reaction was to leave these polluted inner-city neighbourhoods for the “greener” pastures of the surrounding suburbs. However, the flight to the suburbs was not always available or desirable, and many chose to fight rather than flee the pollution. In many cases, they were joined by increasing numbers of middle-class residents who were busy rediscovering and redeveloping inner city neighbourhoods into hip and fashionable gentrified enclaves.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, the Company and its volunteers found it difficult to organize around these issues, given the rather tenuous nature of the economic situation in the early 1970s, particularly in urban industrial Canada where the Rust Belt was beginning to emerge.<sup>33</sup> The CYC, which was ostensibly established to fight the war on poverty through community development, found it difficult to organize around issues that potentially threatened workers’ job security, since in many cases those residents were also employees of the factories in question. As a result, these projects were torn between issues of economic and environmental sustainability. As one company volunteer argued, “Whether or not a community organization has a strong base of support is academic unless in-plant workers are involved directly.”<sup>34</sup>

The most substantial environmental project undertaken by the CYC in this period took place in Vancouver and was led by volunteers Bill Darnell, Phil Seipp, and Georgia Swedish. Most of the CYC’s early work in Vancouver concerned work with public housing tenants, and alternative schools, such as Knowplace. As those projects associated with the original Vancouver volunteers came to a close in 1969, the CYC was looking for new areas of potential growth.

Darnell himself arrived in Vancouver from the suburbs of Toronto in the fall of 1969, after completing a three-year degree in geography from McMaster University. With not much interest in an office job “making money for others,” Darnell stumbled upon the CYC after a recommendation from a Canada employment centre employee. Indeed, Darnell was in many respects the typical CYC volunteer: a middle-class university graduate in his early twenties with little more than a vague sense of humanitarianism to guide him. Though his mother had been a school trustee and active in a local UNICEF chapter, Darnell had no activist or political past of any kind. He was, as he described himself, “just kid from a middle-class suburb of Toronto” (Don Mills) who saw the CYC as an opportunity for “post-graduate work.”<sup>35</sup> In fact, CYC staff in Vancouver was somewhat wary of Darnell’s strait-laced background and thought he was an undercover RCMP officer trying to infiltrate the organization. Given that Darnell began as a CYC volunteer in January 1970 just as the Company was recovering from a parliamentary investigation that it had been aiding and abetting Quebec separatists, these fears were understandable. Though there was a degree of urgency to show that the Company was still alive in the aftermath of the inquiry, local CYC staff members Orval Strong and Alberta Levitan allowed Darnell to simply hang out with other volunteers and find his own interests. After a few months of trying everything else, and not much more than a general interest in nature from years of camping and a geography degree, Darnell stumbled upon environmentalism as his “thing” among the dozen volunteers working in the Vancouver area.<sup>36</sup>

Darnell arrived in Vancouver just as the environmental movement in the city, if not the entire west coast of North America, was beginning to blossom.<sup>37</sup> Within the space of two to three years a number of environmental issues suddenly appeared on the political scene of Canada’s

western-most province, ranging from strip coal mining on Vancouver Island, to clear-cutting in Cypress Provincial Park just north of Vancouver, to the presence of huge oil tankers down the Straits of Georgia and Juan de Fuca (SPOILS—Society for the Prevention of Oil Spills).<sup>38</sup> In response, a number of local environmental organizations, including the Richmond Anti-Pollution Association (RAPA) and the Society for Scientific Pollution and Environmental Control (SPEC), of which Darnell soon became a member, formed in the summer of 1969.<sup>39</sup> Both organizations protested the above issues as well as the dumping of raw sewage into the Fraser River. SPEC in particular quickly gained province-wide notoriety when its *Fraser River Report* was released in 1969.<sup>40</sup> Darnell also worked alongside the Sierra Club, Zero Population Growth (ZPG), and eventually the Don't Make a Wave Committee mentioned at the outset. Darnell saw his role as a kind of coordinator and facilitator between all of these various movements. As he noted in the project's submission to the Company's governing council, "It [is] evident that many people are actively concerned about environmental issues, and could benefit greatly from the help of an experienced full-time resources person and organizer."<sup>41</sup>

When the Vancouver Environmental Program (VEP) began its work in earnest in November 1970, Darnell, Seipp, and Swedish chose three specific areas of development. The first, which became Swedish's main task, was the establishment of a farmers' market that would sell locally grown and organic produce. Though this project generated a lot of local interest and a federal OFY grant of nearly \$4,000, there is no evidence from Company files that it ever really got off the ground.<sup>42</sup> In the words of CYC staffer Alberta Levitan, it was "the right project, but the wrong year" to start it.<sup>43</sup> The second project was the plan to make the 1970 SPEC-sponsored Festival for Survival into an annual event. Plans for the 1971 version were to link the city's environmental and countercultural movements to turn the

original Festival for Survival into a week-long event to promote alternative and sustainable lifestyles. Given the number of other festivals planned for the same period, the VEP decided to scrap the idea, since it could not guarantee success.<sup>44</sup> Nonetheless, the VEP regrouped and, in cooperation with SPEC and an OFY grant, bought an old school bus for \$350 and turned it into a travelling Ecology Caravan that toured the province that year. The bus, bedecked with flowers and peace symbols, was retrofitted to burn propane, loaded with slide shows and the camping equipment of six SPEC summer workers. Led by Darnell, the caravan covered 2,700 miles of the British Columbia interior in ten weeks, playing music and raising environmental awareness along the way.<sup>45</sup>

The third and final area of the group's work was the coordination of a campaign to stop the construction of an urban freeway system that, like the Spadina Expressway in Toronto, would cut a swath through working-class Vancouver neighbourhoods. It was here that the VEP made substantial and lasting progress. As with just about every North American city, Vancouver planners had drawn up extensive transportation plans to link its growing suburbs with the central business district and other transportation routes connecting the city to national and international markets through an elaborate system of freeways, bypasses, and bridges. By 1965 those plans put the Strathcona neighbourhood, home to most of Vancouver's Chinese community, directly in its crosshairs. Over the next three years, the Strathcona Property Owners and Tenants Association (SPOTA) vigorously fought the plans, forcing the city and the federal governments to end the urban renewal scheme for their neighbourhood.<sup>46</sup> But despite their victory, the freeway threat remained in plans to build a third crossing over Burrard Inlet. Members of the VEP, the city's environmental movement, and homeowners in the downtown core believed that the campaign for the

Third Crossing would be a “watershed moment” for both the environmental and social justice movements in the city.

