

“We of the New Left”: A Gender History of the Student Union for Peace Action from the
Anti-Nuclear Movement to Women’s Liberation

by

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The following served on the Examining Committee for this thesis. The decision of the Examining Committee is by majority vote.

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners. I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

The Student Union for Peace Action (SUPA), was a Canadian group of New Leftists that formed a multi-issue movement for radical social change in the 1960s. SUPA emerged out of the Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and organized around peace, racial and economic equality, and educational freedom between December 1964 and September 1967. At its final conference, four SUPA women, Judy Bernstein, Peggy Morton, Linda Seese, and Myrna Wood, presented a paper titled, “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...,” in which they argued for the addition of gender equality to this list of New Leftist concerns. Following this conference, Morton, Seese, and Wood formed Canada’s first women’s liberation group in Toronto.

This dissertation explores both the character of SUPA’s New Leftism, and the rise and articulation of a feminist consciousness within the group. The definition of New Leftist activism is contested among scholars. This study builds upon an historiographical challenge to New Leftist narratives that focus squarely on young white middle-class men, by arguing that its history belongs to several other actors, such as older leftists, civil rights activists, and women’s liberationists. SUPA illuminates a definition of New Leftism as a collection of overlapping movements around issues such as nuclear disarmament, economic and racial justice, and eventually, gender equality. Using a gender-conscious approach, this dissertation examines how these movements converged within SUPA, and how each served as a backdrop to the development and expression of a feminist consciousness that led to the production of “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” in 1967.

By examining SUPA’s history through a lens of gender, this dissertation presents new understandings of the impact of the group’s strategic shifts upon activists, and of its operations as

a movement. It further complicates the conventional representation of activist women in the group as secretaries and maternal figures, which has developed out of isolated readings of “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” A gender study of the multiple sites of SUPA’s movement activity demonstrates that while gender expectations certainly shaped women’s experiences, they did not have a uniform impact, and did not impose one-dimensional activist identities upon women in the group; rather, as this dissertation argues, SUPA women’s participation in the movement took different forms, and resulted in multifaceted activist identities. Their experiences were marked by a tension between subordination and empowerment, and it was from this position that they analyzed their place in the movement, and called for the inclusion of gender equality to the list of New Leftist demands.

Acknowledgements

In December 2013, a few months into my archival research on the Student Union for Peace Action (SUPA), I came across a reflection on SUPA from the 1960s with this prefatory note from activist Tony Hyde: “People in SUPA do not like to go over their history, and having just completed this paper I can understand why; it is a uniquely painful task.”¹ While initially unsettled by the remark, I quickly discovered that former SUPA activists would graciously and enthusiastically talk with me about the group’s history, that I would have incredible support while navigating the usual pains of dissertation writing, and that producing this paper would be a uniquely *rewarding* task. I would first like to extend my appreciation to the activists who shared their memories and perspectives with me: Peter Boothroyd, John Cleveland, John Conway, Daniel Drache, Nancy Hannum, Jim Harding, Brewster Kneen, Joan Kuyek, Peggy Morton, Clayton Ruby, Linda Seese, Harvey Shepherd, Peter Warrian, Myrna Wood, and Cathleen Kneen, who sadly passed away during the production of this dissertation. I am sincerely thankful to each of you for sharing your time and stories with me so generously.

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¹ McMaster University William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections, Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament-Student Union for Peace Action-New Left Committee Fonds, Box 12, File, ‘SUPA Conference Material,’ Tony Hyde, with the assistance of Michael Rowan, “The Student Union for Peace Action: An Analysis,” undated.

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List of Abbreviations

ATAK	Association for Tenants Action Kingston
CCCRH	Canadian Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards
CCF	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation
CCND	Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
CND	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
COFO	Council of Federated Organizations
CORE	Congress of Racial Equality
CPC	Communist Party of Canada
CUCND	Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
CUS	Canadian Union of Students
CUSO	Canadian University Service Overseas
CYC	Company of Young Canadians
ERAP	Economic Research and Action Project
FAL	Feminine Action League
FLQ	Front de libération du Québec
JOIN	Jobs or Income Now
KCP	Kingston Community Project
MFDP	Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party
MUMS	Mothers United for Maximum Safety
MWLG	Montreal Women's Liberation Group
NAC	National Action Committee on the Status of Women
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDP	New Democratic Party
NDY	New Democratic Youth
NFCUS	National Federation of Canadian University Students
NLC	New Left Caucus (Toronto)
NLC	New Left Committee (replaced SUPA in September 1967)
NSP	Nova Scotia Project
NORAD	North American Aerospace Defense Command
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
RCSW	Royal Commission on the Status of Women
RIPP	Research, Information, and Publications Project
SCLC	Southern Christian Leadership Conference
SCM	Student Christian Movement
SDU	Students for a Democratic University
SDS	Students for a Democratic Society
SFU	Simon Fraser University
SNCC	Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
SNPP	Student Neestow Partnership Project
SPC	Socialist Party of Canada
SUPA	Student Union for Peace Action
TWLG	Toronto Women's Liberation Group
TWLM	Toronto Women's Liberation Movement

UGEQ	Union générale des étudiants du Québec
VOW	Voice of Women
VWC	Vancouver Women's Caucus
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WLG	Women's Liberation Group

Introduction

In the summer of 1967, four friends in Toronto, Judy Bernstein, Peggy Morton, Linda Seese, and Myrna Wood, joined together in resolve to raise the issue of gender inequality in the Canadian New Leftist group, the Student Union for Peace Action (SUPA). Each of these women related to SUPA differently, but all felt strongly that the group was perpetuating conventional constructions of gender roles and expectations within the movement, and lacked a consciousness of gender inequality as a structural social issue that should be integrated into their New Leftist program for revolutionary social change. In response, they produced the working-paper, “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” and presented it for discussion at SUPA’s final conference in Goderich, Ontario that September. The paper’s analysis proceeds from the contention that “social progress can be measured by the social position of the female sex,” and in nine pages, lays out an analysis of “the human condition in New Left terms.”¹ Concluding that the alienation that New Leftists were attempting to overcome through a movement for systemic social change was maintained by women’s subordination, the paper called upon their fellow SUPA activists to revolutionize the gender relations of the group, and accept gender equality as necessary for the achievement of the movement’s objective of human liberation. Bernstein, Morton, Seese, and Wood were raising a largely unexplored issue in the Canadian New Left. Anticipating the possibility that their paper might be quickly dismissed, they asserted their expectation that it be treated with respectful reflection: “We trust that you will consider this paper with the seriousness with which it was written.”²

¹ Judy Bernstein, Peggy Morton, Linda Seese, and Myrna Wood, “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...,” in *Women Unite! Up from the Kitchen, up from the Bedroom, up from Under*, eds. Judy Bernstein et al. (Toronto: Canadian Women’s Educational Press, 1972), 31.

² Ibid.

Historiography and Argument

The significance of “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” has been asserted by several scholars of Canada’s sixties. Ian McKay has identified the document as a “founding text” of the Canadian women’s liberation movement, and Judy Rebick has stated that the article was “passed eagerly from hand to hand among women in the New Left.”³ Myrna Kostash has called the paper “the basis for the autonomous organization of women militants,” while Stuart Henderson has identified it as “the first major statement of the women’s liberation movement in Canada.”⁴ Although the paper has been established as a foundational document of the Canadian women’s liberation movement, the events, experiences, and analyses that resulted in its production have yet to be thoroughly explored. Instead, isolated readings of “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” have resulted in an historiographical construct of women in SUPA as mainly the secretaries, mothers, and wives of the movement. Doug Owrarn’s analysis of the paper led him to conclude that women in SUPA acted as either “surrogate mother or housewife,” or in a “traditional secretarial role.”⁵ Similarly, historian James Pitsula’s reading of the document directed him to the interpretation that “men assumed leadership in...SUPA, relegating women to menial tasks, such as making coffee and stuffing envelopes.”⁶ These understandings of SUPA women’s roles in the movement have been perpetuated by a tendency to reduce “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” to the one-liner: “We will be the typers of letters and distributors of

³ Ian McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals: Rethinking Canada’s Left History* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005), 192, and Judy Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses: The Making of a Feminist Revolution* (Toronto: Penguin Group, 2005), 8.

⁴ Myrna Kostash, *Long Way From Home The Story of the Sixties Generation in Canada* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1980), 169, and Stuart Henderson, *Making the Scene: Yorkville and Hip Toronto in the 1960s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 318.

⁵ Doug Owrarn, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby-Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 272.

⁶ Pitsula, *New World Dawning*, 164.

leaflets...no longer.”⁷ As a bold statement that demonstrates both SUPA women’s frustrations with marginal roles in the movement, and adoption of an oppositional voice, it is the most oft-quoted phrase from the document.⁸ The overall effect of its repetition in the historiography has been a flattened representation of SUPA women’s contributions to the movement. This dissertation argues for a new dialogue around women’s participation in the group. It interprets SUPA women’s experiences through a gender study of the movement, rather than through an isolated reading of activist women’s grievances around the expectation that they act as the “workers and wives” of the movement.⁹ It is through a gender study that a more complicated story of women’s activism in SUPA emerges, and deeper understandings of the movement’s operations and character arise.

This dissertation illuminates particular interpretations of both the Canadian New Left, and women’s activism within it. There is no scholarly consensus on the definition of the New Left. Some maintain that there was no single New Left and choose to use the term “New Leftist” to recognize the heterogeneity of the movement.¹⁰ This dissertation follows this practice, acknowledging that New Leftist thought was multi-dimensional and had various expressions, even within a single group such as SUPA. Some scholars conceptualize New Leftism as a movement primarily of white students, which was related to, but distinct from, other social movements of the period, including the American movement for black civil rights, and women’s liberation. Historian John McMillian advances this understanding, contending that it is necessary

⁷ Bernstein, et al., “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...,” in *Women Unite!*, 39.

⁸ Black, “The Canadian Women’s Movement,” 96; Douville, “The Uncomfortable Pew,” 257; Richard Harris, *Democracy in Kingston: A Social Movement in Urban Politics, 1965-1970* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1988), 119; Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 78; Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s*, 300; Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses*, 8.

⁹ Bernstein, et al., “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...,” in *Women Unite!*, 38

¹⁰ Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 4.

to “draw a distinction...between the New Left and what is sometimes called ‘the movement.’”¹¹ SUPA’s history, however, illuminates the difficulty of disentangling the strands of “the movement.” As a multi-issue movement, SUPA organized around peace and disarmament, educational freedom, and economic and racial equality. By the end of SUPA’s life, women in the group also argued for the inclusion of gender equality to this list. SUPA activists viewed an inter-connectedness among the range of issues around which they organized, and identified violence, alienation, and inequality as problems that needed to be addressed through structural change, and a revolution in social consciousness. The conceptualization of New Leftism advanced by American historian Van Gosse is useful in this context. Gosse identifies New Leftism as a collection of overlapping movements that each formed “part of a challenge to the established order.”¹² This understanding is applicable to SUPA, whose history intimately links the anti-nuclear movement, civil rights movement, student movement, anti-war movement, and women’s liberation movement, illuminating the character of New Leftist activism as a “movement of movements.”¹³

Despite this broad definition, there are commonalities that can be discerned among these movements, as they were expressed in SUPA, including a focus on nonviolence, participatory democracy, self-determination, and the search for the root causes of violence and inequality. It was their attempt to transform social structures that marked New Leftists as “radicals.”¹⁴ As American sixties activist Bill Zimmerman explains in his memoir: “The word ‘radical’ literally

¹¹ John McMillian, “‘You Didn’t Have to Be There’: Revisiting the New Left Consensus,” in *The New Left Revisited*, eds. John McMillian and Paul Buhle (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), 5.

¹² *Ibid.*, 5.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁴ Gerald F. McGuigan, “In Search of Issues,” in *Student Protest*, ed. Gerald F. McGuigan (Toronto: Methuen Publications, 1968), 21.

means ‘getting to the root of things.’”¹⁵ This approach defined the overlapping social movements that converged within SUPA to challenge the operation of power in society. SUPA’s history illuminates a definition of New Leftism as a collection of radical movements addressing inter-related systems of violence and oppression.

In addition to advancing this particular understanding of New Leftism, this dissertation contributes new insights on issues of gender relations in SUPA, and the beginnings of the Canadian women’s liberation movement. Studies of the second wave of Canadian feminism acknowledge that women in SUPA played a role in the beginnings of women’s liberation, but do not offer an analysis of their experiences in the group.¹⁶ When discussing the roots of women’s liberation in New Leftist groups, including SUPA, feminist writer Judy Rebick explains: “the young women in these radical movements played just as subordinate a role to male activists as their mothers did to their fathers. When they got tired of walking three steps behind their men, they too revolted.”¹⁷ This explanation cannot be taken as the totality of SUPA women’s experiences in the group. This dissertation argues that SUPA women’s activism was multifaceted, shaped by contradictory themes of subordination and empowerment. It was within this tension that women in SUPA evaluated their place within the movement, and developed a consciousness of gender inequality as a collective and political issue. What has emerged out of my research is a more complicated story of gender relations in SUPA, the roles and experiences of women in the group, and factors that led to the emergence of the women’s liberation movement.

¹⁵ Bill Zimmerman, *Troublemaker: A Memoir from the Front Lines of the Sixties* (New York: Random House, 2011), 125.

¹⁶ Nancy Adamson, “Feminists, Libbers, Lefties, and Radicals,” in *A Diversity of Women: Ontario, 1945-1980*, ed. Joy Parr (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 252-280; Black, “The Canadian Women’s Movement,”; Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses*; and Joan Sangster, “Radical Ruptures: Feminism, Labor, and the Left in the Long Sixties in Canada,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, no.1 (March 2010): 1-21.

¹⁷ Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses*, 8.

The remainder of this introduction is divided into four sections. The first offers an overview of SUPA and New Leftism, as well as a note on periodization. The second section defines a number of terms connected to feminist organizing that I employ throughout the dissertation, and my reasons for selecting them. Section three outlines my method, sources, and approach to oral history research. Finally, a brief chapter outline is presented in section four.

SUPA, New Leftism, and the Sixties

SUPA's beginnings are located in its predecessor, the Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CUCND). The Canadian CUCND, modeled after the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, was established in 1959 to generate anti-nuclear protest across Canadian university campuses during the Cold War. One of the CUCND's central objectives was to convince the Canadian government to refuse nuclear weapons, and opt for disarmament. As will be discussed in chapter one, the arrival of nuclear weapons on Canadian soil on 31 January 1963, prompted the CUCND to broaden its purpose, and organize around the inter-related themes of peace, self-determination, and equality. The future of the peace movement, as envisioned by CUCND Chairman Art Pape in February 1964, would be concerned with the "quality of life rather than mere survival."¹⁸ This orientation was formalized in December 1964 when activists dissolved the CUCND and formed SUPA in its place.

SUPA's life spanned from December 1964 to September 1967, when it was replaced by the twelve-person New Left Committee. As a decentralized movement, SUPA was composed of local projects, and regional and university branches across the country, connected by communications through the *SUPA Newsletter*, and national conferences. Writing on SUPA in

¹⁸ McMaster University William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections (hereafter, MUA), Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament-Student Union for Peace Action- New Left Committee Fonds (hereafter, SUPA), Box 11, File, 'CUCND Seminar, Kingston,' Art Pape, "The Future of the Peace Movement," February 1964.

1967, one activist described the movement as a “small number of individuals, engaged in specific activities around a variety of goals.”¹⁹ This is a fair assessment. While SUPA did not keep membership lists, the SUPA federal office, located in Toronto, reported that they had a mailing list of 1,050, and between 400 and 500 committed participants, most of whom they described as “loose individuals,” rather than members of a particular SUPA branch or project.²⁰ Despite SUPA’s name, the group was not limited to students. As activist Peggy Morton recalls, the group spent two days debating the definition of a student at SUPA’s founding conference in Regina.²¹ Several proposed an “open-ended definition of the student as a person who is still striving to learn about and understand the world.”²² It was reported in *Sanity*, the monthly journal of the Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, that the group moved away from a “rigid formalistic definition of student,” and decided to leave the question of membership to individual SUPA chapters.²³ With no formal membership lists, it is not possible to gain a sense of how many SUPA participants actually fell outside the traditional definition of the student, but what is clear is that the boundaries of the group ranged from those enrolled in university, to those who had no connection to the university upon joining SUPA, such as Rocky Jones who led SUPA’s Nova Scotia Project, discussed in chapter three.

SUPA has been widely identified by historians as Canada’s leading “New Leftist formation.”²⁴ The concept of a “left formation” has been advanced by Ian McKay, who offers the following definition of the term:

¹⁹ MUA, SUPA, Box 12, File, ‘SUPA Conference Material,’ Tony Hyde, with the assistance of Michael Rowan, “The Student Union for Peace Action: An Analysis,” undated but ca. 1967.

²⁰ Ibid., Box 7, ‘SUPA Worklist 1966,’ Jim Mayor, “Worklist #11,” 30 June 1966.

²¹ Peggy Morton, Interview with author, 22 March 2016.

²² “SUPA Conference Report Regina 64/65,” *Sanity*, Vol. 2, no. 7 (February, 1965), 6.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ian Milligan, *Rebel Youth: 1960s Labour Unrest, Young Workers, and New Leftists in English Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), 65; McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals*, 35; and Bryan Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 258

A left formation is a historic block in emergence—an attempt to transcend the iron logic of economic and social determinism...by the formation of a new historical agent, a complex unity made up of unique individuals amidst contrasting and even contradictory forces, but united by an overriding political objective—that of reasoning and living otherwise.²⁵

Against the backdrop of the nuclear threat of the Cold War, and national liberation struggles, SUPA's "New Leftist formation" emerged with a strong focus on nonviolence, the decentralization of power, and right to self-determination. McKay conceptualizes the New Leftist vision of a "liberated society" and "radical democracy" as sometimes, but not always, "covered under the rubric of 'socialism.'"²⁶ Similarly, sociologist and former SUPA activist John Cleveland posits that the politics of many New Leftists "were outside socialism," but that New Leftism involved a re-thinking of socialism that stressed liberation, anti-authoritarianism, and participatory democracy²⁷

Historians commonly characterize New Leftists in relation to Old Leftists. Old Leftists viewed the working class as the agents of social change and focused on "the struggle of workers against capitalists."²⁸ New Leftists, on the other hand, located the potential for social transformation in a number of groups outside traditional channels of power, including racialized communities, the working and welfare poor, and even students, together referred to as the "dispossessed." Debates over the agent of social change developed as the decade unfolded, demonstrating the dynamic nature of New Leftist thought. In SUPA, disagreements emerged over the identification of the white middle-class university student as part of the "dispossessed." Furthermore, as the decade wore on, some began to argue for an alliance with "the new working

²⁵ McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals*, 112-113.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 189.

²⁷ John W. Cleveland, "New Left, Not New Liberal: 1960s Movements in English Canada and Quebec," *Canadian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* 41, no.1 (Fall, 2004): 83.

²⁸ Van Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left: An Interpretive History* (U.S.A.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005),4.

class” over dispossessed organizing.²⁹ These debates, as they played out in SUPA, are explored in chapter five. The central point to be made here is that an expanded definition of the agent of social change was a distinguishing feature of New Leftism.

New Leftist organizing strategies further marked them as a new formation on the left. While Old Leftists organized around political parties and labour, New Leftists promoted an extra-parliamentary approach of grassroots organizing among those excluded from decision-making processes. The New Leftist objective of creating participatory forms of democracy was reflected in their organizational forms, which emphasized horizontal leadership, consensus building, and a decentralized structure. This “prefigurative politics” was both an experiment in the participatory forms of democracy that New Leftists were seeking, and a reaction against Old Leftist structures and ideology, which they criticized as hierarchical and dogmatic.³⁰

Generational identity and youth culture have been integral themes of sixties scholarship. As McKay has explained, youth were central to New Leftism in a way that was unprecedented by other leftist formations.³¹ As will be discussed in chapter one, historians and sociologists alike have interpreted New Leftism as one expression of a broader youth movement that encompassed both political activism and the adoption of counter-cultural behaviours.³² Some historians view the connection between generational identity and sixties activism so strongly, that they define the period in generational terms. Doug Owram uses this framework in his study of the baby boom,

²⁹ Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 79-80.

³⁰ Wini Breines defines “prefigurative politics” as “political forms that...embodied the desired society.” Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left, 1962-1968: The Great Refusal* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 6. This paragraph draws on the following sources: Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*, 252-255; James M. Pitsula, *New World Dawning: The Sixties at Regina Campus* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 2008), 35-36; and McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals*, 183-190.

³¹ McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals*, 184.

³² Stuart Henderson, *Making the Scene*, 22, and Kenneth Westhues, “Inter-generational Conflict in the Sixties,” in *Prophecy and Protest: Social Movements in Twentieth-Century Canada*, eds. Samuel David Clark, Linda M. Grayson and J. Paul Grayson (Toronto: Gage Educational Pub., 1975), 388-389.

arguing that the strands of the sixties “were linked by the generation that defined them.”³³ While youth culture has been rightly established as a major feature of sixties activism, studying the period strictly through the lens of the baby boom overlooks important actors who influenced the era’s activism, including the Voice of Women, A.J. Muste, Bertrand Russell, and Ella Baker.

Periodization

Scholars have used different timeframes in their studies of Canada’s sixties. Some studies of the sixties have focused on the period between 1960 and 1969. Bryan Palmer selected these dates for his comprehensive study on Canada’s sixties in which he argues that the first half of the decade “contained the seeds of change” that would develop in the latter half. Through his study of these years, Palmer defines the sixties as a period of “political shift to the left.”³⁴ Activists and scholars who have argued more strongly for a decadal definition of the sixties, such as Myrna Kostash and Cyril Levitt, assert that 1970 is a natural ending point because the War Measures Act quelled much of the protest and dissent that defined the era.³⁵ Other scholars view these temporal borders as too narrow, and advance a “long view” of the sixties, defining the period by social movements that extended from the 1950s to 1970s.³⁶ As noted by historians Lara Campbell and Dominique Clément, this approach emphasizes continuity and the evolution of the

³³ Owsram argues that while demographically the baby boom included those born between 1946 and 1962, it is more meaningful to adopt a cultural definition that emphasizes their historical experience. He thus uses a definition of the baby boom that spans from the late years of World War II to 1955 or 1956. Doug Owsram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), xiii-xiv, and 280.

³⁴ Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s*, 23 and 248.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 23, Kostash, *Long Way From Home*, and Cyril Levitt, *Children of Privilege: Student Revolt in the Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984).

³⁶ Karen Dubinsky et al., eds, *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009); Lara Campbell, Dominique Clément, and Greg Kealey, eds., *Debating Dissent: Canada and the Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012); Dimitry Anastakis, ed., *The Sixties: Passion, Politics, and Style* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2008); Andrew Hunt, “When Did the Sixties Happen? Searching for New Directions,” *Journal of Social History* 33, no.1 (Fall, 1999): 147-162; Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *The Journal of American History* 91, no.4 (March, 2005): 1233-1263; and Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left*, 6.

sixties as an idea rather than timeframe, and has contributed to the necessary work of complicating the conventional labels of “a quiescent 1950s or a co-opted 1970s.”³⁷

While the “long view” best suits my conceptualization of New Leftism as a collection of movements, I am not using a definition of “the sixties” to delineate the years of my study. The timeframe covered in this dissertation, 1959 to 1970, has been selected to tell a particular story of Canada’s sixties: the story of SUPA’s New Leftism, and its link to the emergence of the women’s liberation movement. The starting date of 1959 marks the founding of SUPA’s predecessor, the CUCND, which developed a New Leftist orientation in the first half of the decade. While SUPA’s life only spanned to September 1967, this dissertation extends to 1970 in order to examine the burgeoning women’s liberation movement and its connections to SUPA’s New Leftism. Women’s studies scholar Naomi Black identifies the years 1967 to 1970 as a “key period of the second wave of the Canadian women’s movement.”³⁸ I cover these years to trace how the women in SUPA who called upon New Leftists to confront gender inequality, carried their activism forward in the women’s liberation movement. Events in 1970 demonstrate that by this time, the women’s liberation movement was underway. It was in this year that the first conference of the Canadian Women’s Liberation Movement was held, and that the movement organized and carried out its first national action.³⁹ These events serve as markers of the movement’s successful emergence, and therefore make 1970 a reasonable end date for a study concerned with the rise of the women’s liberation movement. I reference some important developments of the women’s movement that occurred after 1970, signalling the continued

³⁷ Campbell and Clément, “Introduction: Time, Age, Myth: Towards a History of the Sixties,” in *Debating Dissent*, 18.

³⁸ Naomi Black, “The Canadian Women’s Movement: The Second Wave” in *Changing Patterns: Women in Canada*, eds. Sandra Burt, et al., 2nd ed. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1993), 89.

³⁹ Nancy Adamson, Linda Briskin, and Margaret McPhail, eds., *Feminist Organizing for Change: The Contemporary Women’s Movement in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), 299.

growth of the movement, but do not attempt to offer a history of the women's movement as it developed in the 1970s and beyond.⁴⁰

Extending the dissertation's timeframe beyond the years of SUPA is not only necessary for an exploration of the application and significance of the feminist consciousness that developed within the group, but is further required to challenge the "declension narrative" of sixties activism. The declension narrative moves from "good sixties" movements, defined by participatory politics, nonviolence, and idealism, to "bad sixties" movements marked by factionalism, violence, and cynicism in the latter part of the decade.⁴¹ This narrative has been particularly strong in American historiography, and has been challenged by American feminist scholars such as Jaqueline Dowd-Hall, Alice Echols, and Jennifer Frost, as unrepresentative of the experiences of activists in feminist and black freedom movements.⁴² Some Canadian accounts have also explained the close of the sixties using a declension narrative, identifying confrontation and arrests at Simon Fraser University, the co-option of revolutionary leftist activism, and violent episodes in Quebec, including the Sir George Williams affair, and the October Crisis, as expressions of a disintegration of sixties movements.⁴³ This dissertation challenges the declension narrative by studying the last years of the 1960s through the lens of the burgeoning women's liberation movement, which offers evidence of this period as one of leftist movement-building. As will be discussed in chapter seven, the women's liberation movement

⁴⁰ Ian McKay and Judy Rebick both study leftist women's activism from the 1960s to the 1990s. McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals*, 192-210, and Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses*.

⁴¹ Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987).

⁴² Dowd-Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement," 1254; Jennifer Ann Frost, "Participatory Politics: Community Organizing, Gender, and the New Left in the 1960s" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 1996), 11; and Alice Echols, "Across the Universe," in *New World Coming*, 407.

⁴³ Kostash, *Long Way from Home*, 265-76, and O'ram, *Born at the Right Time*, 280-307. The declension narrative is challenged in Campbell, et al. eds., *Debating Dissent*, 19-20.

demonstrated a continuity with the hallmarks of sixties New Leftist groups, including a focus on participatory democracy, self-determination, and systemic social change.

Defining Feminist Consciousness, Women’s Liberation, and Second-Wave Feminism

The terms feminist consciousness, women’s liberation, and second-wave feminism, are used throughout this dissertation. Although these terms are elaborated upon in chapters two and six, it is necessary here to introduce how they will be used, and why their definitions matter. It is the objective of this dissertation to trace the development and articulation of a feminist consciousness in SUPA. I follow Mary Fainsod Katzenstein’s understanding of feminist consciousness as a lens through which relationships, home, and society are viewed, rather than as a set of strategies or specific objectives that might distinguish one feminist ideology from another.⁴⁴ A feminist consciousness develops both out of an awareness of the disproportionate power relationships between men and women, and an understanding of these inequalities as socially and historically constructed, rather than biologically determined.⁴⁵

I use the term “women’s liberation” to describe the movement of New Leftist women organizing around a feminist consciousness. Women’s liberation was a New Leftist movement because it was rooted in the ethic of participatory politics and self-determination, and argued that structural social change was necessary for gender equality. As will be seen in chapter seven, their New Leftism informed their understanding of capitalism as the primary obstacle to women’s liberation. Women’s liberationists at the time did not use the label of “feminist.” As Naomi Black has noted, Canadian women’s liberationists “initially felt that ‘feminism’ identified an

⁴⁴ Mary Fainsod Katzenstein, “Comparing the Feminist Movements of the United States and Western Europe: An Overview,” in *The Women’s Movements of the United States and Western Europe: Consciousness, Political Opportunity, and Public Policy*, eds. Fainsod Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Mueller (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 8.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

American movement.”⁴⁶ In the United States, a division occurred in the early years of the women’s liberation movement between “politicos” and “radical feminists.” Politicos located women’s oppression in capitalist relations and insisted that women’s liberation remain part of the broader leftist movement, whereas radical feminists argued that women were oppressed as a sex, and therefore formed a sisterhood that needed to organize against patriarchy, rather than capitalism.⁴⁷ In Canada, this debate registered in Toronto when a contingent of the city’s women’s liberation chapter split to form the New Feminists in 1969 to organize against patriarchy.⁴⁸ As discussed in chapter seven, the New Feminists were largely composed of American women who had moved to Toronto in opposition to the draft. Canadian women’s liberationists were not the only activists to resist the label of “feminist.” American historian Estelle Freedman explains that this was true of many international women’s activists and reformers from the origin of the term in the 1880s “through the social upheavals of the 1960s.”⁴⁹ She identifies women’s activism of the 1960s as a “critical turning point in the history of feminisms,” explaining that within a decade of women’s liberation activism, “the term *feminist* began to be used to refer to the politics of this new movement.”⁵⁰

It is necessary to acknowledge that I am studying the development of a “feminist consciousness” among New Leftist women who did not themselves use the term “feminist” because of its connotations with radical feminism during the period. I maintain that the term “feminist consciousness” accurately describes the political awareness around gender that was

⁴⁶ Black, “The Canadian Women’s Movement,” 93.

⁴⁷ Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 3.

⁴⁸ Canadian Women’s Movement Archives, University of Ottawa (hereafter CWMA), Box 107, Laurel Limpus, “The History of the Toronto Women’s Liberation Movement,” February 1971.

⁴⁹ Estelle Freedman, “The Historical Case for Feminism,” in *Gender and Women’s Studies in Canada: Critical Terrain*, eds. Margaret Hobbs and Carla Rice (Toronto: Women’s Press, 2013), 33.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

developing among New Leftists at the time. I have elected to use the term “feminist consciousness” over “gender consciousness” following the distinction between the terms advanced by Lisa Marie Hogeland, who writes: “The difference lies in the link between gender and politics. Feminism politicizes gender consciousness, inserts it into a systematic analysis of histories and structures of domination and privilege.”⁵¹ As will be seen in chapters six and seven, the women in SUPA who raised the issue of gender inequality did so within a critique of structural conditions that created and maintained women’s subordinate social position. They carried this analysis forward into social movement activism by forming Canada’s first women’s liberation group in 1967.

Women’s liberation was part of a broader feminist movement, which I refer to interchangeably as “the second wave of feminism” and “the women’s movement.” Although there is some debate over the conceptualization of waves of feminist activism, I use the term to describe the upsurge of organizational activity around the social position of women, beginning in 1967 with the inception of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW), and the creation of Canada’s first women’s liberation group in Toronto.⁵² These milestones represent two strands of feminist activism that constituted the second wave. In chapter seven, I use the term “women’s rights advocates” to distinguish the organizers of the RCSW from women’s liberationists. While both groups sought to improve the social position of women, they held different views on how this should be accomplished. Women’s rights advocates sought reforms within existing institutions to bring about equality between men and women, while women’s

⁵¹ Lisa Marie Hogeland, “Fear of Feminism: Why Young Women Get the Willies,” in *Making Sense of Women’s Lives: An Introduction to Women’s Studies*, eds. Michèle Plott and Lauri Umanski (Toronto: Collegiate Press, 2000), 18.

⁵² Black, “The Canadian Women’s Movement,” 84. The debate around the terminology of feminist “waves” is discussed in chapter two. See also Joan Sangster, *Transforming Labour: Women and Work in Post-war Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 235.

liberationists posited that systemic change was required, following their argument that women's subordination was maintained by the capitalist structure of society. I use the terms "women's movement" and "second wave" to refer to the activism represented by both these efforts to organize around feminist demands, in addition to the efforts of radical feminism. I further refer to women's rights activism, women's liberation, and radical feminism as strands of feminist thought, following the understanding advanced by theorists such as Chris Beasley that while there are multiple "feminisms," it is possible to identify common "indicators of feminist thought."⁵³ Using Estelle Freedman's definition of the "critical elements of feminisms," this dissertation identifies these shared foundations as a critique of male privilege, a conviction that women and men are of equal worth, and an attempt to address gender inequality through organized efforts and social movement activity.⁵⁴ The fourth element of Freedman's definition is that feminism recognizes intersecting social hierarchies. While women's liberationists emphasized the intersection of class and gender, they did not offer a theory of intersectionality that seriously took other hierarchies, such as race and sexuality, into account during the period under study. The development of intersectionality as a significant component of contemporary feminist theory buttresses Beasley's contention that the meaning of feminism "has varied over time."⁵⁵

Method and Sources

To date, there has been no full-length treatment of either SUPA as a movement, or the issue of gender relations in Canadian New Leftist activism. SUPA has been included in several studies of Canada's sixties that examine broader themes such as peace activism, on-campus student

⁵³ Chris Beasley, *What is Feminism? An Introduction to Feminist Theory* (London: Sage Publications, 1999), 117.

⁵⁴ Freedman, "The Historical Case for Feminism," 34.

⁵⁵ Beasley, *What is Feminism?*, xii.

activism, national identity, generational identity, the counter-culture, RCMP counter-subversion, and labour and Christianity as important elements of Canadian New Leftist history.⁵⁶ Scholars' recognition of SUPA's significance in publications that centre on these various components of Canada's sixties demonstrates the group's far-reaching impact and points to the need for a closer investigation of SUPA itself. This dissertation seeks to contribute to this objective through a gender study of the movement.

This dissertation combines the objectives of women's history and gender history. Early women's historians sought to address the absence of women's stories from historical scholarship.⁵⁷ This dissertation shares a similar objective of illuminating the activist experiences of women in SUPA which have either been overlooked, or reduced to the roles of secretary and mother. More broadly, this dissertation studies SUPA through the lens of gender, following Joan W. Scott's assertion that gender serves as a "useful category of historical analysis."⁵⁸ This approach, as described by gender theorist M. Bahati Kuumba, emphasizes the use of gender as an analytic category, rather than an "add-on" to historical analysis.⁵⁹ A gender-conscious approach

⁵⁶ Select works include: Bruce Douville, "Project La Macaza: A Study of Two Canadian Peace Protests in the 1960s," in *Worth Fighting For: Canada's Tradition of War Resistance from 1812 to the War on Terror*, eds. Lara Campbell, Michael Dawson, and Catherine Gidney (Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 2015); Michael Maurice Dufresne, "'Let's Not Be Cremated Equal': The Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament 1959-1967," in *The Sixties in Canada. A Turbulent and Creative Decade*, ed. M. Athena Palaeologu (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2009), 9-64; Garry Moffatt, *A History of the Peace Movement in Canada* (Ottawa: Grape Vine Press, 1982); Lawrence S. Wittner, *Resisting the Bomb: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1954-1970* Vol. 2 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); 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): 1-18. Available online. <http://www.ucalgary.ca/hic/issues/vol7/3>. Accessed 28 September 2016; Lexier, "The Canadian Student Movement in the Sixties: Three Case Studies" (PhD diss., University of Alberta, 2009); Pitsula, *New World Dawning*; Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*; Owsen, *Born at the Right Time*; Henderson, *Making the Scene*; Steve Hewitt, *Spying 101: The RCMP's Secret Activities at Canadian Universities, 1917-1997* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); Milligan, *Rebel Youth*; Bruce Michael Douville, "The Uncomfortable Pew: Christianity, the New Left, and the Hip Counterculture in Toronto, 1965-1975," (PhD diss., York University, 2011).

⁵⁷ Catherine Carstairs and Nancy Janovicek, eds., *Feminist History in Canada: New Essays on Women, Gender, Work, and Nation* (Toronto: UBC Press, 2013), 4.

⁵⁸ Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, no.5 (December, 1986): 1053-1075.

⁵⁹ M. Bahati Kuumba, *Gender and Social Movements* (California: AltaMira Press, 2001), 13.

guides the research questions asked, and the lens through which sources are read. It is a method, Scott maintains, of “interrogating history” which can offer “deeper insight into the history we study, whatever its period or topic.”⁶⁰ This has proven true for studies of sixties social movements. This dissertation is influenced by American gender-conscious social movement scholarship, particularly the works of historians and sociologists of the movement for black civil rights. Sara Evans’ concept of “free spaces,” (see chapter two), and Belinda Robnett’s concept of “bridge leadership,” (see chapter six), are particularly significant to my analysis of the relationship between gender and leadership in SUPA. While SUPA was not a movement focused on issues of gender justice, this dissertation argues that it was nevertheless shaped by gender in meaningful ways.⁶¹

My understanding of gender as a category of analysis is informed by feminist scholarship emphasizing its social and historical construction. A major element of a gender-conscious approach is the study of how meanings of “male” and “female,” “men” and “women,” are constructed in particular contexts, for particular purposes.⁶² With this in mind, the very use of the terms “SUPA women” or “New Leftist women” can be problematic, as they can impose an essentialist identity, assume a unity of experience, and construct an arbitrary binary against “SUPA men” or “New Leftist men.” This dissertation recognizes “women” and “men” as conceptual categories, following the argument that their meanings change across time and place, and cannot accurately describe the myriad of identities they encapsulate. Similarly, the identification of “women’s issues” is not to suggest that there is only a certain cluster of concerns

⁶⁰ Scott, “Unanswered Questions,” *The American Historical Review* 113, no.5 (2008): 1423.

⁶¹ The argument that “gender is a fundamental feature of social movements” has been made by Rachel L. Einwohner, et al., “Engendering Social Movements: Cultural Images and Movement Dynamics,” *Gender and Society* 14, no.5 (October, 2000): 681.

