

AMERICAN EXILES BEYOND THE POLITICS OF THE DRAFT:

Nudity, Feminism, and Third World Decolonization in Vancouver, 1968–71

HENRY JOHN*

IN JUNE 1970, at the peak of a politically inflected exodus of young American pacifists to Canada, left nationalist activist and Carleton University professor Robin Mathews lambasted the nation's new arrivals as "cultural imperialists." Writing in *AMEX*, the literary mouthpiece of the American exile community, Mathews placed Vietnam-era American exiles alongside a Canadian economy and job market that was increasingly being dominated by US interests and insisted that "the US draft dodger speaks, to the Canadian ear, with the same accent as all the US citizens who have taken positions in Canada that should have gone to Canadians."¹ Mathews further denigrated a perceived American takeover of the Canadian youth movement, labelling violent protest and anti-authoritarian intent as American imports while asserting, "I am not sure I need any number of US citizens to fight my political battles for me. I resent the suggestion that Canadians need US citizens to bring about necessary changes."² He was far from alone in making these accusations, especially among Canadian left nationalists. For one, James Laxer, a doctoral student in history at the University of Toronto, future New Democrat leadership candidate, and a founding member of the Waffle movement, a left-wing nationalistic subset of the

* This article is dedicated to the memory of Robert McDonald, whose characteristic scholarly generosity shaped this research from its inception and whose energetic presence will be greatly missed by all in Vancouver's historical community. Thanks, as well, to Michel Ducharme, Tina Loo, Tamara Myers, Letitia Henville, Eryk Martin, Laura Ishiguro, Coll Thrush, and the editors, copyeditor, and two anonymous reviewers of *BC Studies* for their carefully constructed and incredibly helpful feedback. The staff at UBC Rare Books and Special Collections were also a constant source of aid throughout the researching process. Finally, thanks to my family and Mariko for their support and tolerance.

¹ Robin Mathews, "The US Draft Dodger in Canada Is Part of US Imperialism in Canada," *AMEX: The American Expatriate in Canada* 2, no. 4 (1970): 24.

² *Ibid.*, 25. In this way, Mathews echoed sentiments he had expressed in *Canadian Dimension* earlier in 1970. See Robin Mathews, "Opinion: On Draft Dodging and U.S. Imperialism in Canada," *Canadian Dimension* 6, no. 7 (1970): 10–11.

New Democratic Party, opined in the same year that Vietnam exiles had been “unable to formulate a political strategy relevant to Canada.”³

The high-profile and inflammatory nature of such critiques has somewhat skewed the historiography of politicized Vietnam-era American exiles in Canada. A plethora of studies have focused on the web of organizations encouraging and facilitating the northern movement of Vietnam War draft resisters and deserters,⁴ their formation of self-enclosed communities in both rural and urban settings,⁵ the gendered dynamics framing the experience of male and female war exiles,⁶ and their interactions with immigration officials and law enforcement agents.⁷ However, when analyzing the ability of politicized American exiles to involve themselves in the glut of Canadian social movements springing up during the long 1960s, historical studies are limited by predominately focusing on the relationship between American exile politics and Canadian left nationalism.

Older studies, taking the criticisms of Laxer, Mathews, and their ilk as representative of Canadian leftists as a whole, have largely accepted the label of “cultural imperialists,” depicting American exiles committed to radical political ideologies as isolated from their Canadian comrades

³ James Laxer, “The Americanization of the Canadian Student Movement,” in *Close the 49th Parallel, etc.: The Americanization of Canada*, ed. Ian Lumsden (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 277. Laxer would later specify in 2003 that his position was formulated in opposition to American expatriates “believing they would make natural leaders for the anti-war movement in Canada.” See James Laxer, *The Border: Canada, the US and Dispatches from the 49th Parallel* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2003), 127–28.

⁴ Jessica Squires, *Building Sanctuary: The Movement to Support Vietnam War Resisters in Canada, 1965–1973* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013); John Hagan, *Northern Passage: American Vietnam War Resisters in Canada* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); D.W. Maxwell, “Religion and Politics at the Border: Canadian Church Support for American Vietnam War Resisters,” *Journal of Church and State* 48, no. 4 (2006): 807–29.

⁵ Kathleen Rodgers, *Welcome to Resisterville: American Dissidents in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014); and David S. Churchill, “American Expatriates and the Building of Alternative Social Space in Toronto, 1965–1977,” *Urban History Review* 39, no. 1 (2010): 31–44; Jay Young, “Defining a Community in Exile: War Resister Communication and Identity in AMEX, 1968–1973,” *Histoire sociale/Social History* 44, no. 87 (2011): 115–46.

⁶ Lara Campbell, “Women United against the War: Gender Politics, Feminism, and Vietnam Draft Resistance in Canada,” in *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness*, ed. Karen Dubinsky, Catherine Krull, Susan Lord, Sean Mills, and Scott Rutherford (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009), 339–46.

⁷ David S. Churchill, “An Ambiguous Welcome: American Expatriates, National Needs and Cold War Containment,” *Histoire sociale/Social History* 38, no. 73 (2004): 1–26; Steve Hewitt, *Spying 101: The RCMP’s Secret Activities at Canadian Universities, 1917–1997* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 160; Joseph Jones, *Happenstance and Misquotation: Canadian Immigration Policy, 1966–1974, the Arrival of US Vietnam War Resisters, and the Views of Pierre Trudeau* (Vancouver: Quarter Sheaf, 2008).

and, hence, as politically and socially impotent.⁸ More recent studies have added some nuance. David Churchill has noted that prominent American activists in Toronto in the late 1960s, influenced by the strength of left nationalism in Ontario, tempered their rhetoric to align with the contemporary political debate regarding Canadian national sovereignty and US imperialism in Canada.⁹ In *Building Sanctuary*, Jessica Squires explores the tensions created by Canadian nationalism on the left and the American exile campaign to open the 49th parallel to Vietnam draft resisters and deserters.¹⁰ However, while historical literature has sufficiently explored the relationship between war resistance activism and left-wing Canadian nationalism, a relationship that largely played out in debates at the federal level, opportunities remain to further understand the ways in which American exiles in Canada built connections with the broader maelstrom of New Left political ideologies that buffeted Canadian locales during the tail end of the long 1960s.

By moving analysis of American exile politics away from a singular focus on draft resistance, this article emphasizes the plurality of political and ideological connections available to Americans in Vancouver between 1968 and 1971 – namely, second-wave feminism, counterculturalism, and global Third World decolonization. These emergent 1960s trains of thought provided alternative means of fostering community, belonging, and migrant integration beyond a sense of connection to nation. This not only opens questions regarding the role of ideology in the formulation of shared group identities but also centralizes other factors, particularly that of legal vulnerabilities, in simultaneously inhibiting and necessitating processes of political connection. Ultimately, as this research demonstrates, it was only the compounded stakes bound up in arrest that visibly separated Canadian from American activists.

This study focuses on one Canadian locale – Vancouver, British Columbia, the unceded and occupied territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples. It argues that politicized American exiles operating in the city did so in far more complex circumstances

⁸ Myrna Kostash, *Long Way from Home: The Story of the Sixties Generation in Canada* (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1980), 67; Renée G. Kasinsky, *Refugees from Militarism: Draft-Age Americans in Canada* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1976), 149–50.

⁹ David Churchill, “Draft Resisters, Left Nationalism, and the Politics of Anti-Imperialism,” *Canadian Historical Review* 93, no. 2 (2012): 234. Examples of this shift from American writers for an exile publication in Toronto include: Charles Campbell, “The Americanization of Canada,” *AMEX: The American Expatriate in Canada* 2, no. 3 (1970): 12–14; Dee Knight, “Yes, It Has Politics,” *AMEX: The American Expatriate in Canada* 2, no. 3 (1970): 14–16; Dee Knight, “Bill Spira Raps on Canadian Politics and U.S. Exiles,” *AMEX: The American Expatriate in Canada* 3, no. 1 (1971), 8–12.