The VEP’s strategy was not only to oppose construction of the Third Crossing and crosstown freeway, but to offer an alternative to the car and its resulting environmental degradation: rapid public transit. By March 1971, the VEP had largely become known at the CYC as the Transit Project, as it had united resident and ratepayer groups from the North Shore down through False Creek and Strathcona (many of which also received assistance from CYC volunteers) to form two public transit advocacy groups: the North Shore Transportation Committee and the Citizen’s Committee for Public Transit.<sup>47</sup> In addition, Darnell used his contacts in SPEC, the Sierra Club, and other environmental groups to ally them with the project, while Seipp used his contacts with the Vancouver District Labour Council as well as the city’s tenant and ratepayer organizations to similar ends. Ironically, aligned against the anti-bridge forces was Canada’s first minister of the environment, Liberal MP Jack Davis. The minister represented the voters of North Vancouver, for many of whom the gridlock across the Lion’s Gate Bridge was a daily hassle. Undaunted by their well-heeled opposition, the transit advocacy organizations receiving CYC assistance collected more than 21,000 signatures opposing the Third Crossing, forcing all levels of government to withdraw their support for a project that would have given Vancouver over to the reign of the automobile and the resulting urban sprawl.<sup>48</sup>

### **The Company and the Counterculture<sup>49</sup>**

AS THE VANCOUVER PROJECT ILLUSTRATED, if the Company was going to move into organizing around environmental or ecological issues, affiliation with countercultural groups provided one of its most promising avenues. As other scholars have noted, the counterculture’s anti-modernist critique

of production, consumption, and urbanization, as well as the dehumanizing nature of modern science and technology (the technocracy, as Jacques Ellul called it) pointed to a return to more “natural” relationships between people and the environment.<sup>50</sup> The Company’s own reports on the movement noted that the “alternative culture” was essentially conservative, as it sought “fewer of the negative aspects of our technological society.”<sup>51</sup> Of course much of this was represented in the back-to-the-land communes that sprang up across North America in the late 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>52</sup> However, it was not long before underground publications such as the *Mother Earth News*, the *Whole Earth Catalogue*, and even the Canadian publication *Harrowsmith* began to disseminate ideas about organic food and alternative/appropriate technologies to a wider audience.<sup>53</sup> Nonetheless, it would be wrong to equate all hippies to environmentalists, and all environmentalists to hippies. In fact, both the environmental movement and the CYC had a rather strained relationship with the counterculture. Although both embraced its youthful dynamism and were sympathetic to its promotion of alternative lifestyles, they also wanted to be taken seriously by the general population.<sup>54</sup>

The CYC’s own work with countercultural groups began in late 1970 under the ZIP program, during what might be called the second wave of the New Left and of the CYC itself.<sup>55</sup> These ZIP projects were intended to signal to the government and Canadians, particularly younger ones, that “the Company was still alive and . . . [could ward off] the inevitable criticism of castration and imminent collapse.”<sup>56</sup> Originally, the program was supposed to focus on the two biggest issues concerning Canadian youth in the summer of 1970: unemployment and transiency. However, when the smoke cleared, the Company found itself working only tangentially on those issues with the alternative culture communities in Canada’s main urban centres of Toronto, Winnipeg, and Vancouver.<sup>57</sup>

Three of the four ZIP projects involved alternative culture urban communes, which had begun to establish themselves in Canadian cities in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In Vancouver, the CYC-sponsored project involved a group of young hippies who trekked westward during the summer of 1970. Sitting around their government-sponsored youth hostel one day, the group was trying to think of something that could make them some money “while contributing to the preservation of the environment.” With some help from the CYC, they decided to pool their welfare checks, buy a van, and rent an old warehouse to collect recyclable materials including paper, bottles, and cans.<sup>58</sup> The group became known as the Joshua Society and initiated one of the first recycling projects in Canada.<sup>59</sup> Within a year the Joshua Society employed more than forty young people and had collected more than five tons of paper from Vancouver-area offices, including those of Noranda, Imperial Oil, BC Telephone, and the University of British Columbia. The group subsequently sorted and sold the materials for reprocessing, earning them anywhere between \$9 and \$65 a ton while saving Vancouver-area businesses nearly \$200 monthly in disposal costs.<sup>60</sup> Those who began the project were planning to use the recycling project to help “get their heads together” before moving on to bigger and better things. In the process they were also trying to raise awareness among Canadians about the “quickly depleating [*sic*] natural resources and getting people directly involved in [their] conservation.”<sup>61</sup> The Joshua Society and its recycling project became one of the most successful CYC programs in British Columbia, lasting as it did through 1974.<sup>62</sup>

In Winnipeg, the Company’s ZIP project grew out of an organization known as CRYPT (Committee Representing Youth Problems Today). The organization was established by Tony Harwood Jones, the priest of Winnipeg’s All Saints Anglican Church, to deal with the influx of young

people tramping to and through Winnipeg. Located across the street from Memorial Park—known in those years as Hippie Park—All Saints provided young transients with a referral service for accommodation, health care, and employment opportunities, as well as just a place to hang out. It was also a place that was sympathetic to American draft dodgers. Soon the young people associated with the program began to take control of these programs. Under the name of Youth Power Services (YPS), the group sought to create a place where young people could access employment services and accommodation, as well as a place where transients could crash and get a free shower and a free meal.<sup>63</sup> The organizers hoped that out of this initial project would come organizing activities for projects such as co-operative housing, food co-ops, tenant problems, civil and human rights, and other issues of importance to young people.<sup>64</sup>

Many of those same people engaged in YPS were also starting to experiment with elements of the alternative culture, particularly the idea of urban-based communes. However, in early 1970, Winnipeg city council sought to pass an ordinance to prevent more than four unrelated persons from occupying the same dwelling. Proposed as means to prevent the growth of slums and the blockbusting techniques of developers, the by-law also threatened the group's own communal living arrangements. With CYC support, YPS defeated the by-law, but its project in communal living remained on shaky ground economically. To solve that problem the project members established a co-operative food store known as the Whole Earth Co-operative. The project began as a means to deal with the rising costs of food and would better allow “young people struggling to maintain their cultural identity [and]... lifestyle against great odds.” But the group did note that it was not just the price of foods due to “commercial rip offs prevalent in ... large supermarkets” that was motivating their actions. They also wanted to use the opportunity to provide healthy food, “free of pollutants

and other potentially environmentally damaging items,” an issue that historian Catherine Carstairs notes was starting to attract the attention of Canadians both hip and straight.<sup>65</sup> Overall, the group in Winnipeg sought to use the project to give direction to those who had “rejected the established technocratic way of life, [but who had] ... not yet consciously [sought]... definite alternatives.”<sup>66</sup> The promotion of healthy environmentally friendly diets was hopefully a means to those ends.