⁶² Scott, “Unanswered Questions,” 1424-28; Kathryn McPherson, et al., *Gendered Pasts: Historical Essays in Femininity and Masculinity in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1999), 2.

that are of importance to women.⁶³ I refer to “women’s issues” as the concerns around which women’s liberationists organized “under the sign of ‘women.’” as a result of their collective consciousness of shared experiences of subordination.⁶⁴

The primary source base for this dissertation is comprised of archival documents and oral histories. The William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University houses the main archival collection used for my research, the CUCND-SUPA-New Left Committee fonds. The collection was acquired from the Toronto SUPA office, with additional donations from activists Howard Adelman, Don Roebuck, Harvey Shepherd, John Conway, and Judy Pocock. It is a rich source base, comprised of twenty-two boxes of meeting agendas, minutes, correspondence, publications, finance reports, policy statements, research proposals, contact lists, community project records, conference papers, petitions, speeches, pamphlets, and newsletters. While the collection reflects SUPA’s history from the CUCND through to the disbanding of New Left Committee (1959-1968), it possesses some regional biases that must be acknowledged. Those activists who donated their papers were all based primarily in Toronto, with the exception of John Conway who lived in Saskatoon and Regina during his time in SUPA. A notable absence from this collection is Dimitri Roussopoulos’ papers, which could offer greater insight into the regional specificities of SUPA’s history in Montreal. Roussopoulos founded the Canadian CUCND and was considered a leader within SUPA. Unfortunately, his perspectives are largely missing from this dissertation, both because of the absence of his papers from the archival collections, and his refusal to participate in my oral history research unless he was granted conditions that were unacceptable to the author.

⁶³ Nancy Adamson, et al. notes: “As the complexity of women’s position in society is unravelled, feminists have come to understand that all economic and social-policy decisions have an impact on women.” Adamson, Briskin, and McPhail, *Feminist Organizing for Change*, 7.

⁶⁴ Scott, “Unanswered Questions,” 1427.

Although the archival records come mostly from the Toronto office and Toronto-based activists, they do provide a reasonable overview of SUPA activities in other parts of the country. The Toronto federal office corresponded with the various SUPA regional and campus branches. This correspondence offers a glimpse into the perspectives of activists across these locations. In addition, the *SUPA Newsletter* and worklist were important forms of communication which not only documented SUPA activities from coast to coast, but also acted as a forum for discussion and debate. Minutes and reports of national SUPA meetings also offered information on the topics New Leftists in SUPA were discussing, their directional shifts, and how these shifts were experienced among activists engaged in different forms of work across various locations. In addition, community organizing reports from La Macaza, North Bay, Halifax, Kingston, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia, reveal the different contexts in which SUPA activists were operating, and how they adopted their organizational strategies as a result.

A number of other archival collections flesh out the overlapping movements that were integral to SUPA's history. Records on anti-nuclear activism in Canada were consulted at McMaster University Archives, and Library and Archives Canada, including the collections of the Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and the Voice of Women. Archival documents on cross-border civil rights activism were acquired through the Canadianization Movement Papers at King's College Archives and Special Collections in London, Ontario, and through the Wisconsin Historical Society's Freedom Summer Digital Collection. Insights into the broader Canadian student movement were gained through a consultation of the Canadian Union of Students fonds, and Radical Organizations Archive at McMaster University. Information on SUPA's activities within the Toronto Anti-Draft Programme was gained through the Mark Satin papers at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto.

Journals including *Canadian Dimension*, *Our Generation Against Nuclear War* (renamed *Our Generation* in 1965), and *Sanity*, provided an overview of the broader context of sixties leftist activism. Finally, the Canadian Women's Movement Archives in Ottawa offered a wealth of material on the women's liberation movement across Canada, and included papers from SUPA activist Myrna Wood. Additional primary source material on women's liberation was acquired through the *Women in Social Movements in the United States* document project, which includes a collection of records on the women's liberation movement at Simon Fraser University.

Oral history is another significant component of the research for this dissertation. I began the process of selecting interviewees by creating a list of names from the archival records, which I checked against the names of interviewees from recent publications on Canada's sixties that have dealt with SUPA. Some level of participation in either the CUCND or SUPA was my only criterion for selecting interviewees. Of my original list of twenty-five interviewees, I successfully contacted seventeen, with all but two agreeing to the interview. The interviewees included six women and nine men. Their dates of involvement in SUPA varied. Six interviewees entered the movement through the CUCND in the first half of the 1960s, and one entered through peace activism in the United States with the Fellowship for Reconciliation, and a position on the editorial board of *Our Generation Against Nuclear War* in Montreal; four entered SUPA in 1965 through the civil rights movement; and another four became involved in 1965 through other networks, including the Company of Young Canadians, New Democratic Youth, and Student Christian Movement. Most maintained some link to SUPA until it was disbanded in September 1967, and replaced by the New Left Committee. Five of the interviewees were elected to this committee: Linda Seese, Myrna Wood, Peggy Morton, Harvey Shepherd, and Daniel Drache.

The interviewees were a representative cross-section of SUPA activists, including those who held formal leadership positions on SUPA's federal council; those who were devoted primarily to community organizing; those who engaged in movement research and writing; and those who worked in the SUPA federal office. While some devoted most of their energies to a particular SUPA project, others did not locate their primary identification in SUPA. Interviewees also offered a glimpse into the unique contexts of the regions in which they were active during the movement, including parts of Nova Scotia, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia. While my fifteen interviewees cover a range of activist identities in SUPA, some key perspectives are missing. Some have passed away, and others did not respond to my invitation to participate. I entered this research with the objective of talking with both SUPA activists who have been frequently interviewed and who have written on the sixties, and those who have not yet publicly recounted their experiences. I largely failed to find contact information for SUPA activists whose reflections on the movement are absent from other historical scholarship on Canada's sixties. One of the unique components of my oral history research, however, is that I interviewed three of the four women who wrote "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..." and gained considerable insights on their background and activist identities, which are currently missing from the historiography.⁶⁵

Interviews were conducted in person, and over the phone when travel was not possible. Interviewees were asked about their background, entry into social activism, nature of involvement in SUPA, and open-ended questions related to various themes, including generational identity, work and leadership, decision-making, movement-building strategies, regional identity, topics of debate within the movement, and the gender dynamics of the group. I

⁶⁵ I could not locate Judy Bernstein for an interview.

approached the interviews with three main understandings of how the research could be used: first, to add colour missing from archival records such as minutes and reports, which offer limited insight into the mood and atmosphere of the movement; second, to develop my interpretations through a reading of activist memories against other primary source material; and third, to contribute perspectives that were never recorded in writing during the period under study, including reflections on the sexual politics of the movement, and responses to “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” at the time it was presented.

Like any source, oral histories must be used critically. The writings of Alessandro Portelli have influenced my conceptualization of memory and the value of oral history. My analysis of oral history interviews treats memory as an historical source that illuminates connections between the past and the present. Portelli argues that “the specific utility of oral sources for the historian lies, not so much in their ability to preserve the past, as in the very changes wrought by memory. These changes reveal the narrators’ effort to make sense of the past and to give a form to their lives.”⁶⁶ To identify shifts in memory, I interpreted oral history interviews against written records from the period under study, and in some cases, against memoirs and oral histories conducted by other scholars. In some instances, a misremembering of events was easy to identify. For example, when Joan Kuyek identified 1969 as the date of her final attendance of a SUPA meeting, it was obvious that this could not have been the case, because the group had disbanded two years before.⁶⁷ As Portelli argues, however, there is significance in the misremembering. Rather than dismiss it as a lapse in memory, the act of questioning why Kuyek remembered this 1969 gathering in Sudbury, Ontario as a SUPA meeting reveals greater insight

⁶⁶ Alessandro Portelli, “What Makes Oral History Different,” originally published in 1979. Reprinted in *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (New York: Routledge, 1998), 38.

⁶⁷ Joan Kuyek, Interview with author, 12 November 2015.

into her experience. The meeting to which Kuyek was referring was actually the national seminar of the Canadian Union of Students (CUS). As explored in chapter seven, CUS began to shift toward a New Leftist orientation in 1966, and was influenced by a number of SUPA activists. Kuyek's memory of the 1969 CUS gathering as a meeting of SUPA people demonstrates that this influence was registered at a level of personal experience.

Reading the interviews against the archival records allowed me to compare my interpretations with those emphasized in activist memories. Inconsistencies were particularly evident because I conducted most interviews after I had constructed a preliminary narrative using archival material. My interpretations were further refined by a reading of the archival records against the interviews. The oral histories illuminated details about the atmosphere in which these records were produced, and allowed me to study them within a broader context. For example, the written records do not elaborate on the impact of sexual relationships on women's experiences in SUPA, but as the oral histories consistently revealed, these relationships played an important role in the movement's culture, and were a central force behind the emergence of discussions around status and gender in the movement. I applied an understanding of this broader context gained from the oral histories to my reading of "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..." in chapter six.

The above examples of the interpretive work of oral history raise the issue of sharing authority as "a reflexive practice."⁶⁸ The "dual authority" of the oral history interview, as explained by historian Steven High, is comprised of the lived experience of the interviewee, and the training and "critical distance" of the researcher.⁶⁹ I approached inconsistencies between my own interpretations of archival sources and those emphasized in oral histories careful not to dismiss one form of authority in favour of the other, but to engage in a "negotiated process" of

⁶⁸ Steven High, "Sharing Authority: An Introduction," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 43, no.1 (Winter 2009): 16.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

interpretation.⁷⁰ Sending each interviewee sections of the dissertation containing information from our interview for their comment was one practical way of “sharing authority.”

Chapter Outline

This dissertation traces the rise of a feminist consciousness among SUPA activists within a broader narrative of the development of the group’s New Leftism. My conceptualization of New Leftism as a collection of social movements is reflected in the structure of the dissertation, which foregrounds the movements that converged in SUPA’s history: the anti-nuclear movement, (chapters one and two); the civil rights movement, (chapter three); “dispossessed” organizing, (chapter four); the anti-war movement, (chapter five); the student movement, (chapters one, two, and seven); and the women’s liberation movement, (chapter seven). Chapter six, which is not mentioned above, focuses on SUPA’s New Leftist movement culture, rather than its activities.

The structure also follows a basic chronology. The first two chapters cover the years 1959 to 1964. Chapter one explores the roots of SUPA’s New Leftism in the CUCND and anti-nuclear movement, arguing that inter-generational connections significantly shaped New Leftist thought. It concludes with the founding of SUPA, which formalized the CUCND’s shift toward an action-based program that sought change at a structural level. Chapter two focuses on the experiences of women activists in the anti-nuclear movement, and examines the period through a gendered lens to explain why a feminist consciousness was largely absent from social activism at that time. As will be seen in chapters one and two, several New Leftists in SUPA entered social activism through anti-nuclear activism. As chapter three explores, the American movement for black civil rights was another significant point of entry into SUPA. Some participated directly in

⁷⁰ Ibid., 21.

the movement in the southern United States in 1964 and 1965, while others engaged in Canadian support work, largely in 1965. The influence of the American civil rights group, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), on SUPA's values and strategies is also explored in this chapter. Furthermore, chapter three establishes the civil rights movement as a site for the development of a feminist consciousness among women in SUPA whose formative activist experiences were in SNCC. Chapter four focuses on SUPA's efforts to build a movement of the dispossessed through community organizing projects in 1965. It argues that during this time, SUPA identified community organizing as the best approach for movement-building. The value placed on community organizing is significant in a study of New Leftist women's activism. As chapter four argues, community organizing created "free spaces" for women to exercise leadership and build their activist identities. Chapter five explores debates around SUPA's priorities, decision-making practices, and movement-building strategies between 1966 and 1967. Significantly, the emphasis of the overall movement shifted from community organizing to anti-war work and Canadian nationalism. This shift can be attributed both to the disillusionment some experienced around the apparent lack of success of the local projects, and the rise of the war in Vietnam as a significant issue that could mobilize a broader base of support for movement-building. The gendered implications of this shift are studied in this chapter. Chapter six examines how women in SUPA came to view their seemingly personal concerns as shared and political issues related to gender identity within the context of New Leftist movement culture, culminating in the production of "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..." in 1967. Finally, chapter seven explores how some SUPA women applied their feminist consciousness in the post-SUPA years by forming Canada's first women's liberation group in Toronto. It further examines their politics within the broader context of the Canadian women's movement from 1967 to 1970.

The declaration in “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” that “we of the New Left deplore exploitation of all kinds,” pointed to the mosaic of movements around which SUPA organized, and prefaced a challenge for New Leftists to recognize gender inequality in their program for social change.⁷¹ The two strands of this dissertation, the exploration of SUPA’s overlapping movements on the one hand, and rise of a feminist consciousness on the other, are knit together through a gender analysis of the multiple sites of New Leftist organizing that shaped SUPA activists and the development of the group.

⁷¹ Bernstein, et al., “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...,” in *Women Unite!*, 37.

CHAPTER ONE

“LET OUR GENERATION LEAD”:

New Leftists and the Canadian Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, 1959-1964

On Christmas Day 1959, eighty university students from Montreal stood together in silence at the National War Memorial in Ottawa to pay tribute to the fallen Canadian soldiers of the two World Wars and to lay a wreath bearing the pledge, “we will not rest until peace triumphs over war.”¹ These students belonged to the first chapters of the Canadian Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CUCND). They marched from the War Memorial to Parliament Hill to deliver a petition signed by eleven hundred university students opposed to the possibility of nuclear weapons on Canadian soil.² As the demonstrators waved their placards, sang peace songs, and chanted “ban the bomb,” the country received just a small glimpse of the student activism that would animate the decade ahead.

The CUCND provides an opportunity to examine the intersection between Canadian Cold War anti-nuclear activism and the emerging New Leftist activism of the 1960s. Between 1959 and the end of 1964, the CUCND shifted their focus from nuclear disarmament, to a multi-issue movement around inter-related themes of peace, equality, and self-determination. The first Canadian CUCND chapters formed approximately eight months after Prime Minister John Diefenbaker announced that American Bomarc missiles would be stationed in North Bay, Ontario and La Macaza, Quebec. The Bomarc missiles, which were intended for continental defence, were designed to be fitted with nuclear warheads.³ Negotiations to arm the missiles with

¹ “Petition Diefenbaker: Bar A-Warheads, Students Ask,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 26 December 1959, 1.

² The students were from the University of Montreal, McGill University, and Sir George Williams University.

³ Patricia McMahon, *The Essence of Indecision: Diefenbaker’s Nuclear Policy, 1957-1963* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill Queen’s University Press, 2009), 73.

the nuclear warheads remained on-going between Canada and the United States from 1958 to 1963.⁴ As will be seen in this chapter, the CUCND organized centrally around this issue until 31 January 1963, when nuclear warheads were delivered to Canada under Prime Minister Lester Pearson's minority Liberal government. Following this development, the CUCND officially broadened its campaign with new policies and tactics. Rather than campaign solely for disarmament and the cessation of nuclear testing, the group began to advocate for a Canadian foreign policy of positive neutralism; research the economic and social consequences of disarmament; and show the potential of non-violent civil disobedience as an alternative to violent forms of conflict resolution. Each of these steps contributed to the group's decision to dissolve the CUCND in December 1964 and form SUPA to lead a multi-issue New Leftist movement for radical social change, which engaged with the strategies of community organizing and non-violent civil disobedience.

The transformation of the CUCND's peace activism from a single-issue campaign to a New Leftist movement has been represented largely as a generational phenomenon. This is seen in studies that polarize the student and senior wings of the anti-nuclear campaign, and those that isolate American student activism as a radicalizing influence.⁵ This chapter challenges the conventional representation of the CUCND's adoption of New Leftism as an expression of generational rebellion, and illuminates sources of influence beyond American student groups that have been commonly credited for the innovations associated with New Leftist thought. The first section of this chapter will locate this argument within the historiography of Canadian New Leftists; the second section will explain the CUCND's formation, objectives, strategies, and

⁴ For more on Canadian nuclear policy during this time, see McMahon, *The Essence of Indecision*.

⁵ Dufresne, "'Let's Not Be Cremated Equal,'" 30-31, 35 and 38-39, and David Churchill, "SUPA, Selma, and Stevenson: The Politics of Solidarity in mid-1960s Toronto," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 44, no. 2 (Spring, 2010): 38-39.

relationships to anti-nuclear groups in Canada and abroad; and the third section will examine the influences that contributed to transformations in the group's approach to peace activism. It will become apparent that the CUCND developed a New Leftist orientation within a multi-generational peace movement that engaged with the strategies and analyses of students, pacifists, and civil rights activists across Canada, the United States, and Britain.

New Leftists and Youth in Canadian Historiography

As noted in the introduction, scholars have named youth activism as a defining feature of New Leftism. Doug Owram uses a cultural definition of the "baby boom generation" to identify those born between late World War II and 1956 as the participants of this movement.⁶ His collective biography of this demographic explains that parents, experts, teachers, and media all transmitted the message to postwar children that they were special "as the generation that would create something new and better."⁷ He interprets their activism in the 1960s as an attempt to live out the values of democracy and individuality that they were taught as children, and as an expression of their sense of empowerment as a group to transform the social structures that did not meet their expectations.⁸

Scholars have studied how this generational identity played out across Canadian universities, which were expanding within the context of economic prosperity, the growth of the middle class, a large demographic of young people, and an emphasis on the economic, social, and technological contributions of post-secondary institutions.⁹ The on-campus student movement in the 1960s largely dealt with a desire to give students a greater voice within the university. Roberta Lexier's work on the student movement argues that a broad segment of the

⁶ Owram, *Born at the Right Time*, xiv.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 309.

⁸ This interpretation is also found in Westhues, "Inter-Generational Conflict," 401-402.

⁹ Lexier, "The Canadian Student Movement in the Sixties," 196-198, and Pitsula, *New World Dawning*, 32-33.

student population shared the objective of abolishing *in loco parentis*, the university's practice of regulating student behaviour in the place of the parent. Their success organizing around the abolition of *in loco parentis* provided students with a sense of collective power and a distinct identity as a group. With this momentum, they campaigned for other types of institutional reform on Canadian university campuses, such as student representation within the governing structures of the university.¹⁰

As a group, students asserted that they were an integral part of the university community and should be consulted on the decisions that were affecting their education and personal lives on campus. The struggle to achieve control over decision-making processes was not limited to students. While universities expanded during the 1960s, the majority of youth did not attend these institutions. Eleven percent of youth between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four were enrolled in university in the 1965/1966 academic year.¹¹ The majority of 1960s youth were found in the workforce, resulting in "an increasingly more youthful appearance to the working class," according to Bryan Palmer.¹² As Ian Milligan has demonstrated, working-class youth need to be recognized in studies of 1960's youth activism. Like their student counterparts, youth in the workforce exhibited a spirit of anti-authoritarianism. In the workplace, they too challenged the centralization of control and power, providing one indication of a "shared cross-class youth culture."¹³

Descriptions of Canadian New Leftists have been couched within the discourse of a unique 1960's generation of youth. This was emphasized in a 1965 article in *Maclean's*, which defined New Leftists as "the radical catalyst of a new generation of Canadians, a generation

¹⁰ Lexier, "The Canadian Student Movement in the Sixties," 4-5.

¹¹ Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 18, and Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*, 217.

¹² Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*, 216.

¹³ Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 20.

that's unlike any other that's gone before."¹⁴ Historians have also stressed the notion of generational difference in descriptions of New Leftists.¹⁵ As James Pitsula has described it, the New Left was "an analysis based on generational conflict" that developed around universities.¹⁶ To be sure, universities were a hub for the development of New Leftist thought. The notion that students and intellectuals should act as leaders of a New Leftist movement was advanced by American sociologist C. Wright Mills, who called upon students and radical intellectuals to view themselves as agents of social change in his 1960 "Letter to the New Left."¹⁷ A sense of generational obligation to serve as the leaders of this movement was expressed by the members of the American group, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), who described themselves in their 1962 Port Huron Statement as "people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit."¹⁸

Interpretations of the CUCND's transformation into SUPA fit within this broader historiographical understanding of New Leftism as an expression of generational identity formed around the ethics and spirit of youth. Michael Maurice Dufresne, who has produced the only independent treatment of the CUCND to date, uses a generational framework to explain the CUCND's embrace of a more radical orientation.¹⁹ This view is supported by David Churchill, who identifies American students as the central source of inspiration behind the CUCND's turn to New Leftism.²⁰ My research challenges the argument that generational identity can explain the

¹⁴ Peter Gzowski, "The righteous crusaders of the New Left," *Maclean's*, 15 November 1965.

¹⁵ Owram, *Born at the Right Time*, 227-228, and Westhues, "Inter-Generational Conflict," 401-402.

¹⁶ Pitsula, *New World Dawning*, 35.

¹⁷ C. Wright Mills, "Letter to the New Left," *New Left Review*, no. 5, September-October, 1960.

¹⁸ "The Port Huron Statement of the Students for a Democratic Society," 1962, available online <http://coursesa.matrix.msu.edu/~hst306/documents/huron.html>. Accessed 16 April 2015.

¹⁹ Dufresne, "Let's Not Be Cremated Equal," 30-31, 35.

²⁰ Specifically, Churchill identifies SDS and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) as the main influences. Churchill, "SUPA, Selma, and Stevenson," 38-39.

CUCND's adoption of a New Leftist ethic. I contend that the CUCND's development into SUPA must be studied with an understanding of New Leftism as an inter-generational movement.

Canadian historians have begun to demonstrate the inter-generational links in New Leftist strategies and analysis. In her work on Canadian participation in anti-draft activism during the war in Vietnam, Jessica Squires conceives of the New Left as "a multigenerational movement with influences from multiple sources."²¹ This understanding emerged out of her observation that New Leftist anti-draft groups relied on the resources of older pacifists of the peace movement. David Austin has also argued that inter-generational connections were significant to the development of New Leftist thought within the Montreal-based Caribbean Conference Committee (CCC).²² Furthermore, Catherine Gidney issued a call in 2012 for more historians of Canada's 1960s to examine how inter-generational co-operation and intra-generational conflict shaped the activism of the era.²³ This chapter builds on this historiographical challenge for a multi-generational perspective of New Leftist thought. It investigates the various meanings contained in the CUCND's language of generational identity, and the complex generational influences that shaped the group's activism, to demonstrate that activists of various ages contributed to a radical peace activism to confront the challenges of the atomic age. The implications of this argument are meaningful to an understanding of the sources of New Leftist thought. Rather than locating the emergence of a New Leftist style of activism solely in student radicalism or the growth of a broader youth culture, this chapter demonstrates how innovations

²¹ Jessica Squires, *Building Sanctuary: The Movement to Support Vietnam War Resisters in Canada, 1965-73* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013), 186-187.

²² The CCC was comprised predominantly of Caribbean students who had immigrated to Montreal. David Austin, "All roads led to Montreal: Black Power, the Caribbean, and the Black Radical Tradition in Canada," *The Journal of African-American History* 92, no. 4 (Autumn, 2007): 520

²³ Catherine Gidney, "War and the Concept of Generation: the International Teach-ins at the University of Toronto, 1965-1968," in *Cultures, Communities, and Conflict: Histories of Canadian Universities and War*, eds. Paul Stortz and E. Lisa Panayotidis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 293.

in the peace movement, advanced through inter-generational relationships during the first half of the 1960s, contributed to the development of New Leftism in Canada.

The Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in Canada

The formation of the CUCND was inspired by anti-nuclear activism in Britain. In January 1958, British activists who were campaigning for bans on nuclear testing expanded their objectives to include nuclear disarmament.²⁴ The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), formed under the leadership of Bertrand Russell, gained widespread support in Britain. According to historian Lawrence Wittner, a variety of CND groups emerged throughout the country, including “special CND sections...for Women, Students and Youth, Christians, Teachers, Scientists, and other professional groups.”²⁵ A Combined Universities CND was also established to generate anti-nuclear activism on campuses. Among the campaign’s supporters was Canadian Dimitrios Roussopoulos, a graduate student at the London School of Economics. During a visit home to Montreal in October 1959, Roussopoulos organized a meeting at Sir George Williams University to establish a Canadian counterpart to the British CUCND. The students in attendance, including students from McGill, rallied others from the University of Montreal to plan a Christmas Day demonstration in Ottawa, and send the message to Diefenbaker that they opposed his plan to accept Bomarc missiles from the United States, and the possibly of arming them with nuclear warheads.²⁶

Following the demonstration, CUCND groups were formed across Canadian universities and colleges, with a member group defined as “an organized body of ten or more students on a

²⁴ MUA, SUPA, Box 1, File, ‘CUCND Toronto, 1960-1961, Correspondence and Miscellaneous Material, “The Charter,” undated.

²⁵ Wittner, *The Struggle Against the Bomb*, 190.

²⁶ Dufresne, ““Let’s Not Be Cremated Equal,”” 19-20. Diefenbaker’s first statement on Canada’s acquisition of nuclear weapons was made on 20 February 1959. According to historian Patricia McMahon, this statement did not immediately generate anti-nuclear protest; however, a handful of letters opposing the Prime Minister’s plan were sent to his office. McMahon, *The Essence of Indecision*, 47-51.

university campus.”²⁷ By the spring of 1960, the CUCND claimed sixteen member groups, representing all the provinces outside of the Maritimes, and with a heavier presence in Quebec.²⁸ The campaign established their secretariat in Montreal, with Roussopoulos elected as the federal chairman. As the Canadian CUCND Charter explained in its policy statement, the campaign was modeled after the British CND/CUCND: “The Canadian Campaign like the British, stands... for unilateral abandonment of nuclear weapons no matter what any other power may do.”²⁹ The CUCND then, focused on Canadian unilateral nuclear disarmament, and called upon the Canadian government to remove its nuclear bases, stop nuclear testing and the manufacturing and storage of nuclear weapons, and put an end to H-Bomb patrol flights over the country.³⁰ As outlined in their Charter, their strategy was to use education campaigns, petitions, and demonstrations to pressure the Canadian government to renounce nuclear weapons as a first step toward multi-lateral nuclear disarmament.³¹

As a student-led campaign, the CUCND sought to increase student support for nuclear disarmament across Canadian universities. Campus actions included selling badges, distributing literature, forming study groups, hosting speakers, lectures, and debates, and organizing actions with other universities.³² While the campaign successfully rallied students in support for nuclear disarmament across the country, it was clear that not all university students supported the

²⁷ MUA, SUPA, Box 1, File, ‘CUCND Toronto 1960-1961,’ ‘The Charter,’ undated.

²⁸ Of the seventeen member groups reported in 1960, eight were in Quebec, four in Ontario, two in Alberta, one in Manitoba, one in Saskatchewan, and one in British Columbia. Ibid., “Names and Addresses of CUCND Executive Members in Canada,” Spring 1960. One memo reported the national membership of CUCND as approximately three hundred in 1963. This is the only membership number I could locate in the archival records. MUA, Box 1, File, ‘Secretariat Meetings—Minutes Dec. 1962-Feb. 1964,’ ‘Executive Secretary’s Memo #2,’ 1 October 1963. Lawrence Wittner reports a much higher membership number of seven thousand in 1962, citing his source as Elvin S. Shapiro to Russell, Jan. 8, 1962 Class 640 RA I. I have not located this source, and have found no evidence that the membership number reached seven thousand. Wittner, *Resisting the Bomb*, 198.

²⁹ MUA, SUPA, Box 1, File, ‘CUCND Toronto 1960-1961,’ ‘The Charter,’ undated.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² MUA, Canadian Union of Students Fonds (hereafter, CUS), Box 8, File, ‘CUCND,’ ‘CUCND,’ undated.

CUCND's call for Canadian unilateral nuclear disarmament. In February 1961, McMaster Students' Council rejected a CUCND petition to be recognized as a group on campus. When a new council reconsidered the request in October 1962, the External Affairs Chairman of McMaster University Students' Council wrote to the National Federation of Canadian University Students (NFCUS), asking for guidance on the issue. The NFCUS Vice-President of National Affairs responded that "NFCUS does not recognize CUCND. Personally, I am not for unilateral disarmament and therefore in conflict with the policies of CUCND. Further, I do not think we should associate with such movements. They do not have the favour of all Canadian university students."³³ This reply was written in the weeks leading to the Cuban missile crisis and reflected the opinion that deterrence was a more effective strategy to prevent nuclear war. The Cuban missile crisis, which brought the world to the brink of nuclear war, strengthened support for Canada to acquire nuclear weapons.³⁴ Following the crisis, the Liberal Official Opposition, under the leadership of Lester Pearson, began to reconsider their position against nuclear weapons in Canada.³⁵ Former CUCND activist, Peter Boothroyd recalls the damaging effect of the Cuban missile crisis on the anti-nuclear movement, reflecting: "That was very early on in the CUCND and it killed the peace movement practically because people said, well it's kind of hopeless."³⁶ Although the anti-nuclear campaign did not gain support during this time, the CUCND achieved

³³ Ibid., Letter from Manon R. Turbide to Mr. Gerald Wiggle, 5 October 1962.

³⁴ The Cuban missile crisis began on 14 October 1962 when the United States discovered that Soviet nuclear missiles were stationed in Cuba. Fearing the possibility of the Soviets launching a nuclear attack, United States President John F. Kennedy announced his decision on 22 October to place a naval blockade around Cuba to prevent the Soviet Union from delivering more missiles to the island. He further issued a demand to Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev to remove the nuclear weapons. While the Soviets did not try to cross the American blockade, they did not remove the nuclear weapons until an agreement was reached on 28 October. Khrushchev agreed to remove the weapons from Cuba in exchange for Kennedy's promise not to invade the island and to withdraw American nuclear weapons from Turkey. For more on how the crisis influenced Canada's response to nuclear weapons, see McMahon, *The Essence of Indecision*, 143-170.

³⁵ McMahon, *The Essence of Indecision*, 153.

³⁶ Peter Boothroyd, Interview with author, 17 March 2016

a small victory at the end of October when McMaster Students' Council decided to approve the CUCND campus group, almost two years after the request had been submitted.³⁷

Student reactions to the CUCND at individual universities confirmed that their generation had not achieved a consensus around Canada's nuclear policy. At the University of Regina, student Garth Hibbert wrote an article for the campus newspaper, stating that "Canada without nuclear weapons is like a fortress without walls."³⁸ At McGill University, a poll conducted by the *McGill Daily* revealed only seventy-nine students out of 875 surveyed agreed with the CUCND's policies.³⁹ Roussopoulos responded that the poll was "partial and undemocratic," asserting that the low numbers in support of the campaign could be attributed to the fact that students had been asked if they agreed with positions, such as neutralism, that were more radical than actual CUCND policies at the time.⁴⁰ Further resistance to the CUCND was evident at St. Paul's College of the University of Manitoba, where CUCND activists were denied the use of rooms to hold their meetings by the college's students' council.⁴¹

The lack of student consensus around Canada's nuclear policy points to one area of intra-generational conflict. The CUCND's objectives and tactics, however, did set them apart from non-student peace groups in the first years of 1960s, including the Canadian Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards (CCCRH) and the Voice of Women (VOW). The CCCRH was a national group of notable Canadians formed by Mary Van Stolk of Edmonton. The group's objective was to end nuclear testing by educating the public and the government on the consequences of radioactive fallout. In the winter of 1959, the CCCRH issued its first press

³⁷ Dufresne, "Let's Not Be Cremated Equal," 20.

³⁸ Garth Hibbert, "Nuclear disarmament," *Carillon*, 7 December 1962, quoted in Pitsula, *New World Dawning*, 173.

³⁹ "CUCND Policies Rejected," *The Carleton*, 3 November 1961.

⁴⁰ "CUCND's Roussopoulos Charges Daily Poll 'Partial And Undemocratic,'" *The Carleton*, 3 November 1961.

⁴¹ Dufresne, "Let's Not Be Cremated Equal," 20.

release.⁴² Unlike the CUCND, the CCCRH did not immediately take a stand on Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons and did not attempt to acquire a mass membership. CCCRH membership was by invitation only to ensure that the group was comprised of only the most prominent and respected Canadians.⁴³ Van Stolk was convinced that the best chance of influencing Canadian nuclear policy would come from a small group of elite Canadians using tactics such as petitioning and distributing educational literature to politicians and the public.⁴⁴ Through a prominent membership and conservative tactics, the CCCRH hoped that the government would acknowledge their credibility and consequently the legitimacy of their demands.

VOW was established on 28 July 1960 in reaction to a rallying call issued by *Toronto Daily Star* columnist Lotta Dempsey, following the collapse of the Paris Summit in May 1960.⁴⁵ Dempsey appealed to Canadian mothers, stating: "Like most women, I see the Summit in terms of my own family, my small house and garden, my quiet street and neighbours."⁴⁶ In other words, Dempsey believed women should speak out against nuclear war in order to ensure the protection of their children, homes, and communities. VOW membership was comprised predominantly of middle-class wives and mothers, and was not ethnically diverse during this

⁴² Wittner, *Resisting the Bomb*, 197.

⁴³ Patricia McMahon, "The Politics of Canada's Nuclear Policy, 1957-1963" (PhD diss, University of Toronto, 1999), 144.

⁴⁴ Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), MG 28 I 389 Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (hereafter, CCND), Vol. 1, File, 'By-laws and Legal Correspondence, n.d., 1960,' "By Laws of Canadian Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards," undated.

⁴⁵ The Paris Summit brought together U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan, and French President Charles de Gaulle to discuss Berlin and nuclear-arms-control. International hopes that a peace agreement could be initiated at the conference were ruined when Khrushchev left the summit on the first day of discussions after he failed to convince Eisenhower to apologize for flying the U-2 spy plane over Soviet territory. For a detailed account on the U-2 incident and the collapse of the Paris Summit, see E. Bruce Greelhood, "Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Spy Plane, and the Summit: A Quarter-Century Retrospective," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (Winter, 1987): 95-106.

⁴⁶ Lotta Dempsey, "Private Line," *Toronto Daily Star*, 17 May 1960, 52.

period.⁴⁷ Members joined with various political backgrounds and levels of activist experience. In her study of VOW, historian Marie Hammond-Callaghan notes that group was made up of “an eclectic mix of Old Left, social gospel, interwar peace activists, the politically inexperienced, and women engaged in professional, community, and church associations.”⁴⁸ The pressure to maintain a respectable public image generated disagreements in VOW over the priorities of their activism. Many members believed that the group’s activism should foreground motherhood and the construction of positive relationships with women outside of Canada if they wished to be regarded as a respectable women’s peace group. For instance, at VOW’s first general meeting in June 1961, Jo Davis, VOW’s first vice-president and Chairman of the Public Relations and Publicity Committee, argued that “national political pressure activity should not be the dominant ‘image’ of V.O.W., but rather a strong educational program for international understanding.”⁴⁹ A debate followed over whether VOW should take a stand against Canada’s acquisition of nuclear weapons. Verna Conant, president of the VOW Ontario Provincial Committee, argued in favour of taking a strong position against nuclear arms in Canada, adding that the Ontario branch had just adopted this position on 15 June. After “considerable discussion,” VOW adopted a resolution to oppose “the acquisition of nuclear weapons by any country not now possessing them.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Tarah Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts: Canadian Women, Child Safety, and Global Insecurity* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), 93, and Kay Macpherson, *When in Doubt, Do Both: The Times of My Life* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 90.

⁴⁸ Marie Hammond-Callaghan, “Bridging and Breaching Cold War Divides: Transnational Peace Building, State Surveillance, and the Voice of Women,” in *Worth Fighting For: Canada’s Tradition of War Resistance from 1812 to the War on Terror*, eds. Lara Campbell, Michael Dawson, and Catherine Gidney (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2015), 137.

⁴⁹ LAC, MG 28 I 218 Voice of Women Fonds (hereafter VOW), Vol. 1, File, ‘1st Annual Meeting, Proceedings, 1961,’ “Voice of Women, First Annual Meeting,” June 1961.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

By June 1961, both the CCCRH and VOW joined the CUCND to call upon Canada to reject nuclear weapons. Their decisions to adopt a firm stance on Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons was made after nuclear disarmament had gained vocal support from the Liberal Party and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF).⁵¹ There were also changes within the CCCRH that could explain their decision to expand their activism to include a rejection of nuclear weapons on Canadian soil. In March 1961, F.C. Hunnius of the CUCND replaced Van Stolk as the group's executive secretary. As explained by historian Patricia McMahon, "his appointment signalled a new willingness to embrace the more radical elements of the disarmament movement," including Canadian unilateral nuclear disarmament.⁵²

Once they expanded their objectives, the CCCRH, VOW, and the CUCND worked together on a petition campaign to urge the Canadian government to refuse nuclear weapons. This united action was organized in response to the growing concern that Diefenbaker was moving closer to an agreement with American President John F. Kennedy to arm the Bomarc missiles with nuclear warheads.⁵³ The petition received over 141,000 signatures out of a population of 18 million.⁵⁴ Perhaps more significant than the number of signatures, was the campaign's success attracting the support of "prominent educators, well-known authors, powerful newspapers, provincial legislatures, and the Canadian Labor Congress."⁵⁵ The CUCND organized a seventy-two hour demonstration to follow the presentation of the petition to Diefenbaker on 6 October 1961, which some VOW members joined according to the *Globe and Mail*.⁵⁶ The newspaper described the demonstration as "quiet and orderly," adding that the

⁵¹ Dufresne, "Let's Not Be Cremated Equal," 27.

⁵² McMahon, *Essence of Indecision*, 125-126.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, xv.

⁵⁴ The population of Canada was 18,238,000 in 1961. "Estimated population of Canada, 1605 to Present," available online. <http://statcan.gc.ca/pub/98-187-x/4151287-eng.htm#ii>. Accessed 21 April 2015.

⁵⁵ Wittner, *Resisting the Bomb*, 197.

⁵⁶ Dufresne, "Let's Not Be Cremated Equal," 28.

“Royal Canadian Mounted Police in uniform kept an eye on the group.”⁵⁷ The October 1961 petition campaign marked one of the greatest successes for these Canadian anti-nuclear activists. The demonstration of public opposition to the acquisition of nuclear weapons was forceful enough to convince Diefenbaker to postpone his negotiations with Kennedy.⁵⁸

The CUCND worked further with the CCCRH while the group was expanding its objectives to include Canadian nuclear disarmament. The CUCND encouraged the CCCRH to change its name to the Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CCND), in 1962.⁵⁹ Hunnis convinced the CCCRH to adopt a broader membership-based campaign, explaining later that “the transition was only partly voluntary; if the CCCRH had not become such an organisation, another would have been created, competing for relatively scarce resources and support.”⁶⁰ According to Roussopoulos, the CUCND worked to legitimize a broader policy change for the CCCRH by “introducing CND literature and by pointing to its well-known members, including people like Bertrand Russell and J.B. Priestly.”⁶¹ The student group also sent the CCCRH a “Statement of Unity” in which they emphasized the importance of a name change, arguing that if Canadian peace activists were to be successful, they must present “the image of a unified Canadian peace movement—with one name.”⁶² The CCCRH debated their name change at the group’s annual meeting in February 1962. While some wanted to create a new name that emphasized “peace” or “survival,” in the end, the group decided that the Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CCND) would be the most effective name change to indicate their new

⁵⁷ Walter Gray, “Cleric says PM Vows No A-Arms in Peace,” *Globe and Mail*, 7 October 1961, 1.