¹⁰ Squires, *Building Sanctuary*, 142–76.

than has previously been recognized: they were enmeshed in a diversity of ideological communities and were ultimately limited by judicial factors rather than matters of political orientation. Indeed, whereas the older literature on American exiles in Canada noted above emphasizes that countercultural, anti-authoritarian, and radical ideologies isolated exiles from youth politics in their new country of residence, this study finds the opposite. Due to their legal vulnerability, sustained political action by Americans in Vancouver absolutely necessitated collaborating with Canadians; however, the diversity of dissenting languages arising in Vancouver during this period, a result of the city's particularly vibrant exposure to varieties of New Left and countercultural politics, ensured the process of integration was often grounded in praxes other than that of Canadian left nationalism.

Indeed, Canadian left nationalism registered lightly in the seething mélange of New Left and countercultural movements within which American activists operated in Vancouver between 1968 and 1971, four years in which political and social radicalism peaked in the city. Starting in the late 1950s and ending in the early 1970s, the New Left was a global wave of anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, and pro-democratic politics that originated in Third World liberation struggles.¹¹ Initially predominant on the university campuses but soon extending into the wider city, in Vancouver these ideas rubbed up against the countercultural communities of hippies and cultural radicals mushrooming up in Kitsilano, on Main Street, and in Gastown.¹² The result was an ideological and cultural matrix in which particular strands of New Left thought, described by radical historian Eryk Martin as having a novel focus on “alternative revolutionary actors such as students, women, racialized people, and the dispossessed,” intersected with a countercultural attention to sexual

¹¹ For analyses of the emergence of a global revolutionary philosophy in local settings, see Karen Dubinsky, Catherine Krull, Susan Lord, Sean Mills, and Scott Rutherford, eds., *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009); Sean Mills, *The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010); Lara Campbell, Dominique Clement, and Gregor Kealey, *Debating Dissent: Canada and the Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012). For a slightly older, non-Canadian focused analysis of the New Left and Third World decolonization, see Fredric Jameson, “Periodizing the 60s,” *Social Text* 9/10 (1984): 178–209.

¹² To be sure, Simon Fraser University was the initial focus of much youth politics in Vancouver, though this shifted in 1969. See Hugh Johnston, *Radical Campus: Making Simon Fraser University* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2005); Ian Milligan, “Coming Off the Mountain: Forging an Outward-Looking New Left at Simon Fraser University,” *BC Studies* 171 (Autumn 2011): 69–91. For a fairly thorough analysis of Vancouver's counterculture, see Lawrence Aronsen, *City of Love and Revolution: Vancouver in the Sixties* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 2010).

liberation, drug advocacy, spirituality, nudity, and strident opposition to law enforcement.¹³

Examples in Vancouver demonstrate that speaking into an array of other political discourses beyond Canadian nationalism also allowed Americans to integrate into local movements. These alternate discourses included Women's Liberation, the struggle of hippies versus "straights," and anti-statist Canadian decolonization, which was indelibly tied to notions of global decolonization. As shown in Frank Zelko's study of Greenpeace, a group overlooked in this study as its peak operations occurred after 1971, in Vancouver radical political movements often emerged as American activists bolstered local movements and configured their ideology to meet local needs.¹⁴ Subsequently, the plethora of movement ideologies and strategies emerging in the city meant language and actions that might alienate American activists from some Canadian leftists – for example, nationalists or liberal pacifists – might subsequently ingratiate themselves to others.

This study explores key moments in which American exiles played a visible role in the history of Vancouver's countercultural and New Left movements in their peak years between 1968 and 1971. It categorizes American exiles, rather than Vietnam War draft resisters or deserters, as its subject to broaden analysis, enabling consideration of other historical actors beyond young men – namely, women exiles.¹⁵ However, in primarily relying on written sources predominately linked with countercultural or student politics, such as hippie newspapers like the *Georgia Straight* and the *Yellow Journal*, and interviewing participants according to their visible presence in these sources, this study prioritizes American exiles with a politicized perspective and, hence, overlooks the majority of American exiles who came to Canada wishing to avoid unrest, revolution, and trouble with the law.¹⁶ Those who came wishing

¹³ Eryk Martin, "Burn It Down! Anarchism, Activism, and the Vancouver Five, 1967–1985" (PhD diss., Simon Fraser, 2016), 21. See also Ian Milligan, *Rebel Youth: 1960s Labour Unrest, Young Workers, and New Leftists in English Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014).

¹⁴ Frank Zelko, *Make It a Green Peace! The Rise of Countercultural Environmentalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹⁵ In general, this study uses "American exile" and "refugee of conscience" to encompass any citizen of the United States who relocated to Canada in opposition to US foreign and domestic policy during the period. Though it considers "draft resisters" (those who refused the call to mandatorily enrol to fight in the Vietnam War) and "deserters" (those who left the US Army following enlistment), analysis is not restricted to these two groups alone.

¹⁶ "Straight" exiles have received wide-ranging coverage in a variety of literary forms. For example, see Roger Neville Williams, *The New Exiles: American War Resisters in Canada* (New York, Liveright Publishers, 1971), 49; Pierre Berton, *1967: The Last Good Year* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1997), 202; Kostash, *Long Way from Home*, 59.

to participate in “the struggle,” though, found an alternative form of integration and participated in events that changed the physical, political, and cultural fabric of Vancouver. Rather than being isolated from their new compatriots, American exiles always found collaborators north of the US-Canada border.

Nineteen sixty-eight marked the year in which the numbers of young Americans relocating to Canada began to spike.¹⁷ A liberalized points system for immigration, introduced in 1967, and geographical proximity made Canada an attractive destination for exiles; however, it is clear that the main causes for this peak in migration came from US developments. The year 1968 saw spiralling US casualties in the US war in Vietnam as the war effort began to sour. The surprise of North Vietnam’s Tet Offensive shattered the long-held illusion of US superiority in the conflict, and the emerging reports of US atrocities delivered propaganda to the anti-war movement, leading more and more Americans to question the morality of the conflict.¹⁸ Entangled with these events, 1968 also saw growing instability and chaos in the US domestic situation. The assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, insurrections in ghettos, campus revolts, and finally the police brutality of the Chicago Democratic National Convention all coincided to create a climate of perceived national disintegration.¹⁹

Vancouver was the third most popular destination in Canada for American exiles after Toronto and Montreal. Many may have arrived with high expectations as literature and propaganda spread through the United States emphasized Canadian and Vancouverite pacifism, tolerance, and liberalism. Reverend J. McRee Elrod, an American Unitarian minister based in Vancouver and the founder of the group Immigration Aid to Refugees of Conscience, regularly posted advertisements in *Playboy*, *Esquire*, *Saturday Review*, *Christian Century*, and the *New York Review of Books*. These advertisements promised that Canada was “one of the few countries trying to create the conditions of

¹⁷ John Hagen estimates that one hundred American war exiles crossed the border in 1964, one thousand in 1965, three thousand in 1967, and between five and eight thousand annually from 1968 to 1973. See Hagen, *Northern Passage*, 3. On the other hand, some historians have disputed the accuracy of attempts to gauge the total numbers entering due to the clandestine nature of exile entry. See Joseph Jones, *Contending Statistics: The Numbers for US Vietnam War Resisters in Canada* (Vancouver: Quarter Sheaf, 2005), 12.

¹⁸ Jake Blood, *The Tet Effect: Intelligence and the Public Perception of War* (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, 2005); Howard Jones, *My Lai: Vietnam, 1968, and the Descent into Darkness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 3.