Finally, in Toronto the ZIP project there worked with “The Hall,” a community centre linking a number of groups including American draft dodgers, members of the gay community, and those interested in communal living arrangements. The original impetus for the project came from Philip Mullins and a group of friends working with the Union of American Exiles and the Toronto Anti-Draft Programme to create an organization to help locate accommodation and employment for draft resisters who arrived in the city with few resources.<sup>67</sup> Eventually the project morphed into the Toronto Communal Living Assistance Project or, as it was more popularly known, the Hall. Described by one CYC as a “sort of post-hippy drug drop-in centre,” it was located in the Baldwin Street neighbourhood at 19 Huron Street. According to Don Feldman, who oversaw the Toronto-based projects for the Company, “those associated with the Hall were those who were truly trying to find an alternative style of life, which does not involve dependency on existing structures and systems.” They were also looking to overcome the “fragmentation and purposelessness of the alternative scene in Toronto” and looked to the Company for assistance in bringing the community together.<sup>68</sup> Other initiatives associated with the Hall included Wachea, a free food program for transients; Switchboard, an employment service; a crafts co-op to support local artisans; *Guerrilla*, an underground newspaper; and the Toronto Free University. Links were also drawn with local theatre groups,

the Toronto Free Youth Clinic, the Red White and Black resisters group, and Canada's first and most notorious "free university," Rochdale College.

The Baldwin Street community was a successful merger of the political left and the emerging counterculture.<sup>69</sup> It was also the scene of most of the city's urban communes, the vast majority of which were associated with draft resisters and their families.<sup>70</sup> It also became the centre of hip enterprise, including the establishment of craft co-operatives such as the Ragnarokr Leather Cooperative and the Little Yellow Ford Truck Store (also known as the Liberation Tribal Store), which sold locally made crafts as well as crafts imported from Southern and Central America.<sup>71</sup> The neighbourhood was also the home to Toronto's first natural food store, the Whole Earth Foods. The Whole Earth Family commune established this venture in July 1969 when the group pooled their resources to rent a storefront at 160 McCaul Street. The store was the first of its kind in the city and introduced California-style natural food sales to Torontonians. The members of the commune group purchased organic and pesticide-free food in bulk, repackaged it, and took turns running the store. In return, everyone in the co-operative was guaranteed room and board, as there was rarely any cash left over for distribution to the commune's members. According to one of the original members of the commune, the store slowly developed a "solid base of customers ... consisting of hippies, Marxists, art students and [the] lunatic fringe." "Over the years," she continued, "nurses and doctors started drifting in ... and eventually more ... Moms and Dads, looking for new ways to eat." But the idea of ecological sustainability was found not only in the range of products that occupied the shelves and bins of the store. Members of the commune scrounged old construction sites for the store furnishings and made everything in the store by hand from old wood, often recycled from the Teperman Wrecking Company. The

group even built a wooden fridge, which, even though it “didn't work that well ... was beautifull[y] hand carv[ed].”<sup>72</sup>

Obviously, much of what was going on in these urban communes and health food co-operatives was quite radical for Canadians at the time. Nonetheless, as Jane Barr's study of Quebec environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS) notes, in the early years health food co-ops often became “informal networks that helped in the diffusion of ideas [of environmentalism]” and a “source of members” to the movement itself.<sup>73</sup> In addition, many of these health food co-ops also began to support the beginnings of the modern local food movement by purchasing the produce from nearby small market farmers, many of which were under threat from government-sponsored rural adjustment programs.<sup>74</sup> These ventures, though exciting and new, were inherently unstable and difficult to sustain economically. Though the records of the Winnipeg Whole Earth Co-op are rather sketchy beyond the initial two-year project sponsored by the Company, evidence suggests that the enterprise did not last beyond 1976, and it was beset by problems of commercial viability the entire time. The Whole Earth Food store in Toronto was more successful, lasting as it did until 1979. It also extended its influence beyond the city to South River and Killaloe, Ontario, where some of its members lived intermittently over the next decade.<sup>75</sup> But that strength was also a weakness, as many of the Baldwin Street commune members who were “determined to do their own thing” came and went, necessitating new inputs of labour and capital to sustain the business. In other cases, unreliable suppliers often required that other products be found to fill out the store's inventory, much of it imported from overseas and little of it particularly “healthy” or “natural.” Indeed, by the early 1970s the Liberation Tribal Store began to sell fewer handmade crafts and more drug paraphernalia and cheap knock-offs of Aboriginal crafts.<sup>76</sup>

## Conclusions

THOUGH THE EVIDENCE PRESENTED ABOVE is at times limited and anecdotal, I think historians of Canada's environmental movement will find much that confirms and questions some findings of what we know about Canadians' early engagement with the idea of sustainable development. First and foremost, the link between the CYC and local community groups engaged in promoting sustainable development reveals that in Canada the concern with the environment came at the end of the Long Sixties, during what some call the second wave, which was associated more with post-materialist orientation of the counterculture than with the social justice focus of the early New Left. Nonetheless, as Bill Darnell's experience shows, many environmental activists came from mundane liberal backgrounds, and it was their association with environmental activism that radicalized both their politics and their lifestyle choices.<sup>77</sup> Second, perhaps flowing from what would become the mantra of the environmental movement's "think globally, act locally," most early environmental activism "on the ground," as Jonathan Clapperton and Liza Piper have called it, was intensely local in its focus, with no overarching national institutions to unite the movement or provide a wider dialogue on issues, strategies, and priorities.<sup>78</sup> Even within the CYC there is very little evidence that any of the projects mentioned here cooperated or shared their experiences in any meaningful way beyond the local or regional level. Only in Vancouver was the CYC successful, not only in coordinating the efforts of environmental groups active in the city, but linking them with other movements and community organizations fighting poverty and urban renewal. The fact that the Winnipeg and Toronto ZIP projects sponsored "Whole Earth" natural food co-operatives had more to do with the popularity of Stewart Brand's prolific and popular catalogue, which put

NASA's first pictures of earth from space on its infamous front covers, than it did with any explicitly shared strategy.<sup>79</sup> Indeed, there is no evidence in the Company's records that the local environmental and sustainable development projects had contact with, or knowledge of, similar organizations and movements across the country.