⁵⁸ McMahon, *Essence of Indecision*, xv-xvi.

⁵⁹ Dufresne, “Let’s Not Be Cremated Equal,” 27.

⁶⁰ McMahon, “The Politics of Canada’s Nuclear Policy,” 264-265.

⁶¹ Roussopoulos, interview with Michael Maurice Dufresne, in Dufresne, “Let’s Not Be Cremated Equal,” 27.

⁶² MUA, Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament Fonds (hereafter CCND), Box 1, File 2, “Memo to all Executive Members, the Board of Directors, and all National Members of the CCCRH, 7 December 1961.

policies, their co-operative relationship with the CUCND, and their connection to the anti-nuclear movement in Britain.⁶³

The CUCND and CCND worked together on a number of initiatives. Members of both groups were involved in the production of the CCND monthly journal, *Sanity*, of which Roussopoulos was the editor-in chief. Occasionally, the two groups worked together on national actions, including a mass lobby in Ottawa in November 1962, when the CUCND and CCND interviewed ninety members of parliament on their positions on nuclear arms in Canada. These actions represented the activists' shared conviction that change could be effected through parliamentary politics.⁶⁴ Interaction between the executives of the two groups was increased when Art Pape, a student at the University of Toronto who served on the executive of the CCND, was elected federal chairman of the CUCND in February 1963. The report in *Sanity* on Pape's election declared that "much closer association between the two sections of the Campaign can be expected in the forthcoming year."⁶⁵

In 1963, the Canadian federal election became a concern for all Canadian anti-nuclear groups. While Diefenbaker remained indecisive over Canada's acquisition of nuclear warheads for the Bomarc missiles, Lester Pearson, Leader of the Liberal Party, declared on 12 January that he would accept warheads if elected, marking a reversal of the party's nuclear policy.⁶⁶ A federal election was called after Diefenbaker's government was defeated on 5 February over the nuclear issue.⁶⁷ The CUCND and CCND organized a number of regional actions during the election,

⁶³ McMahon, "The Politics of Canada's Nuclear Policy," 265. See also MUA, CCND, Box 9, File 1.

⁶⁴ LAC, Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament Fonds (hereafter CCND), Vol.1, File, 'News Releases 1962,' "Canadian Peace Week, November 5-11 Will Feature Mass Lobby at Ottawa," *The Commonwealth*, 24 October 1962.

⁶⁵ "CUCND and CCND Annual Conference Report," *Sanity* 1, no. 3 (March 1963).

⁶⁶ "Which way Canada?" *Sanity* 1, no. 3 (March 1963).

⁶⁷ Diefenbaker was indecisive on the matter of accepting nuclear warheads to arm the Bomarc missiles. For a study of the factors that contributed to his nuclear policy, see McMahon, *The Essence of Indecision*.

while maintaining a position of non-partisanship. Along with VOW, the CCND and CUCND encouraged Canadians to “seek each candidate’s position on nuclear arms” and to vote for those committed to peace.⁶⁸ In Saskatoon, the three groups organized a meeting where the city’s candidates could discuss their stance on nuclear arms in Canada, while the Montreal CUCND and Quebec CCND held a joint meeting and protest.⁶⁹ In Toronto, the CCND placed ads in the *Toronto Daily Star* and mobilized 96 clergymen to sign an anti-nuclear statement, while the University of Toronto CUCND picketed the Toronto Liberal Party office and collected signatures for a student and faculty petition to be sent to Parliament.⁷⁰

In April 1963, Pearson’s Liberals won a minority government. *Sanity* declared that without a majority government, the election results demonstrated that Canadians had not given the government a mandate to accept nuclear weapons.⁷¹ Looking back, Jim Harding echoes the sense that the anti-nuclear movement gained strength during the 1963 election, explaining: “I would say that would have been a real peak for the ban-the-bomb movement’s impact, ’63. And it may have been that that transition to SUPA was because there was the feeling we were gaining influence.”⁷² Although Pearson accepted nuclear warheads to arm the Bomarc missiles, Harding reflects that they were nevertheless beginning to see the influence of “the pressure from below” that they were building through the movement.⁷³ It was a sense of momentum, rather than defeat, which drove the CUNCD to redefine its activism following Canada’s acquisition of nuclear warheads.

⁶⁸ “CUCND and CCND Annual Conference Report,” *Sanity* 1, no. 3 (March 1963).

⁶⁹ “Campaign News,” *Sanity* 1, no. 4 (April-May 1963).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ “Canadian Voters Reject Nuclear Weapons,” *Sanity* 1, no. 4 (April-May 1963).

⁷² Jim Harding, interview with author, 27 September 2016.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

The CUCND and the CCND entered a period of reflection to determine their response to the presence of nuclear weapons in Canada. The central issue that came under debate in both groups was whether they should advocate for Canada to adopt a foreign policy of positive neutralism. This would involve calling upon Canada to withdraw from military alliances and assume a leadership role within a non-aligned bloc to contribute to the relaxation of tensions between the two superpowers. Those who advocated this position reasoned that since the Canadian government's rationale behind its acceptance of nuclear weapons was intimately connected to its responsibilities to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), it followed that anti-nuclear activists should campaign for Canada to leave military alliances. This thinking advanced a broader view for the campaign because it sought to confront deeper issues than the possession of nuclear weapons. Proponents of positive neutralism, both within the senior and student wing of the campaign, lamented that the Canadian government was simply submitting to American commands when it came to matters of foreign policy. Within this context, they argued that Canadian citizens were losing influence over the government's decisions.⁷⁴ Consequently, they began to link the anti-nuclear campaign to issues of democratic citizenship and national sovereignty.⁷⁵

After a period of debate the CUCND ultimately decided to call upon the government to adopt a policy of positive neutralism, while the CCND did not. The result of the campaign's debate over positive neutralism has been used by historian Michael Maurice Dufresne to portray

⁷⁴ This position was asserted by Farley Mowat, Dr. R.S. Bigelow, and Major W.H. Pope in *Our Generation Against Nuclear War*, 1, no.1, Fall 1961.

⁷⁵ Historians José Igartua and Bryan Palmer have both argued that the 1960s shattered a Canadian identity rooted in British heritage. Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution National Identities in English Canada, 1945-71* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), and Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*. While Canada was attempting to assert its independence and identity during the 1960s, the CUCND focused its critique on the Canadian government's submission to the United States on the nuclear issue. Later, SUPA also criticized Canada for being a "branch-plant society" that was losing its economic independence to the United States. James Laxer and Art Pape, "Youth and Canadian Politics," *Our Generation*, 1, no.3 (November 1966).

the contrasting natures of the radical students in the CUCND and the moderate “adult” activists of the CCND.⁷⁶ The records of the debates reveal that there was a mix of moderate and radical voices in both groups. While the CUCND was ultimately more receptive to a policy change, attention to the voices in the debate illuminate examples of both intra-generational conflict, and inter-generational agreement.

Among the CCND supporters of positive neutralism was thirty-year old labour leader John Lee, who served on the group’s Board of Directors. In an open letter to the CCND, Lee advocated not only for Canada’s withdrawal from military alliances, but also for a peace movement based on non-violent resistance and personal sacrifice. He called for the “radicals” of the group to form a new movement that would challenge the sources of war, arguing that “dealing with the symptoms is not as important as dealing with the basic cause of a disease.”⁷⁷ Lee’s letter, along with a CCND draft policy statement for positive neutralism, sparked a heated debate within the CCND. While some CCND executive members, such as Professor C.B. Macpherson of the University of Toronto, supported a position of positive neutralism for Canada, other members including the CCND British Columbia branch, argued that it would result in a loss of membership support.⁷⁸ The future of the campaign was the central concern of the CCND’s meeting of the Board of Directors in October 1963. CCND President, Judge J.T. Thorson, was adamant that the group continue to campaign for nuclear disarmament within NATO, while Lee continued to push for Canada’s withdrawal from the military alliance.⁷⁹ In the end, the Board of Directors approved a policy that renounced military

⁷⁶ Dufresne, “‘Let’s Not Be Cremated Equal,’” 30.

⁷⁷ LAC, CND, Vol. 1, File, ‘Meetings—Minutes and Reports,’ Letter from John Lee to “all those who take PEACE personally and seriously,” 18 October 1963.

⁷⁸ C.B. Macpherson, “Beyond the Nuclear Arms Issue,” *Canadian Dimension*, Dec.-Jan. 1963-1964.

⁷⁹ LAC, CND, Vol. 1, File, ‘Meetings—Minutes and Reports,’ “Minutes of the Board of Directors of the CCND,” 25 October 1963.

alliances in principle, but did not include a call for Canada to withdraw.⁸⁰ This change was enough to prompt Thorson to resign as president of the CCND.⁸¹

The CUCND debated the policy of positive neutralism amongst themselves at their Federal Conference meeting in November 1963. American pacifist, David McReynolds, delivered the keynote address, in which he argued for Canadian withdrawal from NATO. Born in 1929, McReynolds was a staff member of the War Resisters League. His address was debated amongst the CUCND conference delegates who, according to the *McGill Daily*, held competing views on the issue, “from continued, non-nuclear membership to repudiation in favor of the ‘non-armed, non-aligned bloc.’”⁸² In the case of the CUCND, the more moderate voices did not win out and the group decided to endorse a foreign policy of positive neutralism for Canada.

The CUCND’s endorsement of a policy of positive neutralism for Canada was significant in the group’s transition from a single-issue campaign for nuclear disarmament, to a movement seeking a radical analysis of the social and political conditions that prevented peace. Elements of New Leftist thought that were promoted by activists of varying ages should be recognized in the notion of positive neutralism. This is especially evident when studying the themes of generation, New Leftism, and positive neutralism in the British context. In Britain, self-identified New Leftists were already on the scene by 1960. In 1959, two factions joined to develop a New Leftist analysis in the journal, *New Left Review*. The first faction was comprised of former members of the Communist Party of Great Britain, who resigned their membership after the party leaders

⁸⁰ Dufresne, “‘Let’s Not Be Cremated Equal,’” 31-32. The adopted policy statement was as follows: “CCND is opposed in principle to, and will devote itself to an educational campaign against, the system of military alliances, as being obsolete, and as having to be superseded by general and complete disarmament, a competent world authority, and a higher standard of life and productivity for the developing nations.” LAC, CND, Vol. 1, File, ‘Meetings—Minutes and Reports,’ “Basic Policy Adopted at a Special General Meeting,” Montreal, 25-27 October 1963.

⁸¹ LAC, CCND, Vol. 1, File, ‘Meetings—Minutes and Reports,’ “Minutes of the Board of Directors of the CCND,” 25 October 1963.

⁸² MUA, CUS, Box 8, File, ‘CUCND,’ untitled report by Charles Shannon for the *McGill Daily*, 9 November 1963.

refused to condemn the Soviet Union's violent suppression of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956. In the summer of 1956, this group began to edit a quarterly journal called the *New Reasoner*, in which they theorized on how to restore the "humane and libertarian features of the communist tradition."⁸³ The second group was comprised of students from Oxford University, who explored the relevance of socialism to the totality of human relations and activities in their journal, *Universities and Left Review*. In 1959, their journal merged with the *New Reasoner* to form the *New Left Review*.⁸⁴ As British historian Madeleine Davis explains, this publication "was intended to give shape and direction to this unstable, diverse entity...that became the New Left."⁸⁵ From its inception, British New Leftism was a product of inter-generational connections.

British New Leftists viewed the anti-nuclear campaign as an important site of struggle in the development of a new socialism. They were drawn to the CND because it seemed open to the possibility of advocating for Britain to adopt a foreign policy of positive neutralism. British New Leftists argued that withdrawing from NATO and forming alliances with other non-aligned countries, especially within the Third World, "could advance moves toward political self-determination in decolonizing nations and help break the grip of superpower politics, improving the prospects for socialism everywhere."⁸⁶ The CND began to call upon Britain to adopt a policy of positive neutralism in 1962 and, as previously discussed, the Canadian CUCND followed suit in November 1963. Positive neutralism was an element of anti-nuclear activism that was intimately connected to the ideas of New Leftists in Britain who included Old Leftists and university students alike.

⁸³ E.P. Thompson quoted in Wade Matthews, *The New Left, National Identity, and the Breakup of Britain* (Boston: Brill Academic Pub., 2013), 3.

⁸⁴ The first edition came out in 1960.

⁸⁵ Madeleine Davis, "The Origins of the British New Left," in *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956-1977*, eds. Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 47.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 50.

An acknowledgement of positive neutralism as part of an emerging New Leftist analysis challenges the historiographical narrative that locates the CUCND's radicalizing influences solely in the examples of American students in SDS and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). For example, historian David Churchill argues that by 1963, the CUCND began to adopt a "generational analysis...predicated on a conceptualization of students as political agents," reflecting "the growing influence of the US student movement."⁸⁷ American student groups certainly served as models for Canadian New Leftists, and the importance of this cross-border relationship will be explored further in chapter three; however, American activists were not solely responsible for the CUCND's re-orientation, nor did they automatically impose the concept of a "generational gap" onto the group. To be sure, the CUCND employed a language of generational difference in its literature, but as the following section will argue, an analysis of how the CUCND understood their "generation" demonstrates that a student-based identity existed alongside an identification with an older generation of activists, who promoted a more comprehensive critique of the atomic age.

The CUCND's "Generation"

The CUCND drew upon a language of generational identity, reflected by the title of the group's quarterly journal, *Our Generation Against Nuclear War* and by seminars such as, "War or Peace? Let Our Generation Lead."⁸⁸ An examination of the CUCND's pamphlets, newsletters, and quarterly journal, demonstrates that they described their "generation" in two central ways. At times, a division between the young and the old functioned as the defining feature. This was most evident in contexts when the group was appealing to fellow students to campaign for

⁸⁷ Churchill, "SUPA, Selma, and Stevenson," 38.

⁸⁸ MUA, SUPA, Box 1, File, 'CUCND Toronto, 1960-1961,' "National CUCND Conference," 5 September 1961.

disarmament, warning: “if the younger generation doesn’t, then who will?”⁸⁹ The view that, as young people, they had a strategic role to play in the achievement of peace, was forming within a context of increasing student activism. It is this context that has been most commonly used as the backdrop for historical narratives of the CUNCD’s development. Student-led actions were proving to be a powerful force in the movement for black civil rights, while leaders of the American SDS were launching a movement for radical social change as a generation that was “looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit.”⁹⁰ Later in 1964, francophone students in Quebec introduced the concept of student syndicalism on the Canadian scene, which viewed students as young intellectual workers with a responsibility to work as social actors.⁹¹ Students in the peace movement came to identify themselves as important social activists, as demonstrated by the results of the Camp Sunnybrook Conference in Echo Lake, Pennsylvania, which brought Canadian, American, and British student peace activists together in June 1962.⁹² The group produced the “International Declaration on the Student Peace Movement,” which asserted: “In every sense unconditional resistance to the perpetuation of this age of total destruction must be the ethic of our generation if our lives are to be meaningful. It is to this we pledge ourselves—the common cause of all mankind.”⁹³ This declaration presents one of the earliest examples of the student peace movement’s interest in addressing structural issues that contributed to the existence of war, rather than in the singular objective of nuclear disarmament. As the students asserted in their declaration: “In order to build a united world peace movement, we need to turn

⁸⁹ “Announces November 11 March,” *Sheet*, 3 November 1961, quoted in Pitsula, *New World Dawning*, 171.

⁹⁰ “Port Huron Statement,” (1962).

⁹¹ Barbara Godard, “Quebec, the National Question and English-Canadian Student Activism in the 1960s: The Rise of Student Syndicalism,” in *The Sixties in Canada*, 286.

⁹² The CUCND sent three delegates to the conference.

⁹³ MUA, SUPA, Box 14, File, ‘CUCND Clippings, Publications and Documents, 1963-1964,’ “International Declaration on the Student Peace Movement,” Camp Sunnybrook, June 1962.

our attention to the question of social change.”⁹⁴ These examples demonstrate that a student-based identity in the peace movement was certainly developing in the early 1960s. Nevertheless, this identification cannot be studied in isolation. Older activists were also incorporated into the CUCND’s definition of their “generation” and served as important influences in their transition into SUPA.

The CUCND’s “generation” included intellectuals and activists, not defined by age, who linked nuclear disarmament to a broader movement for social change. In Peter Boothroyd’s memory, the CUCND’s activism was not primarily understood around a generational or student identity, stating:

I’m reflecting back on what I felt and thought at the time, and my knowledge, so far as I can remember of what others thought and felt, is it had nothing to do with being students...There was...a journal put out by people in Montreal edited by Dimitrios Roussopoulos and it’s called *Our Generation Against Nuclear War*, but it had very little to do with being a generational issue, as I recall.⁹⁵

This perspective is echoed by Jim Harding, who explained: “I do not ever feel that we had a generational gap in CUCND...The Voice of Women was an inspiration in Saskatoon. I was glad they invited me to their meetings because I could learn so much from them. So, I didn’t ever feel there was a generational rebellion going on in CUCND.”⁹⁶ Peggy Morton’s perspective further supports the contention that a youth-based generational identity was not important to the CUCND, explaining: “I think that came later. I don’t see that as really key in the early sixties. You know, it was later in the sixties...that you really have a movement of the youth taking the lead on many fronts, or seeing themselves as taking the lead.”⁹⁷ Peter Warrian also makes the distinction between the early and late 1960s in his observation of

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Boothroyd, interview.

⁹⁶ Harding, interview.

⁹⁷ Morton, interview.

youth politics: “That youth identity, generational identity, it becomes very important. But if we were somehow slicing a tree and looking at the rings...it’s in my recollection of how I lived it myself, the 67-8-9 period is the first really autonomous definition of that youth identity politics.”⁹⁸ In 1967, Warrian was elected as president of the Canadian Union of Students for the 1968-9 term on a New Leftist platform.⁹⁹ While his increased involvement in the campus wing of the movement may colour his periodization of the sixties, the broader context of the period also points to an intensification of youth-based politics across the globe in the last years of the decade. As historian Doug Owram has observed: “By 1968 the power of youth seemed to be everywhere.”¹⁰⁰ That year, Canadian New Leftists witnessed an upsurge of student unrest in France, the United States, Mexico, and Czechoslovakia, and organized their own direct actions on university campuses in 1968-9 including, Simon Fraser University, the University of Saskatchewan Regina Campus, and Sir George Williams University.¹⁰¹ Historian Steven Hewitt calls the 1968-70 period the “crisis years” for the RCMP Security Service, as they gathered information on New Leftist campus-based activists and organizations. The campus was not the only site of increased youth-based dissent. As Ian Milligan has demonstrated: “By 1968, labour leaders were grappling with youth unrest.”¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Peter Warrian, Interview with author, 11 May 2016. Jim Harding also divided the sixties period in this way in his reflection on youth culture, stating: “The counter-cultural and generational gap stuff, I’m not sure it was even that strong in the early years of SUPA. I think that’s late sixties, because that’s when it was becoming a political factor.” Harding, interview.

⁹⁹ Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 82-83.

¹⁰⁰ Owram, *Born at the Right Time*, 280.

¹⁰¹ For an overview on these international influences on Canadian New Leftists, see Dimitri Roussopoulos, “Canada: 1968 and the New Left,” available online. https://www.ghi-dc.org/fileadmin/user_upload/GHI_Washington/Publications/Supplements/Supplement_6/bus6_039.pdf. Accessed 14 May 2017. For the events at Simon Fraser University, see Ian Milligan, “Coming off the Mountain: Forging an Outward Looking New Left at Simon Fraser University,” *BC Studies: The British Columbian Quarterly* 171 (Autumn 2011): 69-91. For Regina Campus, see Roberta Lexier, “Dreaming of a Better World: Student Rebellion in 1960s Regina,” *Past Imperfect* 10 (2004): 79-98. For Sir George Williams University, see David Austin, *Fear of a Black Nation: Race, Sex, and Security in Sixties Montreal* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2013).

¹⁰² Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 24.

From strikes to university occupations, 1968 witnessed an explosion of youth activism in Canada and around the globe.

Insights gained from oral histories reveal that an identification with youth-based politics was not as strongly felt in the early 1960s as it was in the late 1960s. It is against the wider context of intensified expressions of youth rebellion in the late 1960s that we must understand these memories. There were of course several indications of youth and student-based organization in the early sixties under the CUCND, as noted at the beginning of this section. In addition, the CUCND chapters were based around the university campus, and all but one of the editors of *Our Generation Against Nuclear War* were under the age of thirty. Furthermore, as will be seen in chapter two, women who joined the CUCND connected their activism to a student identity. At the same time, the development of New Leftism within the CUCND in the early years of the decade was shaped by inter-generational relationships, as demonstrated through a reading of the campaign's journal.

The pages of *Our Generation Against Nuclear War* were filled with the writings of senior intellectuals and activists, such as Bertrand Russell, who linked nuclear disarmament to radical social change; J.B Priestly, who viewed nuclear weapons as an expression of anti-democratic decision-making; and A.J. Muste, who argued that an attack on social issues was also an attack on the Cold War. Born in 1885, Muste was a radical pacifist and an advisor to the American civil rights group, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). The CUCND circulated his paper, "The Primacy of Peace," in December 1964 before their federal conference in Regina. Muste's paper made the case that the peace movement needed to treat the problems of racial discrimination, economic inequality, and peace as a single issue, an orientation that the CUCND adopted when they re-established as SUPA. Reflecting on his

influence in 1968, the editors of *Our Generation Against Nuclear War* wrote: “We always maintained...that the peace movement had more of a revolutionary potential than its initial nuclear disarmament phase, and this we attempted to demonstrate...by turning readers attention to the writings of A.J. Muste.”¹⁰³

The notion that the peace movement required a radical analysis of the conditions that created a world focused on war was an important entry point into New Leftist thought. This view was espoused by students and senior activists alike. While the CUCND explored this type of analysis editorially in *Our Generation Against Nuclear War*, it was not until their campaign failed to convince the Canadian government to reject nuclear weapons that they began to take actions to confront the root causes of the nuclear arms race.¹⁰⁴ Beginning in 1964, the CUCND adopted two New Leftist strategies: community-based research and organizing, and non-violent civil disobedience.

Community Research and Non-Violent Civil Disobedience in the CUCND

The CUCND’s actions in 1964 reflected a New Leftist strategy of using extra-parliamentary activism to bring about structural social change. The first action to exhibit this orientation was a community research project in North Bay, Ontario, which was the site of three defence installations: the Bomarc nuclear missile base, the Semi-Automatic Ground Environment centre, and a Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) station.¹⁰⁵ Over the summer of 1964, twelve CUCND students moved to the city to conduct a research study of the social and economic effects of the bases, the attitudes of the residents toward them, and potential

¹⁰³ “Editorial Notes,” *Our Generation*, 6, no. 1 and 2 (Double Issue) (May-June-July 1968), 4.

¹⁰⁴ Dufresne, “‘Let’s Not Be Cremated Equal,’” 29.

¹⁰⁵ MUA, SUPA, Box 7, File, ‘CUCND Toronto Office Documents and Clippings,’ “Student Union For Peace Action North Bay/’64 –Mid-Point Report,” undated.

alternatives for a community “organized for war.”¹⁰⁶ The project participants described their initiative as “a fundamental break with the past traditions of the Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament,” adding that “the very name of the organization now seems old fashioned and should the project prove successful, it will also be grossly inadequate.”¹⁰⁷ This new approach generated excitement among its participants, who felt that they were engaging in something meaningful. As one of the project leaders, Liora Proctor, wrote in June 1964 during the early stages of the project: “It is hard to explain the spirit the group has generated. Everyone seems to feel that we are doing the most radical action of all since we will be more ‘relevant’ than peace marches often are.”¹⁰⁸ Proctor’s statement reflected a general New Leftist notion evident in the CUCND, and other North American groups such as SNCC and SDS, that marches and demonstrations alone were ineffective, and that radical action involved confronting the “real root of power.”¹⁰⁹

In North Bay, the CUCND sought to discover the reasons for the community’s support for the bases and to foster grassroots leadership for the peace movement. This type of community organizing work, centred on the notion of participatory democracy, was inspired by the examples of SNCC and SDS which were both engaged in community projects in the United States. While SNCC and SDS offered models for community organizing work, the innovation of the strategy can be linked to an older activist tradition in the Southern United States. In his study of civil rights organizing in Mississippi, Charles Payne identifies SNCC as “an organization that owed a great deal to a much older generation of activists,” naming Ella Baker, Septima Clark, and Myles

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., Box 8, File, ‘North Bay Project Correspondence—Participants,’ “North Bay: The Research Project,” undated.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., Letter to Frank Showler from Liora Proctor, 4 June 1964.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., “North Bay: The Research Project,” undated.

Horton as direct influences.¹¹⁰ Carol Mueller has also advanced this argument, explaining that the origins of participatory democracy have been misunderstood by historians who argue that it emerged from “the intellectual core of students” in SDS.¹¹¹ She asserts that Ella Baker should be credited for first articulating the tenets of participatory democracy, adding that it was under Baker’s leadership that SNCC was founded. Participatory democracy was a central premise in SNCC, and as Mueller argues, it was after SNCC that SDS modelled itself.¹¹² It is necessary then, to note the inter-generational connections that produced the strategies employed by New Leftist student groups such as SNCC and SDS.¹¹³

In North Bay, the CUCND performed attitude surveys and found that the majority of residents welcomed the defence installations for their economic, rather than military function. Based on these results, the CUCND concluded that the community’s concerns for industry were sustaining their support for the bases, and that an action plan to facilitate industrialization and training were needed in the area. The plan generated interest among North Bay residents and a meeting was called by the Mayor of North Bay and the Townships of Widdifield and West Ferris to take place on 20 October 1964. At the meeting, a resolution was unanimously passed for the

¹¹⁰ Charles Payne, *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 101. Ella Baker (b. 1903) began her work as a civil rights activist in the 1940s with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Septima Clark (b.1898) taught literacy and citizenship across various rural African-American communities and established a citizenship school program in 1956 that was foundational to the 1962 Voter Education Project, led by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and other black civil rights groups. Myles Horton (b. 1905) operated the inter-racial Highlander School which became an important site for the growth of civil rights activism in the 1950s.

¹¹¹ Carol Mueller, “Ella Baker and the Origins of ‘Participatory Democracy,’” in *Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Torchbearers and Trailblazers, 1941-1965*, eds. Vicki L. Crawford, Jacqueline Anne Rouse and Barbara Woods (Brooklyn, New York: Carlson Publishing, 1990), 53.

¹¹² Mueller, “Ella Baker and the Origins of ‘Participatory Democracy,’” 51-52. I follow Mueller’s definition of participatory democracy which includes: “(1) an appeal for grass roots involvement of people throughout society in the decisions that control their lives; (2) the minimization of hierarchy and the associated emphasis on expertise and professionalism as a basis for leadership; and (3) a call for direct action as an answer to fear, alienation, and intellectual detachment.”

¹¹³ Andrew Hunt, “How New was the New Left?” in *The New Left Revisited*, eds. John McMillan and Paul Buhle (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), 145 and Owrarn, *Born at the Right Time*, 221-224. Community organizer Saul Alinsky was another source of inspiration for American and Canadian New Leftists.

tri-municipal Department of Industry to begin a conversion study. The CUCND's community research resulted in action. Their attitude survey among residents revealed that the community's concerns were centred on economic and industrial growth. This work was continued under SUPA which helped design the research and acquire funding for the conversion study.¹¹⁴ Although the study did not result in the conversion of the bases into industrial training facilities, this early experiment with community research and organizing generated enough promise to make community organizing a central strategy within SUPA, as will be discussed in chapter four.

Nonviolent civil disobedience was another strategy that the CUCND began to seriously consider as they expanded their peace activism. Civil disobedience is a radical strategy because it poses a challenge to a law.¹¹⁵ It was promoted by senior radical pacifists writing for *Our Generation Against Nuclear War*, and was also proving to be effective in the movement for black civil rights in the United States. It was seen as both a strategy to produce a mass movement, and as an alternative to war as a form of conflict resolution. Based on this view, the CUCND organized two demonstrations of non-violent civil disobedience outside the Bomarc missile base in La Macaza, Quebec in the summer of 1964, both to assert their opposition to the warheads, and to show French-Canadian separatists the “non-violent alternative” to the militant tactics of groups such as the Front de libération du Québec (FLQ) and the Quebec Revolutionary Committee.¹¹⁶ As historian Bruce Douville observes in his study of the demonstrations at La Macaza, the CUCND linked the presence of the missile base to issues of Quebec sovereignty, arguing that the federal government imposed the base on the community without consultation.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴MUA, SUPA, Box 7, “Student Union For Peace Action North Bay/'64 –Mid-Point Report,” undated.

¹¹⁵ Bruce Douville, “Project La Macaza: A Study of Two Canadian Peace Protests in the 1960s,” in *Worth Fighting For*, 163.

¹¹⁶ MUA, SUPA, Box 10, File, ‘Operation St. Jean Baptiste—Reference Material,’ Letter from Dan Daniels, André Cardinal, and Dimitri Roussopoulos 28 March 1964.

¹¹⁷ Douville, “Project La Macaza.” 164.

The CUCND also identified Quebec as a strategic location to organize an act of civil disobedience against nuclear weapons because of French Canada's "tradition of opposition to war."¹¹⁸ Originally named "Operation St. Jean Baptiste," the first demonstration of civil disobedience sought to make a connection between a sense of national pride, and the responsibility to protest against the Bomarc missile base.¹¹⁹

The CUCND's actions at the missile base in Quebec attracted diverse support. Inter-generational cooperation was evident in the organizing committee, comprised of Roussopoulos (who was no longer a student), André Cardinal (a French-Canadian student and nationalist), and Dan Daniels (a forty-two-year-old former Communist Party member). The first action began on 21 June when seventeen demonstrators sat outside the base in opposition to nuclear arms. These were not all students, nor were they all members of the CUCND. Among them were Art Pape, chairman of the CUCND; Eilert Frerichs, a United Church minister; Ellen Gautschi, a typist and actress, active in Montreal peace activism; and Mabel Egerton, a blind pianist and typist.¹²⁰ As the seventeen demonstrators sat in front of the gate to the base for twenty-three hours, students from the Student Christian Movement (SCM), and the Toronto and Montreal CUCNDs held a vigil around them.¹²¹ By 7:00am the next morning, police began to drag demonstrators into the ditch on the side of the road. The demonstrators followed the training in non-violent civil disobedience that they had received from Robert Gore, an African-American civil rights activist with CORE. Each time the demonstrators were picked up, they offered no physical resistance as they were dragged to the ditch. After being thrown in, they stood up, walked to the gate, and sat

¹¹⁸ MUA, SUPA, Box 10,, File, 'Operation St. Jean Baptiste—Correspondence, background information, etc.,' Ian Gentles, "An argument for civil disobedience at La Macaza on Sept. 7," undated.

¹¹⁹ Douville, "Project La Macaza," 164.

¹²⁰ For the names and occupations of all seventeen demonstrators, see MUA, SUPA, Box 10, File, 'Operation St. Jean Baptiste—Correspondence, background information, etc.' Project La Macaza Bulletin, 6 July 1964.

¹²¹ For more on the Christian elements of the demonstration and the role of the SCM, see Douville, "Project La Macaza."

back down. This continued for two hours, until both sides began to relax their positions and talk to one another, while sharing cigarettes on the road.¹²²

The demonstration was covered at length in *Maclean's* by David Lewis Stein. The sub-heading of his article stated: “‘Non-violent civil disobedience’ came to Canada this summer. Not much was accomplished. But in their own way the radicals scored a point.”¹²³ The demonstrators successfully broke down some of the barriers between themselves and the police at the missile base through their nonviolence. On the morning of 22 June, the demonstrators formed a semi-circle in front of the line of guards at the gate and held a prayer service, led by Rev. Frerichs. The demonstration concluded with the demonstrators and guards shaking hands. In an article written for *Scope*, Jim Harding of the University of Regina CUCND wrote that “the action ended with a ‘communion’ among the guards and demonstrators, and a victory was won for the peace movement.”¹²⁴

The success of the June demonstration prompted the organization of a second action of non-violent civil disobedience, this time with fifty-nine participants. The demonstrators included long-standing members of the CUCND, baby boomers in their first years of university, members of the SCM, and a number of non-students, such as John Lee of the CCND, Diana Edwards, a forty-one-year-old housewife from Montreal, and individuals in the working force varying in age from nineteen to forty-two. This broad age demographic was noted by the CCND publication *Sanity*, which commented that the action attracted “a larger number of older people.”¹²⁵ The demonstration began on 7 September 1964 when CUCND spokesman Dan Daniels approached

¹²² David Lewis Stein, “The peaceniks go to La Macaza,” *Maclean's*, 8 August 1964, 10-11, and 36-37.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹²⁴ Jim Harding, “Project La Macaza,” *Scope*, December 1964, 23.

¹²⁵ “La Macaza,” *Sanity* 2, no. 4 (October 1964), 6.

the commander of the Bomarc missile base and asked that the group be granted entry to “reclaim it for peaceful purposes.”¹²⁶ Harding reported on what followed:

When the request was refused, the demonstrators formed into lines of ten people each and, walking between the two rows of vigilers, proceeded towards the gate singing ‘We Shall Overcome’, partly in French and partly in English... When the first line reached the barrier, each person asked to enter and reclaim the base and, upon refusal, announced that they would sit down for 48 hours symbolizing their non-cooperation with the military method of handling conflict.¹²⁷

After 30 hours, the military opened a second gate to the base. The demonstrators reached a consensus to block both the main and secondary gates, effectively preventing access to the base. As Harding reported, this “led to a reaction from the military that showed the violence and physical force underlying military institutions,” using up to six guards to drag individual demonstrators to a nearby ditch.¹²⁸ Throughout the demonstration, the activists offered no physical resistance.

This act of civil disobedience did not produce the same results as the June action. Both Harding and *Sanity* attributed the difference to the fact that the guards were instructed to respond aggressively, and that they avoided putting guards on duty who had had previous contact with the demonstrators in June.¹²⁹ Nevertheless, the action was not a failure. It gained the attention of Parliament when William Dean Howe of the New Democratic Party (NDP) asked the Associate Minister of National Defence, Lucien Cardin, if he could confirm reports that the RCAF officers responded to the La Macaza demonstrators with excessive force. Cardin responded the next day that ““a minimum of force was used.””¹³⁰ This response was based on interviews conducted with

¹²⁶ Harding, “Project La Macaza,” 25. They wished to reclaim the base to be used as a summer camp for underprivileged children, MUA, SUPA, Box 10, File, ‘Operation St. Jean Baptiste—Correspondence, background information, etc.,’ “What’s going on,” issued by Project La Macaza, undated.

¹²⁷ Harding, “Project La Macaza,” 27.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹²⁹ “La Macaza,” *Sanity* 2, no. 4 (October 1964).

¹³⁰ Lucien Cardin quoted in “House of Commons,” *Sanity* 2, no. 4 (October 1964).

the commanding officer of the base. Unsatisfied with this reply, Tommy Douglas, Leader of the NDP, demanded that Prime Minister Pearson investigate the matter further. Interestingly, the demonstrators themselves were not supportive of an investigation into the officers' actions.¹³¹ They sent a letter to Pearson explaining that it was against the spirit of non-violent civil disobedience to participate in an investigation that would result in the punishment of the officers. They stated that "an inquiry which attempts to level blame on the individual RCAF man would in our view be false and hypocritical. The heart of the inquiry must go to the State and the military establishment. Such an inquiry, we believe, could lead to the lessening of violence."¹³² This response illuminates the demonstrators' perspective that their activism needed to uncover the root causes of war and violence.

The two demonstrations at La Macaza also led to the establishment of a new pacifist group in Montreal, the Movement for Non-Violent Revolution/Le Mouvement Pour La Révolution Non-Violente.¹³³ The group was spearheaded by Roussopoulos, Cardinal, and Daniels, who had led the actions in La Macaza. A.J. Muste delivered the keynote address at the group's founding conference in December 1964.¹³⁴ Muste served as both a model of the non-violent approach and as a leader of the analysis that social injustice and war should be treated as a single issue. Although his impact on New Leftist thought has been described by Roussopoulos as "legendary" and "enormous," few Canadian historians have recognized his contributions, emphasizing instead the influences of American student groups.¹³⁵ The demonstrations at La Macaza also showed enough promise to make non-violent civil disobedience a central theme of

¹³¹ "House of Commons," *Sanity* 2, no. 4 (October 1964).

¹³² "A Letter to the Prime Minister," *Sanity* 2, no. 4 (October 1964).

¹³³ "Canadian Pacifists form Movement," *Sanity* 2, no. 6 (January 1965).

¹³⁴ "Muste to Attend Montreal Conference," *Sanity* 2, no. 5 (December 1964).

¹³⁵ The exception here is Bruce Michael Douville. Roussopoulos quoted in Douville, "The Uncomfortable Pew," 110.

discussion at the CUCND federal conference in 1964, at which they would adopt a social action program rooted in nonviolence, and re-establish themselves as SUPA.

The Founding of SUPA, December 1964

The CUCND's development into a movement that linked peace to wider issues of social justice was formalized at the founding conference of the Student Union for Peace Action held in Regina in December 1964. Reflecting on the period before the conference, John Conway recalls the momentum that was building toward a redefinition of the CUCND's activism, explaining: "We began to push on the national council of the CUCND that we had to change the organization—not just us—there were other people too across the country, and that's what led to the founding of SUPA."¹³⁶ Support within the CUCND for a broader program was reflected in letters from across the country to the national council in Toronto. In the fall of 1964, Don Goldstein of the McGill CUNCD wrote that the group had attracted twenty new people who were "willing to contribute actively to a new CUCND with a broader focus."¹³⁷ Another letter from a CUCND member in Kingston enthusiastically endorsed a name change to reflect the group's movement toward a "social action policy."¹³⁸ A name change was further advocated by branches in western Canada, which were interested in "new policy and programming."¹³⁹ The CUCND Regina branch, according to a report from Jim Harding, was "interested in the role of the university in radicalizing society [and] community organizing with minority groups...in relationship to the peace movement."¹⁴⁰ As Peter Boothroyd recalls, many individuals who had become active in the CUCND for the single purpose of banning the bomb began to view their

¹³⁶ John Conway, Interview with author, 19 May 2016.