¹⁹ Charles Kaiser, *1968 in America: Music, Politics, Chaos, Counterculture and the Shaping of a Generation* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988), xv.

peace on earth.”²⁰ Utopian visions of Vancouver itself were also abundant in American popular culture. One such manifestation, the Flying Burrito Brothers’ song “My Uncle” (1969), described the plight of a young American receiving his notice from his local draft board and subsequently deciding “Vancouver may be just my kind of town / ‘cause they don’t need the kind of law and order / that tends to keep a good man underground.”²¹

However, Americans arriving in Vancouver would swiftly discover that they had been sold a bill of goods. Supported by city politicians, Vancouver police mounted an extensive campaign against the city’s radical youth culture. The city’s underground publication, the *Georgia Straight*, regularly reported the harassment and violence experienced by hip types at the hands of Vancouver Police Department and RCMP officers as well as from Vancouver’s “straight” citizenship.²² Furthermore, it soon became common knowledge that Canada exhibited a “quiet complicity” in the Vietnam War, providing vast quantities of military supplies to the United States, particularly components of napalm through the Canadian branch of the Dow Chemical Company.²³ Polling data found that more Canadians supported the war than opposed it, and Vancouver’s own Mayor Tom “Terrific” Campbell openly displayed his support for the war in 1968 by sending Canadian flags to fly in a US bunker overlooking Vietnam’s Gulf of Tonkin, while simultaneously labelling draft exiles as members of a “scum society.”²⁴

Americans arriving in Vancouver were entering a battlefield in which, even before they engaged in any kind of political work, their own status as immigrants made them especially vulnerable to surveillance and harassment. Established by the Committee to Aid American War

²⁰ J. McRee Elrod to *Christian Century*, 11 January 1968, UBC Rare Books and Special Collections, J. McRee Elrod Fonds, box 1 fol. 1.

²¹ Gram Parsons and Chris Hillman, “My Uncle,” *Gilded Palace of Sin* (Hollywood: A&M Records, 1969), SP 4175-LP; Aisling Murphy, “Journeys to the ‘North Country Fair’: Exploring the American Vietnam War Migration to Vancouver” (MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 2010), 66.

²² “Straight Vendor Beats Rap,” *Georgia Straight* 1, no. 5 (1967); “Letters to Elmore,” *Georgia Straight*, 2, no. 14 (1968), 2; “Police Repression Escalates,” *Georgia Straight* 3, no. 50 (1969), 7; “Pigs Help Out Jericho People,” *Georgia Straight* 5, no. 132 (1970), 5; “Who’s Kidding Who?,” *Georgia Straight* 1, no. 2 (1967), 3.

²³ Victor Levant, *Quiet Complicity: Canadian Involvement in the Vietnam War* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1986).

²⁴ A 1966 Canadian Institute of Public Opinion survey referenced in J.L. Granatstein, *Canada 1957–1967: The Years of Uncertainty and Innovation* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), 213; “Tom Stands on Guard in Vietnam,” *Georgia Straight* 2, no. 23 (1968), 4; CBC Digital Archives, “Vancouver Politicians Averse to Hippies, May 1968.” <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/society/youth/hippie-society-the-youth-rebellion/city-politicians-averse-to-hippies.html>.

Objectors and the American Deserters Committee (ADC) to house draft exiles, American hostels were often excessively targeted by law enforcement. In October 1969, the *Georgia Straight* ran an article detailing that undercover police were photographing everyone entering or leaving an exile hostel at 3090 West Sixth Avenue.²⁵ In November of the same year, another piece in the *Georgia Straight* described the police raid of a hostel at 1368 East Second Avenue in which officers recorded the names of all present residents.²⁶ Both articles implied that the RCMP and Vancouver Police Department were collaborating with the FBI and providing information to US law enforcement agents. Given emergent scandals in other parts of the country, where the RCMP illegally handed over war exiles to US agents at the border, these claims were not far-fetched; rather, they were frequently accurate.²⁷

Due to the status of American exiles as immigrants, and due to the political and cultural biases of politicians and law enforcers alike, even minor offences could lead to deportation, as the well-publicized case of Herb Treffeisen demonstrated. Treffeisen, a graduate of both Lassalle and of Miami University, deserted the US Marines in July 1968 and moved to Vancouver. Finding employment as a social worker for the countercultural street and homeless support agency Cool-Aid, Treffeisen was arrested in September 1969 while stealing a jar of coffee for the underfunded social group.²⁸ This arrest resulted in a six-month stint in jail, followed by deportation orders – all for stealing a jar of coffee.²⁹

Any perceived affiliation with the counterculture contributed to the legal vulnerability of exiles. Whenever dealing with immigration officials, draft-aid groups advised war resisters to always appear as “straight” as possible, including telling exiles to cut their famous long hair.³⁰ Even away from the border, association with countercultural activities, notably possession and consumption of marijuana, made

²⁵ “Draft Evaders Hustled,” *Georgia Straight* 3, no. 80 (1969), 20.

²⁶ “Cops Raid Deserters’ Homes,” *Georgia Straight* 3, no. 87 (1969), 9.

²⁷ See Clive Cocking, “How Did the Canadian Mounties Develop Their Unfortunate Habit of Deporting People They Don’t Like?,” *Saturday Night* (June 1970), 28–39; Churchill, “Ambiguous Welcome,” 22–24.

²⁸ “Herb Treffeisen Tells Story: ‘I Couldn’t Believe Immigration Could Do This,’” *Georgia Straight* 3, no. 87 (1969), 9.

²⁹ Stephen Brown, “Treffeisen Says They Beat Him,” *Georgia Straight* 4, no. 94 (1970): 5.

³⁰ Bill Johnson, “War Objectors ... Help Is Near,” *Georgia Straight* 3, no. 45 (1969): 9. US publications regularly provided this advice to potential border crossers. For example, see “How Deserters Are Caught,” *Northwest Passage* 1, no. 8 (1969): 6. It’s important to note, though, that the ability to simply “shed” this visual signifier is a mark of white privilege and puts paid to any claim that hippies or youth were a racial minority. See claims that “diggersareniggers” in Abbie Hoffman, *Revolution for the Hell of It* (New York: Dial Press, 1968), 28; and Jerry Farber, *The Student as Nigger: Essay and Stories* (New York: Pocket Books, 1970).

Americans especially exposed. To this extent, following a raid on an East Second communal deserters' house, one of the founders of the Vancouver ADC, Rick Ayers, wrote a letter to the *Georgia Straight* warning exiles, and those sheltering them, of the dangers of "heat attracting dope."³¹

American military deserters were particularly exposed in this climate; their less stable immigrant status, the ensuing struggle to find work, and a general lack of financial stability often led to homelessness and hence vulnerability. This vulnerability was demonstrated by the arrest of Robert Edward Wilder in early 1969. Wilder was subsequently deported and faced fifteen years in jail due to army desertion, all because he was caught sleeping rough on the Simon Fraser University campus.³² One of Wilder's most vocal supporters was Melody Kilian, an American who immigrated to Canada with her husband in 1965 to protest the US invasion of the Dominican Republic and who wrote in both SFU's and UBC's student newspapers critiquing the university administrations, as well as the Canadian government, for their handling of Wilder's case.³³ Motivated by the additional plight of military deserters, Kilian had formed the Vancouver ADC in 1968 and was a key figure in efforts to politicize American exiles and form links between their association and wider Vancouver-based political and social movements.

Founded by Kilian and Ayers, the ADC was a collection of deserters, draft resisters, and other American exiles who grouped together to provide aid to military deserters and to organize political action. The group ran the free deserter hostel on East Second Avenue, published the *Yankee Refugee!* newsletter, obtained fake I.D. for deserters unable to get landed immigrant status, and organized meetings for deserters and draft resisters to aid their adaptation to life in Canada.³⁴ While the Vancouver ADC has been highlighted by Jessica Squires as being isolated from the antidraft movement due to its radical ideological commitment,³⁵ I argue that this can only be fully explained when we consider the legal vulnerabilities, and the risk of deportation, faced by Americans in Canada.

The ADC distinguished itself from the older, more established Vancouver Committee to Aid American War Objectors not only in its commitment to assisting deserters rather than draft resisters but also

³¹ Rick Ayers, "Letter to the Editors," *Georgia Straight* 3, no. 61 (1969), 2.

³² Patrick Beirne, "SFU Students Challenge Campus Security Chief," *Peak*, 12 March 1969, 1.