Third, the present study confirms that much of early environmental activism in Canada required government sponsorship to sustain its activities.<sup>80</sup> Almost all projects discussed here drew on federal and provincial government programs such as the CYC, but also Opportunities for Youth, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Local Improvement Program and Neighbourhood Improvement Program, the Agricultural and Rural Development Act, and the Fund for Rural Economic Development. Scholars of environmental activism are encouraged to delve into the records of such organizations and government programs, because if the CYC's own records are a guide, they could provide a treasure trove of evidence here to suggest that environmental activism in Canada was much broader than many have initially believed.<sup>81</sup> Moreover, despite heavy reliance on government, the CYC's experiments with aiding these groups should lead us even further away from seeing environmental and sustainable development activism as a top-down movement initiated by heroic and enlightened bureaucrats or the large "Green Giants" (i.e., Greenpeace, Sierra Club) that came to dominate the modern environmental movement.<sup>82</sup> The CYC provided resources, not the initiative or the ideas; these came solely from individuals and communities seeking the means to combat their problems. As a result, much like grassroots action in any field, sustaining environmental activism beyond immediate crises was often difficult. As all projects examined here reveal, sustaining their momentum depended on a constant search for resources. What governments gave, no matter how little it seems in retrospect, they

could also take away. By the mid-1970s as stagflation began to rise, interest in environmental sustainable development appeared a luxury governments could ill afford. Federal government cost-cutting measures enacted in the 1976 budget, which ultimately killed the CYC and OFY, also spelled the end of other ENGO funding programs.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, while many previous studies of the CYC have over-played the conscious role of government to use the program to buy off youth discontent, government money was never entirely devoid of controls.<sup>84</sup> However, in a day when many ENGOs are not only seeing their government funding eliminated, but their charitable tax status also questioned over issues of advocacy, such times seem positively halcyon.<sup>85</sup>

Finally, I think the preceding case studies should encourage scholars of environmental activism to broaden their focus to think of the concept of sustainability in its larger, and at times more complicated, sense. As the case studies here illustrate, Canadians' early engagement with sustainable development was simultaneously imaginative and tentative. Perhaps this is the result of the bias of the records examined here. On the one hand, the CYC sought out projects that were on the leading edge of social change (i.e., alternative schooling or First Nations culture retention). On the other hand, its commitment to non-directed *animation sociale* meant that communities and individuals determined the actual focus of the projects the Company sponsored. While this may in some ways represent a weakness of the CYC's approach, it did recognize that sustainability in all its forms had to be defined at a more human than global scale. This of course led to trade-offs and unstated assumptions that often compromised each side of the triad—economic, social, and ecological—particularly the last. For hippies in Toronto, Vancouver, and Winnipeg, the creation of health food co-ops and recycling projects were geared primarily as means to sustain the viability of their lifestyles in ways that they found

psychologically and emotionally rewarding, or perhaps the least compromising of the alternatives.<sup>86</sup> Similarly the CYC's aid in forming agricultural co-operatives and "local food" markets and networks provided a means to save their communities and their culture from being consumed by the voracious appetites of urban Canada. The demands of each element of the sustainable development triad (economic, social, and ecological) became even more difficult in the hard economic times of the mid-1970s, revealing that present-day Canadians are not the only ones who face tough choices between economic viability and ecological sustainability. Nonetheless the CYC's incubation of some of these movements is evidence to suggest that Canadians do have experience in conceiving of development that is not only broadly sustainable, but can also be carried out as if people and communities mattered.

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<sup>1</sup> Frank Zelko, "Making Greenpeace: The Development of Direct Action Environmentalism in British Columbia," *BC Studies* 142, no. 43 (Summer/Autumn 2004): 234, <https://doi.org/10.14288/bcs.v0i142/3.1725>. See also Zelko, *Make It a Green Peace! The Rise of Countercultural Environmentalism* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Zelko, "Making Greenpeace," 236–7. For more on the founding of Greenpeace, see Rex Weyler, *Greenpeace: How a Group of Ecologists, Journalists and Visionaries Changed the World* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> The term "sustainable development" did not come into general usage until publication of the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (The Brundtland Commission) Report. *Our Common Future*, was released in 1987. When the term is used in the following study, it implies an approach to economic development that takes into account the environmental, economic, and social justice impacts of human activity. The study also recognizes

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that the term is a contested concept, since it implies that trade-offs between each of its constituent parts, particularly between the economic and environmental aspects of the definition, are feasible. Many environmentalists, particularly “deep ecologists,” believe that such trade-offs undermine the concept of sustainability altogether. See Jacobus A. Du Pisani, “Sustainable Development: Historical Roots of the Concept,” *Environmental Sciences* 3, no. 2 (2006), 83–96, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15693430600688831>; B. Giddings, Bill Hopwood, and Geoff O’Brien, “Environment, Economy and Society: Fitting Them Together into Sustainable Development,” *Sustainable Development* 10 (2002), 187–96, <https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.199>; J. Harris, “Basic Principles of Sustainable Development,” Global Development and Environment Institute (Tufts University) Working Paper 00-04, 2000, <https://sites.tufts.edu/gdae/files/2019/10/00-04Harris-BasicPrinciplesSD.pdf>; and J. O’Connor, “Is Sustainable Capitalism Possible?” in *Food for the Future: Conditions and Contradictions of Sustainability*, ed. P. Allen, 125–37 (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1983).

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Mark Leeming, *In Defence of Home Place: Environmental Activism in Nova Scotia* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2017); Jennifer Bonnell, *Reclaiming the Don: An Environmental History of Toronto’s Don River Valley* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442696808>; Jonathan Clapperton and Liza Piper, eds., *Environmental Activism on the Ground: Small, Green and Indigenous Organizing* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvbd8j4n>; Ryan O’Connor, *The First Green Wave: Pollution Probe and the Origins of Environmental Activism in Ontario* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015); Colin Coates, ed., *Canadian Countercultures and the Environment* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv64h6rb>; and Colin Coates and Graeme Wynn, eds., *The Nature of Canada* (Vancouver: On Point, 2019).

<sup>5</sup> The “Long Sixties” implies the periodization of an era that begins roughly in 1954, with the rise of Third World liberation movements and the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, and ends in 1974 with the oil shocks, the

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withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam, and the resignation of President Richard Nixon. The term was first used by British historian Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy and the United States, 1958–1974* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3–2.