¹³⁷ MUA, SUPA, Box 2, File, 'Toronto Office Correspondence, October-December 1964, Letter from Don Goldstein to Art Pape, 12 October 1964.

¹³⁸ Ibid., Letter from Reg to Art Pape, October 1964.

¹³⁹ Ibid., File, 'Toronto Office Correspondence, 1964-1965,' "CUCND National Staff Meeting," 21 October 1964.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., File, 'Toronto Office Correspondence, October-December 1964,' Letter from Jim Harding to Planning Committee, National CUNCD, 20 October 1964.

anti-nuclear activism as part of a broader network of social justice, reflecting: “I think there was a growing awareness of liberals like myself at that time... I think that even people like me became aware of the broader issues. The social context for war-making became of more and more interest to us.”¹⁴¹

This interest was crystalized between 28 December 1964 and 1 January 1965, when approximately 150 activists gathered in Regina to determine the future of the CUNCD. *Sanity* reported that the themes of “direct social action and decentralization” dominated conference discussions.¹⁴² As a result, the group formally affirmed a commitment to a wider program for social change, reflected by their new name, the Student Union for Peace Action. As this chapter has explored, the CUCND’s decisions to call upon Canada to leave military alliances, engage in non-violent civil disobedience, and study the economic and social conditions that supported war, were all significant foundations for SUPA’s New Leftist movement, and were developed out of inter-generational relationships in the peace movement. These foundations connected to five of the six principles adopted by SUPA at the Regina conference, which included: Canadian non-alignment; the inter-relation between peace and social issues; the notion that peace requires fundamental social change; opposition to the nation-state system; and nonviolence.

Student syndicalism was adopted as the sixth point, and reflected the influence of the student movement, particularly in Quebec.¹⁴³ Linking the responsibility of the student to a program for social action, one paper for the Regina conference declared: “The seeds of a new renaissance are present in the university today. There is a growing indignation with our societies which have yet to rid the world of poverty, discrimination and the bomb. There is a new

¹⁴¹ Peter Boothroyd, interview.

¹⁴² “SUPA Conference Report Regina 64/65,” *Sanity* 2, no. 7 (February, 1965), 6.

¹⁴³ “A New Policy: Student Unionism Accepted,” *Sanity* 2, no. 7 (1965), 7.

readiness to act.”¹⁴⁴ SUPA’s statement of purpose further emphasized the role of the student to affect social change, declaring: “As a social activist the student can create unions of people around social issues related to peace, and thereby mobilize power behind ideas. The university could have an important role to play in this peace action.”¹⁴⁵ Looking back on SUPA’s statement of purpose, Jim Harding, who was elected as SUPA’s federal chairman, reflected on the group’s understanding of the link between the university and social change, explaining: “I reread part of the statement and it’s pretty clear in there. We’re students looking for a vision that links the threat of war to fundamental social change and we still see the university as central to the struggle.”¹⁴⁶

SUPA’s wider vision of social activism was accompanied by structural changes to the group. The decision was made at the Regina conference to replace the centralized governance of the CUCND with a decentralized regional structure, comprised of the Maritimes, Ontario, the Prairies, British Columbia, and Quebec, which was defined as a “nation” rather than region.¹⁴⁷ Each region elected their own chairman and council, held their own regional conferences, determined the activities in their area, and selected one representative to sit on the Federal Council. In addition to the regional representatives, the Federal Council included five elected members and a chairman. The attendees of the Regina conference elected Dick Woodsworth, John Conway, Danny Drache, Dimitri Roussopoulos, and Harvey Feit, to the council, and Jim Harding as chairman.¹⁴⁸ Reflecting on his election, Harding contends that he was likely chosen because he was based in the west, and there was a widespread discontent in the CUCND over the

¹⁴⁴ MUA, SUPA, Box 14, File, ‘CUCND Publications and Library,’ “The University & Social Action in the Nuclear Age,” (November, 1964).

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., Box 11, File, ‘SUPA Founding Conference Regina, Dec. 1964,’ “Student Union for Peace Action, Statement of Purpose,” undated, but ca. December 1964.

¹⁴⁶ Harding, interview.

¹⁴⁷ “A Report on the New SUPA-structure: Four Regions and Quebec,” *Sanity* 2, no. 7 (February, 1965).

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

centralization of decision-making in Toronto. He explains: “I think I had the Quebec and the B.C. and the Prairie vote, because there was already the feeling that the secretariat of the CUCND had been too controlled from the east.”¹⁴⁹ The Federal Council, as described by SUPA member Jim Mayor in 1966, was designed to act as “the decision-making body of SUPA which acts in accordance to policies laid down by membership conferences.”¹⁵⁰ The membership conferences, open to all SUPA members, made decisions by consensus on issues of policy and structure. To avoid a top-down approach to decision-making, the Federal Council was not given the authority to make major decisions on these issues; rather, their purpose was to “discuss these matters and help focus the membership.”¹⁵¹ While council elections were expected to occur annually at membership conferences, none were held. The only other election was held in Goderich, Ontario in September 1967, when it was decided to disband SUPA and establish the New Left Committee (NLC) in its place. The election of Linda Seese as chairwoman, and the one-third representation of women on the NLC, reflected a response to the demands that SUPA women were issuing for greater gender equality in the movement, as will be explored in chapter six.

The Regina conference consolidated the various influences and pressures that were directing the CUNCD toward a New Leftist orientation, including a structural analysis of the issues underlying war and violence; the student syndicalism of francophone students in Quebec; and the community organizing projects and decentralized approach of SNCC and SDS. Consequently, the founding of SUPA represented a convergence of influences from the peace movement, civil rights movement, and student movement. Inter-generational influences were

¹⁴⁹ Harding, interview.

¹⁵⁰ MUA, SUPA, Box 7, File, ‘SUPA Worklist 1966,’ Jim Mayor, Worklist #11, 30 June 1966.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

also evident at the Regina conference. As previously discussed, conference participants discussed Muste's paper "Primacy of Peace," which posited that "the problems of racial equality, economic and social order, and peace are integrally related and at one level constitute a single problem."¹⁵² Inter-generational linkages were further demonstrated by conference speakers, Robert Engler and Mulford Q. Sibley. Engler, born in 1922, delivered an address on the necessity of "getting an overview of a nation and its social issues" in order to effectively organize for political change.¹⁵³ Engler was best known for his 1961 work, *The Politics of Oil: A Study of Private Power and Democratic Directions*.¹⁵⁴ Jim Harding recalls that during this time, the CUCND was beginning to recognize the need to "understand the struggle for resources," and that this was reflected in Engler's presence at the conference.¹⁵⁵ Sibley, who had been a conscientious objector during World War II, spoke on the use of nonviolence to raise ordinary citizens' consciousness of injustices and "their power to right them."¹⁵⁶ Nonviolent civil disobedience matched the movement's growing emphasis on empowering communities to organize around social issues related to peace, and was consequently adopted as one of SUPA's six points.

Conclusion

Studying the roots of 1960s radicalism through the lens of the CUCND offers insight into the inter-generational connections that shaped Canada's emerging New Leftist movement. During the first half of the 1960s, the CUCND came to see students as having an important role to play outside the walls of the university. This followed Mills' call to radical intellectuals, the

¹⁵² MUA, SUPA, Box 11, File, 'Regina 1964—Conference Papers,' A.J. Muste, "Primacy of Peace," December 1964.

¹⁵³ Dimitrios Roussopoulos, "CUCND disbanded: SUPA-men emerge" *Sanity* 2, no.7 (February 1965).

¹⁵⁴ Robert Engler, *The Politics of Oil: A Study of Private Power and Democratic Directions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961).

¹⁵⁵ Harding, interview.

¹⁵⁶ Roussopoulos, "CUCND Disbanded: SUPA-men Emerge."

notion of student syndicalism, the success of students in the civil rights movement to generate mass action, and the examples of students engaged in community organizing. At the same time, the CUCND circulated the ideas of senior intellectuals and activists through their conferences and quarterly journal. Their influence can be observed in the group's decisions to endorse a policy of positive neutralism, to use non-violent civil disobedience, and to view a connection between nuclear disarmament and social change. Writing on the meaning of the title, *Our Generation Against Nuclear War*, the journal's editors explained, "the title implies the belief that new thinking is needed to see us through the present dangerous age."¹⁵⁷ The CUCND identified this "new thinking" in younger and older activists alike, whose ideas and strategies connected nuclear disarmament to an emerging New Leftist movement for fundamental social change. The leaders of the CUCND's "generation" were those activists who sought to decentralize power and promote peaceful alternatives to war and violence.

While inter-generational linkages were observable in the development of New Leftist perspectives, they were largely missing from the emergence of an important strand of New Leftist activism in the late 1960s: the women's liberation movement. The identification of gender inequality as an issue around which New Leftists should organize followed the experiences of women who observed a gap between New Leftist rhetoric and practice, and came to understand their personal problems as collective issues that could be addressed through social movement activity. As will be explored throughout this dissertation, this consciousness was not inherited from an earlier generation of leftist women activists, but rather, developed within the context of the sixties. The following chapter will explore the reasons for this discontinuity, and offer a gendered analysis of the anti-nuclear movement of the early 1960s.

¹⁵⁷ "From England: What They Say About Us," *Our Generation Against Nuclear War* 2, no. 1 (Fall 1962).

CHAPTER TWO

“BRINGING ABOUT THE REVOLUTION AND A WORLD OF PEACE WITH AID OF HUSBAND AND AT LEAST SIX CHILDREN”:

Women in the Peace Movement and Early New Left, 1960-1964

As the CUCND established its new program as SUPA, they turned their attention to structural social issues underlying racial and economic inequality. Gender inequality, however, was absent from the New Leftist agenda, and would not become part of the movement until 1967. This chapter explores the extent to which a feminist consciousness existed in the first half of Canada's 1960s, and the reasons why it was not an observable force in the CUCND during this time. Exploring the reasons for a lack of feminist consciousness among early New Leftists will lead to a clearer understanding of the issues and contexts that contributed to its later rise within SUPA.

The first section of this chapter will provide an overview of Canadian feminist activism prior to the 1960s, and will comment on views around sex-based discrimination in the postwar years. It will further discuss the reasons why activists in the CUNCD did not connect with an older generation of leftist women around issues of gender inequality. The second section will root the CUCND's activism in the context of Cold War gender ideology. The impact of the politicization of gender during this period on women's activism will be explored through a study of the women's peace organization, the Voice of Women, introduced in chapter one. An examination of how gender expectations registered across Canadian universities in the early 1960s will follow, and will contribute to an understanding of the context in which CUCND activist women were living. The final section offers a gender study of the CUCND's operations

and actions to demonstrate how it was shaped by the discourses of gender discussed throughout this chapter.

A Long View of Canadian Women's Activism

There is a long history of Canadian feminist activism that preceded the New Leftist call for women's liberation in the late 1960s. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Canadian women organized around demands for women's rights, including suffrage, access to education, and equal pay. The "first wave" of the women's movement included various perspectives on women's social position, and the grounds on which women should be granted entry into the public sphere. Maternal feminists maintained that women's roles as mothers and caretakers of the home made them uniquely qualified to act as public reformers. Equal-rights feminists disagreed that women's participation in public life should be represented solely as "social housekeeping," and demanded legal reforms that would grant women the same rights as men within existing institutions.¹ Women in socialist circles further advocated for women's rights during this period, but added that equality could never be achieved under capitalism.² Janice Newton's study of women in the Socialist Party of Canada (SPC) between 1900 and 1918 illuminates their attempts to integrate women's issues, including suffrage, into the party's program. Their demands concerning wages, the right to work, and sexual autonomy, combined maternal rhetoric with notions of equality, and an emphasis on the elimination of capitalism. Newton states that even though their demands were not integrated into the SPC's agenda, these women nonetheless "challenged the masculine vision of socialism in which women remained dependent on men and isolated within the home."³

¹ Adamson, et al., *Feminist Organizing for Change*, 33.

² *Ibid.*, 34.

³ Janice Newton, *The Feminist Challenge to the Canadian Left, 1900-1918* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 169.

The women in SUPA who came to identify a need for a women's liberation movement in 1967, fall into a longer tradition of leftist women organizing around issues of gender inequality. Historian Joan Sangster has pointed to the persistence of leftist women's activism between 1920 and the 1960s to argue against the two-wave model of the Canadian women's movement. As she argues, leftists continued to agitate around gender inequality in the interwar years. The Communist Party of Canada (CPC), founded in 1921, demonstrated an interest in women's issues through the creation of a national working-class women's organization and a women's column in the CPC newspaper, but always maintained the supremacy of a class consciousness over a gender consciousness.⁴ Historian Thomas Socknat has further argued for the need to acknowledge women's activism in the interwar years. His study of Canadian feminist peace activists in the interwar period argues that once the women's movement won the federal franchise in 1918, "feminists merely altered rather than ceased their activism."⁵ Specifically, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), formed out of the 1915 International Women's Conference in The Hague, continued to have a strong presence in Canada after the war. As a coalition of feminists-socialists-pacifists, WILPF combined a "class and gender analysis" in their peace work.⁶ This orientation was personified in Alice Loeb, president of the Toronto WILPF chapter in the 1920s. Loeb formed close connections with the labour movement and advocated for birth control, arguing that women's control over reproduction would contribute to the prevention of war because there would be fewer recruits and no necessity to use war as a tool for population control.⁷ In the 1930s WILPF aligned with the Co-operative

⁴ Ibid., 170

⁵ Thomas P. Socknat, "'For Peace and Freedom': Canadian Feminists and the Interwar Peace Campaign," in *Up and Doing: Canadian Women and Peace*, eds. Janice Williamson and Deborah Gorham (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1989), 67.

⁶ Ibid., 70.

⁷ Ibid., 70 and 72.

Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and emphasized the need for the party to address women's issues through groups such as the CCF Women's Joint Committee (WJC). The WJC brought together the minority of feminist activists in the CCF who were seeking more leadership for women in the party, and who wanted women's concerns to be seriously considered. As Sangster has observed, the issues that CCF feminists identified in the 1930s were mostly centred on the domestic sphere. At the same time, they distinguished themselves from maternal feminists, identifying the combination of their class and gender analysis as "militant mothering."⁸

While Sangster and Socknat have noted the persistence of feminist activism in leftist circles between the first and second waves of the women's movement, women's issues were not taken up by early New Leftists. SUPA did not identify women as agents of social change, nor did they specifically address issues of gender inequality. While the inter-generational alliances formed in the peace movement during the first half of the 1960s contributed to the development of a New Leftist orientation within the CUCND, as discussed in chapter one, there is no real evidence of younger activists in the CUCND and SUPA connecting with older activists on issues of gender. CUCND activist Nancy Hannum recalls "having huge respect" for older women peace activists in the Voice of Women, such as Ursula Franklin, and fondly remembers "being part of conversations with her."⁹ These discussions centred on issues of peace, and not gender inequality.

Some activist women of the 1960s, such as Nancy Adamson, Linda Briskin, and Margaret McPhail, have also explained that they did not have an understanding of the leftist

⁸ Joan Sangster, "Women and the New Era: The Role of Women in the Early CCF, 1933-1940," in *Building the Co-Operative Commonwealth: Essays on the Democratic Socialist Tradition in Canada*, ed. J. William Brennan (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1985), 70, 91-92.

⁹ Nancy Hannum, Interview with author, 25 February 2016.

women's organizing that had preceded them.¹⁰ There are a few factors that may have contributed to this lack of awareness. Groups such as the WILPF, which agitated for women's rights and peace during the 1920s and 1930s, had directly witnessed and participated in the movement for women's suffrage. By contrast, activists in the CUCND and SUPA, born and raised in the 1940s and 1950s, did not bear witness to a similar period of widespread agitation for women's rights. Although fragmented examples of leftist women's activism existed during this time, as Sangster has observed, they did not constitute the same mass character of the women's movement of the early twentieth century. The formative years of CUCND and SUPA activists were characterized by Cold War anxieties over communism and the instability of gender roles. These preoccupations resulted in widespread suspicion of leftists and anyone who transgressed traditional conventions of gender and sexuality. Consequently, the influence and visibility of groups such as WILPF waned when both leftist and feminist activism were constructed as national security threats.

Broader considerations of how of sex-based discrimination was understood after the Second World War offers further insight into the reasons why gender inequality was not viewed as a significant issue around which early New Leftists should organize. The subordination of sex discrimination to issues of class struggle was evident in Old Leftist political parties, such as the SPC, CPC, and CCF. One reason for this was the belief that organizing around other issues would prevent the formation of a unified class consciousness. Similarly, postwar campaigns for human rights demonstrated a tendency to view sex-based discrimination as different from, and as less important than, other forms of discrimination. Historians Ruth Frager and Carmela Patrias have studied how race-based discrimination and sex-based discrimination were interpreted

¹⁰ Adamson, et al., *Feminist Organizing for Change*, 27.

differently in postwar campaigns against employment discrimination in Ontario. They explain that after the Second World War, racial inequalities came to be viewed as a product of “discriminatory human behaviour,” whereas gender inequalities “continued to be accepted on the assumption of inherent differences between men and women.”¹¹ This meant that campaigns for racial equality were embedded in a framework of human rights, while campaigns around women’s issues, such as equal pay for equal work, were justified on the basis of need.¹²

During the 1940s and 1950s, the prevailing social belief that gender inequality was a reflection of biological difference meant that activists largely did not interpret sex discrimination as an issue of human rights. A widespread sense that gender inequality was natural, while racial, ethnic, and religious inequalities were products of failed systems and human behaviour, served as the backdrop for the subordination of women’s issues in postwar human rights campaigns. As this chapter will demonstrate, an interpretation of gender inequality as an expression of natural difference between men and women also existed across Canadian university campuses in the first half of the 1960s.

Cold War gender ideology and widely accepted justifications for gender inequality contributed to the slow rise of feminist consciousness within SUPA. Rising expectations among young university women that their lives would not be restricted by gender inequality further contributed to an atmosphere in which a feminist agenda was not prioritized among early New Leftists. The next section will examine the impact of the Cold War on women’s activism in the

¹¹ Ruth A. Frager and Carmela Patrias, “Human Rights Activists and the Question of Sex Discrimination in Postwar Ontario,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 93, no. 4 (December 2012): 586. For other works on postwar human rights campaigns and understandings of racial prejudice, see Ruth A. Frager and Carmela Patrias, “‘This is Our Country, These Are Our Rights’: Minorities and the Origins of Ontario’s Human Rights Campaigns,” *Canadian Historical Review* 82, no.1 (2001): 1-35 and James W. St.G. Walker, “The ‘Jewish Phase’ in the Canadian Movement for Racial Equality,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 34, no.1 (2002): 1-29.

¹² Frager and Patrias, “Human Rights Activists,” 586.

first half of the 1960s, and will use the Voice of Women as a case study. This will provide a broader context for exploring issues of gender within Canadian universities and the CUCND in the second half of this chapter.

Cold War Gender Ideology

Chapter one discussed inter-generational alliances among leftist activists within the context of the nuclear threat of the Cold War. The nuclear arms race provided a backdrop for the emergence of a New Leftist analysis that emphasized nonviolence and participatory democracy. For feminists, the background of the Cold War worked to restrain rather than facilitate challenges to gender inequality. Gender was politicized in an effort to regulate behaviour and easily identify individuals who were transgressing established norms of capitalist society. One of the seminal works to influence American and Canadian studies of gender and family during the Cold War is Elaine Tyler May's, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*. Tyler May argues that white middle-class Americans generally perceived marriage and the nuclear family as the keys to security in the context of the Cold War. A retreat into domestic life generated a semblance of personal security, and was also framed by politicians and media as a patriotic duty. For example, in the 1959 "kitchen debate" between President Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, "Nixon insisted that American superiority in the cold war rested not on weapons, but on the secure, abundant family life of modern suburban homes."¹³ According to this position, the United States' victory in the Cold War relied on consumption and an adherence to gender roles within the family unit. American media disseminated the message that Soviet women desexualized themselves through social activism and an engagement in the labour force. By contrast, American women were encouraged to demonstrate their feminine virtues as

¹³ Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1988), 17-18.

consumers, wives, and mothers.¹⁴ As Tyler May argues, an adherence to these gender roles was constructed as necessary to create strong nuclear families and ensure personal and national security.¹⁵

Canadian historians have built on Tyler May's scholarship to demonstrate the connections between Canadian Cold War security, the family, and prescribed gender roles.¹⁶ In her study of Canadian women's peace activism, Tarah Brookfield explains that in Cold War Canada, the middle-class suburban family was upheld as a representation of morality and as "a symbol of Canada's success as a democratic and capitalist nation."¹⁷ Similarly, in her study of post-war suburbia, Veronica Strong-Boag argues that the image of the happy housewife was constructed to communicate the message that ownership of a suburban home would not only result in personal fulfilment, but would also contribute to the West's "final triumph over communism."¹⁸ Women's roles as wives and mothers were framed as both a path to personal happiness and as a duty of citizenship.

An emphasis on an adherence to prescribed gender roles also formed part of an attempt to create a standard of "normal" behaviour against which subversive threats could be identified.¹⁹ Understandings of sexuality figured prominently in the construction of these behavioural

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁶ Canadian scholars have also studied the connections between family, gender ideology, and Canada's immigration policies. Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006), and Laura Madokoro, "'Slotting' Chinese Families and Refugees, 1947-1967," *The Canadian Historical Review* 93, no. 1 (March, 2012): 25-56.

¹⁷ Tarah Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts: Canadian Women, Child Safety, and Global Insecurity* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), 11.

¹⁸ Veronica Strong-Boag, "Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-1960," *Canadian Historical Review* 72, no. 4 (1991): 474.

¹⁹ Patrizia Gentile, "'Government Girls' and 'Ottawa Men': Cold War Management of Gender Relations in the Civil Service," in *Whose National Security? Canadian State Surveillance and the Creation of Enemies*, eds. Gary Kinsman, Dieter K. Buse, and Mercedes Steedman (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2000), 131-132; Jennifer Lynn Hunter, "'Is it even worth doing the dishes?' Canadians and the Nuclear Threat, 1945-1963" (PhD diss., McGill University, 2004), 13.

standards. As Tyler May observes, homosexuality was constructed as both a deviant behaviour and a character weakness that could be exploited by communists.²⁰ In Canada, this fear was evidenced in the early 1960s by efforts to develop a “fruit machine” that would screen for homosexuals in the civil service.²¹ This was motivated by the belief that homosexuals could be easily blackmailed by communists to reveal classified information.²²

Historical scholarship in Canada and the United States illuminates that those who did not conform to conventions of gender and sexuality were targeted as security threats. This provides an important backdrop for studying the activism of Canadian women in the anti-nuclear movement. Since both peace activism and a transgression of gender norms were viewed with suspicion, women in the anti-nuclear movement had to strategically frame their activism in order to be viewed with legitimacy. The Voice of Women (VOW), introduced in chapter one, provides a case study to examine the intersection between Cold War gender ideology and women’s peace activism. The following section will use an analysis of VOW to argue that the Cold War provided an effective backdrop against which Canadian women could form a movement for peace around a female consciousness, rather than a feminist consciousness.

Female Consciousness and the Voice of Women, 1960-1964

The Cold War emphasis on prescribed gender roles created the conditions for women’s organizing around a female consciousness.²³ A female consciousness is strongly linked to a maternalist ideology. As Estelle Freedman explains, an “attempt to solve specific problems by making moral claims as mothers” is an expression of female consciousness.²⁴ Female

²⁰ Tyler May, *Homeward Bound*, 94.

²¹ Gary Kinsman, “Character Weaknesses’ and ‘Fruit Machines’: Towards an Analysis of Anti-Homosexual Security Campaign in the Canadian Civil Service,” *Labour/Le Travail*, 35 (Spring, 1995): 134, 153.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Temma Kaplan, *Crazy for Democracy: Women in Grassroots Movements* (London: Routledge, 1997), 6-7.

²⁴ Estelle B. Freedman, *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2002), 328.

consciousness is distinct from a feminist consciousness. While a female consciousness forms around conventional gender roles, a feminist consciousness “questions gender hierarchy rather than maneuvers within it.”²⁵ A female consciousness was evident in VOW’s recruiting strategies and anti-nuclear initiatives. One VOW brochure responded to the question, “Why women?” by identifying the unique qualities of a mother and housewife that made her well-suited to participate in VOW’s anti-nuclear work, stating:

Although the future of the human race is of concern to both men and women, it may be that women have a particular role to fill. Childbearing and housekeeping develop a woman’s flexibility and practicality—ad hoc measures—and long range goals. With these, she has the rare privilege of planning her work—diaper washing can on occasion give way to writing the Prime Minister!²⁶

Building upon the tradition of maternal feminism, VOW laid claim to an activist voice in the anti-nuclear movement through mothering. VOW’s first president, Helen Tucker, positioned the group’s activism within a framework of international motherhood, stating: “We, the women, should see ourselves as the midwives of ‘One world.’ In the home, the family, the school and the government, our thought shall be for the world family. The good of all children shall be our concern.”²⁷ The group paired its maternalism with a focus on forming international relationships with other women. One of their first actions was to select a different country each week and have every VOW member “write a letter to a mother in that country asking her support for disarmament.”²⁸ VOW’s anti-nuclear activism in the first half of the 1960s was intimately connected to the notion that women could nurture more peaceful international relations through their shared maternal concern for the welfare of the world’s children.

²⁵ Ibid., 333.

²⁶ LAC, VOW, Vol. 7, File, ‘What How Why,’ Brochure “What How Why,” undated but ca.1963.

²⁷ Ibid., Vol. 1, File, ‘2nd Annual Meeting, Minutes and Proceedings, 1962,’ Helen Tucker, “President’s Report, Second Annual Meeting,” 16 September 1962. Emphasis in original.

²⁸ “Women of Canada Say ‘No Atom War,’” *Toronto Daily Star*, 29 July 1960, 15.

An emphasis on maternal responsibility, however, did not result in a unified activist vision within VOW. VOW members who were particularly concerned about their public image believed that protests against Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons were severely damaging to their campaign. Mrs. Truelove, president of VOW's Manitoba branch, attributed a drop in membership in 1962 to this aspect of the group's campaign, stating:

I think the general impression is too much of a fringe, slightly fanatic, 'Ban-the-Bomb' pressure group...I think we should concentrate our efforts far less on demonstrations and protests, and far more on making the Voice of Women truly international, by increasing all our overseas contacts and developing friendly relations.²⁹

This opinion was shared by VOW's first vice-president Jo Davis, who became convinced that "radical militants were taking over VOW."³⁰ This concern followed the election of Thérèse Casgrain as VOW national president in 1962 and Kay Macpherson in 1963. Casgrain was an experienced political activist who had worked to win the provincial franchise for women in Quebec, and was elected leader of the Quebec CCF in 1951.³¹ Under Casgrain's leadership, VOW organized a peace train to Ottawa, which brought VOW activists to Parliament Hill on 1 November 1962 with a laundry basket of petitions "demanding No Nuclear Weapons In Canada."³² The press reported that this action signalled "a new element of militancy in VOW," and according to Kay MacPherson, misrepresented them as 'hysterical women.'³³ The action isolated some of the group's more conservative members who feared that the organization was turning into a ban-the-bomb pressure group. Casgrain resigned as VOW president in 1963 to run as an NDP candidate in the federal election. She was replaced by Kay Macpherson, who

²⁹ LAC, VOW, Vol. 1, File, '2nd Annual Meeting, Minutes and Proceedings, 1962,' "Provincial Reports," 16 September 1962.

³⁰ Macpherson, *When in Doubt, Do Both*, 103.

³¹ Christine Ball, "The History of the Voice of Women/La Voix des Femmes—The Early Years," (PhD diss. University of Toronto, 1994), 377 and 380.

³² *Ibid.*, 478, and Macpherson, *When in Doubt*, 97.

³³ Macpherson, *When in Doubt*, 97.

described her political views as “left of the CCF,” and was married to Marxist scholar, C.B. Macpherson.³⁴ In her memoir, she recalls having to convince Davis’ camp at VOW’s 1963 general meeting that she was “in favour of positive, constructive policies (peace-building, international cooperation, exchange visits with women in other countries) rather than being totally dedicated to such militant activities as banning the bomb and going on marches and demonstrations.”³⁵ Davis, however, was not satisfied, and circulated a letter among VOW members expressing her concern that the group was becoming too radical. At a meeting held in January 1963, most members voiced their disagreement with Davis’ concerns, and on 22 January, she resigned from the group.³⁶

Historian Marie Hammond-Callaghan has argued that under Casgrain and Macpherson, VOW embraced “New Left political protest alongside the more traditional tactics of lobbying and education to bring about change.”³⁷ This did not go uncontested. As Macpherson recalls, “So many of VOW’s early crises concerned militant versus other more ladylike (and often less effective) actions, and many women left because they felt VOW was becoming too radical, if not downright pink.”³⁸ Although debates about tactics and policy were strong, and led to a loss of some of VOW’s more conservative members, they did not significantly transform how VOW framed its activism around motherhood. Their activist identities as responsible mothers continued to be evident in their actions, such as their 1963 baby tooth survey. Concerned about the health implications of fallout from nuclear testing, VOW branches in seven Canadian cities collected baby teeth to be tested by Dr. Murray Hunt at the University of Toronto for the

³⁴ Ibid., 79.

³⁵ Ibid., 103.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Hammond-Callaghan, “Bridging and Breaching Cold War Divides,” 145.

³⁸ Macpherson, *When in Doubt*, 105.

radioactive material, strontium-90.³⁹ The group's maternal emphasis was further reasserted in their 1964 boycott against war toys, which made "war seem inevitable and acceptable" to children.⁴⁰ While VOW's activism had expanded since 1960 to include participation in public demonstrations and a firm stance against nuclear weapons in Canada, as discussed in chapter one, it nevertheless remained entrenched in a framework of maternal responsibility.⁴¹

Suspicion surrounding anti-nuclear activists, paired with the Cold War emphasis on conventional gender roles, influenced how VOW framed their activism as women. A female consciousness was evident in their identification of motherhood as something that bonded women around the world and motivated their desires to curtail the nuclear arms race. VOW's argument that housekeeping and childrearing gave women the skills and flexibility to join the anti-nuclear campaign further evidenced their female consciousness. At the same time, elements of VOW's activism challenged conventional gender norms. As historian Jennifer Lynn Hunter has argued, VOW stepped outside their prescribed roles as women by "leaving hearth and home to become involved in a previously males-only realm: the national security debate."⁴² VOW activists organized campaigns, spoke with media and politicians, mobilized women across the country, and formed international connections with women.

The public roles that VOW members occupied had an uneven impact on the trajectory of their activism. Former VOW president Kay Macpherson and vice-president Meg Sears, reflected

³⁹ Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts*, 72. Harmful levels of strontium-90 were not discovered in the teeth, although higher levels were found in baby teeth from northern Canada. For more information on the survey, see LAC, VOW, Vol. 5, File, 'Radiation Baby Teeth Survey, 1963.'

⁴⁰ LAC, VOW, Vol. 7, File, 'War Toys,' Marjorie Lawrence, 'Let's Repudiate War Toys this Christmas,' 1964. For a study of VOW's antiwar toy campaign, see Braden Hutchinson, "Fighting the War at Home: Voice of Women and War Toy Activism in Postwar Canada," in *Worth Fighting For*, 147-158.

⁴¹ The American peace group, Women Strike for Peace (WSP), offers another example of women's Cold War peace activism. Ian McKay's study of Margaret Ells Russell's involvement in WSP emphasizes the group's humanism above its maternalism. Ian McKay, "Margaret Ells Russell, Women Strike for Peace, and the Global Politics of 'Intelligent Compassion,'" in *Worth Fighting For*, 119-132.

⁴² Hunter, "'Is it even worth doing the dishes?,'" 206.

that “after taking that first step forward from ladylike anonymity and finding themselves in the limelight, some women scuttled back into the familiar shadows. Others found it exhilarating, and never looked back.”⁴³ The latter group included women who continued their work as activists, despite opposition from their husbands. These women began to link the goals of peace and gender equality in the second half of the 1960s. As explained by Macpherson and Sears, their activism grew around an awareness that “a peaceful world would not be achieved in a society where women were oppressed and ignored.”⁴⁴ As a result, they aligned with other women’s groups to push for a Royal Commission on the Status of Women.⁴⁵

VOW acted as a bridge between peace and feminist movements for several women. Muriel Duckworth, national president of VOW between 1967 and 1971, maintained that it was through her peace activism that she entered the feminist movement in 1970.⁴⁶ In her study of the Halifax branch of VOW, Frances Early posits that “a youth-flavoured feminism in the latter part of the 1960s expanded VOW’s already ambitious political agenda and influenced members to reframe their personal and political identities.”⁴⁷ Although a feminist consciousness was apparent in the activist histories of VOW leaders such as Thérèse Casgrain and Kay Macpherson, the group’s early peace activism was framed as a “woman’s concern,” rather than as a “feminist issue.”⁴⁸ While VOW rallied women around a female consciousness in the first half of the 1960s

⁴³ Kay Macpherson and Meg Sears, “The Voice of Women: A History,” in *Women in the Canadian Mosaic*, ed. Gwen Matheson (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Limited, 1976), 88.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 80-81.

⁴⁶ Frances Early, “‘A Grandly Subversive Time’: The Halifax Branch of the Voice of Women in the 1960s,” in *Mothers of the Municipality: Women, Work, and Social Policy in Post-1945 Halifax*, eds. Judith Fingard and Janet Guildford (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 271.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Barbara Roberts, “Women’s Peace Activism in Canada,” in *Beyond the Vote: Canadian Women and Politics*, eds. Linda Kealey and Joan Sangster (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 298. For an example of Macpherson’s earlier feminist activism, see her description of activities with the Association of Women’s Electors in Toronto in Macpherson, *When in Doubt*, 80.

to confront the nuclear threat as concerned wives and mothers, this activism led some to reframe their consciousness around explicitly feminist goals in the late 1960s when a widespread movement for gender justice was beginning to take shape.

Views of Women in Canadian Universities

VOW's activism in the early 1960s offers a broader context for the discussion of gender dynamics in the CUCND, and the challenges facing university women in the peace movement. While a female consciousness was evident through VOW's activism, it was not observable within the CUCND. University women who participated in on-campus movements or the CUCND tended to connect their activism to a student identity, even though they were often treated differently from their male counterparts. The behaviours of university women were strictly regulated, as explained by Roberta Lexier in her dissertation on 1960s on-campus student activism. They were held to stricter curfews than male students, and also required signed letters of permission from their parents to leave campus during certain times.⁴⁹ In his study of the University of Regina, James Pitsula argues that stricter regulations around university women's private lives were an expression of the value placed on the preservation of women's virginity before marriage.⁵⁰ As will be discussed in chapter six, this emphasis would wane with the "sexual revolution," which brought about a wider acceptance of pre-marital sex.

Women's reasons for attending university were often perceived differently than those of male students. In 1969, Peggy Morton, who had participated in both the CUCND and SUPA, commented on how women were viewed at Queen's University, which she had attended. Reflecting on the perception of women attending the university, she wrote: "There's a stock joke

⁴⁹ Lexier, "The Canadian Student Movement," 56-57.

⁵⁰ James M. Pitsula, *As One Who Serves: The Making of the University of Regina* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 99.

on campus—that women are here to get their MRS. degree.”⁵¹ She described a candle lighting ceremony held for new female students “where the important thing that you discover is how many babies you are going to have (by the number of drips on the candle) and whether you are going to marry an Artsman, an Engineer or a Medsman (from the colour of the ribbon on the outside of the knot on the candle).”⁵² According to Morton, the central messages of the speeches delivered by the Padre and the Dean of Women at the ceremony further emphasized a view of conventional gender roles for female students. As Morton reported: “Apparently, women are at Queen’s for two reasons. First, to ‘set the moral tone of the campus.’ And second, to prepare for marriage so that we can be intelligent companions for our husbands.”⁵³ Looking back on her university experience as a woman, Morton reflected: “that’s one of the first places where your consciousness develops.”⁵⁴

Although conventional understandings of gender roles were present across Canadian universities, a student-based rather than gender-based identity was central to the on-campus activism of women. As historian Doug Owrarn has commented: “Women as a group were very much like the men who came to campus at the same time...The peer group remained important, even paramount, and that peer group was...changing campus institutions in dramatic fashion.”⁵⁵ Roberta Lexier’s study of student activism in the 1960s, discussed in chapter one, offers a comprehensive analysis of how student campaigns for university reform were successful because they unified a broad segment of the student population, men and women alike, around common concerns.

⁵¹ Peggy Morton, “You have nothing to lose but your chains,” *This Paper Belongs to the People* 1, Issue 6 (10 September 1969), 4.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Morton, interview.

⁵⁵ Owrarn, *Born at the Right Time*, 275

A student-based identity forged through on-campus activism was strong enough to support university women's expectations that their lives would look different from those of the suburban housewives described by American writer Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique*. Myrna Kostash recalls reading *The Feminine Mystique* between lectures with other women on the University of Alberta campus in 1963. Friedan's book voiced the private feelings of American housewives grappling with "the problem that has no name."⁵⁶ As Kostash reflects: "We read that these women felt tired all the time, felt weepy and despondent, felt sexless and barren of personality, and...sat in the armchair at the psychiatrist's office, resignedly accepting the prescription for tranquillizers as the appropriate remedy for their anxious queries: 'Who am I?' and 'Is this all there is?'"⁵⁷

In Canada, the popular women's magazine, *Chatelaine*, explored these types of issues before the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963. *Chatelaine* served as a space for "feminist analysis" in the early 1960s according to historian Valerie Korinek.⁵⁸ Some magazine articles from this time dealt with the challenges that working wives and mothers faced, and the damaging effects of gendered expectations on women to marry young, have children, and devote themselves to the domestic sphere. As Korinek observes, one of the central themes of *Chatelaine* editorials and feature articles "was that there was life beyond dishpan hands and ennui."⁵⁹ The magazine's editor, Doris Anderson, published the views of French feminist Simone de Beauvoir in February 1960, after the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) decided to censor some statements that de Beauvoir made in an interview, including her support for divorce,

⁵⁶ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 50th anniversary ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1963), 1.