³³ Interview with Rick Ayers, 6 March 2013; Melody Kilian, "Canadians Know, Even if Germans Didn't," *Ubysses* (14 March 1969), 4; Melody Kilian, "A Draft from the South," *Peak*, 19 March 1969, 5.

³⁴ Interview with Rick Ayers, 6 March 2013.

³⁵ Squires, *Building Sanctuary*, 193.

in its desire to promote political action that extended beyond the act of relocation.³⁶ Kilian wrote in the *Yankee Refugee!* in February 1969: “we understand that being in Canada does not affect the size of the US military machine, and that our men’s places are simply filled by others who cannot enter Canada ... Being here or helping others to come here is NOT anti-war work.”³⁷ Indeed, the group described itself, in an article published in the *Movement* in June 1969, as “primarily a catalyst for Americans within the local movement.”³⁸

The ADC, as its name suggests, squarely oriented its externally projected group identity around its members’ being American exiles. Community events organized by the group were solely intended for Americans; both its weekly community dinners held at its hostels and its annual 4th of July picnics were advertised as “American only.”³⁹ Equally, the prime drive of the ADC’s political activism was geared towards American issues such as the Vietnam War, and it deliberately emphasized its Americanness when engaging in these actions. The group engaged in multiple actions around Vancouver’s and Victoria’s docks in attempts to persuade the crews of docking US Navy vessels to desert their posts.⁴⁰ Equally, it pledged financial and logistical support for numerous anti-war mobilizations, and encouraged residents of its hostel to attend demonstrations under an “American Deserters against the War” banner.⁴¹

Explicitly rooting these actions in an opposition to US imperialism, both in Canada and in the Third World, members of the ADC utilized rhetoric and analyses that suggest they were open to ideas being circulated by Canadian nationalists at the time. They frequently employed the expression “branch plant economy,” a term popularized by Montreal economist Kari Levitt in *Silent Surrender*, her 1970 critique of the US corporate takeover of Canada’s economy, when analyzing their new

³⁶ The Vancouver Committee to Aid American War Objectors, described by Jessica Squires as “perhaps the most significant of the anti-draft group,” was founded in October 1966. Firmly rooted in older leftist and faith-centred traditions of pacifism, its main function was providing American war resisters legal assistance for immigration purposes as well as finding housing and employment for new arrivals. See Squires, *Building Sanctuary*, 27.

³⁷ Melody Kilian, “Oh, Canada!,” *Yankee Refugee!* 4 (February 1969): 1.

³⁸ Rick Ayers and Melody Kilian, “Nowhere to Run, Nowhere to Hide,” *Movement* (June 1969): 14.

³⁹ “All American Refugees Dinner,” *Georgia Straight* 3, no. 48 (1968), 19; Barry and Duncan, “Our Fourth of July,” *Yankee Refugee!* 8 (July 1969): 2.

⁴⁰ “Ships Again,” *Yankee Refugee!* 8 (July 1969): 3.

⁴¹ “Easter Saturday Mobilisation,” *Yankee Refugee!* 5 (February/March 1969): 5; Interview with Rick Ayers, 6 March 2013.

nation of residence.⁴² As such, the first edition of *Yankee Refugee!* features an article by contributor Terry Boyce in which he castigates the way in which “the economy here is controlled almost exclusively by US interests,” coming to a conclusion that would have pleased Canadian nationalists such as Wafflers Mel Watkins and James Laxer in the understanding that “as the nation now exists, it is little more than a US colony.”⁴³ As such, certain behaviours of the ADC align with David Churchill’s argument that American exiles tempered their rhetoric to fit with the Canadian nationalist critique.⁴⁴

However, the ADC’s anti-imperialist critique did not stop at castigating the Americanization of Canada. Whereas Robin Mathews, Carlton University professor and leading Canadian nationalist, had expressed his resentment of American exiles critiquing Canadian society in 1970,⁴⁵ *Yankee Refugee!*’s writers were quick to point out the colonial nature of Canada itself, placing particular emphasis on the condition of Indigenous communities in Vancouver and beyond. Contributor Lancelot Greers thus stated “if you don’t like what’s happening to the Black man down there [in the United States] dig what’s happening to the Red man here” and, highlighting the racist nature of Canada’s educational system, asked “how many Indians do you know on campus?”⁴⁶ The ADC followed through with this allegiance to Canada’s internally colonized Indigenous peoples by supporting the Native Alliance for Red Power, an emerging Indigenous rights group operating in Vancouver, whose meetings they attended and whose “Eight-Point Program” they published in the April 1969 edition of *Yankee Refugee!*⁴⁷ Although historians have claimed that such radical philosophies and critiques of Canada alienated exile groups from other Canadian leftists, such studies have largely overlooked the ways in which US legal vulnerabilities shaped these divisions.⁴⁸

⁴² Kari Levitt, *Silent Surrender: The Multinational Corporation in Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1970), 7–9 and 104–5. For ADC member usages of this term, see Kilian, “Canadians Know,” 4; Kilian, “Draft from the South,” 5; Yankee Refugee Staff, *Americans in Canada* (pamphlet, n.d.), UBC Rare Books and Special Collections, Renée Goldsmith Kasinsky Fonds, box 6, fol. 3, 2–3.

⁴³ Terry V. Boyce, “Why Yankee Refugee?,” *Yankee Refugee!* 1 (November 1968): 1.

⁴⁴ Churchill, “Draft Resisters,” 234.

⁴⁵ Mathews, “US Draft Dodger in Canada,” 26.

⁴⁶ Lancelot Greers, “An Article,” *Yankee Refugee!* 3 (December 1968): 1–2.

⁴⁷ “NARP Eight Point Program,” *Yankee Refugee!* 7 (April 1969): 2.

⁴⁸ Lawrence M. Baskir and William A. Strauss, *Chance and Circumstance: The Draft, the War, and the Vietnam Generation* (New York: Knopf, 1978), 190; Kostash, *Long Way from Home*, 67. Outside of specifically draft resister literature, these comments have been made by historians of US-Canadian relations in general. See J.L. Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home? Canadians and Anti-Americanism* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1997), 171; Paul Hollander, *Anti-Americanism: Critiques at Home and Abroad, 1965–1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 416;

The ADC members themselves found that their status as American exiles, and as immigrants in Canada, inhibited their ability to engage in Vancouver's budding culture of radical protest. After reporting on the deportation of deserter Robert Wilder for trespass and vagrancy, and later the deportation of three exiles arrested protesting the docking of a US submarine in Victoria in 1969, members of the ADC were well aware that being arrested, whether for political or non-political reasons, could lead to their forced return to the United States.⁴⁹ This limitation and weakness was most evident during the group's participation in the student occupation of the Simon Fraser University administration building in November 1969, which called for increased student participation in the university admission process and a greater ease of credit transfer from BC colleges.⁵⁰ As reported in *Yankee Refugee!*, Kilian participated in the "sit-in" but was forced to leave the building, along with other Americans, once the police arrived "in order to avoid possible deportation." Kilian subsequently lamented "protecting myself whilst others fought ... I had to go for no other reason than that I was born in the US."⁵¹

The legal vulnerability of American exiles as a whole, and draft resisters and deserters in particular, helps explain how the ADC isolated itself from the wider draft resistance movement in Vancouver. Betty Tillotsen, of the Vancouver Committee to Aid American War Objectors (VCAAWO), described in a 1969 letter how the ADC's "political slant, as voiced by some of them, had turned off some community people who had been supporters of our work." Despite publishing a disclaimer that insisted their political work was in no way linked to the VCAAWO, a year later the authors of the *Yankee Refugee!* were still being blamed for splits within the wider draft resistance movement.⁵² As Ayers revealed to me during an interview, much of the tension created by the ADC's politics was directly linked to the perception that they were "bringing heat" on other exiles.

Unable to fully engage in political action and alienated by their politics from the wider draft resistance movement in Vancouver, Ayers and Kilian decided to return to the United States in the summer of 1969, with Ayers

Robert Bothwell, *Canada and the United States: The Politics of Partnership* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), 99.

⁴⁹ "Repression in the Neo Colony," *Yankee Refugee!* 6 (March 1969): 3.