<sup>6</sup> For more on the sixties roots of the environmental movement, see Keith M. Woodhouse, “The Politics of Ecology: Environmentalism and Liberalism in the 1960s,” *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 2, no. 2 (2008): 53–84, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jsr.0.0008>. See also Adam Rome, “‘Give Earth a Chance’: The Environmental Movement and the Sixties,” *Journal of American History* 90, no. 2 (2003): 525–54, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3659443>; Jeff Sanders, “Environmentalism,” in *The Columbia Guide to America in the 1960s*, ed. David Farber and Beth Bailey, 273–80 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001). No real synthetic work on the Canadian environmental movement has yet been published. For elements of its history that put it in its historical context see Zelko, “Making Greenpeace”; O’Connor, *First Green Wave*; Coates, *Canadian Countercultures and the Environment*; and Jane E. Barr, “The Origins and Emergence of Quebec’s Environmental Movement” (M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> For SANE see Lawrence Wittner, *Confronting the Bomb: A Short History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 64–70. For the Canadian Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards (CCCRH), see Tarah Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts: Canadian Women, Child Safety and Global Insecurity* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), 81–2. Eventually the CCCRH merged with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and then the Student Union for Peace Action (SUPA). Much of SUPA was absorbed by the CYC by 1967. The other main Canadian peace organization that also joined the campaign against nuclear fallout and nuclear testing was the Voice of Women. See Barbara Roberts, “Women’s Peace Activism in Canada,” in *Beyond the Vote: Canadian Women and Politics*, ed. Linda Kealey and Joan Sangster, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 276–308; and Frances Early, “Canadian Women and the International Arena in the Sixties: The Voice of Women/La voix des femmes and Opposition to

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the Vietnam War,” in *The Sixties: Passion, Politics, and Style*, ed. Dimitry Anastakis, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2008), 25-41.

<sup>8</sup> Protests against the use of chemical defoliants began as early as the Kennedy administration. By 1967 most of these protests took place against the makers of the chemicals, particularly Dow Chemical. Protests were strongest during the Company’s recruiting drives on American university campuses, but did carry over onto Canadian universities. For a particularly readable account of the American protests, see David Mariniss, *They Marched into Sunlight: War and Peace Vietnam and America October 1967* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003). For Canada, see Roberta Lexier, “‘The Backdrop against Which Everything Happened’: English-Canadian Student Movements and Off-Campus Movements for Change,” *History of Intellectual Culture* 7, no. 1 (2007), <https://www.ucalgary.ca/hic/issues/vol7/3>. For more on the long history of the use and protest against the use of chemical agents in Vietnam, see David Zierler, *The Invention of Ecocide: Agent Orange, Vietnam, and the Scientists Who Changed the Way We Think about the Environment* (Atlanta: University of Georgia Press, 2011).

<sup>9</sup> J. Harding, “Continuing On: Deepening the Anti-Nuclear Movement since the Sixties,” in *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness*, ed. K. Dubinsky, Catherine Krull, Susan Lord, and Sean Mills (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009), 392.

<sup>10</sup> Harding, “Continuing On,” 398–9.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement* (Washington, DC: Island, 2005), 137. See also Adam Rome, *The Genius of Earth Day: How a 1970 Teach-in Unexpectedly Made the First Green Generation* (New York: Macmillan, 2013), 13–17.

<sup>12</sup> Woodhouse, “Politics of Ecology,” 54.

<sup>13</sup> Coates, *Canadian Countercultures and the Environment*.

<sup>14</sup> Woodhouse, “Politics of Ecology,” 75. For more on the term “politics of authenticity” see Douglas C. Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism,*

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*Christianity, and the New Left in America*, Contemporary American History Series (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

<sup>15</sup> Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), Company of Young Canadians Fonds, RG 116, vol. 15, file 120-01-03, *Report by the Organizing Committee of the Company of Young Canadians to the Prime Minister of Canada* (hereafter the *Leddy Report*), 12.

<sup>16</sup> *Globe and Mail*, “Welfare,” April 7, 1965, 2.

<sup>17</sup> LAC, RG 116, vol. 15, file 120-J5, “Notes for a Presentation by Alan Clarke, Executive Director of the CYC to the Inter-Departmental Conference of Youth to Be Held at the Tops Marina Motor Hotel, Smiths Falls Ontario, March 25–26, 1968.”

<sup>18</sup> *Ubysey*, “CYC Orator Soapboxes Noon Today,” November 15, 1966, 6.

<sup>19</sup> Margaret Daly, *Revolution Game: The Short Unhappy Life of the Company of Young Canadians* (Toronto: New Press, 1970).

<sup>20</sup> Doug Owsram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 224 and 362n35, <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442657106>.

<sup>21</sup> William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections (McMaster University—hereafter MMA), Company of Young Canadians Fonds (hereafter Doug Ward Fonds), box 4, file 12 Myrna Wood and Michael Rowan (with the assistance of Anthony Hyde and Linda Seese), “Notes on the Nationalization of Saul Alinsky or ‘Community Organizing and the Company of Young Canadians.’”

<sup>22</sup> For more on the early history of the Company, see Daly, *Revolution Game*, and Ian Hamilton, *The Children’s Crusade: The Story of the Company of Young Canadians* (Toronto: Peter Martin, 1970).

<sup>23</sup> Kevin Brushett, “Making Shit Disturbers: The Selection and Training of the Company of Young Canadian Volunteers, 1965–1970,” in *The Sixties In Canada: A Turbulent and Creative Decade*, ed. M. Athena Palaeologu, 246–69 (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2009).

<sup>24</sup> Kevin Brushett, “Federally Financed Felquistes’: The Company of Young Canadians and the Prelude to the October Crisis,” *Quebec Studies* 55 (Spring/Summer 2013): 77–100, <https://doi.org/10.3828/qs.55.1.77>.

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<sup>25</sup> LAC, RG 116, vol. 178, file C, “Company of Young Canadians: Report to the Honorable Mr. J. Hugh Faulkner, Secretary of State, May 22, 1974,” 3.

<sup>26</sup> The Port Huron Statement was drawn up by SDS in 1962 and is often seen as the manifesto of the American New Left. Jim Miller, *“Democracy Is in the Streets”: From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987). For the impact of the American New Left on Canada, see Myrna Kostash, *Long Way from Home: The Story of the Sixties Generation in Canada* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1980).

<sup>27</sup> MMA, Doug Ward Fonds, box 4, file 8, Jay Jervis cited in “Feedback: To Be the Way for Those without a Way,” March 4, 1967, 10.