⁵⁷ Kostash, *Long Way from Home*, 167.

⁵⁸ Valerie J. Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 311.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 330.

belief in the equality of men and women, and criticism of the institution of marriage.⁶⁰ De Beauvoir authored the pioneering work, *The Second Sex*, first published in French in 1949 and then in English in 1953, which advanced the position that “one is not born, but rather one becomes, woman.”⁶¹ While her views appeared in the pages of *Chatelaine* in 1960, they were not discussed in Canadian student newspapers, such as *The Varsity* or *The Carleton*, until later in the decade. At the University of Toronto, the first article professing a need to study de Beauvoir’s work was written by the campus’ Women’s Liberation Movement in February 1970.⁶²

While housewives across North America were struggling with the issues described in *The Feminine Mystique* and *Chatelaine*, Kostash and several other women on university campuses did not feel bound to this same fate; rather, they interpreted their university education as proof that their futures would look different from the lives of the suburban housewife. Looking back on her reaction to Friedan’s description of women’s lives, Nancy Hannum of the CUCND remembers thinking: “Well, I’m not going to be like that...I felt like I was out there in the world and I was going to work and work on issues that I cared about. So far, nobody’d stopped me.”⁶³ Hannum’s perspective was reflective of a more general sense among the female student population. As Kostash sums it up: “It was 1963 and there was none of us who did not believe we would be different from the brigades of defeated women in the suburbs. *We* were students.”⁶⁴ This is not to say that women attending universities did not see marriage and children in their future; rather, their expectation was that they would be able to “have adventures” and also “build

⁶⁰ Ibid., 311.

⁶¹ Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malvonay-Chevallier (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 283.

⁶² “Out from under,” *The Varsity*, 25 February 1970, 5. In *The Carleton*, a student wrote a letter to the editor lamenting the lack of selection at the campus bookstore, naming de Beauvoir’s autobiography, *The Prime of Life*, as a book that should be sold. Eric Sevasuck, “Pitiful sight,” *The Carleton*, 12 November 1965, 5.

⁶³ Hannum, interview.

⁶⁴ Kostash, *Long Way from Home*, 137.

an interesting home and raise bright children.”⁶⁵ In 1964, Carleton CUCND president, Cathleen Rosenberg voiced this vision in the university yearbook when she described her future plans, somewhat humorously, as “bringing about the Revolution and a World of Peace with aid of husband and at least six children.”⁶⁶

In the first half of the 1960s, women were enrolling in universities in higher numbers than ever before, participating in campaigns for university reform, and expecting a future that would be different from the image of the unfulfilled housewife. Amid these expectations, women faced university regulations, attitudes, and ceremonies that reflected conventional understandings of gender roles. During this time, some university policies regulating women’s lives on campus were challenged, such as the strict curfews imposed on women living in residences.⁶⁷ A consciousness that higher education gave women training for roles beyond the domestic sphere could also be discerned. For instance, in October 1964, Kostash wrote an article for the University of Alberta student paper, *The Gateway*, which asserted that women on campus had goals other than marriage.⁶⁸ However, a widespread challenge to attitudes toward women and constructions of femininity would not arrive on university campuses until the late 1960s with the emergence of the women’s liberation movement, discussed in chapter seven.

Women and Gender Relations in the CUCND

The CUCND was an entry point into New Leftist activism for several women. This section will explore how some of these women became involved in the CUCND, the types of

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Cathleen Rosenberg, B.A., *The Raven 1964* (University Yearbook), 57, available online. <https://archive.org/details/theraven1964carl>. Accessed 04 December 2014, and Cathleen Kneen, interview with author, 13 November 2015.

⁶⁷ Elaine H. Chalus, “From Friedan to Feminism: Gender and Change at the University of Alberta, 1960-1970,” in *Standing on New Ground: Women in Alberta*, eds. Catherine A. Cavanaugh and Randi R. Warne (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1993), 134.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 132.

roles that they occupied, and the extent to which they saw gender inequality as a problem in the group. As a campaign centred on the nuclear issue, the CUCND did not openly discuss gender inequality. Nevertheless, understandings of gender shaped the group's actions in important ways. The second part of this section will explore how constructions of gender influenced the CUCND through a case study of their engagement with non-violent civil disobedience at La Macaza.

Women performed various roles within the CUCND. To some extent, it is difficult to assess the nature of their roles based on the archival records. For instance, one list shows that some women held executive positions on CUCND campus branches as they were forming in 1960; however, the titles that they held are not specified.⁶⁹ Although the records do not describe the nature of the positions that they held, at least two women served as campus branch presidents in the history of the CUCND: Cathleen Rosenberg (hereafter referred to as Cathleen Kneen) at Carleton, and Peggy Morton at Queen's University. Kneen first encountered the CUCND in Edinburgh, Scotland where she had spent a year studying at the age of eighteen. She started the CUCND branch at Carleton upon her return to Canada.⁷⁰ Morton became involved with the CUCND at Queen's at the end of her first year in 1962 after meeting members of the campaign at a coffee shop. The next year, she was elected president of the campus branch, recalling: "I got elected as the president because nobody else wanted it, basically. Nobody was willing to do it."⁷¹ Serving as CUCND branch presidents provided Kneen and Morton with opportunities to exercise

⁶⁹ MUA, SUPA, Box 1, File, 'CUCND Toronto 1960-1961,' "'Names and addresses of CUCND executive members in Canada," Spring 1960. The women listed include, H el ene S en ecal, Laval University; Ann Albright, University of Western Ontario; Joan Wray, University of Alberta, Calgary; Elaine Stringan, University of Alberta, Edmonton. Margareta Lewke, University of Saskatchewan; Jill Adams and Lorene Gordon, University of British Columbia. The executive of the University of Toronto and the University of Manitoba were comprised exclusively of men. There are no names listed under the following CUCND campus branches: McGill University, Sir George Williams University, Macdonald College, the University of Montreal, Beaux Arts Academy (Montreal), and the Ryerson Institute of Technology.

⁷⁰ Kneen, interview.

⁷¹ Morton, interview.

and develop leadership skills as speakers and debaters.⁷² Looking back, Morton emphasizes how young and inexperienced she was during this time, reflecting: “At eighteen I was head of the CUCND and had no clue what I was doing. I was absolutely terrified to get up and speak in front of our little group of people.”⁷³

The majority of the leadership positions on the national secretariat, the “supreme administrative body of the CUCND,” were occupied by men, with Dimitri Roussopoulos as the group’s first federal chairman and Art Pape, from the University of Toronto, as the second.⁷⁴ As the only elected member of the secretariat, the federal chairman had the authority to appoint all other positions. One woman, Liora Proctor, a sociology student at the University of Toronto, was appointed to the national secretariat in 1962.⁷⁵ Peggy Morton explains that the low representation of women on the national secretariat was not a significant issue at the time, reflecting: “It wasn’t a question of fighting for leadership positions in that way. That whole idea of being accommodated in that way, you know, there should be so many women on the national executive and so on, we really didn’t have that consciousness then.”⁷⁶

Liora Proctor was a powerful voice on the CUNCD secretariat. As former CUCND and SUPA activist Peter Boothroyd recalls: “One of the people that was very active in the small leadership cadre in Toronto was Liora Proctor and she was very active in the transformation

⁷² Kneen debated the value of the CUCND with fellow students on a campus radio program. “On the Steps,” *The Raven 1964* (University Yearbook), 129.

⁷³ Morton, interview.

⁷⁴ The policies and actions of the CUCND were determined by the National Conference, which was attended by two representatives of each CUCND university branch. It was the responsibility to the Secretariat to coordinate the actions and policies that the National Conference decided upon. Between meetings, “all authority is vested in the National Secretariat.” MUA, SUPA, Box 1, File, ‘CUCND Toronto,’ “The Charter,” undated. See also, MUA, SUPA, Box 2, File, ‘Toronto Office Correspondence,’ D.I. Roussopoulos, “Report on the Federal Secretariat,” 18 November 1962.

⁷⁵ MUA, SUPA, Box 6, File, ‘Fundraising, Toronto Office, 1963-1965,’ “Prospectus: Three New CUCND Programs,” April 1964.

⁷⁶ Morton, interview.

from the CUCND into SUPA.”⁷⁷ Nancy Hannum, who worked in the Toronto CUCND office, recalls the debates that unfolded between Proctor and other members of the secretariat in Toronto while preparing a pamphlet for the Regina Conference at which SUPA was founded. Proctor argued that the pamphlet should emphasize the need to develop a movement with a stronger “organizing approach” around broader issues connected to peace.⁷⁸ As Proctor asserted: “a peace group can legitimately involve itself with...other kinds of issues, including poverty, minority groups, etc.”⁷⁹ Art Pape and Matt Cohen, on the other hand, wanted to stress a critique of the nation-state system and its supporting institutions, which they connected to the persistence of war. Hannum recalls: “I remember sitting there for hours while that was being written. Everyone was arguing how we should do it and which direction we should go, and so on. But it didn’t feel sexist to me at all. It felt like a bunch of people trying to work through a position.”⁸⁰ The result was two articles, one by Pape and Cohen, and the other by Proctor.⁸¹ The positions of both articles were reflected in the direction taken by SUPA. As noted in chapter one, opposition to the nation-state system, and a recognition of the inter-relation between social issues and peace were adopted in SUPA’s six points.

Proctor’s leadership was further evidenced through her role as project director for North Bay ‘64, along with Art Pape and Terry Shaw. As discussed in chapter one, the project’s community-based research strategy departed from the CUCND’s traditional efforts, which centred on petitions, demonstrations, and education campaigns. Unlike the later community

⁷⁷ Boothroyd, interview.

⁷⁸ Hannum, interview.

⁷⁹ MUA, SUPA, Box 14, File, ‘CUCND Publications and Library, 1964-1965,’ Liora Proctor, “A Peace Movement for the Sixties,” in “The University & Social action in the Nuclear Age,” November 1964.

⁸⁰ Hannum, interview.

⁸¹ MUA, SUPA, Box 14, File, ‘CUCND Publications and Library, 1964-1965,’ “The University & Social action in the Nuclear Age,” November 1964.

organizing projects carried out by SUPA, however, North Bay '64 was not based on consensus-building and horizontal leadership. While a community-based project had the potential of generating new opportunities for activist development, project participant Peggy Morton does not recall this being the case in her own experience. She reflects: "I went to work every day to the bank...There was about three of us who went to work, and we supported the thing, and then other people were carrying on interviews and stuff...It was a terrible summer."⁸² When asked which other participants supported the project by working in the town, Morton responded: "It must have been the women. You know, I can't remember, but it must have been...Because I'm quite sure none of the men got a job."⁸³ For Morton, North Bay '64 did not contribute to the development of strong activist skills. The project did, however, demonstrate a rejection of the stringent regulations around gender that dictated living arrangements on university campuses. In 1964, some university administrations were even attempting to "limit contact between the sexes in off-campus housing" by requesting that the landlords registered under Student Housing Services prohibit co-ed living arrangements.⁸⁴ By contrast, the CUCND activists in North Bay experimented with co-ed communal living in a four-bedroom house. This was a harmonious living arrangement, according to Proctor, who wrote in a letter to a potential project organizer that, "the spirit in the group is amazing to behold."⁸⁵

The two acts of non-violent civil disobedience outside the Bomarc missile base at La Macaza perhaps offer the clearest example of the CUCND's gender dynamics. In her study of gender roles in social movements in South Africa and the United States, M. Bahati Kuumba

⁸² Morton, interview.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Chalus, "From Friedan to Feminism," 134.

⁸⁵ MUA, SUPA, Box 8, File, 'North Bay Project Correspondence—Participants,' Letter to Frank Showler from Liora Proctor, 4 June 1964.

observes that strategies of nonviolent resistance, including civil disobedience, are “accessible by both women and men because they [do] not dictate any specific gender role of participation.”⁸⁶ The two cases of nonviolent civil disobedience at La Macaza demonstrate that while women participated in the action alongside their male counterparts, the roles of initiating dialogue with the guards, and acting as spokespeople for the group, were occupied by men. These roles were reported in David Lewis Stein’s coverage of the first demonstration in *Maclean’s*. Stein recounted discussions between Art Pape, Dimitri Roussopoulos, Dan Daniels, and the guards, and reported on a speech given by André Cardinal at the beginning of the action. He did not mention the two female demonstrators by name. He referred to Mabel Egerton only as “a blind woman” and emphasized her dependence on Rev. Frerichs as they walked to the gate.⁸⁷ Stein’s dismissive treatment of the only two women involved in the demonstration may be an indication of his own gender bias. His attention to activists with more prominent roles meant that his article focused on the men who served as leaders and spokespeople for the demonstration. The connection between formal leadership and masculinity will be explored in chapter six.

Women were more highly represented in the group’s second act of nonviolent civil disobedience in September, making up at least one quarter of the demonstrators. Many of them were university students, including Queen’s CUCND president Peggy Morton, and Anna Marie Hill, who would later become the regional chairman of the Quebec SUPA branch. Others, such as housewife Diana Edwards, and thirty-seven-year-old, Kay Van Deurs, also joined the demonstration, reflecting the diversity of participants discussed in chapter one.⁸⁸ Although civil

⁸⁶ Kuumba, *Gender and Social Movements*, 100.

⁸⁷ Stein, “The peaceniks go to La Macaza.”

⁸⁸ For a full list of the names and cities of residence of those who committed civil disobedience in the September action, see MUA, SUPA, Box 10, File, ‘Operation St. Jean Baptiste—Correspondence, background information, etc.,’ La Macaza Bulletin, September 1964.

disobedience provided an open form of resistance to both men and women, the leadership roles of both the June and September actions were dominated by men. As Kuumba has observed in historical case studies of nonviolent resistance in the United States and South Africa, “roles were often differentiated” along gender lines.⁸⁹ In the case of civil disobedience at La Macaza, while both men and women put their bodies on the line in opposition to nuclear weapons, men remained the spokespeople of the actions as they delivered speeches and initiated contact with the guards.

In La Macaza, allusions to socially-valued gendered responsibilities were employed in the justification of the controversial strategy of civil disobedience. As discussed earlier in this chapter, women in VOW drew upon their maternal roles to defend their entry into debates of national security. Similarly, La Macaza spokesman Dan Daniels framed his participation in acts of civil disobedience around his obligation as a father. In an article for the leftist journal *Canadian Dimension*, Daniels defended the risk of imprisonment following the demonstration as follows: “As a father who loves his two children it grieves me deeply that by undertaking this act I might be taken away from them...But I would be a coward and not worthy of the honourable name of father if I should betray them now and not do what is necessary to give them a chance to grow up.”⁹⁰

Daniel’s article demonstrates that connecting anti-nuclear activism to the welfare of children was not unique to women. In the post-war years, respectable manhood involved the traditional role of the family breadwinner, but also encompassed new obligations to the family within the context of a growing consumer economy. In his research on fatherhood between 1945 and 1965, Robert Rutherford demonstrates how the achievement of the ideal family life

⁸⁹ Kuumba, *Gender and Social Movements*, 100.

⁹⁰ Dan Daniels, “Why Civil Disobedience at La Macaza?” *Canadian Dimension* 1, no. 7 (July-August 1964), 16.

depended on the success of the husband and father to purchase a home, car, and television, while also using disposable income for family vacations, leisure, and recreation.⁹¹ The act of consumption, typically associated with femininity, became integrated into a Cold War masculinity. In addition, postwar psychologists and childcare experts emphasized the importance of a “masculine domesticity” that promoted active fatherhood.⁹² Specifically, fathers were urged to act as models of masculinity for their sons. In his study of postwar masculinity, historian Christopher Greig observes that fathers were encouraged to become more involved in family life by taking on certain household duties, becoming a Scout leader or sports coach, and serving as a visible example of appropriate masculinity within the home.⁹³ This was all promoted within the context of anxiety over an instability of gender roles and homosexuality during the Cold War. The image of an active father was thus upheld just like the image of the mother and housewife, and acted as a respected social value around which Daniels could justify his involvement in controversial acts of civil disobedience.

Conclusion

The peace movement of the early 1960s operated in a context that was not conducive to the questioning of gender inequality. This context was characterized by the urgency of the anti-nuclear struggle, pervasiveness of Cold War gender ideology, and general lack of consciousness around gender inequality as a structural social issue. A widespread emphasis on an adherence to gender roles, however, did not deter women from engaging in anti-nuclear campaigns. In fact, women in the peace movement drew upon social values around conventional gender identities to

⁹¹ Robert Rutherford, “Fatherhood, Masculinity, and the Good Life during Canada’s Baby Boom, 1945-1965,” *Journal of Family History* 24, no. 3 (July, 1999): 369. For another study on post-war masculinity, see Christopher Dummitt, *The Manly Modern: Masculinity in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007).

⁹² Christopher J. Greig, *Ontario Boys: Masculinity and the Idea of Boyhood in Postwar Ontario, 1945-1960* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2014), 6.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 4.

justify their participation in the peace movement, as demonstrated by VOW's organization around a female consciousness.

Unlike the activists in VOW, women in the CUCND framed their identities around their experiences as students, rather than their experiences as women. Women in the CUCND joined the campaign as students with a set of expectations for their futures that did not match the realities of the American housewife described in the pages of *The Feminine Mystique*. During this time, a student identity was forceful enough to maintain university women's expectation that they could participate fully in the movement. The issue of gender inequality would not be addressed until later in the decade, after women in SUPA experienced multiple contradictions between their expectations and actual experiences as activists, and began to develop an awareness of their concerns as collective and political issues that could be addressed through social movements. Women in SUPA further developed strong activist skills and networks throughout the decade, which offered them the confidence and support to articulate their growing consciousness. As the next two chapters will explore, civil rights activism and community organizing served as two sites of movement activity that contributed to the rise of a feminist consciousness among women in SUPA.

CHAPTER THREE

“THIS IS NO MORE A MAN’S WORLD THAN IT IS A WHITE WORLD”:

Cross-border Relationships in the Movement for Black Civil Rights and Rise of a Feminist Consciousness

One of the first actions to generate a sense of movement within SUPA was organized in response to the violent suppression of peaceful civil rights demonstrators attempting to march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama in March 1965. Between 10 and 17 March, a total of 1,000 Canadian activists sat down in front of the United States Consulate in Toronto in support of civil rights activists in the United States demanding voting rights for African Americans.¹ SUPA activist Tony Hyde reported that the sit-in was thought of as “a movement” because of the tremendous support and spirit it generated.² The demonstration served as an entry point into SUPA for several individuals, and reflected a strong cross-border relationship among sixties activists.

The theme of fluid borders has been prominent in recent scholarship on sixties activism. In 2007, international scholars gathered for a conference at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario to share research on the global activism of the sixties. The conference resulted in the publication of *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness*, an edited collection that illuminates the relationship between global and local activism in the sixties.³ Ian McKay’s contribution identifies the “placelessness of the radical” as a defining characteristic of the era’s activism, explaining that “being a radical meant shaking loose the clinging dross of merely local realities, and identifying with the more exalted struggles of a

¹ “The Sitdowners,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 20 March 1965, 8.

² MUA, SUPA, Box 12, File, ‘SUPA Conference Material,’ Tony Hyde, with the assistance of Michael Rowan, “The Student Union for Peace Action: An Analysis,” undated.

³ Dubinsky et al., eds, *New World Coming*.

world revolutionary movement.”⁴ This perspective on sixties activism serves as the basis of Sean Mills’ book, *The Empire Within*, in which he argues that Montreal activists were shaped by the language of decolonization of Third World liberation struggles.⁵ Roberta Lexier has also examined the impact of global movements upon local struggles, locating points of intersection between Third World liberation movements, the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, the Quebec Quiet Revolution and the development of English-Canadian student radicalism.⁶

As explored in chapter one, CUCND and SUPA were shaped by an inter-generational network of peace activists from around the globe. Further, it was within the international arena that some got their start in activist work, such as Dimitri Roussopoulos and Cathleen Kneen. The civil rights movement in the United States served as another entry point into activism for several New Leftists in SUPA. This chapter focuses specifically on the fluidity of ideas, strategies, and activists across the Canada-U.S. border during the American movement for black civil rights in the first half of the 1960s, with a particular focus on SUPA’s relationship to the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). There are a number of reasons to focus on this cross-border connection: SNCC served as an entry point into social activism for several Americans and Canadians alike who went on to participate in SUPA; Canadian New Leftists organized support for the civil rights movement through demonstrations and the creation of the group, Canadian Friends of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (Friends of SNCC); SUPA’s structure and tactics were influenced by SNCC; and the civil rights movement served as a site for the development of a feminist consciousness among some SUPA women. The

⁴ Ian McKay, “Sarnia in the Sixties,” in *New World Coming*, 26.

⁵ Sean Mills, *The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010).

⁶ Roberta Lexier, “The Backdrop Against Which Everything Happened: English-Canadian Student Movements and Off-Campus Movements for Change,” *History of Intellectual Culture* 7:1 (2007), available online. <http://www.ucalgary.ca/hic/issues/vol7/3>. Accessed 3 July 2015.

direct contact that existed between SUPA and SNCC demands closer examination as both a component of New Leftism, and an influence on the understandings of gender that were articulated in “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...”

Other scholars have undertaken cross-border studies of Canadian sixties activism. Historian David Churchill has used this approach in his study of the character of Toronto youth activism in 1965. He identifies this period as “part of an extended moment of transnational/translocal solidarity,” in which student activists, particularly in SUPA, organized around issues unfolding in the United States, and modeled their activism after the examples of SNCC and SDS.⁷ Furthermore, Rosanne Waters argues that there was a transnational civil rights movement linking American and Canadian sixties activists. Her work offers a deeper investigation of the support that Canadian New Leftists offered groups such as SNCC, and the impact of this work on Canadian views of domestic human rights.⁸ This chapter builds upon this research with a focus on the experiences of individual SUPA activists who participated in civil rights actions on both sides of the border.

The participation of Canadian activists in American projects, and vice versa, buttresses the argument that an exchange of ideas, tactics, and resources was central to sixties activism. As SUPA activist Jim Harding has reflected: “Many of us spent time in the US and brought back experience and analysis that provided new skills and insights.”⁹ For some of these activists, this cross-border network played an integral role in the development of a feminist consciousness. Positioning the rise of feminist consciousness in SUPA within a broader framework of cross-border activism is particularly important considering that several SUPA women who raised the

⁷ Churchill, “SUPA, Selma, and Stevenson,” 34.

⁸ Rosanne P. Waters, “A March from Selma to Canada: Canada and the Transnational Civil Rights Movement” (PhD diss., McMaster University, 2015).

⁹ Jim Harding quoted in Churchill, “SUPA, Selma, and Stevenson,” 41.

issue of gender inequality were originally from the United States and participated in SNCC and SDS. Out of the four women who wrote the SUPA paper, “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen,” three were American-born, and had formative activist experiences in the United States: Linda Seese was first a SNCC volunteer in Mississippi before she moved to Canada to join SUPA as a community organizer; Myrna Wood of Iowa married and moved to Toronto, where she joined Friends of SNCC. She returned to the U.S. to volunteer at the SNCC headquarters in Atlanta before joining SUPA’s Kingston Community Project in 1965; and Judy Bernstein was an SDS organizer for a Chicago community project called Jobs or Income Now (JOIN) before moving to Toronto. Their time in the United States must be examined as a step in the development of their understanding of how gender operated in the movement and in society, especially considering the debates around gender that occurred in SNCC and SDS during that period. This chapter will focus specifically on SNCC and the civil rights movement as a site for the development of feminist consciousness. The role of SDS and the experiences of SUPA women like Judy Bernstein who participated in the group, will be reserved for chapter four, which focuses on community organizing, and chapter six, which examines the role of New Leftist movement culture in the United States and Canada alike on SUPA women’s decision to raise the issue of gender inequality.

This chapter will provide an overview of SNCC, the civil rights group that was most intimately linked to SUPA activists, with particular attention given to debates around gender. It will move on to examine Canadian efforts to assist SNCC, and will describe the experiences of activists who joined SUPA through their participation in the movement for black civil rights, including Tamio Wakayama, Robertson Wood, Diane Burrows, and Rocky Jones. The third section will centre on Linda Seese and Myrna Wood who participated in SNCC before joining

SUPA and raising the issue of gender inequality in the movement. Through an examination of individual activist experiences, this chapter will establish the civil rights movement as significant to the mobilization of Canadian activism, and as a contributing factor to the development of a feminist analysis among some SUPA women.

Gender in SNCC

SNCC was formed out of the Greensboro sit-in of February 1960, led by African-American college students. The sit-in, which challenged the policy of racial segregation at Woolworth's lunch counters, sparked similar actions among youth across the southern United States.¹⁰ Seeing the potential for youth engagement in the civil rights movement, Ella Baker, who had served as the acting executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), organized a meeting in Raleigh, North Carolina for youth to discuss the movement. The result was the formation of SNCC in April 1960.¹¹ It was decided that the group would be based on nonviolence, interracial cooperation, and decentralization. The group's decentralized decision-making processes differed from those of the senior civil rights organization, the SCLC, which was entrenched in a hierarchical structure of predominantly older black men connected to the church.¹² The SCLC sponsored the meeting of students in Raleigh, and expected that any group to emerge would serve as a youthful affiliate to their organization.¹³ Baker and the students, however, rejected this arrangement, deciding that SNCC should remain independent.¹⁴

¹⁰ Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 45.

¹¹ Fred Prowledge, *Free At Last? The Civil Rights Movement and the People Who Made It* (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1997), 227-228.

¹² Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 183-189, and Steve Estes, *I Am a Man!: Race, Manhood, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 64 and 140.

¹³ Prowledge, *Free At Last?*, 227-228.

¹⁴ Howard Zinn, *SNCC: The New Abolitionists* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2002), 34.

There were gendered implications to SNCC's decision to strike out on its own. Their emphasis on decentralization meant that women had more opportunity to engage in prominent roles than in existing civil rights organizations. Sociologist Belinda Robnett explains that "women...are better able to obtain power where power relations are decentralized."¹⁵ In SNCC, untitled roles granted more autonomy because they lacked rigid expectations and boundaries.¹⁶ The group's approach to social change also had a positive impact on women's participation. While groups such as the SCLC and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) tended to organize short-term actions to bring about legislative reform, SNCC focused on long-term grassroots organizing to develop local black leadership that could independently sustain civil rights activism in the community.¹⁷ This emphasis on the grassroots lined up with the tradition of local women's organizing in black churches and communities.¹⁸ SNCC created meaningful spaces of participation for black women such as Ruby Doris Smith Robinson, Cynthia Washington, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Muriel Tillinghast. Nevertheless, there is evidence of gender imbalances within the group. In January 1964, Ruby Doris Smith Robinson led a protest in the office of SNCC's executive secretary, James Forman, frustrated that the responsibility of taking minutes was only ever given to women.¹⁹ In addition, Belinda Robnett's conceptualization of a bridging tier of leadership to characterize the role that many women held as mobilizers who created links "between the social movement and the community," has been

¹⁵ Belinda Robnett, *How Long? How Long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 113.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 110.

¹⁷ Charles Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 268.

¹⁸ Waters, "A March from Selma to Canada," 108, and Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, 268.

¹⁹ Harry G. Lefever, *Undaunted by the Fight: Spelman College and the Civil Rights Movement, 1957-1967* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2005), 213, and Judy Richardson Interview with Jean Wiley, 2007, available online. <http://www.crmvet.org/disc/women1.htm#womeninsncc>. Accessed 20 July 2015.

used to study black women's roles in SNCC.²⁰ The theorization of bridge leaders has brought more attention to the less visible roles that black women occupied. The need to develop a theory of bridge leadership in order to recognize black women as critical mobilizers of the movement, however, is also evidence of their exclusion from traditional leadership functions. As will be seen in chapter six, a similar situation existed in SUPA.

SNCC's grassroots approach stressed the importance of nurturing local leadership in black communities of the rural South. Rather than imposing decisions upon these communities, SNCC activists moved into the areas they were organizing, listened to the concerns of residents, provided information on citizenship rights, and accompanied people to voter registration offices. These local actions were formulated to facilitate the organic growth of grassroots leadership that could carry on the work of the movement after the departure of SNCC workers.²¹ Although the group was committed to inter-racial organizing, SNCC leadership functions in the field were primarily exercised by African Americans to model black self-determination.²² Those activists outside of the black community helped wherever needed. Tamio Wakayama, a Japanese Canadian, worked as a volunteer janitor and driver for SNCC in Atlanta before he joined the group's photography team.²³ Robertson Wood, a white Canadian, joined SNCC in the summer of 1965 hoping to participate in field projects, but was instead placed in the communications department.²⁴ Between 1960 and 1964, white women in SNCC played a variety of roles in the group, especially in the areas of communication and mobilization. SNCC staffer Dorothy

²⁰ Robnett, *How Long? How Long?*, 19.

²¹ King's College Archives & Special Collections (hereafter, King's College), The Canadianization Movement Papers, 1965-1985, donated by Dr. Jeffrey Cormier, "The Story of SNCC," undated.

²² Robnett, *How Long? How Long?*, 118.

²³ Leslie G. Kelen, ed., *This Light of Ours: Activist Photographers of the Civil Rights Movement* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2011), 206.

²⁴ MUA, SUPA, Box 18, File, 'Housing Clippings, 1965,' "Excerpt from Letter from Myrna Wood (Mrs. Robertson Wood), also working with SNCC in the South," undated.

Dawson Burlage served as a contact between SNCC and northern white students; Sue Thrasher organized the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC) to link southern students to the movement; and Mary King wrote SNCC press releases and performed administrative duties.²⁵ White women also participated in SNCC's Albany Freedom Ride. Joan Browning helped test newly integrated transportation in Georgia, while Casey Hayden worked as a "designated observer," serving as a contact between the demonstration and SNCC headquarters.²⁶ Hayden was also one of the few white women to participate in field work through SNCC's adult literacy campaign in Tougaloo, Mississippi.²⁷

SNCC itself had to model black leadership in order to empower black communities to engage in civil rights activism. For this reason, activists who were not black, irrespective of gender, took on supporting roles in the group. As white SNCC activist Bob Zellner recalls: "White staff exercised influence in the organization only to the extent that they appreciated and abided by the principle of black leadership."²⁸ White women's roles were restricted more than those of any other group, due to the historical context of race and gender relations in the South. In particular, it was feared that the entire group would suffer violent reactions from local whites if white women were sent to work in black communities.²⁹ The presence of white men in the field could also be dangerous to the group, but not to the same extent due to "the dictates of the mystique that surrounded white womanhood in the South," as explained by Robnett.³⁰ This

²⁵ Dorothy Dawson Burlage, "Truths of the Heart," in *Deep in Our Hearts, Nine White Women in the Freedom Movement*, Constance Curry et al. (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2000), 100, Sue Thrasher, "Circle of Trust," in *Deep in Our Hearts*, 228, Mary King, *Freedom Song: A Personal Story of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement* (New York: William Morrow and Company Inc., 1987), and Elizabeth Jacobs, "Revisiting the Second Wave: In Conversation with Mary King," *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism* 7, no. 2 (2007): 112.

²⁶ Joan C. Browning, "Shiloh Witness," in *Deep in Our Hearts*, 67-68.

²⁷ Casey Hayden, "Fields of Blue," in *Deep in our Hearts*, 352-355.

²⁸ Bob Zellner with Constance Curry, *The Wrong Side of Murder Creek: A White Southerner in the Freedom Movement* (Montgomery, AL: New South Books, 2008), 293.

²⁹ Estes, *I Am a Man!*, 62-63.

³⁰ Robnett, *How Long? How Long?*, 129.

mystique was informed by longstanding constructions of race and gender that produced stereotypes of black men as animalistic and lustful, unable to contain their sexual impulses, and white women as models of purity and innocence who required the protection of white men. These stereotypes were so entrenched in white southern society that they served as the rationale behind the lynching of African-American men.³¹ It was within this context that SNCC feared the risks of placing white women in the field. Consequently, the roles of white women in SNCC were not dictated by gender alone, but by a combination of race, gender, and southern culture.³²

SNCC's commitment to self-determination, nonviolence, and the unity of individuals across lines of race, formed their vision of a Beloved Community.³³ From 1960 to the summer of 1964, SNCC staff was an intimate inter-racial group seeking to live as "a band of brothers and sisters, a circle of trust."³⁴ The summer of 1964 marked a turning point for SNCC and the Beloved Community. The group decided that more media attention was necessary to acquire support, and ensure that their actions would make an impact on political leaders. To attain this attention, SNCC brought approximately 1,000 mostly white, middle-class northern college students to volunteer in Freedom Summer, a project that centred on Freedom Schools and voter registration in Mississippi.³⁵ The influx of such a large number of white northern volunteers into SNCC significantly changed the dynamics of the group. Freedom Summer has been a topic of interest for historians and sociologists studying race and gender in the civil rights movement. Particularly, scholars have studied Freedom Summer to assess the treatment and experiences of

³¹ Amy Louise Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890-1940* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 7.

³² Robnett, *How Long? How Long?*, 138.

³³ Hayden, "Fields of Blue," in *Deep in Our Hearts*, 342, and Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1979), 37.

³⁴ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, ed., *A Circle of Trust: Remembering SNCC* (United States of America: Rutgers, The State University, 1998), 18.

³⁵ Doug McAdam, *Freedom Summer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 4.

white women in SNCC, an emphasis which has received some criticism for its focus on moments of the movement when whites participated in large numbers.³⁶ Since this chapter studies the influence of the civil rights movement on SUPA women whose initial activist experience was in SNCC, it necessarily focuses on white women.

Freedom Summer was organized by a coalition of civil rights groups based in Mississippi called the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO). SNCC took a lead in the organization of the project with Bob Moses of SNCC as the program coordinator. The project was based on the premise that the presence of whites in Mississippi would attract more attention to civil rights work. The volunteers were typically given work assignments in Freedom Schools, which taught math, literacy, nonviolence, and African-American history; community centres, which offered literacy programs for adults, day care services, and health clinics; voter registration campaigns; and organizational work for the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), which sought to challenge the all-white delegation of Mississippi Democrats at the Democratic National Convention of 1964.³⁷

The mass entry of white volunteers into SNCC generated racial tensions, as several black activists found them to be “patronizing and imperious.”³⁸ After Freedom Summer, a number of white volunteers joined SNCC staff and two competing visions for the group’s future emerged.³⁹ The first emphasized a desire to remain decentralized, while the second advanced a position for a more hierarchical and centralized group.⁴⁰ A meeting in Waveland, Mississippi was held in November 1964 to discuss these approaches. It was within this context that two longstanding

³⁶ Payne, *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom*, 432-433, and Robnett, *How Long? How Long?*, 115-116.

³⁷ Christopher M. Richardson and Ralph E. Luker, eds., *Historical Dictionary of the Civil Rights Movement*, 2nd ed. (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 132-133 and 191-192, and King’s College, The Canadianization Movement Papers, “Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, Congressional Challenge Fact Sheet,” undated.

³⁸ Echols, *Daring to Be Bad*, 29.

³⁹ Zellner, *The Wrong Side of Murder Creek*, 293.

⁴⁰ Echols, *Daring to Be Bad*, 33.

white SNCC activists, Casey Hayden and Mary King, anonymously submitted a conference paper titled, “Position Paper: Women in the Movement.” The activist histories of these two women offer some insight into their decision to raise the issue of gender in the group. Both Hayden and King entered the civil rights movement through the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), in which they discussed the topic of gender roles.⁴¹ In the late 1950s, Hayden had also lived in the Christian Faith and Life Community at the University of Texas in which “all leadership slots were dual, co-chaired by a man and a woman.”⁴² As Hayden explains: “My politics and expectations were shaped by non-sexist institutions.”⁴³ By the spring of 1963, Hayden and King were sharing an apartment in Atlanta, and reading Doris Lessing’s novel *The Golden Notebook*. Hayden describes the impact of this novel, stating: “It was enormously affirming to see a woman of the left view her life in the same compartments as I viewed mine, speak of all aspects of her life frankly, acknowledge her own needs, and empower her perspective by making it public.”⁴⁴ According to Hayden, it was the combination of their involvement in the YWCA and reading of *The Golden Notebook* that motivated them to initiate conversations about gender in the movement even before writing their position paper in 1964.⁴⁵

The position paper emphasized the centrality of men to decision-making and leadership, noting that the COFO leadership was made up exclusively of men, and that even women in leadership roles “can expect to have to defer to a man on their project for final decision making.”⁴⁶ They also noted that some women with ample experience in community organizing

⁴¹ Hayden, “Fields of Blue,” in *Deep in Our Hearts*, 338 and 351-352.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 339.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 351-352.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 352.

⁴⁶ “Position Paper: Women in the Movement,” Waveland, Mississippi (November 1964), available online. http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML_docs/Resources/Primary/Manifestos/SNCC_women.html. Accessed 24 July 2015.

spent most of their time “doing clerical work for other people,” and that very seldom were women asked to chair staff meetings in Atlanta. Hayden and King observed that it was not easy to discuss these issues because “assumptions of male superiority are as widespread and deep rooted and very much as crippling to the woman as the assumptions of white supremacy are to the Negro.” Concluding that “this is no more a man’s world than it is a white world,” Hayden and King wrote of their hope that “some women will begin to recognize day-to-day discriminations” and that this awareness could one day grow large enough to shift the values of the movement.⁴⁷

The paper’s intent has been viewed differently by various academics. Scholars of the women’s liberation movement, such as Sara Evans and Ruth Rosen, have interpreted the paper as a specific attempt to discuss sex discrimination in the movement.⁴⁸ Other scholars have argued that the context in which the paper was written would suggest that other factors informed their decision to raise gender issues. Robnett contends that Hayden and King submitted the paper because they viewed the possibility of a more hierarchical structure for SNCC “as a clear step toward a patriarchal organization much like the SCLC.”⁴⁹ David Barber has expanded on this analysis, noting that the rise of Black Nationalism during this time threatened the positions of both male and female white activists in SNCC who had been incorporated into the Beloved Community before Freedom Summer.⁵⁰ For this reason, the position paper was responding to issues of race relations, along with issues of gender.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women’s Movement Changed America* (New York: Viking, 2000), and Evans, *Personal Politics*.