⁵⁰ Johnston, *Radical Campus*, 382–92.

⁵¹ Melody Kilian, "American Students in the Sit-In," *Yankee Refugee!* 4 (November 1968): 2–3.

⁵² Betty Tillotsen to the American Deserters Co-Op in Montreal, 1 December 1969, UBC Rare Books and Special Collections, Renée Goldsmith Kasinsky Fonds, box 5, fol. 12; "Disclaimer," *Yankee Refugee!* 5 (February/March 1969): 4; "Vancouver," *AMEX: The American Expatriate in Canada* 2, no. 4 (1970): 17–18.

entering the active duty GI resistance network.⁵³ The committee's poor organization, and the fact that Kilian and Ayers were its only leaders, helps explain the relatively short-lived nature of the group. Furthermore, its members' simultaneous identification as American exiles and radical activists cut the ADC off from the draft resistance movement in Vancouver and Canada as a whole. Yet these same radical orientations could conversely bind Americans, even certain members of the ADC, to alternative communities of shared political sentiment. The diversity of social movements gripping the city during this period provided exiles with a range of potential ideological languages through which to connect with local activists. Politicized American exiles throughout Vancouver who chose to eschew an open and publicized identification as American by looking beyond the draft resistance movement, though still subject to legal vulnerabilities, enjoyed far greater success in forging connections with local activists.

Radical youth politics in Vancouver at the tail end of the 1960s were largely confined to two separate, though sometimes intersecting, spheres: the student activist movements at Simon Fraser University and the countercultural community largely focused in Kitsilano. American activists were, not surprisingly, heavily involved in these two social and political arenas. Exile roles in both scenes, specifically in the Vancouver Women's Caucus and in the countercultural movement to create a nudist community at Wreck Beach, demonstrate that structuring political action around symbols of identity that had nothing to do with being American proved to be an effective means of connecting with local liberationist movements in the city. Although these two movements could not be more different in their ideological tone, American activists employed similar strategies when integrating into these movements, notably employing alternative media as social infrastructure and speaking in a language of shared political sentiment.

At least two American exiles were heavily involved in the early days of the Vancouver Women's Caucus, a women's liberation group initially based at Simon Fraser University that was founded in 1968.⁵⁴ Kilian wrote an early strategy paper for the group in 1969 and was further embroiled in the debates over child care that gripped Simon Fraser University that

⁵³ Interview with Rick Ayers, 6 March 2013.

⁵⁴ For a full history of the Vancouver Women's Caucus, see Liz Briemberg, "Beginning of Women's Caucus," Vancouver Women's Caucus: A Women's Liberation History Project. <https://www.vancouverwomenscaucus.ca/herstory/early-days/>; Frances Jane Wasserlein, "An Arrow Aimed at the Heart: The Vancouver Women's Caucus and the Abortion Campaign 1969-1971" (MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1990), 24-56.

year.⁵⁵ Indeed, according to an undated pamphlet distributed as part of the Women's Caucus literature, she helped found the SFU Co-Op Nursery, an experimental and non-hierarchical community approach to child care formed by taking over part of the student lounge.⁵⁶ Kilian's ability to integrate into and drive this movement rested partially on her navigation of student political groups such as the SFU Student Executive Council, partially on her repeated writing in campus newspapers such as the *Peak* and the *Pedestal*, but also on her ability to speak to an affective community of women and mothers rather than just to Americans.

These factors also contributed to the impact of Kilian's compatriot Janiel Jolley, whose name would achieve borderline celebrity status on the SFU campus and in national women's liberation politics in 1970. The wife of a draft resister, Jolley moved to Vancouver in 1968 and was a one-time contributor to the *Yankee Refugee!*⁵⁷ In the winter of 1969, she was chosen by the Women's Caucus to stand as a protest candidate in the Waterloo Lutheran University's "Miss Canadian University" beauty contest. Although the pageant organizers barred Jolley from participating, a "Janiel Jolley Day" event at SFU nevertheless raised sufficient funds to cover her travel to Waterloo, Ontario.⁵⁸ On the day of the pageant, Jolley invaded the event with two hundred supporters and gave a two-minute speech from the stage, castigating the objectifying and sexist nature of both pageants and the accompanying beauty industry.⁵⁹

The rhetoric employed by Jolley throughout the campaign demonstrates that she decidedly avoided identifying as American and deliberately spoke to a nationally connected community of Canadian women and feminists. In a speech delivered to the Simon Fraser Student Society, she proclaimed that "discrimination against women is being practiced in Canadian universities every day"; meanwhile, in an article published in the *Peak* prior to her journey to Ontario, she stated, "our protest is intended to reach women all across Canada and tell them there is an

⁵⁵ Melody Kilian, "Discussion Paper – Towards a Strategy," Vancouver Women's Caucus: A Women's Liberation History Project, <https://www.vancouverwomenscaucus.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Towards-a-Strategy-by-Melody-Kilian.pdf>.

⁵⁶ Melody Kilian, "Children Are Only Littler People or the Louis Riel University Family Co-Op," Vancouver Women's Caucus: A Women's Liberation History Project, <https://www.vancouverwomenscaucus.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Children-Are-Only-Little-People-by-Melody-Kilian.pdf>. For an extensive analysis of the history of the debate surrounding child care in British Columbia, see Lisa Pasolli, *Working Mothers and the Child Care Dilemma: A History of British Columbia's Social Policy* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015).

⁵⁷ Janiel Jolley, "Autobiographical Statement #2," *Yankee Refugee!* 2 (November 1968): 3.

⁵⁸ "Protest Contests," *Pedestal* 1, no. 2 (1969), 2; "Beauty Queen or Human Being?" *Pedestal* 2, no. 1 (1970), 1; Marcie Toms, "Janiel Jolley Day," *Peak* 14, no. 2 (1970), 3.

⁵⁹ "Janiel Jolley Shows 'Em the Way," *Peak*, 4 February 1970, 1.



Figure 1. American exile Janiel Jolley in preparation for “Miss Canadian University” pageant protest, 1970. *Source: Pedestal 2*, no. 1 (1970), 3, F-272-0-0-0-0-3, Simon Fraser University Archives, Vancouver BC, Canada.

alternative.”⁶⁰ Furthermore, and perhaps even more tellingly, despite being a US citizen, during her speech at the Miss Canadian University Contest Jolley announced, “I represent a growing tendency in Canadian women to object to the dehumanizing nature of beauty contests.”⁶¹ Jolley’s activism, then, was far more successful when she stepped beyond

⁶⁰ Speech to Simon Fraser Student Society quoted in Folco Petrali, “Wickshom Challenges McGeer to Debate,” *Peak 13*, no. 9 (October 1969), 2.

⁶¹ Quoted in “Janiel Jolley Shows ‘Em the Way,” 1.

the bounds of the American resister scene. In funding her protest, she reached out to the Simon Fraser student community and equally directed her protest so as to connect with a nationwide audience of “Canadian women.”

These activists, Jolley and Kilian, had a successful impact on the women’s liberation movement due to their ability to speak through localized media in a liberationist language that connected them in affective community with local activists. In a radically different setting, for a radically different cause, one American draft resister’s crusade to organize a nude protest demonstrates similar grounds for success: the abandonment of an American exile identity, interaction with local movements through community media infrastructure, and a language of liberationism that cultivated networks of shared political sentiment. Korky Day, a draft resister from San Francisco, moved to Canada in 1968 and wound his way to Vancouver by 1969. Day’s first job in Vancouver was as a vendor for the *Georgia Straight*, and he has claimed that the access he gained to the publication’s newsroom made him “one of the most politically well-informed people in the city.”⁶²

The *Straight* was part of a countercultural surge of underground publications that had its historical roots in the United States. The civil rights newspaper *Dissent* and New York’s pacifist news sheet *Liberation* began printing in the mid-1950s, and publications such as *Liberation News Service*, the *Los Angeles Free Press*, and the *Berkeley Barb* drove the emergence of the US counterculture in the early 1960s.⁶³ Many American exiles relied on the *Georgia Straight* to find their bearings upon arriving in the city; many used writing in the publication as a means to connect with the local political and hip scene; others, like Day, used the publication (and its widespread circulation, which had reached sixty to seventy thousand copies per issue by 1970) to organize protest movements.⁶⁴

This information distribution network played an essential role in Korky Day’s mobilization of the countercultural community for a highly successful nude protest at Point Grey’s Wreck Beach on 23 August 1970. The scale of the protest was, in part, a response to the arrest of thirteen

⁶² Interview with Korky Day, Vancouver, BC, 3 October 2017.