<sup>28</sup> LAC, RG 116, Records of the Company of Young Canadians, vol. 15, file 120-J5, Company of Young Canadians, “Aims and Principles Adopted by the Provisional Council July 25, 1966,” 1–3.

<sup>29</sup> See Mark Leeming *In Defence of Home Places: Environmental Activism in Nova Scotia, 1970–1985* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2017). Leeming’s study notes that most early environmental activism in Nova Scotia centred on bays and estuaries, as the government and industry saw them as waste sinks for industrial effluent.

<sup>30</sup> LAC, RG 116, vol. 92, file 210, memorandum, Cam Mackie to Claude Vidal, Re: Cape Breton Project, February 26, 1969; Bert Deveaux, Cape Breton Project: Staff Progress Report, January 29, 1969; Patricia Paul, Personal Report: Cape Breton Project, n.d.; memorandum, Jim Littleton to Stewart Goodings, Re: Visit to Cape Breton Project, August 15, 1968.

<sup>31</sup> Leeming, *In Defence of Home Place*; Bonnell, *Reclaiming the Don*; Clapperton and Piper, *Environmental Activism on the Ground*; O’Connor, *First Green Wave*; Jennifer Read, “‘Let Us Heed the Voice of Youth’: Laundry Detergents, Phosphates and the Emergence of the Environmental Movement in Ontario,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* n.s., 7, no. 1 (1996): 227–50, <https://doi.org/10.7202/031109ar>; Arn Keeling, “Urban Waste Sinks as a Natural Resource: The Case of the Fraser River,” *Urban History Review/Revue d’Histoire Urbaine* 34 (2005): 58–70, <https://doi.org/10.7202/1016047ar>; and Keeling, “Sink or Swim: Water Pollution and Environmental Politics in Vancouver, 1889–

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1975," *BC Studies* 142, no. 43 (2004): 69–101,  
<https://doi.org/10.14288/bcs.v0i142/3.1717>.

<sup>32</sup> For the Canadian context of gentrification and its impact on local politics, see the work of David Ley, including Ley, *The New Middle Class and the Remaking of the Central City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); David Ley, "Gentrification and the Politics of the New Class," *Society and Space* 12 (1994): 53–74, <https://doi.org/10.1068%2Fd120053>; and S. Hasson and D. Ley, *Neighbourhood Organizations and the Welfare State* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

<sup>33</sup> Steven High, *Industrial Sunset: The Making of North America's Rust Belt, 1969–1984* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003.)

<sup>34</sup> LAC, RG 116, vol. 120, file 567 memorandum, Wolfe Erlichman to Yvan Poulin, Re: Proposed Action Research Project, "Occupational and Environmental Health," May 6, 1975.

<sup>35</sup> For more on the typical CYC volunteer, see Kevin Brushett, "From Beatnik to Boy Scout: Recruiting Company of Young Canadian Volunteers & the Politics of Youth 1965–1968 (paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, Vancouver, June 2, 2008).

<sup>36</sup> Telephone interview with Bill Darnell, May 20, 2013.

<sup>37</sup> Telephone interview with Bill Darnell, May 20, 2013.

<sup>38</sup> For SPEC's history see SPEC, "Our History" available at <https://www.spec.bc.ca/since1969>. See also LAC, RG 116, vol. 99, file 350.

<sup>39</sup> For more on the early history of Vancouver's fledgling environmental movement, see Rex Weyler, *Greenpeace*, 56–67; and Lawrence Aronsen, *City of Love and Revolution: Vancouver in the Sixties* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 2010). According to Weyler, SPEC was initially called the Society for the Prevention of Environmental Collapse. See also Keeling, "Urban Waste Sinks as a Natural Resource"; and Keeling, "Sink or Swim." For more on SPEC, see Jonathan Clapperton, "The Ebb and Flow of Local Environmental Activism: The Society for Pollution and Environmental Control, British Columbia," in Clapperton and Piper, *Environmental Activism on the Ground*, 261–88.

<sup>40</sup> Keeling, "Urban Waste Sinks," 65.

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<sup>41</sup> LAC, RG 116, vol. 143, file 892, "Submission to the Proposed The Company of Young Canadians Vancouver Environmental Project," October 19, 1970; and Vancouver Environmental Project Report, March 10, 1971.

<sup>42</sup> LAC, RG 116, vol 143, file 892, letter to Cam Mackie (OFY) re Vancouver Community Market, April 7, 1971; A. Levitan to Dal Brodhead, monthly report, August 9, 1971.

<sup>43</sup> LAC, RG 116, vol. 143, file 892, Levitan to Broadhead, monthly report.

<sup>44</sup> LAC, RG 116, vol. 143, file 892, Vancouver Environmental Project Evaluation and Report to June 30, 1971.

<sup>45</sup> Society Promoting Environmental Conservation, "SPEC's Beginnings," <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/spec/spec/Spectrum/spring1999/beginframeset.htm>, accessed May 21, 2013 (discontinued); Weyler, *Greenpeace*, 53; and telephone interview with Bill Darnell, May 20, 2013.

<sup>46</sup> For more on the Strathcona Property Owners fight against the freeway, see Kay Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 199-211; and Donald Gutstein, *Vancouver Limited* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1975), 154-7.

<sup>47</sup> LAC, RG 116, vol. 143, file 892, Ben Swankey, "The Citizens Committee for Public Transit: A Brief History," October 1, 1970; King Wan, "92 Days with the CYC"; A. Levitan to Dal Brodhead, August 9, 1971; Alberta Levitan, monthly reports, June 4, 1971, March 23, 1971; Phil Seipp, "Vancouver Environmental Project: Evaluation and Report to June 30, 1971."

<sup>48</sup> For more on the Third Crossing fight, see Gutstein, *Vancouver Limited*, 162-6; and Ken Mackenzie, "Freeway Planning and Protests in Vancouver, 1954-1972" (MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1984). Vancouver's adherence to mixed-use high-density planning, lack of urban freeways, and access to the city's varied natural environment (ocean front, mountains, etc.) has often put it at the forefront of city planning in North America and has become known as "Vancouverism." See Mike Harcourt and Ken Cameron, with Sean Rossiter, *City Making in Paradise: Nine Decisions That Saved Vancouver* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2007).