⁴⁹ Robnett, *How Long? How Long?*, 120.

⁵⁰ David Barber, *A Hard Rain Fell: SDS and Why It Failed* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008), 103.

Stokely Carmichael's infamous comment that "the position of women in SNCC is prone," accompanies any discussion of the position paper. The remark was made while SNCC activists were decompressing at a gathering after the Waveland meeting. Hayden was in the group, and recalls that Carmichael made the quip when someone brought up the position paper on women in the movement, adding that she found the comment "really funny."⁵¹ While some scholars have identified the remark as evidence of sex discrimination within SNCC, others have pointed to statements made by Hayden and King that it was a satirical reflection on the number of sexual liaisons in SNCC during Freedom Summer.⁵² Linda Seese, who was volunteering with SNCC at the time, recalls hearing about Carmichael's response, and reflects: "It was taken out of context given to me, and I believe I perpetuated it in one early women's liberation book."⁵³ Robnett points out that Carmichael was actually one of the activists who was supportive of the points that the women raised. Other activists, such as Bob Moses, Jean Wheeler Smith, and Donna Richards were also sympathetic.⁵⁴ The majority of SNCC, however, was centrally concerned about the group's survival and either did not want to be distracted by the issue of gender, or did not believe that it was a real problem in the movement.⁵⁵

While the debates over the intention behind the creation of the Waveland paper are interesting and important, they have obscured a more basic interpretation of the document's historical significance. The paper advanced an understanding of gender as a cultural construction by comparing it to "race." When Hayden and King wrote that "this is no more a man's world than it is a white world," they gave voice to a consciousness of gender inequality as the product

⁵¹ Hayden, "Fields of Blue," in *Deep in Our Hearts*, 366.

⁵² Robnett, *How Long? How Long?*, 120.

⁵³ Linda Seese, Interview with author, 1 March 2016.

⁵⁴ Robnett, *How Long? How Long?*, 120.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

of discriminatory practices, rather than natural differences between men and women.⁵⁶ The paper signifies an articulation of a feminist consciousness among sixties activists. Hayden recalls that as a national leader of the YWCA during the fifties, she had been discussing women's issues, but the Waveland paper "represents a breakout into public political discussion in this generation."⁵⁷

While the concerns presented in the paper did not generate much discussion within SNCC itself, they would reappear in November 1965 in a second paper written by Hayden and King called "Sex and Caste." The contents and impact of this paper are discussed in chapter six. Here it should be noted that Hayden wrote the paper while working in SDS in 1965. Hayden still received a paycheque from SNCC, but was "on loan" to SDS to use the skills she had developed in the South to organize white northern communities.⁵⁸ Hayden's transition into white community organizing reflects a broader shift within SNCC from an interracial to black separatist movement. By the spring of 1965, white staff members were encouraged to organize white communities. This decision was the result of an increased number of white staff following Freedom Summer, and a feeling that white volunteers and staff were becoming too dominant in the leadership of the Mississippi programs.⁵⁹ Black separatism also began to gain traction in 1966 with SNCC's Atlanta Project, directed by Bill Ware, who "adopted a Pan-Africanist philosophy" while in the Peace Corps in Ghana.⁶⁰ As an urban project, the Atlanta group broke from SNCC's tradition of rural community organizing, and also "used racial separatism as their basis," according to historian Clayborne Carson.⁶¹ By December 1967, whites were expelled

⁵⁶ "Position Paper: Women in the Movement," Waveland, Mississippi (November 1964).

⁵⁷ Casey Hayden, "In the Attics of My Mind," in *Hands on the Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts by Women in SNCC*, eds., Faith S. Holsaert, et al. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 382.

⁵⁸ King, *Freedom Song*, 499, and Hayden, "Fields of Blue," 369.

⁵⁹ King, *Freedom Song*, 497.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 499.

⁶¹ Carson, *In Struggle*, 191.

from SNCC by a narrow vote of nineteen to eighteen, with twenty four abstentions.⁶² Both Hayden and King left SNCC in 1965 when the debates over white participation in the group were mounting. As chapter six will discuss, the pair worked together to produce “Sex and Caste” to begin a conversation on “the idea of women organizing themselves.”⁶³

The above background on SNCC offers context for a study of the links between SUPA, the movement for black civil rights in the United States, and the influence of this relationship on the development of a feminist consciousness. Participation in SNCC and Canadian actions that supported the civil rights movement were formative for several SUPA activists. The following sections will examine the connections between Canadian New Leftists and the civil rights movement. The first section will focus on SUPA activists involved with Friends of SNCC groups, which offered moral and financial support to SNCC in the South. This will be followed by an examination of the experiences of two women, Myrna Wood and Linda Seese, who participated in SNCC before joining SUPA community organizing projects. These two women were central to the development of a feminist analysis within SUPA, articulated in September 1967. This chapter will establish the civil rights movement as one of the sites in which they developed their understandings of gender.

Friends of SNCC

Students did not have to travel to the southern United States to lend their support to the civil rights movement. Friends of SNCC groups offered students across North America, and even the globe, with an opportunity to contribute to the movement. By November 1964, SNCC reported that Friends of SNCC chapters could be found in almost every major American city

⁶² Ibid., 241, and King, *Freedom Song*, 508.

⁶³ Hayden, “Fields of Blue,” 371.

across sixty campuses.⁶⁴ The purpose of these groups was to raise money for projects and bail, collect clothing and supplies, recruit volunteers to travel south, and plan northern support work, such as demonstrations and letter-writing campaigns. As one SNCC member wrote, “we have to depend on people in the North to bring pressure on those in power.”⁶⁵ The rural black communities in which SNCC was organizing did not hold significant influence over media and politicians. Encouragement to form Friends of SNCC groups was based on the notion that white activists across university campuses could generate support among segments of the population that held more clout with decision makers and reporters.

Canadian activists joined in the effort to bring attention and resources to SNCC’s movement. Friends of SNCC groups were established across Canadian university campuses at the University of Western Ontario, University of Toronto, Carleton, Queen’s, McGill, the University of Saskatchewan, and the University of British Columbia.⁶⁶ According to historian Roseanne Waters, Canadian activist Diane Burrows played a key role in the establishment of these campus groups, explaining that she “highlighted SNCC’s transnational focus” by describing the racial injustice they were confronting in the United States as not just “an American problem, [but] a problem of democracy.”⁶⁷ Canadian activists recognized this as a significant moment of New Leftist activism, and saw inaction on this issue as “unspoken support for those who are perpetuating prejudice.”⁶⁸ Waters’ dissertation on the transnational civil rights movement provides a comprehensive view of the formation, activities, and contributions of

⁶⁴ Wisconsin Historical Society (hereafter, WHS), Freedom Summer Digital Collection, Mary E. King Papers, Box 1, Folder 18, “A Note About the Friends of SNCC Groups—What do they do,” undated, available online. <http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15932coll2/id/24621/show/24533/rec/12>. Accessed 24 July 2015. `

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Waters, “A March from Selma to Canada,” 114.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 114 and Diane Burrows quoted in Waters, “A March from Selma to Canada,” 115.

⁶⁸ Robertson Wood, quoted in Waters, “A March from Selma to Canada,” 120.

Friends of SNCC in Canada. This chapter focuses more specifically on the relationship between Friends of SNCC and SUPA in order to illuminate the link between Canadian New Leftists and the movement for black civil rights, and further build upon the understanding of New Leftism as a collection of overlapping movements.

The creation of Friends of SNCC branches in Canada was made possible by the organizational efforts of activists who had direct experience in the movement across the border, such as Tamio Wakayama, Diane Burrows, and Clayton Ruby. For Wakayama, working in SNCC was an opportunity to confront the effects of racial discrimination that he personally experienced as a Japanese Canadian. During the Second World War, Wakayama and his family were incarcerated along with other Japanese Canadians in British Columbia.⁶⁹ Following the war, his family was forced to move “east of the Rockies,” and relocated to Chatham, Ontario.⁷⁰ Wakayama was a university student when he saw coverage of black students staging sit-ins in the southern United States. He was inspired by their non-violent response as they were tossed from their seats, verbally abused, and assaulted with coffee and eggs while attempting to integrate lunch counters. Looking back, he explains that their struggle resonated with him: “I sensed then that I was connected [to these people] in some deep and yet still, unnamed, unidentified part of me.”⁷¹ Their example strengthened his determination to resist internalizing messages of racial discrimination. In the fall of 1963, Wakayama decided to leave university and join SNCC in the South, where he started his work as a volunteer janitor and driver in Atlanta. His role expanded as he began to help edit the SNCC publication, *The Student Voice* and was put

⁶⁹ On the incarceration of Japanese Canadians, see Peter Ward, “British Columbia and the Japanese Evacuation” *Canadian Historical Review* 57, no. 3 (Sept., 1976): 289-308; Stephanie Bangarth, “Religious Organizations and the “Relocation” of Persons of Japanese Ancestry in North America: Evaluating Advocacy,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 34, no. 3 (October, 2004): 511-540; and Bangarth, *Voices Raised in Protest: Defending Citizens of Japanese Ancestry in North America, 1942-49* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008).

⁷⁰ Kelen, *This Light of Ours*, 207.

⁷¹ Tamio Wakayama quoted in *This Light of Ours*, 210.

on the SNCC payroll, which he recalls as “one of the proudest moments of my young life.”⁷² It was during his time in SNCC that he discovered his talent for photography. SNCC photographer Danny Lyon recognized Wakayama’s potential after seeing a poster that he had created advertising a rally. Lyon lent him his spare Nikon, and Wakayama joined the SNCC photography team, working as the manager of the darkroom of the Southern Documentary Project, and a field photographer in Mississippi. By the end of 1964, Wakayama returned to Canada, where he contributed to the development of Friends of SNCC groups, and joined SUPA.⁷³

Diane Burrows, a graduate from the University of Toronto, was most instrumental in the establishment of Friends of SNCC groups in Canada. At the age of twenty-two, she moved to Mississippi to volunteer in Freedom Summer. Talking with a reporter from the *Montreal Gazette* in December 1964, Burrows reflected on the common question of why she bothered to get involved in something that many defined as “an American problem.”⁷⁴ Her response was that “discrimination is a world affair” and that perhaps one day she could apply the skills that she had developed in SNCC to “the Canadian situation.”⁷⁵ As a SNCC volunteer, Burrows worked in the “White Folks Project” in Biloxi, Mississippi.⁷⁶ The project was comprised of white volunteers working to acquire white support for black voting rights. The experience of trying to obtain white support for the civil rights movement in Mississippi proved to be very valuable to her future as a civil rights activist in Canada. She was hired by SNCC to work as the national

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Waters, “A March from Selma to Canada,” 117-118.

⁷⁴ Jean Sharp, “Worked On Civil Rights,” *The Montreal Gazette*, 15 December 1964, 19.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ WHC, Freedom Summer Digital Collection, Sally Belfrage Papers, File, ‘Biloxi, 1964,’ “White Community Project Report,” 22 July 1964, available online.

<http://cdm15932.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15932coll2/id/36829/rec/1>. Accessed 24 July 2015.

coordinator for Friends of SNCC Canada on a salary of thirty dollars a week.⁷⁷ In the fall of 1964, she travelled to various campuses in Ontario and Montreal to speak about her time in Mississippi, and the necessity of organizing Friends chapters to support SNCC.⁷⁸

Clayton Ruby was another founding member of the Canadian Friends of SNCC whose initial experience had been as a volunteer in rural Mississippi. After it had become clear that he was not going to be successful as a community organizer in Mississippi, Ruby was offered the opportunity to return to Canada to fundraise.⁷⁹ He returned to Toronto around the time of the Selma demonstration outside of the U.S. Consulate, which he identifies as his “first really big involvement,” and helped establish Friends of SNCC.⁸⁰ The Friends of SNCC national staff demonstrated an overlap with SUPA. The staff included Ruby, who at the time was serving as a part-time manager of the SUPA office, and Harvey Shepherd, who later joined the office staff of SUPA. Robertson Wood, who shared responsibilities with Diane Burrows as Friends of SNCC national coordinator, later participated in a 1966 SUPA community organizing project.⁸¹ In Toronto, SUPA and Friends of SNCC were so connected that they eventually shared office space on Bancroft Avenue.⁸² When asked to describe the relationship between SUPA and Friends of SNCC, Ruby explained that the two were inextricably connected, stating:

Nothing existed other than SUPA. We called ourselves Friends of SNCC when we were doing SNCC work...Some people were attached directly to Friends of SNCC and spent most of their time doing SNCC work, which mostly involved fundraising and publicity...but there really was no Friends of SNCC organization other than SUPA.⁸³

⁷⁷ Ibid., Mary E. King Papers, Box 1, Folder 17, “Mary King—Meeting Minutes, 1964-1965,” 27 April 1965, 24, available online.

<http://cdm15932.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15932coll2/id/49641/show/49569/rec/9>. Accessed 24 July 2015.

⁷⁸ Waters, “A March from Selma to Canada,” 115.

⁷⁹ Clayton Ruby, Interview with author, 13 October 2015.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ MUA, SUPA, Box 3, File, ‘Correspondence—Mike Rowan,’ “SNCC Canada Appointments,” Freedom Now: Canadian Friends of SNCC Newsletter, Vol 1, No. 3, 1 June 1965.

⁸² Ibid., 116.

⁸³ Ruby, interview.

Ruby's recollection is reinforced by Myrna Wood, who described Friends of SNCC as "an offshoot of SUPA."⁸⁴ Similarly, John Cleveland recalls the overlap between SUPA and SNCC in Halifax. As students' council president of King's College in 1965-66, Cleveland encouraged student participation in SUPA's Nova Scotia Project, led by Rocky and Joan Jones. As Cleveland explains: "They were in SUPA as well as SNCC, so there was this overlap, for them and for me."⁸⁵ These understandings of the relationship between civil rights work and SUPA supports the conceptualization of New Leftism as a collection of related movements. Jim Harding's recollections of the 1963 March on Washington further illuminate the inter-relation of these movements, explaining: "I find out when I'm down there that pretty much everyone who was in the civil rights movement is also a peace activist. They're all wearing non-nuclear buttons. So at that point I realized there's really a movement converging here."⁸⁶ Harding further participated in the Quebec-Washington-Guantanamo Walk for Peace in 1963, which linked activism around peace and racial equality in a racially-integrated march to protest nuclear weapons and the U.S. embargo on Cuba, while also promoting non-violent direct action.⁸⁷ The connection between SUPA and SNCC reflected a broader cooperation between sixties movements.

The Canadian demonstration outside of the U.S. Consulate in Toronto in response to the Selma crisis in March 1965, was SUPA's first major action as a movement. During this time, SNCC and the SCLC were campaigning for voting rights in Alabama. Although African

⁸⁴ Myrna Wood, Interview with author, 14 November 2015.

⁸⁵ John Cleveland, Interview with author, 18 September 2016. Rocky raised money for SNCC through speaking engagements in Canada. He attempted to convince Jim Forman to establish a SNCC chapter in Nova Scotia, but his request was denied based on Forman's conviction that the situation in the southern U.S. was much worse than Canada. Burnley "Rocky" Jones and James W. St.G. Walker, *Burnley "Rocky" Jones Revolutionary: An Autobiography* (Winnipeg: Roseway Publishing, 2016), 62-3.

⁸⁶ Harding, interview.

⁸⁷ Ibid. For more on the Quebec-Washington-Guantanamo Walk for Peace, see Marian Mollin, *Radical Pacifism in Modern America: Egalitarianism and Protest* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 125-150.

Americans had the right to vote in theory, they were denied this right through a number of barriers in the southern states, including tests and poll taxes. Even when some African Americans were able to successfully register to vote, they faced violent reactions from whites.⁸⁸ SNCC had been organizing voter registration attempts in Selma since February 1963.⁸⁹ Martin Luther King, Jr. entered with the SCLC in January 1965 to intensify activism around voter registration. Alabama was a particularly dangerous state for civil rights organizers. Marches in Selma led by John Lewis of SNCC and King of the SCLC resulted in mass arrests in January and February 1965.⁹⁰ In the town of Marion where civil rights activists were planning their own actions for voting rights, police shot and killed Jimmy Lee Jackson, an African-American protestor who was attempting to protect his mother from being beaten.⁹¹ Activists in Canada responded by sending a telegram to President Johnson on 15 February, expressing their concern over the violence in Alabama and urging him to “use every means at your disposal to stop the disgraceful and unlawful treatment accorded to Negroes in Alabama when attempting to participate in the most basic function of a democratic society, the process of voting.”⁹²

Jackson’s death prompted the organization of a large-scale demonstration in the form of a march from Selma to the state’s capital of Montgomery. SNCC did not formally participate in the march due to “the likelihood of police brutality, the drain on resources, and the frustrations experienced in working with SCLC,” according to SNCC executive secretary James Foreman.⁹³

⁸⁸ Garth E. Pauley, *LBJ’s American Promise: The 1965 Voting Rights Address* (Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2007), 58.

⁸⁹ David J. Garrow, *Protest at Selma: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Voting Rights Act of 1965* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 30.

⁹⁰ According to SNCC, there were nearly 2,500 arrests made in the four weeks following the first march on 18 January. King’s College, The Canadianization Movement Papers, “Fact Sheet on Selma, Alabama,” 13 February 1965.

⁹¹ Pauley, *LBJ’s American Promise*, 61.

⁹² King’s College, The Canadianization Movement Papers, Telegram to President Johnson from the Ottawa Committee for Human Rights (OCHR), quoted in the OCHR Newsletter, 8 March 1965.

⁹³ James Foreman quoted in Garrow, *Protest at Selma*, 70.

It was therefore decided that individual SNCC activists could participate in the march, but it would not be officially supported by the group. One of these individuals was SNCC chairman John Lewis, who led the march on its first day on 7 March, along with Hosea Williams of the SCLC.⁹⁴

The marchers were dedicated to non-violent protest. As they were peacefully making their way through Selma, they were stopped by state troopers on the Edmund Pettus Bridge where they were ordered to disperse. When the marchers refused to move, they were charged by troopers and attacked with nightsticks and tear gas.⁹⁵ Because of the extent of the violence that marchers encountered, this episode became known as “Bloody Sunday.” Following the events of Bloody Sunday, Friends of SNCC in Toronto decided they would protest the police force in Selma by holding a peaceful demonstration outside of the U.S. Consulate on University Avenue in Toronto. Friends of SNCC notified the police and the Consulate of their demonstration, and held training sessions on nonviolence in preparation for the sit-in. On Wednesday, 10 March Friends of SNCC released a letter to the Consul-General issuing demands for federal troops to be sent to Selma to protect the marchers, for the arrest of officials preventing African Americans from voting, and for the passage of voting rights legislation.⁹⁶ A group of about thirty-five demonstrators attempted to sit down in the covered entrance to the Consulate, but were dragged onto the outside steps and sidewalk by police.⁹⁷ During this time, 300 students marched to the Consulate and arranged picket lines on the sidewalk. By 10:45 p.m. the demonstrators were permitted by police to move onto the consul steps, under the condition that they would return to

⁹⁴ Garrow, *Protest at Selma*, 74.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁹⁶ “Demands at the consulate,” *The Varsity*, 11 March 1965, 2, and Waters, “A March from Selma to Canada,” 124.

⁹⁷ “Demands at the consulate,” *The Varsity*, and Myrna Wood, e-mail message to author, 27 March 2017.

the sidewalk in the morning.⁹⁸ On the morning of 11 March, the demonstrators were dragged from the consul steps.⁹⁹ They remained committed to nonviolence throughout the demonstration, offering no physical resistance as they were removed from the steps, dragged across the sidewalk, and tossed on their blankets and sleeping bags.¹⁰⁰ When news arrived that a white minister in Selma had died from injuries after being beaten for supporting the march, one high school demonstrator asserted that the group should force their way into the Consulate, charging his fellow demonstrators of being fearful of arrest. A SNCC representative responded that it was the nonviolent method, rather than fear, that dictated the group's approach.¹⁰¹ Entry into the Consulate was eventually granted to Liora Proctor of SUPA, along with two other students, to speak with the U.S. Consul-General Park Armstrong, who was apparently sympathetic during their meeting, but did not support the demonstration publicly.¹⁰²

Canadian activists held similar actions in other parts of the country. Students picketed the U.S. Consulates in Vancouver and Montreal.¹⁰³ In Montreal, nine demonstrators, including Dan Daniels of the Montreal Peace Centre, staged a sit-in at the entrance of the U.S. Consulate where they were "removed on special stretchers" by seven officers.¹⁰⁴ In the nation's capital, the Carleton Friends of SNCC sent a telegram to President Johnson on 8 May protesting the "inhuman treatment of the Negroes marching from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama."¹⁰⁵ Further protest convened in Ottawa on 14 March when as many as 4,000 demonstrators marched from

⁹⁸ "Reach consul steps," *The Varsity*, 11 March 1965, 1.

⁹⁹ "Police drag students from consulate here," *The Toronto Star*, 11 March 1965, 1.

¹⁰⁰ "Sit-ins," *The Toronto Star*, 11 March 1965, 8.

¹⁰¹ "SNCC sit-in," *The Varsity*, 12 March 1965, 3.

¹⁰² "Demonstrators undaunted by cold," *The Varsity*, 12 March 1965, 1.

¹⁰³ Waters, "A March from Selma to Canada," 128.

¹⁰⁴ Bryan Goodyer, "Mass March Staged on U.S. Consulate: Nine Demonstrators Forcibly Removed," *The Montreal Gazette*, 17 March 1965, 1.

¹⁰⁵ King's College, The Canadianization Movement Papers, Telegram to President L.B. Johnson from Carleton University, 8 March 1965.

Parliament to the American Embassy.¹⁰⁶ Although the demonstration in Toronto continued during this time, they nevertheless sent 800 students from the University of Toronto to participate in the Ottawa action.¹⁰⁷ Diane Burrows, Robertson Wood, and Art Pape of SUPA were among those who travelled from Toronto. Pape addressed the crowd explaining the details of the march, and Burrows spoke about the importance of sending donations to civil rights demonstrators in the South.¹⁰⁸ The group produced an open letter to President Johnson stating: “We understand that presidential action rests on a vigorous public opinion. We believe that your stand (as stated Saturday), is very much a response to public pressures throughout the United States and around the world. We are proud and honoured to be part of that pressure for freedom.”¹⁰⁹ The President’s statement to which they referred denounced the brutality in Selma and asserted his intention to ensure that “every citizen of this country is given the right to participate in his Government at every level through the complete voting process.”¹¹⁰ This statement was followed by an address on 15 March, during which Johnson urged Congress to pass the Voting Rights Act.¹¹¹ The announcement of voting rights legislation did not satisfy Canadian demonstrators. In Toronto, demonstrations continued until 17 March and stopped only after Johnson announced a federal court order to ensure no state interference with the march

¹⁰⁶ The Canadian University Press reported that there were 4,000 marchers, while *The Varsity* reported 2,000. King’s College, The Canadianization Movement Papers, Canadian University Press News Service No. 49, “4000 students March for the Negro’s Right to Vote,” 16 March 1965, and “SNCC Demonstrates in Ottawa,” *The Varsity*, 19 March 1965, 3.

¹⁰⁷ King’s College, The Canadianization Movement Papers, untitled SNCC report, undated.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., “Ottawa Snick March” 14 March 1965.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., “Press Release,” undated.

¹¹⁰ The statement followed President Johnson’s meeting with Alabama Governor George Wallace on 13 March 1965. The statement can be found at The American Presidency Project, “The President’s News Conference,” 13 March 1965, available online. www.presidency.ucsb.edu. Accessed 19 August 2015.

¹¹¹ King’s College, The Canadianization Movement Papers, “Voting Rights Act of 1965,” 1965.

from Selma to Montgomery. Montreal demonstrators remained outside the U.S. Consulate until the marchers reached Montgomery and it was clear that the court order had been effective.¹¹²

Canadian support actions were appreciated by SNCC in the South. The group sent civil rights activists Prathia Hall and Lafayette Surney to address the activists in Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal. Originally, John Lewis was scheduled to address activists in Ottawa at an event sponsored by the Ottawa Committee for Human Rights (OCHR); however, his engagement was cancelled as a result of injuries he sustained during the Selma march. In a telegram sent to the OCHR, Lewis apologized that he could not be with them, adding: “We of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee have been both excited and encouraged by the tremendous support for the struggle received from our Canadian friends.”¹¹³ At a SNCC meeting in April 1965, the Canadian demonstrations were named as “the most exciting of all,” while Diane Burrows was praised as “an excellent organizer.”¹¹⁴

The Canadian demonstrations also received recognition from the U.S. government. In a letter to Friends of SNCC Canadian groups, Burrows reported that the Friends of SNCC delegation to the White House “learned that the Johnson Administration was quite aware of what we were doing here.”¹¹⁵ The delegation spoke with an advisor to the President who called the Canadian response to Selma “extremely unique.”¹¹⁶ The demonstration contributed to the media attention given to the racial violence in Selma. The international public was coming face

¹¹² “Sit-in ends: make new plans,” *The Varsity*, 19 March 1965, 1.

¹¹³ King’s College, The Canadianization Movement Papers, Telegram from John Lewis to the Ottawa Committee on Human Rights, 13 March 1965.

¹¹⁴ WHC, Freedom Summer Digital Collection, Mary E. King Papers, Box 1, Folder 17, “Mary King—Meeting Minutes, 1964-1965,” 27 April 1965, 24, available online.

<http://cdm15932.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15932coll2/id/49641/show/49569/rec/9>. Accessed 24 July 2015.

¹¹⁵ King’s College, The Canadianization Movement Papers, Letter to Friends of SNCC from Diane Burrows, 31 March 1965.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

to face with the United States' mistreatment of its citizens through television coverage of episodes such as Bloody Sunday. By making headlines, the Friends of SNCC demonstrations added to the pressure placed on President Johnson to defend the rights of African Americans and maintain an image of American freedom and democracy within the context of the Cold War.¹¹⁷ According to Lafayette Surney, civil rights activists believed that "Canadian demonstrations of support for the Negro in the South were one of the factors that prompted President Johnson to initiate legislative action."¹¹⁸

The success of the Canadian demonstrations further led to the organization of the first conference of the Canadian Friends of SNCC in May 1965.¹¹⁹ The conference illustrated the relationship between the civil rights movement and student movement, with speakers such as Charlie Cobb and Fannie Lou Hamer of SNCC, Art Pape of SUPA, and Tom Hayden of SDS. Cobb, who had initiated the SNCC Freedom School program of 1964, spoke on the connections between racial oppression in the South, and the sense of individual powerlessness in education. He explained that SNCC was trying to foster a kind of education where "you as an individual, really set the standards."¹²⁰ This emphasis on self-determination and control over one's education and daily life were central both to SNCC and the student movement. Stewart Goodings of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism also spoke at the May conference on the subject of Quebec's Quiet Revolution, illuminating the breadth of concerns held by Friends of SNCC activists.¹²¹ The Toronto Friends of SNCC initiated a project around language

¹¹⁷ Waters, "A March from Selma to Canada," 168, and Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 249-250.

¹¹⁸ King's College, The Canadianization Movement Papers, Canadian University Press News Service No. 49, "4,000 Students March for the Negro's Right to Vote," 16 March 1965.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Letter from Diane Burrows to Friends of SNCC, 31 March 1965.

¹²⁰ MUA, SUPA, Box 3, File, 'Correspondence—Mike Rowan,' "A Step Towards a Movement in Canada," *Freedom Now: Canadian Friends of SNCC Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1 June 1965, 2.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 4. For an analysis of the connections between the civil rights movement and Quebec nationalism, see Waters, "A March from Selma to Canada," 129-135.

rights in Georgetown upon hearing that Holy Cross Elementary, a school of 300 students of which 106 were bilingual in French and English, was refusing to institute a bilingual kindergarten, opting instead for an English-language class. Francophone parents pulled their children out of the school and taught them at a local restaurant. Friends of SNCC helped teach the children and organize a sit-in at the school on 17 May 1965. The sit-in prompted a school board emergency meeting where it was decided to establish a bilingual kindergarten.¹²² Canadian Friends of SNCC was involved in overlapping New Leftist actions. As Diane Burrows described the objective of the Friends of SNCC conference: “We are hoping...to show the inter-relatedness of various fields of social action participants are interested in.”¹²³

The Friends of SNCC demonstrations in March 1965 served as a galvanizing force and an entry point into sixties activism for some individuals, including Myrna and Robertson Wood. According to Myrna Wood, it was during the Toronto demonstration that her husband Robertson came to be viewed as a leader among the demonstrators. She reflected that it was most likely “because of character and age” that her husband was “awarded a position of leadership by the group.”¹²⁴ He stayed with the protestors every night and was a leader of the Ottawa demonstration. His efforts were noticed by Diane Burrows, who requested that he join her as a coordinator in the Toronto office to help organize the Canadian movement. He accepted the position, but decided that to learn more about what was required of the movement in Canada, he should travel south to do field work with SNCC. He and Myrna went to work at the Atlanta SNCC office in the summer of 1965, although they were no longer a couple.¹²⁵ Myrna reported

¹²² MUA, SUPA, Box 3, File, ‘Correspondence—Mike Rowan,’ “A Step Towards a Movement in Canada,” *Freedom Now: Canadian Friends of SNCC Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1 June 1965, 5.

¹²³ King’s College, The Canadianization Movement Papers, Letter to Nick Aplin from Diane Burrows, 20 April 1965.

¹²⁴ MUA, SUPA, Box 18, File, ‘Housing Clippings, 1965,’ “Excerpt from letter from Myrna Wood (Mrs. Robertson Wood), also working with SNCC in the South,” undated.

¹²⁵ Myrna Wood, e-mail message to author, 27 March 2017.

that Robertson was working in the Atlanta Communications Department instead of touring the field projects because more staff was needed there and he possessed the skills needed by the office.¹²⁶ During that summer, Robertson also took part in the MFPD challenge in Mississippi. He demonstrated in Jackson and was arrested along with 700 other civil rights activists on 14 June. Friends of SNCC established the Rob Wood Bail Fund, while Harvey Shepherd wrote about Wood's arrest in the *SUPA Newsletter*, urging SUPA activists to help by writing letters to the White House demanding that the United States Department of Justice ensure the release of those who were imprisoned in Jackson.¹²⁷ Other suggested actions included fundraising, sending requests to local newspapers to write on events in Jackson, and participating in a Washington lobby with SNCC Canada.¹²⁸ The lobby was organized as part of the MFPD challenge.¹²⁹ During the summer of 1965, SNCC encouraged civil rights activists to lobby Congress to unseat the five Mississippi Congressmen and to hold new elections throughout the South "within six to nine months after federal officials begin registration there."¹³⁰

The Toronto sit-in at the U.S. Consulate also launched the activism of Burnley "Rocky" Jones, an African Canadian originally from Truro, Nova Scotia.¹³¹ The demonstrators in Toronto were mostly white students. The spectacle of the protest caught Jones' attention, who at the time was twenty-four years of age and working for the Treasury Department of the Government of

¹²⁶ "Excerpt from letter from Myrna Wood," undated.

¹²⁷ King's College, The Canadianization Movement Papers, Letter from Anne Cohen to Friends of SNCC National Office, undated.

¹²⁸ MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File, 'SUPA Newsletter, Vol. 1,' "SNCC Report: MFPD Challenge Brings Arrests, Brutality," *SUPA Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 23 June 1965.

¹²⁹ King's College, The Canadianization Movement Papers, News Release, "SNCC Announces '65 Plans," 25 February 1965.

¹³⁰ Ibid., "The Washington Lobby," undated.

¹³¹ For an account on Rocky Jones' life and activism, see Jones and Walker, *Burnley "Rocky" Jones Revolutionary*.

Ontario.¹³² Jones joined the demonstration and became plugged in with Friends of SNCC and SUPA. Following the demonstration, Jones joined a delegation of ten Canadians to Washington to show their support to the civil rights demonstrators who were finally given safe passage for their march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama on 21 March. SUPA activists Henry Tarvainen and Jim Mayor were also part of the delegation, along with Robertson Wood and Diane Burrows of Friends of SNCC.¹³³ Through conversations with SUPA activists about the group's upcoming community organizing projects scheduled for the summer, Jones decided to become fully involved in the movement. He gave up his steady job in Toronto and relocated with his wife and daughter to Nova Scotia to lay the foundations for a project dealing with issues of racial discrimination and African-Canadian poverty in Halifax, which will be discussed in the next chapter.¹³⁴

The civil rights movement not only provided an entry point into New Leftist activism for some Canadians, but it also served as a site for the questioning of gender roles. As discussed in the first section of this chapter, Casey Hayden and Mary King raised the issue of gender inequality in SNCC at the Waveland meeting of 1964. Their experiences in SNCC served as a foundation for the development of a feminist analysis which they would vocalize a year later in their paper, "Sex and Caste," explored in chapter six. A background in SNCC was also significant for two of the SUPA women who wrote "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..." in 1967: Myrna Wood and Linda Seese. The following section focuses specifically on the civil

¹³² Ibid., 56-60 and MUA, SUPA, Box 8, File, 'Projects—Summer, 1965,' "A Report on Community Organizing Projects, Summer 1965," Prepared for the Company of Young Canadians by the Student Union for Peace Action, Summer 1965.

¹³³ "Toronto Delegation Visits U.S.; Wants Marchers Protected," *The Globe and Mail*, 20 March 1965, 3. For more on the trip to Washington, see Jones and Walker, *Burnley "Rocky" Jones Revolutionary*, 60-62.

¹³⁴ MUA, SUPA, Box 8, File, 'Projects—Summer, 1965,' "A Report on Community Organizing Projects, Summer 1965," Prepared for the Company of Young Canadians by the Student Union for Peace Action, Summer 1965.

rights activism of these two women. Both Wood and Seese were born in the United States, attended American colleges, and gained their initial activist experiences in the civil rights movement. Their involvement in SNCC must be studied alongside their activism in SUPA to gain a comprehensive understanding of the events, people, and experiences that shaped both their activist identities and understandings of gender expressed in the 1967 paper. Their motivations for joining SNCC, and the nature of their involvement in the group, will be studied before offering an analysis of the connections between their civil rights activism and perspectives on gender. Studying their individual experiences not only provides a better understanding of their activist histories, but offers a window into broader themes, such as the permeability of activism across the Canadian-U.S. border, race relations within the civil rights movement, and how personal identifications, including class and sexual orientation, can inspire and shape activist work.¹³⁵

Myrna Wood

Myrna Wood was a SUPA activist who was significantly influenced by her experiences in the civil rights movement. Her motivation to participate in civil rights actions emanated from her own experience living in the United States. As she stated in a 1989 interview: “That’s how I got involved in all of those things, because of my United States background, and understanding what it was all about.”¹³⁶ Before attending university, Wood had a job at a bookstore in Nashville where she met two African Americans who had been working at the store for over twenty-five years. Wood recalls her surprise when she learned that as a new employee doing the same work,

¹³⁵ For more on the advantages of studying history through biography, see Simone Lassig, “Toward a Biographical Turn? Biography in Modern Historiography—Modern Historiography in Biography,” *GHI Bulletin* no. 35 (Fall 2004), available online. <http://www.ghidc.org/publications/ghipubs/bu/035/35.147.pdf>. Accessed 27 April 2017.

¹³⁶ Canadian Women’s Movement Archives (hereafter CWMA), University of Ottawa, Myrna Wood, Box 359, Untitled file, “Interview with Myrna Wood,” 15 April 1989.

she was making ten dollars more per week than her coworkers.¹³⁷ Outside of the workplace, Wood witnessed other examples of discrimination, including a parade of the Ku Klux Klan on the main street of Nashville, and a bombing of a Jewish community centre two blocks from her home. It was ultimately the discriminatory culture of the city that drove Wood to leave the area and return home to Iowa and ask her parents to help her pay for university tuition. At the age of twenty-two she moved into residence at Iowa University for one year.¹³⁸ In 1959 she married Robertson Wood, a Canadian who had just graduated from the University of Western Ontario. The couple moved to Toronto and Myrna took a job as a library worker at the University of Toronto.¹³⁹

It was not until 1964 that Myrna Wood entered social activism at the age of twenty-eight. Her first action was a protest in Toronto against a visit from Alabama Governor George Wallace, who was known for his opposition to civil rights legislation. Wallace was scheduled to speak at the Lions International Convention in Toronto in July 1964. The protest against Wallace's scheduled appearance began with the organization of the Emergency Committee of Five, which sent a telegram to the Lions International Convention headquarters requesting that they remove Wallace from the program. The committee was comprised of the Toronto and District Labor Council, the United Negro Association, the Canadian Anti-Apartheid Committee, the Holy Blossom Temple social action committee, and the Home Service Association.¹⁴⁰ Lions International refused the request, explaining that their president, Aubrey Green, was from Alabama, and it was convention that the president of the service club invite the governor from

¹³⁷ Ibid, and Wood, interview.

¹³⁸ Canadian Women's Movement Archives (hereafter CWMA), University of Ottawa, Myrna Wood, Box 359, Untitled file, "Interview with Myrna Wood," 15 April 1989.

¹³⁹ MUA, SUPA, Box 18, File, 'House Clippings, 1965,' "Excerpt from letter from Myrna Wood (Mrs. Robertson Wood), also working with SNCC in the South," undated.

¹⁴⁰ "Lions reject pleas to bar Wallace," *Toronto Daily Star*, 7 July 1964, 1.

his home state to speak at the conference.¹⁴¹ Unsatisfied, the group decided to organize a demonstration.