⁶³ Irwin Unger and Debi Unger, *The Movement: A History of the American New Left, 1959–1972* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1974), 18–30.

⁶⁴ For a selection of the articles written by a politically influential draft resister in Vancouver named Eric Sommer, see Eric Sommer, “3rd World Strike,” *Georgia Straight* 3, no. 45 (1969), 5; Eric Sommer, “Cool-Aid,” *Georgia Straight* 3, no. 53 (1969), 2; Eric Sommer, “Preview of 541 Million ‘Chinatown’ Freeway,” *Georgia Straight* 3, no. 46 (1969), 6; Eric Sommer, “How to Survive,” *Georgia Straight* 3, no. 57 (1969), 12–13; Eric Sommer, “People’s Rights,” *Georgia Straight* 5, no. 188 (1971), 12–13.

nude bathers on the beach in early August, but it was also a measure of Day's ability to connect to the wider hip community via networks of social infrastructure.⁶⁵ Employing the countercultural press afforded him the means of collaborating with the wider community, posting ads asking for help postering and marshalling for the event, and receiving feedback from other counterculturalists to change the location from Third Beach in Stanley Park to Wreck Beach, "the traditional nude beach." Equally important, given his vulnerable position as a refugee of conscience, organizing through the alternative press afforded Day some measure of anonymous safety, and in posting notices in the *Straight*, the war exile adopted the pseudonym "Mr. Natural."⁶⁶

As Day stated in one of these posts, the key to the event's success would be that sufficient nudists would attend that "the numbers and the support of a large part of the general public [would] minimize arrest." Thanks in large part to the wide circulation of the *Georgia Straight*, this critical mass was achieved. According to Day's count on the day, three thousand protestors attended the "Nude-In," and there were zero arrests.⁶⁷ On top of the high turnout, another indication of the success of the protest is that Wreck Beach was established as a popular nudist site, an iconic carnivalesque space on the edge of the city that has persevered to this day.⁶⁸ However, due to continued anxiety caused by potential arrest and deportation, "Mr. Natural" himself couldn't enjoy a full liberation from his oppressive apparel. Having already been arrested for selling copies of the *Georgia Straight* in Richmond the preceding year, charges that were immediately dropped, Day wasn't taking any chances and only enjoyed partial nudity, sporting a jockstrap for that first gathering.⁶⁹

The potential threat of deportation would be a shadow that hung over all American activists as they participated in Vancouver's radical politics in the long 1960s. However, forming connections with local communities of Canadian activists, marshalling the networks of social infrastructure binding these communities together, and choosing to organize around notions of shared political sentiment – rather than nationality – allowed exiles such as Day, Kilian, and Jolley a lower-risk opportunity to play an

⁶⁵ James Woycke, *Au Naturel: The History of Nudism in Canada* (Etobicoke: Federation of Canadian Naturists, 2003), 189.

⁶⁶ Mr. Natural, "Nude-In August 23," *Georgia Straight* 4, no. 121 (1970), 6; Mr. Natural, "Skinny-dippers Hassled: Support Aug. 23 Nude-In," *Georgia Straight* 4, no. 122 (1970), 3; Mr. Natural, "Nude-In Changed to Wreck Beach," *Georgia Straight* 4, no. 123 (1970), 2.

⁶⁷ Interview with Korky Day, Vancouver, 3 October 2017.

⁶⁸ For a fuller history of Wreck Beach, and the campaign to preserve it, see Carellin Brooks, *Wreck Beach* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 2007).

⁶⁹ Interview with Korky Day, Vancouver, 3 October 2017.

organizational role in Vancouver-based and Canadian social movements. They critiqued Canadian universities for being sexist, critiqued Canadian society for being oppressive, and critiqued Canadian law enforcement for being prudishly authoritarian. These kinds of political evaluations were developed even further throughout 1970 and 1971 by the riotous anarchic collective Vancouver Yippie! American exiles once more played a prominent role in this group and, though they still experienced political limitations due to their vulnerable immigration status, through shared anti-authoritarian and anti-colonial ideologies they formed close working bonds with local activists.

Also known as the Northwest (sometimes Northern) Lunatic Fringe, Vancouver Yippie! demonstrates that anti-colonial critiques of the Canadian state could provide a language that bound exile and local activists in a shared political community. Operating alongside the less theatrical Vancouver Liberation Front, the Yippies produced their own publication, the *Yellow Journal*, over 1970 and 1971, and organized numerous actions: “exorcising” the Vancouver police station, occupying the cafeteria in the basement of downtown Vancouver’s Hudson’s Bay Company department store, storming the US consulate in Vancouver, picketing Oakalla Prison Farm, invading the US border town of Blaine by marching en masse through the Peace Arch border crossing, occupying a “People’s Park” in objection to the planned construction of a hotel in Stanley Park, and organizing the infamous “Grasstown Smoke-In” of 1971. As well as organizing actions, the Yippies coordinated a “People’s Defense Fund” to pay bail for individuals arrested at protests and issued several “Free Vancouver” supplements through both the *Yellow Journal* and the *Georgia Straight*, providing political and social advice for surviving the increasingly hostile environment in the west coast city.⁷⁰

Historical analyses of the Northwest Lunatic Front have predominately either dismissed the group as a “sheer nuisance” or have claimed that it represented little more than a transplanted US philosophy driven forward by American radicals.⁷¹ Some evidence supports the latter view, given that the group drew its name from the American Youth International Party (Yippie!), established by Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin in New York in 1967, and that many of its strategies were equally influenced

⁷⁰ Gloria Mundi, “Defense Fund Scores: Kilian Fumbles the Bail,” *Georgia Straight* 5, no. 193 (1971), 3; “Free Vancouver” Supplement, *Yellow Journal* 5 (June 1970).

⁷¹ Michael Boudreau, “‘The Struggle for a Different World’: The 1971 Gastown Riot in Vancouver,” in *Debating Dissent: Canada and the Sixties*, ed. Lara Campbell, Dominique Clément, and Gregory S. Kealey (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 122; Julian Benedict, “Radical Yellow: Exploring Vancouver’s ‘Guerrilla’ Newspaper,” *West Coast Line* 40, no. 4 (2007): 54; and Aronsen, *City of Love and Revolution*, 108.

by Hoffman's call to employ "theater in the streets" to resist capitalism and imperialism.⁷² Indeed, Rubin himself had previously been active in Vancouver, leading the 1968 occupation of the UBC Faculty Club.⁷³

However, as historian Eryk Martin has demonstrated, and as Yippie Larry Gambone has claimed in his 2015 memoir *No Regrets*, Vancouver Yippie! was a more complex phenomenon, drawing heavily on the experiences of older Canadian Industrial Workers of the World activists and influenced by both traditional and New Leftist ideologies of global revolution.⁷⁴

While in the minority, and reliant on Canadian activists for safety, support, and success, Americans certainly played a key role in driving Vancouver Yippie! forward. Eric Sommer, a draft resister from Philadelphia, wrote, albeit anonymously, for the *Yellow Journal* and played a leading role in coordinating the Grasstown Smoke-In – the pro-marijuana protest that culminated in an infamous night of police brutality in Gastown in August 1971.⁷⁵ Bob Sarti, a draft resister from New York who arrived in Vancouver via Phoenix, Arizona, in 1968, served as an unofficial publicity officer for the group, using what he termed a "very strategic" occupation as a journalist with the *Vancouver Sun* to write favourable news items about it.⁷⁶ Herb Weich (sometimes referred to as Herb White or Juils Comeault), a resister from Norfolk, Virginia, was also the main organizer of a series of Yippie! benefit concerts over the winter of 1970, raising funds for the People's Defense Fund.⁷⁷

Despite the judicial risk involved, American exiles also played key roles on the ground during street actions. Both deserter Peter Prontzos and Dale Clark, a Canadian who was drafted due to attending a US university, enthusiastically participated in the majority of the Yippie! street actions.⁷⁸ Special mention, though, goes to Virginian Herb Weich, who played an eagerly creative and leading role in several demonstrations.