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<sup>49</sup> It should be recognized that the term “counterculture” is highly contested. First popularized by Theodore Roszak in 1968 in his seminal book, *The Making of a Counterculture*, it implied the emergence of a unique subculture in Western society that came to reject the dominant norms and values of modern Western capitalist society. However, as Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle note in the introduction to their book *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and '70s*, “The term ‘counterculture’ falsely reifies what should never properly be construed as a social movement. It was an inherently unstable collection of attitudes, tendencies, postures, gestures, ‘lifestyles,’ ideals, visions, hedonistic pleasures, moralisms, negations, and affirmations. These roles were played by people who defined themselves first by what they were not, and then, only having cleared the essential ground of identity, began to conceive anew what they were” (10). Finally, as authors Thomas Frank and Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter have recently argued the oppositional nature of the counterculture was highly compromised by its own reliance on modern Western culture for its values and the means of disseminating them. See Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counterculture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle, eds., *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and '70s* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter, *The Rebel Sell: Why the Culture Can't Be Jammed* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 2005); and Stuart Henderson, *Making the Scene: Yorkville and Hip Toronto in the 1960s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).

<sup>50</sup> Andrew Kirk, “Machines of Loving Grace: Alternative Technology, Environment and the Counterculture,” in Braunstein and Doyle, *Imagine Nation*, 353–78. See also Kirk’s full-length account of the impact of Stewart Brand and the Whole Earth Catalogue on both the counterculture and the environmental movement. Andrew G. Kirk, *Counterculture Green: The Whole Earth Catalog and American Environmentalism*, repr. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2011). For the Canadian context, see Coates, *Canadian Countercultures and the Environment*.

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<sup>51</sup> LAC, RG 116, vol. 47, file 139-1, "Information Package on the Alternative Culture," n.d., 1.

<sup>52</sup> The CYC itself gave assistance to at least two agricultural communes interested in alternative agriculture, which included a project near L'Isle Verte, Quebec (see LAC, RG 116, vol. 103, file 425, "Commune de L'Isle Verte," n.d.) and another near Birtle, Manitoba (LAC, RG 116, vol. 137, file 707, "Birtle Farm Development," 1974). The former project, which lasted for more than a decade has been written about by one of its members, Marc Corbeil, *L'Utopie en acte: La commune de la Plaine* (Rimouski: Université du Québec à Rimouski, 1990). For more on the environmental ethic of the Back-to-the-Land Movement and its links to government subsidization, see Ryan H. Edgington, "Be Receptive to the Good Earth': Health, Nature, and Labor in Countercultural Back-to-the-Land Settlements," *Agricultural History* 82, no. 3 (Summer 2008): 279–308, <https://doi.org/10.3098/ah.2008.82.3.279>; and Matt Cavers, "Dollars for 'Deadbeats': Opportunities for Youth Grants and the Back-to-the-Land Movement British Columbia's Sunshine Coast," in Coates, *Canadian Countercultures and the Environment*, 179–99.

<sup>53</sup> Barr, "Origins and Emergence of Quebec's Environmental Movement," 42–3.

<sup>54</sup> For the CYC's messy relationship with the counterculture, see Kevin Brushett "The Company of Young, Hip, Turned On Canadians? The CYC and Alternative Youth Culture" (paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, May 30, 2012); Brushett, "Between Beatnik and Boy Scout': Recruiting the Company of Young Canadian and the Politics of Youth, 1965–1970" (paper presented to the 87th Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, June 2, 2008). Rex Weyler and Ryan O'Connor note that both Greenpeace and Pollution Probe sought quite consciously to distance themselves from the more outward trappings of the counterculture, even though their members were influenced by its ideas. Weyler, *Greenpeace*, 45, 60, 136; and O'Connor, *Toronto the Green*, 89–93. For a classic statement on how the media overhyped the impact of the "long hairs" on sixties protest movements, see Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

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<sup>55</sup> This characterization comes from Terry Anderson's division of the Long Sixties into two distinct phases: the First Wave or "Surge," 1960–8, and the "Second Wave" or "Crest," 1968–73. According to Anderson it was only after 1970 that the counterculture really began to establish deep roots in American culture and society. See T. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties: Protest in America from Greensboro to Wounded Knee* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 239–410.

<sup>56</sup> LAC, RG 116, vol. 100, file 350, "The ZIP Program," September 1971.

<sup>57</sup> LAC, RG 116, vol. 100, file 350, "Zip Programme—Projects," n.d.

<sup>58</sup> LAC, RG 116, vol. 100, file 350, "Joshua Society," n.d.

<sup>59</sup> The Joshua Society project seems to have occurred simultaneous to those developed by Pollution Probe in Toronto, although there is no evidence that either group was aware of the another. See O'Connor, *First Green Wave*, 84–91.

<sup>60</sup> *Tri-City Herald*, "Venture in Cooperation May Set Pattern for Paper Recycling," August 19, 1971, 17; "Save Your Paper," *UBC Reports* 17, no. 11, September 7, 1971.

<sup>61</sup> LAC, RG 116, vol 100, file 350 "Joshua Society," n.d.

<sup>62</sup> CYC policies were to provide resources to projects only for two years after, which the Company believed that the organizations should become self-sustaining.

<sup>63</sup> The idea was based largely on another successful CYC sponsored project, the Victoria Cool Aid Society, which was Canada's first comprehensive youth-oriented social service organization. It began in 1968 and continues to provide a range of social services to young and old. For more on the organization, see Helen Edwards, "40 Years of Caring: A Brief History of the Victoria Cool Aid Society," 2009, [https://coolaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/History\\_of\\_Victoria\\_Cool\\_Aid\\_Society\\_1968-2008.pdf](https://coolaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/History_of_Victoria_Cool_Aid_Society_1968-2008.pdf).

<sup>64</sup> LAC, RG 116, vol. 100, file 350, "Evaluation YPS," n.d.

<sup>65</sup> LAC, RG 116, vol. 133, file 658, "YPS Evaluation," n.d. See Catherine Carstairs, "Food, Fear and the Environment in the Long Sixties," in (eds.), *Debating Dissent: Canada and the Sixties* ed. L. Campbell, D. Clement, and G.S. Kealey, 29–45

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(Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012); and Carstairs, "The Granola High: Health Food in Canada," in *Edible Histories, Cultural Politics: Towards a Canadian Food History*, ed. Franca Iacovetta, Valerie J. Korinek, and Marlene Epp, 305–25 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

<sup>66</sup> LAC, RG 116, vol. 133, file 658, "YPS Evaluation," n.d.