Wood decided to join the demonstration after reading about Wallace's visit in the newspaper. She recalls that her husband was not supportive of this at the time, feeling that picketing on the streets was not the proper way to address social issues.¹⁴² Nevertheless, he attended the demonstration alongside his wife. Myrna and Robertson were among the approximately 1,000 demonstrators surrounding Maple Leaf Gardens on 9 July when Wallace was to make his appearance.¹⁴³ According to the *Toronto Daily Star*, the demonstration attracted eighteen different groups, including the New Democratic Youth and the Student Christian Movement.¹⁴⁴ Demonstrators waved placards that read "Feed Wallace to the Lions," and "You Stand Condemned," and distributed pamphlets showing images of civil rights protestors in the United States being attacked by police dogs. Rabbi Feinberg of Holy Blossom Temple spoke at a rally after their demonstration, where he described Wallace as a "magnolia-scented Hitler" who "has carved a political career out of contempt for human beings."¹⁴⁵ Through the demonstration, Myrna Wood came into contact with a mixture of activist groups and received a glimpse of the energy and fervor of sixties protests. Looking back on this experience, during an oral history in 1989, she simply recalled: "It was wonderful."¹⁴⁶

Wood's involvement in sixties activism really took off after she attended a meeting of the University of Toronto Friends of SNCC group.¹⁴⁷ She heard about the newly formed Friends of

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² CWMA, Myrna Wood, Box 359, Untitled file, "Interview with Myrna Wood," 15 April 1989.

¹⁴³ "1,000 March in Protest of Wallace," *The Globe and Mail*, 9 July 1964, 1.

¹⁴⁴ Ron Lowman, "1,000 march at Gardens to protest Wallace visit," *Toronto Daily Star*, 9 July 1964, 1.

¹⁴⁵ Feinberg quoted in Lowman, "1,000 march at Gardens," 3.

¹⁴⁶ CWMA, Myrna Wood, Box 359, Untitled file, "Interview with Myrna Wood," 15 April 1989.

¹⁴⁷ In our oral history in 2015, Wood identified this meeting as her entry point into social activism. In the 1989 interview cited above, she named the protest against Governor Wallace as her first action.

SNCC through the student newspaper, which came to the library's desk. At the age of twenty-nine, she attended her first Friends of SNCC meeting and met eighteen-year-old Judy Pocock who encouraged her to attend a second meeting, which coincided with the Selma crisis.

Wood was among the thirty-five activists that approached the entrance of the U.S. Consulate on the first day of the sit-in in solidarity with the Selma marchers. The demonstration had a profound impact on Wood. She was inspired to travel south to join SNCC, explaining: "At that point I still considered myself some kind of an American and I guess I knew what life was like there and I thought I could do something."¹⁴⁸ In a 1989 interview, she explained that this decision was met with some words of caution from SUPA activists. She recalls an exchange she had with SUPA people who tried to convince her not to go:

I remember one confrontation I had with these men in Toronto, where they sat me down and they tried to give me a lecture that "Myrna you don't know what it's like for white girls in the South." And I attacked them...I said "what the hell difference is it to me, what are you talking about? Whether it's a black man or a white man treating me that way, do you think there's any difference?"¹⁴⁹

Wood further remembered having a perception of gender inequality at this time, and even challenging "the male chauvinism of SUPA/SNCC circles that I moved in."¹⁵⁰ While she recalled other women in the group who shared in this awareness, she explained that they could not formulate an analysis of what they were feeling. In addition, they saw other issues as more urgent, such as the movement for black civil rights and the war in Vietnam.

In the summer of 1965, although no longer a couple, Myrna and Robertson both moved to Atlanta to work at the SNCC headquarters.¹⁵¹ Myrna took it upon herself to work in the SNCC

¹⁴⁸ Wood, interview.

¹⁴⁹ CWMA, Myrna Wood, Box 359, Untitled file, "Interview with Myrna Wood," 15 April 1989.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Myrna Wood, e-mail message to author, 27 March 2017.

warehouse sorting the books for Freedom Schools that had been donated by northerners.¹⁵² She believed that sorting through these books was something valuable she could contribute as a white person and a library worker, explaining: “I could do this because of the way I looked...I was white and acted like a worker.”¹⁵³ She organized the books by subject and communicated with SNCC workers in different communities to determine the books they required. She also worked in the office of the SNCC headquarters, recalling that “there were several northern white people working in the office.”¹⁵⁴ During this period, SNCC was dealing with the addition of northern white staff who decided to stay in SNCC after Freedom Summer. Wood recalls witnessing “this split that had occurred between the whites and the blacks there.”¹⁵⁵ She differentiated herself from the group of middle-class northern white students who remained in SNCC, saying that she and her friend Barbara were unlike “the other whites who came down there with their four piece white alligator suitcases.”¹⁵⁶ Wood identified herself primarily as a worker. This identity was informed by her years working before attending university, and her role as a library worker, rather than a student, at the University of Toronto. She had been happy to use her skills arranging the Freedom School book collection and working in the office; however, it was also through SNCC that she came to see that there were other areas of participation for her as a white activist. She recalls: “People who talked about the debate that whites should go back to the North and organize amongst the whites where the problem is—that made sense to me.”¹⁵⁷ She decided to

¹⁵² WHC, Freedom Summer Digital Collection, CORE Southern Regional Office Records, Box 17, Folder 1, “To all sncc field projects, from library committee,” 9 June 1965, available online. <http://cdm15932.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15932coll2/id/16659/rec/1>. Accessed 24 July 2015.

¹⁵³ CWMA, Box 359, ‘Untitled, Interview with Myrna Wood,’ 15 April 1989.

¹⁵⁴ Wood, interview.

¹⁵⁵ CWMA, Box 359, ‘Untitled, Interview with Myrna Wood,’ 15 April 1989.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

move back to Canada and join SUPA's community organizing efforts in Kingston, Ontario, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Linda Seese

Linda Seese grew up in Stow, Ohio. Her parents supported the struggle for black civil rights, despite their attendance at a church that was opposed to the movement. She recalls her mother sending a letter to the editor of a Mississippi newspaper, in which she urged local churches to lend their support to the struggle for civil rights.¹⁵⁸ Seese studied economics at the College of Wooster in Ohio. She moved to New York for one semester to study at New York University. During her university studies, Seese dated a white South African minister who was a vocal opponent of Apartheid. Reflecting on their relationship, Seese explained in a 2014 interview: "I was a lesbian, so it was a very platonic relationship. I couldn't really act on being a lesbian in the '60s."¹⁵⁹ Within this context, Seese felt a sense of isolation from mainstream society, and it was this personal understanding of marginalization that motivated her to join the movement for black civil rights. As Seese reflected: "I'm pretty sure I would not have been interested if I wasn't a lesbian. I knew what it was like to not be part of main society, even though if you saw me you'd probably think I was. Inside I wasn't."¹⁶⁰

Seese's degree in economics ultimately landed her a spot on the Freedom Summer volunteer team. Her training began in Oxford, Ohio where she prepared to work as a teacher in the Freedom Schools.¹⁶¹ Most of her time was spent teaching at a Freedom School in Indianola,

¹⁵⁸ Jared E. Leighton, "Freedom Indivisible: Gays and Lesbians in the African American Civil Rights Movement" (PhD diss., University of Nebraska, 2013), 322.

¹⁵⁹ Linda Seese quoted in Julie Ann Grimm, "Fires beatings and oh yes, voting: Santa Fe woman remembers the summer that changed everything," *Santa Fe Reporter*, 1 July 2014, available online. <http://www.sfreporter.com/santafe/article-8870-fires-beatings-and-oh-yes-voting.html#sthash.Mq3I64Js.dpuf>. Accessed 10 July 2015.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ Leighton, "Freedom Indivisible," 64.

Mississippi, a town of 7,000 people in the heart of the Mississippi Delta.¹⁶² A women's group at a Unitarian church in Maddison, Wisconsin sent Seese ten dollars a week throughout the summer as she volunteered full time.¹⁶³ Some scholars have labeled Freedom School teaching as a low-status position because it did not pose the same physical risks as voter registration work, and was not as valued by certain high-ranking people in SNCC because of its design as work that would be appropriate for northern white volunteers, especially women, with relatively little experience. As sociologist Doug McAdam has noted, "Freedom School teachers were second-class citizens" and these workers were largely northern white women.¹⁶⁴ White women's disappointment in their relegation to teaching and clerical roles is at the centre of McAdam's analysis. This focus is repeated by Ruth Rosen, who writes: "The moral drama of changing the world had brought them South, yet here they were, clerks, teachers, and housewives."¹⁶⁵ Just as Canadian historians have perpetuated an image of female SUPA activists as the mothers and secretaries of the movement, studies of SNCC have also tended to emphasize these elements of white women's work in Freedom Summer. A study of how individual women actually engaged in SNCC demands a consideration of the work they performed as meaningful and impactful. An examination of Seese's activist experience in SNCC is pertinent to re-evaluations of the importance of Freedom School work and of the activist identities of SUPA women. When Seese joined SUPA in the summer of 1965, she brought the skills and experiences she had gained as a Freedom School teacher in SNCC. It is necessary to establish Freedom School teaching as meaningful activist work, because it is generally dismissed in the historiography. Seese's story reveals the influence that Freedom School work had on her own life as an activist, and on the lives of her students. It

¹⁶² John Herbes, "Freedom School is Ruined by Fire," *New York Times*, 6 March 1965.

¹⁶³ Seese, interview.

¹⁶⁴ McAdam, *Freedom Summer*, 110.

¹⁶⁵ Rosen, *The World Split Open*, 104.

further demonstrates that Freedom School teachers also faced the dangers of supporting black civil rights in the South.

Looking back on the Freedom Schools, Seese reflects that they “made the most change because we were changing people’s views on themselves.”¹⁶⁶ In particular, she stresses the importance of black history education at the Freedom Schools. Materials on black history were lacking in the conventional schools that African-American children attended because they merely received “cast-out textbooks from white schools.”¹⁶⁷ Seese witnessed the legacies of the transformative impact of Freedom Schools at a reunion organized by some of her former students. She reports that many are “now published authors and university professors.”¹⁶⁸

The work that Seese and other volunteers were doing at the Freedom School did not go unnoticed by local whites. Although Freedom Schools were viewed as one of the safest centres of movement activity, they nevertheless became targets of racial violence. On 5 March 1965, the Freedom School at which Seese worked was burned down.¹⁶⁹ Upon hearing the news, the Freedom School workers attempted to enter the building to collect any surviving materials, but were denied entry by police who took files, including lists of members of the MFDP.¹⁷⁰ After trying to gain entry, Seese and her fellow COFO workers were arrested for “refusing to obey an officer.” They were all bailed out the same afternoon.¹⁷¹ A few months later, four African-American homes were targeted, including the house where Seese and other project workers were

¹⁶⁶ Seese, interview.

¹⁶⁷ Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, “I Will Never Forget’: Memories from Mississippi Freedom Summer,” 61, available online. <http://oral.history.ufl.edu/files/I-Never-Will-Forget.pdf>. Accessed 28 July 2015.

¹⁶⁸ Seese, interview.

¹⁶⁹ WHS, Freedom Summer Digital Collection, MFDP Lauderdale County WATS (Telephone) Reports, March-April 1965, “WATS Reports,” 1, available online. <http://cdm15932.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15932coll2/id/56527/show/56499/rec/1>. Accessed 8 July 2015.

¹⁷⁰ King’s College, The Canadianization Movement Papers, “SNCC News Briefs,” undated.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

staying. The volunteers were living at the home of a local black woman, Mrs. MacGruder. A Molotov cocktail was thrown into the house with Mrs. MacGruder, Seese, and other volunteers inside.¹⁷² Everyone evacuated safely, but the house was destroyed. This violence followed an order given by U.S. District Judge Claude Clayton to the Sunflower County registrar not to make “any distinction based on race in the process of registering voters.”¹⁷³ As a result of the enforcement of this order, SNCC was able to register 300 people to vote in a period of two weeks.¹⁷⁴ According to a report in the SNCC newspaper, *The Student Voice*, local whites burned homes to intimidate blacks who were registering to vote.¹⁷⁵

Seese’s experience in Indianola demonstrates both the danger and significance of Freedom School work. It was transformative for volunteers such as Linda Seese who states: “It changed my life. It was the most important thing in my life even more than coming out.”¹⁷⁶ Seese’s reflections on her experiences as a Freedom School teacher with SNCC emphasize the transformations she witnessed in the students, the dangers she encountered as an activist, and the personal impact of her activism. Writing in 1969, however, Seese presented her experience in SNCC from a different angle. In an article titled, “You’ve Come a Long Way Baby—Women in the Movement,” Seese explained: “‘The only position for women in SNCC is prone’...apply (sic) expresses the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee’s attitude toward women in

¹⁷² Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, Dennis Flannigan, 78.

¹⁷³ King’s College, The Canadianization Movement Papers, “Violence Breaks with Mass Negro Registration,” *The Student Voice*, Vol.6, No. 2, 30 April 1965, 1 and 4.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Linda Seese quoted in Julie Ann Grimm, “Fires beatings and oh yes, voting.” For a discussion of views of Freedom School work, see McAdam, *Freedom Summer*, 110, and Charles M. Payne, “‘Sexism is a helluva thing’ Rethinking Our Questions and Assumptions,” in *Civil Rights History from the Ground Up: Local Struggles, A National Movement*, ed. Emilye Crosby (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2011), 319.

general,” adding that “the attitude toward white women was even worse.”¹⁷⁷ She lamented the restrictions that white women faced in SNCC, including their virtual exclusion from voter registration work during Freedom Summer, denial of use of project funds or cars, and assignment to the mundane tasks of cooking, cleaning, and typing.¹⁷⁸ She described the hierarchy of SNCC as “black man, black woman, white man and then white woman,” adding that “white women often felt that they were fighting for the equality of black men at the expense of their own.”¹⁷⁹

Writing in 1969 during the emergence of women’s liberation, Seese’s evaluation of SNCC emanated from her perspective as a white woman seeking self-determination. More recent reflections among white women who participated in SNCC downplay the issue of white women’s subordination in the group, emphasizing instead an understanding of their assignment to supportive roles in a movement for black self-determination. For example, in our oral history Seese explained: “There was a large number of white women volunteers for the summer, and most of the volunteers were white. Any black women would be, as they should be, put in positions of power...Of course we needed to have the leadership be the black people, obviously.”¹⁸⁰ Recent interviews with former white female SNCC activists tend to emphasize this perspective much more strongly than earlier interviews of the 1970s. Mary King, for example told historian Sara Evans in the 1970s that she and Casey Hayden had occupied “positions of relative powerlessness” in SNCC.¹⁸¹ In a 2007 interview, King’s emphasis shifted away from her sense of powerlessness, toward a rationalization of the types of tasks she performed. Instead of field work, King explained: “I was on the phone, writing news releases,

¹⁷⁷ Linda Seese, “You’ve Come a Long Way, Baby—Women in the Movement,” in *The New Women: A Motive Anthology on Women’s Liberation*, eds. Joanne Cooke and Charlotte Bunch-Weeks (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1970), 154.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 155.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 156.

¹⁸⁰ Seese, interview.

¹⁸¹ Evans, *Personal Politics*, 85.

taking affidavits and documentation because it was an area where I felt I could do the work. Other people could do many, many things...but this seemed like something I could do that was appropriate, and that was needed and useful.”¹⁸²

These shifts in perspective have been analyzed by American scholars of the civil rights movement. Historian Steven Estes has noted that certain elements of the narrative are emphasized or downplayed depending on present circumstances. He argues that white women’s early memories of SNCC “reflected an emerging feminist consciousness that highlighted and analyzed the role of gender in the movement.”¹⁸³ Their later memories, however, downplayed a feminist analysis, “perhaps because they were fearful that feminist critiques of civil rights groups from the 1960s and 1970s would contribute to a negative revisionism in historical accounts of the movement.”¹⁸⁴ Casey Hayden has reflected that even when they submitted the Waveland paper in 1964, she remembers “thinking it was not the right issue for that time.”¹⁸⁵ In another reflection on the paper, she acknowledged that it represented “a more white feminist perspective.”¹⁸⁶ Reactions from black women in SNCC reinforce that this was the case. Cynthia Washington criticized the paper, stating that the grievances “didn’t make any particular sense to me.”¹⁸⁷ Ruby Doris Smith Robinson, who directed her own project in Bolivar County, Mississippi and in 1966 was elected as executive secretary of SNCC, was also unsympathetic.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸² King quoted in Jacobs, “Revisiting the Second Wave,” 112.

¹⁸³ Steve Estes, “Engendering Movement Memories: Remembering Race and Gender in the Mississippi Movement,” in *The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory*, eds. Renee C. Romano and Leigh Raiford (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2006), 303.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Casey Hayden, “Roots of Feminism in the Redemptive Community: A Remembrance of SNCC and the Movement,” Trinity College SNCC Reunion, available online. <http://www.crmvet.org/nars/hayden.htm>. Accessed 18 August 2015.

¹⁸⁶ Casey Hayden, “In the Attics of My Mind,” in *Hands on the Freedom Plow*, 382.

¹⁸⁷ Cynthia Washington quoted in Cynthia Fleming, *Soon We Will Not Cry: The Liberation of Ruby Doris Smith Robinson* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998), 117.

¹⁸⁸ Barber, *A Hard Rain Fell*, 103.

The lack of support that the paper generated among black women in SNCC, combined with a realization that the issues raised were a question of race as well as gender, may have contributed to shifts in white women's later memories of the gender dynamics of SNCC.

The Contribution of the Civil Rights Movement to the Development of a Feminist Analysis in SUPA

While the more recent memories of white women in the civil rights movement have challenged the critiques of women's subordination that they raised in the sixties, some consistency remains. From the 1960s through the present, white women who participated in SNCC have emphasized the influence of black women on the development of their feminist consciousness. As historian David Barber explains, black women operated outside of the expectations placed on traditional white womanhood. One white woman in SNCC, Jo Freeman, stated in an interview that black women in the movement "occupied more social space than white women, played more roles, were a bigger presence in their communities...In effect, the black women I saw and worked with provided a different model of what it meant to be a woman in our society."¹⁸⁹ Women like Ella Baker served as role models to white women in SNCC, such as Mary King, who credits Baker for instructing her on self-determination. King commented that this emphasis inspired her later activism in the women's liberation movement which invited women to "define our own freedom."¹⁹⁰

Seese and Wood, along with the other women in 1967 who raised the issue of gender inequality in SUPA, pointed to black women in the civil rights movement as evidence that gender is something learned, rather than something innate, stating that the women they encountered in the civil rights movement "are assertive, active in politics within the confines of

¹⁸⁹ Jo Freeman quoted in Barber, *A Hard Rain Fell*, 98.

¹⁹⁰ Mary King quoted in Rosen, *The World Split Open*, 112.

their caste society and the dominant force in their society.”¹⁹¹ They pointed to the leadership of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party as an example of the leadership positions that black women in the movement occupied. By contrast, they stated that in SUPA: “We created father figures or allowed them to be created...A few people were allowed to lead. Many people were excluded from leadership. The largest excluded group was women.”¹⁹² In 1969, Linda Seese summed up the lessons that she and other white women learned in the movement by witnessing the examples of black female activists:

White women saw the black matriarchal society and began to discover an alternative to the lives of their white, middle-class mothers. We realized the biological-inferiority-of-women argument to be a lie and a myth. We saw women manage jobs and families. We saw women rule their own roosts, not merely deciding what car to buy. We noted that the leadership of the Southern grassroots organizations...was female. We met Fannie Lou Hamer, a truly great person, who is also a *woman*.¹⁹³

In oral histories, both Seese and Wood named Fannie Lou Hamer as a role model in the civil rights movement.¹⁹⁴ Hamer was a sharecropper and timekeeper on a plantation in Sunflower County, Mississippi. In 1962, Hamer attempted to register to vote for the first time at the age of forty-four as part of a SNCC voter registration campaign.¹⁹⁵ Hamer went on to play a leading role in the civil rights movement. She worked as a field secretary for SNCC, organizing around African-American voting and welfare rights, and served as vice-chair of the MFDP.¹⁹⁶ Hamer’s activism came at great personal cost. She lost of her job on the plantation where she had worked with her husband for eighteen years after attempting to register to vote, and was arrested and

¹⁹¹ Bernstein, et al., “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...,” 37.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁹³ Seese, “You’ve Come a Long Way, Baby,” 156.

¹⁹⁴ Seese, interview, and Wood, interview.

¹⁹⁵ Chana Kai Lee, *For Freedom’s Sake: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 23.

¹⁹⁶ Manie E. Locke, “Is this America? Fannie Lou Hamer and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party,” in *Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Torchbearers and Trailblazers, 1941-1965*, eds. Crawford, Vicki L. et al. (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, 1990), 29 and 32, and Lisa Anderson Todd, *For a Voice and the Vote: My Journey with the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2014), 284.

severely beaten by police in June 1963 while she and seven other activists were returning to Mississippi from a voter registration workshop in South Carolina. Hamer's strength and leadership were deeply influential to Seese and Wood. After naming Hamer as a source of inspiration, Seese added: "Women, the community women in Mississippi were amazing, just amazing...They were pivotal."¹⁹⁷ Wood, who heard Hamer speak at a fundraising event in Toronto, reflected: "You couldn't listen to Fannie Lou without wanting to get involved, do more."¹⁹⁸ Hamer's example proved to be of even greater significance to Wood once she moved south to participate in SNCC.¹⁹⁹

SUPA women's references to African-American women in their 1967 paper, "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..." emanated from their direct involvement in civil rights activism. They witnessed the influential examples of women leaders in the movement and began to question essentialist definitions of gender identities. Participating in SNCC not only contributed to the development of a consciousness of issues of gender inequality and a conceptualization of gender as an historical and social construct, but further acted as a site in which women built their identities and skills as activists. While their roles as Freedom School teachers and office workers have often been defined as low-status work by historians and sociologists studying the movement, reflections from women such as Wood and Seese reveal that these were meaningful experiences that provided a foundation for their future activism in SUPA and beyond.

Conclusion

The movement for black civil rights helped stimulate Canadian activism and also acted as an entry point into SUPA for a number of individuals. The relationship between civil rights

¹⁹⁷ Seese, interview.

¹⁹⁸ Wood, interview.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

activists and SUPA activists reinforces this dissertation's conceptualization of the New Left as a collection of sixties movements. While scholars have studied the cross-border influences of the civil rights movement on the development of Canadian New Leftism, the relationship between civil rights activism and the development of New Leftist women's activism in Canada has gone unconsidered. This chapter has illuminated the civil rights movement as an area of activism that contributed to understandings of gender among women in SUPA, such as Linda Seese and Myrna Wood. Their later discussions of gender in SUPA were partly coloured by insights gained during their time in SNCC. Their participation in the movement for black civil rights would be layered with several other activist experiences to shape their feminist consciousness. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, these experiences, including working in community organizing projects, navigating the power struggles in SUPA, and discussing socialist ideas, would all inform the character of their feminism.

CHAPTER FOUR

“SOMETHING REAL TO RELATE TO”:

Community Organizing in SUPA

In September 1965, SUPA declared itself to be “part of a movement for participatory democracy with SNCC and SDS.”¹ This identification partly emerged out of the cross-border activism discussed in the previous chapter. New Leftists conceptualized participatory democracy as the antidote to alienation. In essence, participatory democracy promotes grassroots leadership and direct community involvement in decision-making processes, in order to give those removed from centres of power greater control over the decisions affecting their everyday lives.² New Leftists identified community organizing as one approach to generate a movement for participatory democracy. In this way, community organizing and participatory politics were intimately linked. As former SUPA activist Peter Boothroyd explains: “The idea of community organizing had a strong democratization thrust to it.”³ The organizational strategy involved moving into communities, learning about the issues facing those communities, and facilitating collective actions to give the “dispossessed” greater power over decision-making at the local level. The purpose of the projects was also to “ground the student movement in the realities of Canada, rather than in their own middle-class or urban ideologies,” as explained by Jim Harding.⁴ In fact, after the first summer of community organizing in 1965, the SUPA federal office reported: “We feel for the first time that we have something real to relate to.”⁵

¹ MUA, SUPA, Box 8, File ‘Projects—Summer, 1965,’ “A Report on Community Organizing Projects,” Summer 1965.

² Martin Oppenheimer, “Alienation or Participation: The Sociology of Participatory Democracy,” published by SDS, December 1966.

³ Boothroyd, interview.

⁴ Harding, interview.

⁵ MUA, SUPA, Box 2, File ‘National Office Correspondence Summer 1965,’ Letter to ICDP from SUPA, Toronto, undated.

Activists in the American civil rights movement and northern student movement provided models of the community organizing approach.⁶ Chapter three established the civil rights movement as a training ground for several individuals in SUPA. Similarly, activists in the American SDS were also inspired by SNCC's civil rights organizing. As historian Jennifer Frost has observed, "SNCC's activism created a mystique that inspired and intrigued members of SDS," and served as a significant influence on the group's decision to organize around issues of poverty and unemployment through the Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP).⁷ ERAP sought to organize communities around economic demands with the goal of creating "an interracial movement of the poor."⁸ By the summer of 1964, projects were underway across ten American cities.⁹ These projects were linked to an analysis of a "triple revolution" in militarism, cybernation, and human rights.¹⁰ For SUPA, the triple revolution "seemed to point the way to a broad social movement organizing around a variety of related issues," as stated by SUPA activist Tony Hyde. ERAP, he explained, provided "an exciting example of how such a movement might be built."¹¹ Canadian activists in the peace movement began to experiment with methods of community and economic research to illuminate the connections between militarism, community needs, and democratic decision-making with the CUCND North Bay project of 1964, discussed in chapter one. As explained by Hyde, North Bay was a transitional project that offered the group

⁶ Cathleen Kneen, interview, and Boothroyd, interview.

⁷ Jennifer Frost, *"An Interracial Movement of the Poor": Community Organizing and the New Left in the 1960s* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 10.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁹ Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 2009), 315. The cities were Baltimore, Chester, Boston, Trenton, Cleveland, Hazard, Louisville, Philadelphia, Newark, and Chicago.

¹⁰ A group of thirty-two social activists and thinkers united to produce "The Triple Revolution," a memorandum that was sent to President Lyndon Johnson in March 1964. The document was published in *Liberation* magazine that same month. Robert Perrucci and Marc Pilisuk, eds., *The Triple Revolution: Social Problems in Depth* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), viii.

¹¹ MUA, SUPA, Box 12, File 'SUPA Conference Material,' Tony Hyde, with the assistance of Michael Rowan, "The Student Union for Peace Action: An Analysis," undated.

the experience to later develop into “an SDS-style organization whose prime activity would be dispossessed organizing.”¹²

In the mid-1960s, New Leftists identified the “dispossessed” as the agents of social change, a group which included racialized communities, the working and welfare poor, and students. As discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, this represented a major shift from the Old Leftist conceptualization of the agents of social change as the traditional working class. While Old Leftists organized around workplaces, labour unions, and political parties, New Leftists in SUPA centred their activism on general community concerns.¹³ There were gendered implications to this reorientation. As American historian Sara Evans has noted, community organizing is “more conducive to female leadership” because the community, unlike the workplace, has been historically considered a female sphere of activity.¹⁴ Jennifer Frost expands on this analysis, pointing out that “community women proved most receptive to ERAP” because they viewed their participation in actions for improved community resources as a “logical extension of their obligations to home and family.”¹⁵ For this reason, some scholars have conceptualized community organizing projects as “free spaces,” defined as “settings between private lives and large-scale institutions where ordinary citizens can act with dignity, independence, and vision.”¹⁶ The New Leftist conceptualization of the dispossessed, while not explicitly naming women, lent itself to a form of organizing that validated the community as a site of political action. Not only did this approach facilitate the participation of community

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 93.

¹⁴ Evans, *Personal Politics*, 154.

¹⁵ Frost, “*An Interracial Movement of the Poor*,” 82.

¹⁶ Sara M. Evans and Harry C. Boyte, *Free Spaces: The Sources of Democratic Change in America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 17.

women, but it also provided a “free space” for women in SUPA to exercise leadership, gain confidence, and build their activist networks.¹⁷

Over the course of the winter and spring of 1965, SUPA developed plans for five community organizing projects: Project La Macaza, the Kootenays Project, the Kingston Community Project, the Student Neestow Partnership Project, and the Nova Scotia Project. The first two of this list focused on peace and nonviolence, while the latter three concentrated on racial and economic justice. Two other projects around education and analysis were also initiated. The School for Social Theory was established as a collection of seminars designed to give students the freedom to explore social issues and theories without the traditional structures and examinations of an academic institution.¹⁸ A second project, Peace and Professions, gathered social workers and journalists in Toronto to discuss innovative approaches to their work.¹⁹ The project joined the School for Social Theory at the end of the summer of 1965 since both were based on social education through reading and discussion. Since this chapter focuses specifically on community organizing, it does not elaborate on these projects.

This chapter expands upon the understanding of New Leftism as a collection of movements through an overview of SUPA’s community projects, studies the significance of community organizing through the challenges and lessons that surfaced out of the projects, and examines the influence of community organizing on the development of a feminist consciousness. The projects are also described in order to illuminate the overall emphasis that SUPA placed on community

¹⁷ Frost, “Participatory Politics,” 76, and Barber, *A Hard Rain Fell*, 112.

¹⁸ MUA, SUPA, Box 1, File ‘SUPA Federal Council Minutes,’ “Student Union for Peace Action Federal Council, Minutes of the Federal Council Meeting,” September 1965; Box 7, File ‘CUCND Documents 1965,’ “Prospectus—School for Social Theory,” undated; Box 14, File ‘SUPA Pamphlets,’ Matt Cohen, “Ideas on the University,” October 1965.

¹⁹ Lyn Owen, “Lay your body on the line: SUPA demands total involvement,” *The Varsity*, 15 October 1965, and Hannum, interview.

organizing in 1965 as an “invention of movement building.”²⁰ As will be argued here and in the following chapter, the significance with which community organizing was regarded during this time created a particularly receptive atmosphere for women activist leadership.

Overlapping Movements in New Leftist Community Organizing

A study of SUPA’s community organizing projects supports the definition of New Leftism as a collection of social movements. SUPA positioned itself within the peace movement, the civil rights movement, and the student movement through its community organizing efforts. The group blended the notion of student syndicalism with strategies employed by SNCC in the civil rights movement, and SDS in the northern student movement, to organize communities around a range of issues, from disarmament to improved housing.

SUPA’s community projects in La Macaza and the Kootenays both reflect a consistency with the concerns of the CUCND, and the group’s enduring presence in the peace movement. As discussed in chapter one, the CUCND viewed democratic decision-making as essential to disarmament, the lessening of Cold War tensions, and the establishment of a more peaceful society. Community organizing, with its emphasis on participatory democracy, was therefore identified as a strategy that was well-suited to the movement’s goal of promoting disarmament and nonviolence. In the summer of 1965, SUPA organized Project La Macaza, which sought to build a movement for the removal of the town’s Bomarc missile base, and the Kootenays Project in British Columbia, which focused on learning about nonviolence directly from Doukhobor communities.

²⁰ MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletter Vol.,’ Jim Harding, “SUPA at Saskatoon: An Evaluation,” *SUPA Newsletter*, 27 January 1966.

Project La Macaza was co-sponsored by SUPA and the Union générale des étudiants du Québec, (UGEQ). Both SUPA and the UGEQ shared a notion of the student as a young intellectual worker who should be involved in social action. The Bomarc base in La Macaza provided an opportunity for students to engage in community research and organization. While the CUCND had already initiated actions around the base in 1964, these had been limited to protests. The 1965 action, as described in one project report, was about “community mobilization,” which included research, discussion, and public education.²¹ Six project workers participated, with three in the field, and three conducting support work in Montreal, including research and fundraising.²² The project produced a socio-economic study of the three areas affected by the military base: La Macaza, L’Annonciation, and Labelle. The group produced a research document that studied the power structure, labour history, political behaviour, agriculture, and industries of the region, to gain an understanding of the relation of the military base to the community.²³ Three field workers, Aline Desjardins, Terry Moore, and André Cardinal, moved to the region on 29 June 1965, and were each responsible for talking with sympathetic local leaders in one of the three areas mentioned above about possibilities for community development and alternatives to the military base.²⁴ The project was based around the idea that the funding for the military base should be reallocated to regional development programs.²⁵

One of the project objectives was to “help the powerless and dispossessed of the region to take a political role.”²⁶ Documentation of the work performed over the summer of 1965,

²¹ Ibid., Box 8, File ‘Projects—Summer, 1965,’ “A Report on Community Organizing Projects,” Summer 1965.

²² Ibid., Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletter, Vol. 1,’ “Project La Macaza,” *SUPA Newsletter*, 21 July 1965.

²³ Ibid., Box 8, File ‘La Macaza 1965,’ “Project La Macaza,” undated, but ca. September 1965.

²⁴ Ibid., Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletter, Vol. 1,’ “Project La Macaza,” *SUPA Newsletter*, 21 July 1965.

²⁵ My archival research did not reveal any evidence that the project developed specific program proposals.

²⁶ MUA, SUPA, Box 8, File ‘La Macaza 1965,’ “Project La Macaza,” undated, but ca. September 1965.

however, reveals that research became a dominant focus of the project, and that discussions were conducted primarily with local leaders in church, government, and unions. Although some conversations were held with ordinary residents, project organizer Terry Moore explained that ideas “did not get beyond the elite level.”²⁷ The project organizers identified a need to do more in the future to work with “dispossessed or alienated individuals in the community.”²⁸ Although a synthesis of the project research was carried out over the fall and winter, the project did not return in the summer of 1966. The project received some community support, but many were hostile to the presence of peace activists in the region. Negative community feelings toward the CUCND’s civil disobedience actions around the base in 1964, in addition to disapproving attitudes toward the field workers’ mixed-gender living arrangements, were two factors that restricted the possibilities for deeper community engagement.²⁹ Although Project La Macaza did not mount a significant challenge to the military base through community organizing, SUPA would ultimately see its vision for disarmament realized at the end of the decade, when Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and converted the La Macaza military base into an Aboriginal educational and training facility.³⁰

The Kootenays Project in British Columbia further evidenced SUPA’s continuing activity in the peace movement. The project was sponsored by the SUPA Prairie region, and drew participants mainly from Ontario.³¹ During the summer of 1965, eight project workers lived in the village of Ootechenia in the Kootenays among a community of Doukhobors, a pacifist

²⁷ Ibid., File ‘Projects—Summer, 1965,’ “A Report on Community Organizing Projects,” Summer 1965.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., Box 8, File ‘La Macaza 1965,’ “Project La Macaza,” undated, but ca. September 1965.

³⁰ Bryan Palmer notes that this plan was originally advanced by SUPA. Bryan Palmer, “New Left Liberations: The Poetics, Praxis and Politics of Youth Radicalism,” *The Sixties in Canada*, 82.

³¹ Project participants: Don Roebuck, Jim Mayor, Lynn Butts, Carolyn Dalessio, and Jim Mayor (Toronto); Ray St. Onge (Windsor); Jessie Hogg (Edmonton); and Peter Boothroyd (Field Secretary, SUPA Prairie Region, Regina). MUA, SUPA, Box 8, File ‘Kootenay Project 1965,’ Letter from Peter Boothroyd to Don Roebuck, Ray St. Onge, Jessie Hogg, and Don Forsythe, 13 May 1965, and Peter Boothroyd, “SUPA Kootenay Project,” undated.

religious group.³² The project's aims were to learn about "the nature of active-non-violence and its application to community conflict" from the Doukhobors, and also to analyze the challenges of maintaining a pacifist cultural group.³³

Over the summer, the project workers conducted individual research, and travelled the province to visit various Doukhobor communities. In an assessment of the project, Peter Boothroyd observed that while they successfully engaged in dialogue with community members, "we didn't learn much about non-violence ourselves."³⁴ Looking back at the type of education that the project afforded, Boothroyd explains: "What I learned was a lot about myself and social relationships."³⁵ The summer spent living and researching in the Kootenays culminated in a collective action in the form of a vigil, organized by the youth of Ooteshenia along with SUPA workers. The vigil attracted 300 people on 6 August 1965 to commemorate the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.³⁶ A SUPA project report noted that the vigil was particularly significant because "there had never been any form of peace manifestation in this area before."³⁷ Project workers interpreted the vigil's success as evidence of the relationships and trust that were built over the course of the summer.

While the SUPA projects in Quebec and British Columbia did not result in many immediate tangible achievements, they stimulated discussions on disarmament and nonviolence among community leaders and youth. These projects further emphasize the intersection between peace activism and community engagement as one expression of SUPA's New Leftism. This

³² MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File 'SUPA Newsletter, Vol. 1,' Lynn Butts, "The Kootenays Project," *SUPA Newsletter*, 23 June 1965.

³³ *Ibid.*, Box 8, File 'Kootenay Project 1965,' Peter Boothroyd, "SUPA Kootenay Project," undated.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, File 'Projects—Summer, 1965,' "A Report on Community Organizing Projects," Summer 1965.

³⁵ Boothroyd, interview.

³⁶ MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File 'SUPA Newsletter, Vol. 1,' Peter Boothroyd, "Kootenays Project Report," *SUPA Newsletter*, 30 August 1965.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

orientation distinguished Canadian New Leftist community organizing from that of their American counterparts. Cathleen Kneen, who worked in both the CUCND and SUPA, reflected: “We’d taken our lead from SDS and SNCC, talking about community organizing, but our practice was, again, very homegrown.”³⁸ SUPA’s roots in the peace movement were significant to its unique development. While SDS was concerned with “peace and disarmament” as a secondary priority to community organizing within ERAP, their community projects did not engage with peace work in the same way as SUPA’s projects in La Macaza and the Kootenays.³⁹

Community organizing projects focused on poverty and racial discrimination more closely resembled American New Leftist actions than those SUPA projects centred on disarmament and nonviolence. As discussed in chapter three, the Canadian civil rights demonstrations in solidarity with the Selma marchers in March 1965 energized a movement within SUPA. This movement, however, received some negative publicity for not focusing on Canadian issues. In response, Liora Proctor of the SUPA national staff, sent letters to the editors of the *Toronto Daily Telegram*, *Montreal Star*, and *Globe and Mail* explaining that SUPA was in the process of planning projects around issues of poverty and racial discrimination within Canada.⁴⁰ These projects were the Kingston Community Project, centred on housing and economic inequality in neighbourhoods in Kingston, Ontario, and the Student Neestow Partnership Project, which sought to increase the autonomy of First Nations and Métis communities in various parts of Saskatchewan. A third project emerged directly out of the Selma demonstration outside of the U.S. Consulate in Toronto. It was through the demonstration that Rocky Jones, introduced in chapter three, decided to initiate the Nova Scotia Project, which aimed to increase youth

³⁸ Kneen, interview.

³⁹ Frost, “*An Interracial Movement of the Poor*,” 22.