⁷² Abbie Hoffman, *Revolution for the Hell of It, by Free* (New York: Dial Press, 1968), 27. See also Susanne Elizabeth Shawyer, "Radical Street Theatre and the Yippie Legacy: A Performance History of the Youth International Party, 1967–1968" (PhD diss., University of Texas, 2008).

⁷³ John Gibbs, "Students Party as Profs Depart: Raucous Ruckus Rouses Faculty Club," *Ubysey*, (25 October 1968): 3.

⁷⁴ Martin, "Burn It Down!," 25–39; Larry Gambone, *No Regrets: Counterculture and Anarchism in Vancouver* (Edmonton: Black Cat Press, 2015), 76.

⁷⁵ "How Not to Get Busted at the Grasstown Smoke-In," *Georgia Straight* 5, no. 190 (1971), 3–4; Interview with Bob Mercer, Vancouver, 15 February 2013; Interview with Peter Prontzos, Vancouver, 26 February 2013.

⁷⁶ Interview with Bob Sarti, Vancouver, 22 February 2013. For an example of this favourable coverage, see Robert Sarti, "Yippies behind Rash of Street Actions Here," *Vancouver Sun*, (6 June 1970), 23.

⁷⁷ Gambone, *No Regrets*, III.

⁷⁸ Interview with Peter Prontzos, Vancouver, 26 February 2013.

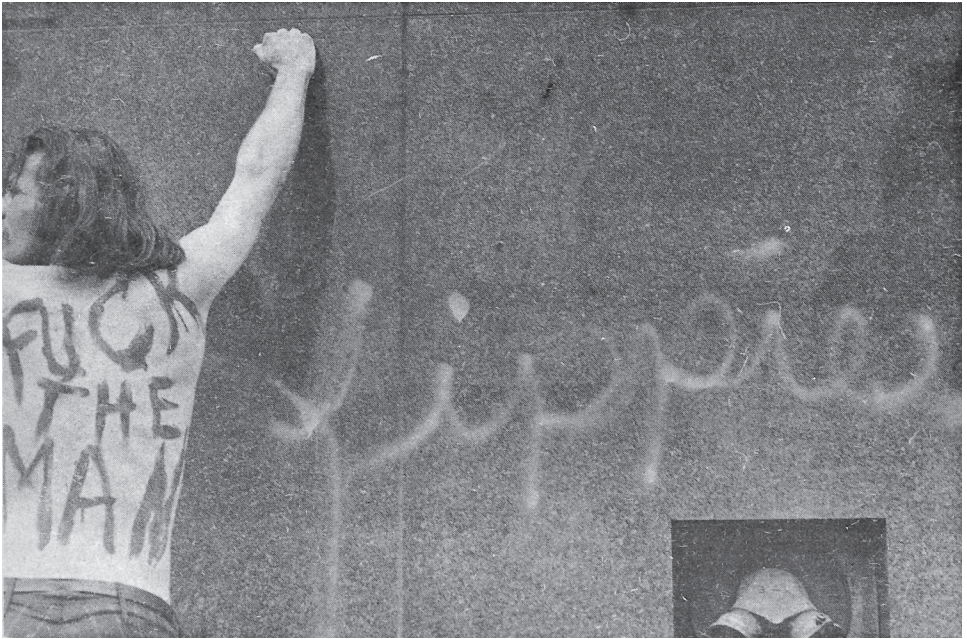


Figure 2. Draft resister Herb Weich protesting outside the Vancouver Police Department, 1970. Source: *Yellow Journal* 1 (May 1970), 1.

“Crazy Herb” pops up in many accounts of Yippie! events. During the April 1970 theatrical exorcism of the Vancouver Police Department on 312 Main Street, Weich led the incantations dressed as a half-naked “shaman” with “FUCK THE MAN” painted on his back, a photo of which adorns the first edition of the *Yellow Journal*.⁷⁹ Equally, in Yippie Larry Gambone’s memoir, Weich is mentioned standing on the front line during a protest at Oakalla Prison Farm, offering to get a buzz cut if police officers played turncoat and joined the Yippie! ranks.⁸⁰

Historian Myrna Kostash has claimed that American Vietnam-era exiles often alienated Canadian activists by “looking at the struggle in Canada as inconsequential.”⁸¹ Although several Canadian public figures – notably James Laxer and Robin Mathews – made these kinds of accusations during the long 1960s by claiming that American activists were taking over the movement north of the 49th parallel, this pattern is

⁷⁹ “Yippies Freak for Peace,” *Yellow Journal* 1 (April 1970), 1; Interview with Bev Davies, Vancouver, BC, 13 February 2013.

⁸⁰ Gambone, *No Regrets*, 107.

⁸¹ Kostash, *Long Way from Home*, 67.

not evident in Vancouver Yippie!⁸² Some of its larger actions did indeed revolve around US issues such as the Vietnam War; however, its central focus was on revealing a perceived global struggle in localized Canadian socio-political arenas.⁸³

Crucially, the *Yellow Journal* identified the unfolding struggle for Québécois independence as the centre of the revolutionary struggle in North America. So important was the revolutionary movement in Quebec to the *Yellow Journal* contributors that they dedicated their entire last issue, renamed *Le Journal Jaune*, to assertions of solidarity with the Front de Libération du Québec during the 1970 October Crisis.⁸⁴ Indeed, their alignment with the Québécois liberation movement speaks to broader commitments the Yippies made to Canadian decolonization. And they criticized the economic dominance of Canadian institutions in Trinidad and Tobago as well as the historical and contemporary injustices piled upon Indigenous peoples by the Canadian state.⁸⁵

Although seemingly unaware of the broader emergence of “Red Power” in Canada and the legal claims to Indigenous land sovereignty occurring throughout this period in British Columbia, Vancouver Yippie! co-operated with the Vancouver-based Native Alliance for Red Power (NARP) at rallies, events, and fundraisers.⁸⁶ The *Yellow Journal* regularly posted details of systemically racist policies followed by the Department of Indian Affairs and supported NARP in its exposé of child abuse at the Sechelt residential school.⁸⁷ Indeed, rather than looking to US history for revolutionary inspiration, members of Vancouver Yippie! found their

⁸² James Laxer, *The Border: Canada, the US and Dispatches from the 49th Parallel* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2003), 128; Laxer, “Americanization of the Canadian Student Movement,” 277–88; Mathews, “Opinion,” 10.

⁸³ “Doin’ Their Duty,” *Yellow Journal* 2 (May 1970), 1; “Bringin’ the War Home,” *Yellow Journal* 2 (May 1970), 2–3; “Porkland or: Who Kicked the Jams Out of the People’s Army Jamboree,” *Yellow Journal* 7 (September 1970), 9; “Cleaver and the Amerikan Dream,” *Yellow Journal* 1 (April 1970), 12–14; Stew Albert, “Jerry Meets Charlie,” *Yellow Journal* 5 (June 1970), 5.

⁸⁴ “Quebec: A Police State in Your Own Back Yard,” *Yellow Journal* 1 (April 1970), 8; “Free Quebec, Free Canada,” *Le Journal Jaune* 8 (October 1970): 7 and 8.

⁸⁵ “Snow White Melts,” *Yellow Journal* 2 (May 1970), 17.