<sup>67</sup> Phillip Mullins, "Yellow Ford Truck, May 1968–April 1969," Ragnarokr Cordwainery, [http://www.ragnarokr.org/index.php-title=The\\_Yellow\\_Ford\\_Truck,\\_May\\_1968-April\\_1969.html](http://www.ragnarokr.org/index.php-title=The_Yellow_Ford_Truck,_May_1968-April_1969.html).

<sup>68</sup> LAC, RG 116, vol. 100, file 350, "Background to the ZIP Program," n.d., 5.

<sup>69</sup> For more on the Baldwin Street community of draft resisters and expatriate Americans, see John Hagan, *Northern Passage: American Vietnam War Resisters in Canada* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2001); Renée G. Kasinsky, *Refugees from Militarism: Draft-Age Americans in Canada* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1976); David Churchill, "American Expatriates and the Building of Alternative Social Space in Toronto, 1965–1977," *Urban History Review/Revue d'Histoire Urbaine* 39, no. 1 (2010): 31–44, <https://doi.org/10.7202/045106ar>.

<sup>70</sup> Phillip Mullins, "Housing Communes in Toronto, 1968–1972," Ragnarokr Cordwainery, [http://www.ragnarokr.org/index.php-title=Housing\\_Communes\\_in\\_Toronto,\\_1968-1972.html](http://www.ragnarokr.org/index.php-title=Housing_Communes_in_Toronto,_1968-1972.html).

<sup>71</sup> Though Mullins does not say so explicitly, the Yellow Ford Truck Store seems to be based on Stewart Brand's Whole Earth Truck Store, which began out of the back of his 1963 Dodge van. Kirk, *Counterculture Green*, 48.

<sup>72</sup> Phillip Mullins, "John Anderson," Ragnarokr Cordwainery, [http://www.ragnarokr.org/index.php-title=John\\_Anderson.html](http://www.ragnarokr.org/index.php-title=John_Anderson.html). See also comments by "Patricia" in "Nuthouse," review, BlogTo, January 9, 2011, <https://www.blogto.com/grocery/nuthouse-toronto/>. Catherine Carstairs also notes that another Toronto health food store—Goldberry's—adopted the same kind of anti-modern decor by making the store resemble an old-fashioned general store. Carstairs, "Granola High," 312.

<sup>73</sup> Barr, "Origins and Emergence of Quebec's Environmental Movement," 123.

<sup>74</sup> LAC, RG 116, vol. 103, file 426, Rapport du Projet Coop Cabano—Couvrant la Période Juin de Septembre 1974. Much of this movement to support small

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market farming was also associated with the emerging farmland preservation movement. See M. Bunce, "Thirty Years of Farmland Preservation in North America: Discourses and Ideologies of a Movement," *Journal of Rural Studies* 14, no. 2 (1998): 235.

<sup>75</sup> Churchill's "American Expatriates and the Building of Alternative Social Space in Toronto, 1965–1977" mentions another whole foods store called the Golden Ant Health Food Store, in the Village, but its members were not at any point connected to the CYC. Churchill, "American Expatriates," 39. For more on the move of the community to Killaloe, see Phillip Mullins, "Killaloe Colony," Ragnarokr Cordwainery, [http://www.ragnarokr.org/index.php-title=Killaloe\\_colony.html](http://www.ragnarokr.org/index.php-title=Killaloe_colony.html) ; and Douglas Gloin, "Living Green before Their Time," *Toronto Star*, May 20, 2007, [https://www.thestar.com/news/2007/05/20/living\\_green\\_before\\_their\\_time.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/2007/05/20/living_green_before_their_time.html).

<sup>76</sup> Philip Mullins, "Jimmy Wilson," Ragnarokr Cordwainery, [http://www.ragnarokr.org/index.php-title=Jimmy\\_Wilson.html](http://www.ragnarokr.org/index.php-title=Jimmy_Wilson.html).

<sup>77</sup> Telephone interview with Bill Darnell. Darnell also noted that many of his associates in the Sierra Club such as Irving and Dorothy Stowe had substantial leftist backgrounds as union organizers. Rex Weyler, "Dorothy Stowe 1920–2010: Greenpeace Cofounder, Social Justice Advocate," *Vancouver Observer*, July 23, 2010, <https://www.vancouverobserver.com/politics/news/2010/07/23/dorothy-stowe-1920-2010-greenpeace-cofounder-social-justice-advocate> .

<sup>78</sup> J. Clapperton and L. Piper, "Introduction: In the Shadow of the Green Giants: Environmentalism an Civic Engagement," in Clapperton and Piper, *Environmental Activism on the Ground*, 6.

<sup>79</sup> See Kirk, *Counterculture Green*, 40–1.

<sup>80</sup> See Cavers, "Dollars for 'Deadbeats.'

<sup>81</sup> Ryan O'Connor's work on Pollution Probe and Jane Barr's work on the early environmental movement in Quebec both state that their subjects drew heavily on government programs such as OFY for support. My study of the CYC also suggests that many groups applied to more than one program at a time and often

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combined funding from federal and provincial programs. O'Connor, *First Green Wave*, 159 and 167; and Barr, "Origins and Emergence of Quebec's Environmental Movement," 96–7.

<sup>82</sup> See Alan MacEachern, "Voices Crying in the Wilderness: Recent Works in Canadian Environmental History," *Acadiensis* 31, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 217–18.

<sup>83</sup> Jane Barr's study of Quebec ENGOs notes that 1974 proved to be a fall-off year in the number and the size of memberships of ENGOs. Barr, "Origins and Emergence of Quebec's Environmental Movement," 96.

<sup>84</sup> The classic statement on this is Martin Loney, "A Political Economy of Citizen Participation," in *The Canadian State: Political Economy and Political Power*, ed. L. Panitch, 446–72 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977). Jane Barr also notes in her study of Quebec ENGOs that some of them were denied funding because they were "too radical." Barr, "Origins and Emergence of Quebec's Environmental Movement," 110.

<sup>85</sup> See Gerald Caplan, "Stephen Harper and the Tyranny of Majority Government," *Globe and Mail*, June 15, 2012, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/second-reading/stephen-harper-and-the-tyranny-of-majority-government/article4268008/>; and Janet Eaton, "The Harper Budget: Assault on the Environment for Big Oil Profits: Roundup of Canadian Environmental NGO Response," Sierra Club of Canada, April 14, 2012, <https://beyondcollapse.wordpress.com/2012/04/16/the-harper-budget-assault-on-the-environment-for-big-oil-profits-roundup-of-canadian-environmental-ngo-responses>.

<sup>86</sup> For some of the compromises that communes had to make, see Corbeil, *L'Utopie en Acte*.