⁸⁶ Bryan Palmer, “Indians of All Tribes’: The Birth of Red Power,” in *Debating Dissent: Canada and the Sixties*, ed. Lara Campbell, Dominique Clement and Gregor Kealey (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 193–210; and Scott Rutherford, “Canada’s Other Red Scare: The Anicinabe Park Occupation and Indigenous Decolonization,” in *The Hidden 1970s: Histories of Radicalism*, ed. Dan Berger (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 77–94. For an analysis of the ongoing struggle for land rights in British Columbia during this time, see Douglas Harris, “A Court Between: Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in the British Columbia Court of Appeal,” *BC Studies* 162 (2009): 137–64.

⁸⁷ “Canadian Racism,” *Yellow Journal* 5 (July 1970), 10; “NARP Offs Priest,” *Yellow Journal* 2 (May 1970), 13. This focus on Indigenous issues in Vancouver was particularly important in the 1960s due to the tendency of the Vancouver mainstream press at the time to discursively erase or stereotype Indigenous people in the city. See Meghan Longstaffe, “Indigenous Women as

historical muse in the form of Louis Riel and other Métis participants of the nineteenth-century uprisings in the Red River Colonies in Manitoba and in the District of Saskatchewan, who made regular appearances in the group's publications.⁸⁸

Vancouver Yippie! matched a rhetorical commitment to Canadian decolonization with action. It made a staunch enemy of the Hudson's Bay Company, lambasting the fur-traders-turned-retail-giants whose "first two hundred years" featured "a continuous record of rape and ruthlessness."⁸⁹ In one of its first actions, Vancouver Yippies celebrated "300 years of institutional racism at the Bay" by occupying the Hudson's Bay cafeteria in the basement of the Georgia and Granville outlet.⁹⁰ In addition, when Betty "Zaria" Andrews ran as a representative of Yippie! against Tom Campbell for the mayoral post in Vancouver's 1970 civic election, one of the more serious policies on her ticket was the return of all Hudson's Bay Company properties and titles to Indigenous peoples.⁹¹

Indeed, for the Northwest Lunatic Fringe, the revolution was happening in Vancouver and Quebec, not in the United States, and fighting Canadian imperialism was just as important as resisting the American Empire. This focus led to some divergence with the American Yippie! Strategy. When Abbie Hoffman, a leading luminary in the American Yippies, declared at a speech in Edmonton that draft exiles should return to the States as the *real* struggle was happening in "the belly of the beast," the *Yellow Journal* roundly attacked him for "utter disregard for the Québec revolution, about which he knew nothing."⁹² This issue arose once again when three American members of the Vancouver Liberation Front decided to form the Amerikong Deserters Committee dedicated to marshalling the seventy thousand deserters and thirty-five thousand draft resisters in Canada into a "Back to Pig Nation" liberation army, intended to return to the United States to participate in the movement there. The *Yellow Journal* responded to these calls by publishing a vitriolic response. Not only, it asserted, did the formation of such exile groups potentially endanger other exiles working within the movement, but it also delegitimized the struggle in Vancouver, a struggle that was becoming increasingly violent and dangerous.⁹³

Newspaper Representations: Violence and Action in 1960s Vancouver," *Canadian Historical Review* 98, no. 2 (2017): 230–60.

⁸⁸ "Konfederation," *Yellow Journal* 5 (June 1970), 2; "Gabriel Dumont," *Yellow Journal* 1, no. 6 (1970), 18.

⁸⁹ Interview with Bob Sarti, Vancouver, 22 February 2013.

⁹⁰ "Yippies Trip to Sip-In," *Yellow Journal* 2 (May 1970), 9.

⁹¹ "Zaria's Yippie! Platform," *Georgia Straight* 4, no. 137 (1970), 2.

⁹² "NLF Sends Abbie Back to Woodstock Nation," *Yellow Journal* 7 (October 1970), 17.

⁹³ "Untitled Announcement," *Yellow Journal* 5 (June 1970), 5.

American exiles in Vancouver Yippie! still faced continued limitations on their ability to engage in political action. No event would demonstrate this more than the Yippie!-organized invasion of Blaine, Washington, in May 1970, protesting US military operations in Cambodia. As a mass of three hundred young Canadian invaders crossed the 49th parallel at the Peace Arch, neither Bob Sarti, nor Peter Prontzos, nor Herb Weich were present due to the risk posed by returning to their homeland, and nobody interviewed could verify whether Eric Sommer was part of the “Canadian army.” Further, in his description of the events at Blaine, Larry Gambone’s memoirs describe an individual, Jim, who remained on the Canadian side of the border during the invasion since he “was a war resister and it was unwise for him to return to the states.”⁹⁴ American exiles active in the Vancouver Yippie! network, therefore, only faced limitations in their ability to integrate with the local movement when faced with legal ramifications. Political radicalism, in word and deed, bound these exiles to Canadian activists rather than isolating them, and it provided these Americans an opportunity to tie their local experiences into the global revolutionary consciousness of the era.

Far from being isolated from Vancouver politics, by collaborating with Canadian activists in the Vancouver Yippie! collective, radically oriented American exiles altered the very makeup of the city. Their impact can be traced physically in Stan Douglas’s two-storey-high photographic mural depicting the aftermath of the Grastown Smoke-In in the Woodward’s building on Cordova Street, as well as in the downtown green space of the Devonian Harbour Park, kept free from development following the Yippie’s “All Season’s Park” occupation in 1971 and 1972.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the Yippies played an undeniably crucial role in the cultural and political history of Vancouver and, as Eryk Martin has shown, formed the bedrock of the city’s punk and anarcho-political scene that held sway through the 1970s and 1980s.⁹⁶ Outside Vancouver Yippie!, American exiles were at the core of new, and highly influential, social movements throughout the

⁹⁴ “Canadian Forces Withdraw from Blaine,” *Georgia Straight* 4, no. 109 (1970), 3; Gambone, *No Regrets*, 103. Interview with Bob Sarti, Vancouver, 22 February 2013; Interview with Bob Mercer, Vancouver, 15 February 2013; Interview with Peter Prontzos, Vancouver, 26 February 2013.

⁹⁵ Leigh Kamping-Carder, “At the Gastown Riot: Vancouver Artist Stan Douglas Reimagines a Neighborhoods Troubled Past,” *Walrus* (12 July 2009), <https://thewalrus.ca/at-the-gastown-riot/>. For an analysis that gauges the countercultural and non-countercultural forces working to protect Devonian Harbour Park, see J.I. Little, *At the Wilderness Edge: The Rise of the Antidevelopment Movement on Canada’s West Coast* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2019), 15–49.

⁹⁶ Eryk Martin, “The Blurred Boundaries of Anarchism and Punk in Vancouver, 1970–1983,” *Labour/Le Travail*, 75 (Spring 2015): 9–41.

city – from countercultural nudist politics to women’s liberation – and were hence woven into the fabric of Vancouver-based youth activism by common ideological commitments.

Certainly, as the Vancouver American Deserters Committee demonstrates, due to the increased judicial stakes bound up in exile, overt proclamations of anti-authoritarian intent affected both the Americans and the Canadians who were active in the draft resistance movement. Those activists most concerned with aiding American war resisters who fled to Canada, as David Churchill has correctly noted, appear also to have been those most influenced by the rhetoric and demands of Canadian left nationalists such as James Laxer and Robin Mathews.⁹⁷ However, when we shift our analytic gaze beyond the politics of the draft, we can identify alternate languages – of women’s rights, counterculturalism, and postcolonialism – through which American exiles connected with communities of shared political intent in their new home.

In Vancouver, where Canadian nationalism held far less sway than in its heartlands of Ontario and Saskatchewan, the predominant languages through which American activists connected to local movements were all nascent expressions of anti-nationalism. In virulently criticizing the Canadian state for its treatment of women, hippies, and Indigenous peoples, these collaborations between Americans and Canadians took New Left demarcations and made them relevant in their local political arena, tying their own experience to that of a worldwide struggle that was unfolding across manifold localized arenas. These claims to community were thus framed along different axes of identity to that of the nation: they connected not as Canadians or as Americans but as oppressed women, as counterculturalists, and as global revolutionaries.

⁹⁷ Churchill, “Draft Resisters,” 246–48.