⁴⁰ MUA, SUPA, Box 3, File ‘Press Correspondence, 1965,’ Letters from Liora Proctor to the City Editors of the *Toronto Daily Telegram*, *Montreal Star*, and *Globe and Mail*, 22 March 1965.

involvement in African-Canadian efforts against racial discrimination. These projects illuminate the importance of issues of economic and racial injustice to SUPA's New Leftist movement.

The following sections will provide an overview of these three projects. As will be explored, their influence can be discerned across three areas: the consciousness of movement participants, the consciousness of community members, and the development of SUPA's New Leftism. In particular, community projects illuminated the necessity of analyzing Canadian society and its regional specificities, and developing methods of organizing suited for those contexts. This contributed to the transformation of strategies used in community organizing projects themselves, and eventually, to a greater emphasis on leftist nationalism within the overall movement.

The Kingston Community Project

The Kingston Community Project (KCP), which began in June 1965, was organized under the SUPA branch of Queen's University. Before the commencement of the project, the eleven project members, six women and five men, attended a two-day seminar in Toronto led by Tom Hayden and Connie Brown of SDS.⁴¹ Their training involved role-playing sessions, and a discussion of local issues reported in the news. The project began with six weeks of research on the community to gain an understanding of the area's housing conditions, quality of education, unemployment, demographics, and welfare agency practices.⁴² Project workers further initiated contact with residents through door-to-door introductions. The project adopted the SDS approach of block organizing. Organizers were divided into small teams and assigned specific blocks, with

⁴¹ The project was directed by Dennis McDermott, and organized by Don Carmichael, Sally Clendenning, Olivia Howell, Bill Martin, Peggy Morton, Philip O'Brien, Sarah Spinks, Tony Tugwell, Diana Stewart, and Bron Wallace. MUA, SUPA, Box 8, File 'Kingston Community Project 1965,' "Kingston Community Project Prospectus," 7, and MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File 'SUPA Newsletter, Vol. 1,' Dennis McDermott, "Kingston Community Project," *SUPA Newsletter*, 6 June 1965.

⁴² McDermott, "Kingston Community Project," 6 June 1965.

the notion that this would facilitate a more intimate understanding of the particular concerns of each area, and increase the possibility of formulating actions that would generate support.⁴³

Project research and contacts illuminated traffic safety and housing as central concerns. This resulted in the organization of two main projects: one dealing with the increase of traffic safety on Rideau Street, and another confronting an unpopular landlord on Montreal Street.⁴⁴

SUPA organizers on Rideau Street hoped that organizing around a feasible short-term action dealing with traffic conditions would generate a sense of cohesiveness within the community, as well as a desire for further action. On 14 June 1965, the project organizers themselves drafted a petition for increased traffic safety, including school crossing guards, stop signs, and radar traps. Women in the community played a central role circulating the petition among mothers concerned about the safety of their children.⁴⁵ After submitting the petition, a group of residents met with their alderman, who tentatively agreed to a traffic survey.⁴⁶ SUPA vaguely reported that “some improvements in the traffic situation resulted from these efforts,” and that the publication of this success prompted residents several blocks north to circulate a similar petition.⁴⁷

Like Rideau Street, organizers of Ontario Street found that mothers were most open to involvement in community action. SUPA organizers Bill Martin and Sally Clendenning initiated conversations with women on Ontario Street about the possibility of converting an empty lot into a playground for their children.⁴⁸ The idea was received enthusiastically, especially by local

⁴³ Ibid., Box 8, File ‘Projects—Summer, 1965,’ “A Report on Community Organizing Projects,” Summer 1965.

⁴⁴ Ibid., Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletter, Vol. 1,’ Peggy Morton, “The Kingston Community Project,” SUPA Newsletter, 23 June 1965.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ MUA, SUPA, Box 8, File ‘Kingston Community Project 1965,’ untitled KCP report, undated.

⁴⁷ Ibid., File ‘Projects—Summer, 1965,’ “A Report on Community Organizing Projects,” Summer 1965, and Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletter, Vol. 1,’ Don Carmichael, “Kingston Community Project,” 21 July 1965.

⁴⁸ Ibid., File ‘Kingston Community Project 1965,’ untitled KCP report, undated.

mother Pat Parker who became a prime mover of the project. Reflecting on her involvement, Parker recalled that she had no interest in politics or the matters of her municipal government at the time that she was approached by SUPA organizers. After successfully organizing with other mothers for the playground, Parker understood the deeper significance of the action. She observed that what the project workers “were really trying to do was make people like us aware of our government, what it was doing, how it affected us, just aware of things going on in our own city and the world around us.”⁴⁹ Successfully organizing around the playground led Parker to continue organizing within the community. She formed a local group for traffic safety with other women called Mothers United for Maximum Safety, (MUMS).⁵⁰ The issues of traffic safety and community space for their children fell under the purview of women’s family responsibilities. As Jennifer Frost has observed in her study of ERAP, community women became involved in the projects because “for many, a lack of community resources hindered their ability to carry out domestic responsibilities. They also saw such problems as theirs to solve.”⁵¹ An understanding of community concerns as extensions of family care was evident in these early actions of the KCP.

Another KCP action of the summer of 1965 developed around housing conditions on Montreal Street. The residents who expressed concerns over housing all shared the same landlord. KCP workers organized a meeting for tenants to produce a list of demands, which mainly focused on house repairs.⁵² Eight families united in an attempt to confront the landlord, who denied their requests for meetings. The project was finally able to persuade the landlord to meet through a plea in the local newspaper. At a meeting on 27 July 1965, tenants issued their

⁴⁹ CWMA, University of Ottawa, Myrna Wood, Box 359, “Document by Myrna Wood,” undated.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Frost, *An Interracial Movement of the Poor*, 82.

⁵² MUA, SUPA, Box 8, File ‘Kingston Community Project 1965,’ untitled KCP report, undated.

demands for repairs and stated their intention to withhold part of their rent until the repairs were made.⁵³ This firm stance, however, weakened as the publicity around the project intimidated the tenants. As a result, the KCP workers had to increase their role in the action, which was counterproductive to their goal of fostering grassroots leadership. Although some minor concessions were made, the landlord did not follow through with the repairs promised. Later, he threatened tenants with eviction if they did not apologize for the confrontation.⁵⁴

Project workers in Kingston gained a number of insights into community organizing during the summer of 1965. For project workers on Montreal Street, the central lesson emerging out of the shortcomings of their action was that they should have spent “more time explaining the concept of group power,” observing that the tenants who had learned about group power were “less fearful during the confrontation.”⁵⁵ The block approach adopted from SDS was also identified as a weakness. Several project organizers noted that the areas in which they were working did not share a sense of community. In some instances, there was animosity between neighbours, with cleavages between the working and welfare poor.⁵⁶ As project organizers Bronwen Wallace, Peggy Morton, and Sue Menard observed, block organizing was effective in SDS projects “because in a large city slum or ghetto, the block is probably a closely knit group. This is, of course, not true here.”⁵⁷ Project workers began to recognize that approaches used by SDS could not be blindly applied to the unique conditions of Canadian communities.

⁵³ Ibid., Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletter, Vol. 1,’ Don Carmichael, “Kingston Community Project,” SUPA Newsletter, 21 July 1965.

⁵⁴ Ibid., Box 8, File ‘Projects—Summer, 1965,’ “A Report on Community Organizing Projects,” Summer 1965

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Richard Harris, *Democracy in Kingston: A Social Movement in Urban Politics, 1965-1970* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1988), 69.

⁵⁷ MUA, SUPA, Box 8, File ‘Kingston Community Project 1965,’ untitled KCP report, Bron Wallace, Peggy Morton, and Sue Menard, “Towards Better Housing,” 20, undated.

Most of the KCP organizers of the summer of 1965 returned to school in the fall. Over the course of the summer, they made contacts and laid groundwork for future organizing. Recognizing that more time was necessary to organize collective actions, the KCP picked back up in the fall under the leadership of Joan Newman, (hereafter referred to as Joan Kuyek), who quit her job with the Company of Young Canadians to join SUPA, and Myrna Wood, who had just returned from her work with SNCC and was interested in organizing in a working-class community because of her own class background.⁵⁸ The pair focused on organizing youth in the city's north end. One of their main projects was establishing a co-operative coffee house as a place for youth to gather and learn to work collectively.⁵⁹ In our interview, Kuyek explained that this work was “based on all of our ideas about freedom, and peace, and different forms of education,” which were inspired by the trainings of Scottish educator, A.S. Neill.⁶⁰ Neill's influence presents another example of the inter-generational linkages apparent in New Leftist sixties activism, discussed throughout this dissertation. In 1921, Neill founded Summerhill School in England, a free school that was based on “self-government, freedom, and children's innate goodness.”⁶¹ His philosophy gained popularity in the 1960s among New Leftists seeking alternative practices to give students greater control over their education.⁶² This interest was reflected not only in the KCP, but also in SUPA's School for Social Theory.

In addition to youth organizing, the KCP made considerable gains around housing issues in the latter half of the 1960s. This work continued under Kuyek, largely after SUPA disbanded in September 1967. The lack of success of SDS-style approaches to organizing around tenants'

⁵⁸ Harris, *Democracy in Kingston*, 72, and Wood, interview.

⁵⁹ Harris, *Democracy in Kingston*, 72-75.

⁶⁰ Kuyek, interview.

⁶¹ Mark Vaughan, ed., *Summerhill and A.S. Neill* (New York: Open University Press, 2006), 5, and Richard Bailey, *A.S. Neill* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 46.

⁶² Bailey, *A.S. Neill*, xiii.

rights during the summer of 1965, revealed that strategies better suited to the Canadian context were required. Kuyek, who was also a member of the campus NDP club at Queen's, saw potential for a partnership between community organizing and parliamentary politics.⁶³ In December 1967, Kuyek brought the local riding association of the NDP on board a project to establish the Community Information Service to offer free counselling on "workmen's compensation, tenant and welfare rights, and general legal concerns."⁶⁴ This centre, in Kuyek's words, became a "focus for dissent."⁶⁵ Their work led to the founding of the tenant's rights group, Association for Tenants Action Kingston (ATAK) in August 1968. It was also in 1968 that Kuyek was elected to municipal council as a representative of St. Lawrence riding.⁶⁶ As the founding chair of ATAK, Kuyek served as a strong representative for tenants' rights on city council.

Kuyek and ATAK organized around rent control, a demand that they came to discover was not attainable under the regulations of the Ontario Landlord and Tenant Act. As Kuyek wrote in 2011: "When we realized that we had to change the law to get anywhere, I hitch-hiked around the province to convince groups in Ottawa, Toronto and other cities to form the Ontario Tenants' Association. In 1970, the Ontario Tenants' Association won rent control and tenant protection under the Ontario Landlord and Tenant Act."⁶⁷ This victory was achieved after long-term struggle in Kingston, and an experimentation with strategies that deviated from those modeled by the American SDS. The KCP outlasted SUPA itself, and demonstrated that the social

⁶³ Harris, *Democracy in Kingston*, 103.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁶⁷ Joan Kuyek, *Community Organizing: A Holistic Approach* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2011), 14.

transformation envisioned by the movement could not be achieved in one or two summers, but rather, required sustained organization.

The Student Neestow Partnership Project

The idea for the Student Neestow Partnership Project (SNPP) was developed between socialist Métis leader, Malcolm Norris, and SUPA federal chairman, Jim Harding. Norris was a significant influence on Harding, who recalls: “Malcolm Norris...probably more than anyone influenced my ability to make the shift from understanding SNCC and what it was doing to desegregate around the American history of slavery, and what we had to do in Canada around the Canadian history of colonization.”⁶⁸ The project was organized around the themes of partnership and self-determination. At an orientation meeting held in Saskatoon in May 1965, the vision of the project was described to the organizers as “a two-way learning process” between students and First Nations and Métis communities.⁶⁹ Through this partnership, it was conceived that students would gain a better understanding of the concerns of these communities, and that the communities would benefit from the students’ skills if they decided to organize an action. The project contacted band councils across the province and received invitations from seven communities. Student organizers scattered themselves across these seven areas, which included reserves and non-reserves in both rural and urban communities.⁷⁰ As part of the learning process, students lived on a monthly allowance equivalent to the wage that people earned in their location. With the exception of two project areas, organizers worked alone and occasionally met for evaluation meetings.⁷¹ Looking back at this project, Harding explains it as “our own kind of

⁶⁸ Harding, interview.

⁶⁹ MUA, SUPA, Box 10, File ‘Reports: SUPA Projects,’ “Report SUPA Neestow Partnership Project,” Summer, 1965.

⁷⁰ Ibid., Box 20, File ‘Neestow Partnership Project,’ “Student Neestow Partnership Project,” undated.

⁷¹ Project workers and locations: Mike Acker and Richard Thompson, (Buffalo Narrows); Brian Rands, (Patuanak); Lynn Pollard, (Regina); Pat Uhl, (Prince Albert); Robbie Mahood, (Mistawasis); Michelle Rohatyn and Greta

desegregation program” in which project workers got to “know people and hear stories that non-natives have never heard.”⁷²

As part of a movement for participatory democracy, SNPP sought to “increase the self-determination” of First Nations and Métis peoples.⁷³ While project workers sought to support efforts for First Nations and Métis in Saskatchewan to acquire more autonomy over their local situations, they soon began to observe a tension between their approach of entering these communities on the one hand, and the project theme of self-determination on the other. They questioned whether their strategy was even compatible with their ultimate objective. One project report indicated that some organizers “saw the fact that white students were in a project with a goal of Indian self-determination, as a basic contradiction; and this obviously has inhibited workers in their area.”⁷⁴ Looking back, Harding remembers this as one of the central dilemmas of the project, asking: “How do non-Native student progressives go into Métis and reserve communities and actually be a catalyst for change without reproducing all the paternal and colonial roles? It’s a real question.”⁷⁵

Although student organizers formed some relationships with individual members of First Nations and Métis communities, they were mostly regarded with suspicion in the summer of 1965, making it difficult for the project to realize its goal of forming partnerships.⁷⁶ It was through SNPP that students gained a greater awareness of the significance of their identities in community organizing. As Liora Proctor reflected, some saw the students as “just white men

Wagner, (Cowessess); Bill Mountain, (Peepeekesis). MUA, SUPA, Box 10, File ‘Reports: SUPA Projects,’ “Report SUPA Neestow Partnership Project,” Summer 1965.

⁷² Harding, interview.

⁷³ MUA, SUPA, Box 10, File ‘Reports: SUPA Projects,’ “Report SUPA Neestow Partnership Project,” Summer 1965.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Harding, interview.

⁷⁶ Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s*, 265.

who came and dabbled and went away again.”⁷⁷ The intention of forming partnerships based on mutual respect was not enough to transcend suspicions that the project organizers were undercover church and government workers. In Buffalo Narrows, organizer Richard Thompson reported that the people there were convinced that he was working on behalf of an unpopular priest in the area, while Brian Rands in Patuanak noted that he was regarded as a spy for the Department of Natural Resources.⁷⁸

SNPP continued in the summer of 1966, bringing on more workers, such as Linda Seese and Robertson Wood who were returning from the civil rights movement. The project’s strategy evolved from that of the previous summer, with the institution of several clearly-defined ventures. These included the Community Materials Project, to make legal information accessible to the community; the Community Drama Project, to encourage youth to write and produce their own play; and the Northern Education Project, to begin a dialogue with northern communities about their views on education in the area.⁷⁹ In contrast with the nebulous objectives of partnership and learning during the summer of 1965, the projects of 1966 offered organizers a clearer sense of their purpose and roles; however, challenges remained. Clayton Ruby, who organized the Community Materials Project, recalls: “I set up a legal project...and we sat there the whole summer, with one exception, waiting for anyone to have the nerve to ask us for legal advice because people were just too afraid, too afraid.”⁸⁰ This fear had been cemented the previous summer when SUPA was organizing with the Métis Association of Saskatchewan around land entitlement in Green Lake.⁸¹ The students’ presence in the community was so

⁷⁷ Liora Proctor quoted in Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s*, 266.

⁷⁸ MUA, SUPA, Box 10, File ‘Report Student Neestow Partnership Project,’ 12 May-2 Sept. 1965, Appendix I, “Individual Reports,” Richard Thompson and Brian Rands, 1965.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletter, Vol. 2,’ “Neestow Notes,” 12 August 1966.

⁸⁰ Ruby, interview.

⁸¹ MUA, SUPA, Box 10, File ‘Reports: SUPA Projects,’ “Report SUPA Neestow Partnership Project,” Summer 1965.

unwelcomed by officials, that “the government...threatened to cut off aid to the community unless we left,” as Liora Proctor reported in *Our Generation*.⁸² Reflecting back on this, Ruby remarks: “It was an example of total economic power. These people had no possibility of income other than welfare. And the threat of that was just amazing.”⁸³

SNPP’s impact was more obviously felt by the project workers themselves. Working in SNPP forced student organizers to take their “whiteness” into consideration.⁸⁴ This involved not only a reflection on how their racial identities informed their reception into First Nations and Métis communities, but also how their identities as white students influenced their own perspectives and methods. For one, project workers believed that the First Nations and Métis peoples they met would all be eager to organize around the injustices they faced, and that their culture rejected “everything that is hollow about Middle Class America,” as stated by Proctor.⁸⁵ In addition to these preconceived notions, a number of project workers reflected on the impact of their sensitivity training on their views of First Nations and Métis communities. The project orientation encouraged the organizers to privilege their role as learners over their role as activists in order to create space for Indigenous self-determination. They were urged to be objective learners with a “sensitivity to the Indian Mind.”⁸⁶ Field worker Pat Uhl described the effect of this view, stating: “As a result I actually went into the field with a stereotype, which I don’t think I had before the orientation. Somehow ‘the Indian’ (a mythical character in the first place) became a stony faced silent, unpredictable type who has some mysterious way of communicating

⁸² Liora Proctor, “Personal Evaluation: The Student Neestow Project,” *Our Generation* 4, no. 3, November 1966, 42-43.

⁸³ Ruby, interview.

⁸⁴ Clayton Ruby, “Comments,” *Our Generation* 4, no. 3, November 1966, and Bryan Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s*, 266.

⁸⁵ Liora Proctor quoted in Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s*, 266.

⁸⁶ MUA, SUPA, Box 10, File ‘Report Student Neestow Partnership Project, 12 May-2 Sept. 1965,’ Appendix I, “Individual Reports, Pat Uhl, 1965.

with his own kind.”⁸⁷ Organizer Bill Mountain agreed that the orientation gave him “a number of unnecessary inhibitions about ‘Indian Culture.’”⁸⁸ The lessons that SNPP workers learned through their experiences in the field are a testament to one of the legacies of the project, which Jim Harding describes as “desegregation in Neestow.”⁸⁹

The Nova Scotia Project

The Nova Scotia Project (NSP), initiated by Rocky Jones, began in the summer of 1965. Jones spent the summer travelling Nova Scotia with Denny Grant, a West Indian who had heard about the project through the press while studying in western Canada. The pair focused on making contact with people and gathering information about their concerns.⁹⁰ From these discussions, they concluded that the project should be based in downtown Halifax to confront issues of unemployment, housing, and racial discrimination.⁹¹ In September 1965, Jones attended a SUPA meeting of community organizers in Saint-Calixte, Quebec. It was at this meeting that the NSP was accepted under SUPA.⁹² The original organizers included Rocky Jones and his wife Joan, Jim Kinzel, George Hartwell, Tony Carter, Ron Whalen Jr., and Lynn Burrows.⁹³

The NSP centred on three key goals: to increase youth involvement in organizational work for racial equality; to develop local leadership; and “to generate a sense of movement” among African Canadians in Halifax.⁹⁴ Several actions were initiated to meet these objectives. The project had considerable success in its first objective to organize youth. By December 1965,

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., Bill Mountain, 1965.

⁸⁹ Harding, interview.

⁹⁰ MUA, SUPA, Box 3, File ‘Freedom Now,’ “Rocky Goes Home,” *Canadian Friends of SNCC Newsletter* 1, no. 4, 6 July 1965.

⁹¹ Ibid., Box 8, File ‘Projects—Summer, 1965,’ “A Report on Community Organizing Projects,” Summer 1965.

⁹² MUA, SUPA, Box 1, File ‘SUPA Federal Council Minutes, Sept. 9-12 1965,’ “Student Union for Peace Action Minutes of the Federal Council Meeting, or This Hour has 51 Minutes,” 9-12 September 1965.

⁹³ Ibid., Box 9, File ‘Nova Scotia Project, 1965-1966,’ *Nova Scotia Scene*, 1965

⁹⁴ Ibid.

fifteen to twenty young people in the community joined the seven original project workers.⁹⁵ To encourage youth participation in social activism, the project established Kwacha House, an interracial club for young people aged sixteen and up.⁹⁶ The club, which opened on 27 February 1966, served several functions: it operated as a coffee house on weekends, occasionally provided day-care services, offered tutoring in a range of academic subjects, held dances and socials, organized discussions around films, and conducted seminars focused on black heritage and strategies of confronting racial discrimination in Halifax. Kwacha House was operated and managed by the young people of the community as a collective effort. As one project report explained: “By running it as a co-operative, those involved will grow to understand the real meaning of co-operation.”⁹⁷

The NSP also mobilized youth around housing concerns. One issue emerged when the mayor of Halifax, Charles Vaughn, proposed low rental housing in vacant lots on Creighton Street, without consulting the residents.⁹⁸ Jones encouraged youth to get involved in debates about the mayor’s proposal. He gave a talk titled, “Role of Youth in the Community” and inspired eight young people in attendance to meet about the issue. These young people, along with Jones and other supporters, met regularly and paid visits to the mayor, the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and the Planning Division of City Hall, to collect more information on the proposal. They also created and distributed pamphlets to the residents of the area with the title, “Let the People Decide.”⁹⁹ Furthermore, the group took the advice of the Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People to hold a community meeting so that the

⁹⁵ Ibid., *Nova Scotia Scene* 2, December 1965.

⁹⁶ For more on Kwacha House, see Jones and Walker, *Burnley “Rocky” Jones Revolutionary*, 74-76.

⁹⁷ MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletter Vol. 2,’ “Club Kwacha: A Part of the Nova Scotia Project,” *SUPA Newsletter*, 10 April 1966.

⁹⁸ For another account of the Nova Scotia Project’s organization around housing, see Jones and Walker, *Burnley “Rocky” Jones Revolutionary*, 81-82.

⁹⁹ MUA, SUPA, Box 9, File ‘Nova Scotia Project, 1965-1966,’ *Nova Scotia Scene*, Volume #2, December 1965.

residents of Creighton Street could share their views on the proposal and decide what action to take. At the meeting, Jones provided information from his conversations with Mayor Vaughn, and reported that the general message he gave the NSP was, “don’t stop progress.”¹⁰⁰ The community, however, did not see the establishment of low rental housing in the area as “progress,” arguing instead that the plan would result in overcrowding, an overburdening of school and neighbourhood resources, and a deeper designation of the neighbourhood as a poor area.

The project report on the outcome of the Creighton Street housing issue simply stated that, “a compromise satisfactory to both residents and city has been made.”¹⁰¹ Perhaps the project’s greatest achievement could be observed on the level of youth and community consciousness. As a result of this organizing, Jones stated:

People may now recognize the younger generation as a power to be reckoned with. People who may never have had hope before can now see that there are ways to change things--if we work together. More persons in the community are showing their impatience by the way in which they talk to us...The youth in the Creighton Street area are expressing their views in a more articulate way and in this way building faith in themselves. The young people are responsible for organizing or generating a sense of movement at the block level.¹⁰²

Through the NSP, young people learned how to organize around local issues. They also analyzed and discussed racial discrimination at Kwacha House, and wrote reflective pieces for the Nova Scotia Project newsletter, *Nova Scotia Scene*. For many of these young people, this was the first time that they were participating in these types of actions and discussions. Ronnie Whalen, an African Canadian from Truro, wrote a piece for the *Nova Scotia Scene* on Rocky Jones’ influence on his life, explaining that Jones “was the one who talked me into quitting bootlegging

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ MUA, SUPA, Box 20, File ‘Community Organizing,’ Nova Scotia Project brochure, undated.

¹⁰² Ibid., Box 9, File ‘Nova Scotia Project, 1965-1966,’ *Nova Scotia Scene* 2, December 1965.

and doing something of use with myself.”¹⁰³ The project impacted the consciousness of young people like Whalen. As Jones stated, young people were “building faith in themselves” and helping to generate “a sense of movement and expectation where there previously seemed to be apathy and indifference.”¹⁰⁴

The project further worked to unite other members of the community. Like the KCP, the NSP sought to demonstrate the potential of collective action by starting with the manageable objective of creating a playground, or a “tot lot” as it was called by the Halifax organizers. A vacant lot on Creighton Street was chosen as the site for the tot lot, and swings, slides, sandboxes, paint, and other materials were all acquired by donation. Project worker Lynn Burrows explained that the idea for the tot lot did not just emerge from the need for a playground, but from the hope that the action would bring both black and white residents together and “help to build a sense of community, so desperately lacking.”¹⁰⁵ Community members participated in the construction of the tot lot, and the responsibility of supervision was given to a group of thirty women. While the preparation for the playground served its purpose by providing a common focus for the community, the NSP reported that the tot lot program later collapsed due to a lack of supervision and a group of young people who had “rampaged the lot at night.”¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, as Jones recalls, the experience of organizing the tot lot led to future community action, explaining: “The small things we organized, did eventually allow us to talk about larger things and mobilize the community on different issues.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Ibid., *Nova Scotia Scene*, 1965.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., *Nova Scotia Scene* 2, December 1965.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., Letter from Diane Burrows to SUPA Toronto, 22 July 1966.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., *Nova Scotia Scene* 3, November 1966. The destruction of the tot lot is recounted differently by Jones in Jones and Walker, *Burnley “Rocky” Jones Revolutionary*, 82. According to Jones’ recollection, the tot lot was lost as a result of housing development.

¹⁰⁷ Jones and Walker, *Burnley “Rocky” Jones Revolutionary*, 80.

The NSP brought about some tangible achievements in 1965 and 1966, such as Kwacha House, and negotiations with Halifax City Council around Creighton Street. A shift in consciousness could be observed through these efforts, especially among youth. As with the other field projects, it became apparent that the type of local movements that SUPA sought to generate could not be achieved in one or two years. Community organizers agreed that their main contribution was “laying the groundwork” for future action.¹⁰⁸ This proved to be true, as Rocky Jones continued to organize around shifts in consciousness and the growth of black leadership in Nova Scotia. One major achievement was the Transition Year Program (TYP) at Dalhousie University, designed to support black and Mi’kmaq students seeking to upgrade their academic qualifications, enter university, and work in their communities. The TYP was developed by Jones and Dalhousie graduate student, Jim Walker in the late 1960s, and officially began its operations in 1970.¹⁰⁹ Summing up its impact, Jones explained:

I think that the best measurement of our success is that our students’ consciousness is raised, significant issues are being debated, and TYP students are taking a message back into the community. ‘You can go to university and this is what it’s all about.’...An incredible momentum was put into play, as Black consciousness spreads across the Black communities all over the province with TYP students going home. It leads to a real shift.¹¹⁰

The TYP still continues its operations, and stands as a legacy of Jones’ community-based work with black youth in the sixties.

Challenges of Community Organizing

Community organizers across the SUPA projects shared several obstacles in the field. Gaining the trust of community people was a common challenge. In the Kootenays Project, workers described their inconsistent reception by Doukhobors as “sometimes strained,

¹⁰⁸ MUA, SUPA, Box 8, File ‘Projects—Summer, 1965,’ “A Report on Community Organizing Projects,” Summer 1965.

¹⁰⁹ Jones and Walker, *Burnley “Rocky” Jones Revolutionary*, 150-9.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 159.

sometimes warm, sometimes not at all.”¹¹¹ To reduce suspicion and facilitate more natural spaces for conversation, the project workers suggested that any future organizers should take up jobs in the community, or help more with outdoor labour. Project La Macaza also reported on suspicion in the community “since the project is identified with students, with Englishmen, with the peace movement, and with the city...all of which are objects of hostility in La Macaza.”¹¹² The most effective approach to navigate these relationships according to the project workers in the area was to simply avoid imposing their ideas upon community members. In Kingston, a local high school principal expressed his disapproval of the organizers when he exclaimed that SUPA should “take themselves into the middle of Ontario and dig holes and bury themselves.”¹¹³ As previously discussed, the Neestow project roused the suspicion of community members and government officials alike. The Nova Scotia Project also encountered difficulties gaining the trust of some community members who were fearful that Rocky Jones was planning large-scale protests due to press reports on his connections with SNCC.¹¹⁴

Community organizers further experienced the challenge of managing project expectations against a limited timeframe. Looking back on the summer of 1965, Nancy Hannum reflects: “What we were trying to do that summer was huge. All those projects. It was hugely ambitious, and it was probably crazy to think you could do it in a summer and not have a plan for the end of summer...The context was amazing and big, but our capacity to handle that was truly not big enough for what we were trying to do.”¹¹⁵ Linda Seese, who began organizing in Saskatchewan following her work in Mississippi with SNCC, recalls that when she entered the project in 1966,

¹¹¹ MUA, SUPA, Box 8, File ‘Kootenay Project 1965,’ “Report on the Kootenay Project,” 1 September 1965.

¹¹² Ibid., Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletter, Vol. 1,’ Stan Gray, “La Macaza,” *SUPA Newsletter*, 23 June 1965.

¹¹³ Ibid., Bill Martin, “Personality Problems in Kingston,” *SUPA Newsletter*, 6 July 1965.

¹¹⁴ MUA, SUPA, Box 8, File ‘Projects—Summer, 1965,’ “A Report on Community Organizing Projects,” Summer 1965.

¹¹⁵ Hannum, interview.

“there wasn’t much community stuff happening.”¹¹⁶ In contrast, community organizing in Mississippi had been more successful because “the groundwork had been laid, so people were ready for us.”¹¹⁷

Funding was another source of difficulty for project organizers. In some instances, organizers lived off ten to twenty-five dollars of donated funds a week. Several activists had to find paid jobs and could not devote themselves to full-time organizing. In addition to providing support for organizers, funds had to be allocated to resources, travel, conferences, and long-distance phone calls.¹¹⁸ Project La Macaza offers one striking example of the effort that was made to raise funds. The project required \$4,000 to carry out its vision of a demonstration of 2,000 people from across Canada showing their opposition to the military base. In July 1965, the director of the demonstration, Stan Gray, made a cross-Canada fundraising trip to acquire the necessary funds for travel, transportation, and publicity. Gray’s speaking engagements across the country brought in only about half of the required funds.¹¹⁹ While the vision for the demonstration could not be realized due to a lack of funding, Gray’s tour was not deemed a failure. Gray found that universities across the country were receptive to his discussions on the concept of student syndicalism and the community work of SUPA and the UGEQ. For instance, the University of Manitoba ordered 1,000 copies of Serge Joyal’s paper, “Student Syndicalism in Quebec,” and students at the University of British Columbia and the University of Regina began to discuss how they could apply the concept in their communities.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Seese, interview.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ MUA, SUPA, Box 8, File ‘Projects—Summer, 1965,’ “A Report on Community Organizing Projects,” Summer 1965.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., File ‘La Macaza 1965,’ Letter from Stan Gray to “Friends,” 16 September 1965.

¹²⁰ Ibid., Stanley Gray, “Report of the Cross-Canada Fund-Raising and Publicity Tour for the Student Union of Peace Action,” undated.

While funding was a challenge for each project, SUPA's ultimate goal was to have enough money to accommodate travel between the projects so that they could be connected to "build a movement of the dispossessed."¹²¹ This aim, however, was not realized. Organizers in Nova Scotia reported on their sense of isolation from the rest of the movement. They sent a letter to the Toronto SUPA office requesting updates on the other projects since there was little communication between them.¹²² Taken together, issues of funding, expectations, and communication, contributed to a critique of the community organizing approach within SUPA. In addition, the war in Vietnam began to divert the movement's attention away from organizing the "dispossessed." Although community organizing projects continued, the larger emphasis of SUPA shifted. These shifts and their implications will be discussed in the following chapter.

SUPA's community organizing projects offer insight into the New Left as a collection of movements. Dispossessed organizing involved the mobilization of communities around issues related to disarmament, nonviolence, racial equality, and economic justice. While centred on various concerns, SUPA's projects were bound together by the overall vision of ending alienation through a movement for participatory democracy, alongside civil rights activists in SNCC, and student organizers in SDS. Community organizing further contributed to understandings of the agents of social change. Activists learned that the "dispossessed" were not an inherently cohesive group ready to engage in collective action. In addition, it became clear in projects such as the KCP and SNPP that organizing strategies used by SDS could not be blindly applied to the regional contexts in which they were operating in Canada. Community organizing

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² MUA, SUPA, Box 9, File 'Nova Scotia Project, 1965-1966,' Letter from Lynn Burrows to RIPP, 22 February 1966. Activists in a peace project in Comox, British Columbia also wrote to SUPA lamenting their sense of alienation from the Toronto peace movement. The Comox project was not officially a SUPA project, but received some coverage in the SUPA newsletter. SUPA activists in the Kootenays project also visited with them. MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File 'SUPA Newsletter, Vol. 1,' Linda Light, "Letter from Comox," 23 June 1965.

also illuminated women's potential as agents of social change, especially in the KCP. The following section will focus on the impact of community organizing on the consciousness of SUPA women.

Community Organizing as a Site for the Development of a Feminist Consciousness

Working as community organizers contributed to the development of a feminist consciousness among women in SUPA. Conversations with working-class women influenced the shape of their feminist analysis, while living and working alongside other activist women provided an opportunity to form friendships and discuss their ideas about gender relations. Community organizing further served as a useful site for the development of leadership skills, giving SUPA women the confidence to raise their concerns about gender to the rest of the movement. These aspects of community organizing made the projects "free spaces" for female participation; however, the persistence of gendered expectations within some communities also brought SUPA women into direct contact with gender inequality. Community organizing thus helped to illuminate the social construction of gender roles as a significant influence upon activist experiences.

Through projects that brought the lived experiences of community women into clearer focus, New Leftists came to identify women as powerful agents of social change. Harding recalls discussion around women's issues in SNPP, explaining: "The women who were in the field were raising all kinds of questions about the division of labour and the oppression of what was going on with women and who was controlling the bands, and the patriarchy of the chiefs."¹²³ While SNPP was not focused on issues of gender justice, it was through their direct observations of the community that women organizers began to discuss the relationship between gender and

¹²³ Harding, interview.

operations of power. Women organizers in the KCP were further influenced by their observations of community women. Joan Kuyek, Peggy Morton, and Myrna Wood learned about the lives of working-class women through the project. As previously discussed, the KCP organized alongside working-class mothers to secure a playground and form a group around traffic safety called MUMS. SUPA organizers spent a great deal of time talking with these women and learning about their concerns. In particular, local women Pat Parker and Gail Ackley served as important contacts for organizers in Kingston. As Kuyek recalls: “I always thought that Gail and Pat actually really taught me everything I knew.”¹²⁴ Myrna Wood developed a close friendship with Pat Parker, a mother of seven whom Wood describes as the project’s “most active community person.”¹²⁵ Parker’s influence on Wood was evidenced by a conversation that Wood recorded with the intent of sharing it with others in the movement so that they could hear “the wisdom and attitudes of a strong working class (sic) woman.”¹²⁶ Reflecting on Parker’s influence, Wood recalls: “I admired her a lot...You know you admire women who, especially in those times...who stood up for themselves and fought back in every way.”¹²⁷

It was also through their engagement with working-class women in Kingston that project organizers came to learn more about the intersection between class and gender injustice. Peggy Morton reflects: “We learned a lot. We learned the humiliation of the welfare system for women...As far as establishing our own outlook as to the problems that were facing women, it certainly was informative for me.”¹²⁸ Through community organizing, Kuyek, Morton, and Wood studied the structural social issues that New Leftists were seeking to transform for the

¹²⁴ Kuyek, interview.

¹²⁵ CWMA, University of Ottawa, Myrna Wood, Box 359, untitled file, “Document by Myrna Wood,” 20 May 1994.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Wood, interview.

¹²⁸ Morton, interview.

creation of a more equal and democratic society. Wood states: “I certainly learned more consciously about the class system that we live in because it was so blatant in Kingston.”¹²⁹

Kuyek further emphasizes how the work she performed on the project gave her a deeper understanding of social power structures, explaining: “That kind of understanding of power was really sharpened for me in Kingston. It was just so clear...We worked to understand power, it was part of the time. We did power studies in order to understand the structural nature of power and to understand how the welfare system enslaved people.”¹³⁰

Judy Bernstein, who raised the issue of women’s roles in SUPA in 1967, also had a background organizing working-class women. Bernstein worked with Chicago women in the neighbourhood of Uptown in an SDS project called Jobs or Income Now, (JOIN). JOIN originated as a project attempting to organize young unemployed men in Chicago. The inefficacies of this campaign led to a reassessment of who should be organized within the community. SDS women such as Casey Hayden, who had a background in the civil rights movement, recognized the potential of organizing women. As noted by historian Ruth Rosen, Hayden had already observed how black southern women were integral to maintaining their communities, and saw that the women of Uptown performed a similar role. Hayden’s activist experiences, as stated by Rosen, “taught her that organizing women was the key to social change.”¹³¹ Together, Hayden and Bernstein organized women around issues of child care and welfare services.¹³² Reflecting on the impact of this work, Bernstein stated that she was most

¹²⁹ Wood, interview.

¹³⁰ Kuyek, interview.

¹³¹ Rosen, *The World Split Open*, 112.

¹³² “Chicago: JOIN Project,” *Studies on the Left* 5, no. 3, (1965): 117.

inspired by “the woman who never before thought she would be able to deal with the bureaucracy of the welfare system [and] all of a sudden understands it can be done.”¹³³

The organizing work that New Leftist women carried out with working-class women had a significant impact on their call for women’s liberation, and understanding of New Leftism. Disillusionment among some in SUPA over dispossessed organizing contributed to a reassessment of the agents of social change in 1966 and 1967. While this will receive more detailed consideration in chapter five, it is necessary here to note that the relation of the working class to the movement, and the usefulness of Marxist analysis, moved to the forefront of discussion in SUPA at their educational conference in December 1966, and was one of the divisive forces that contributed to the group’s disbanding in September 1967.¹³⁴ SUPA women like Myrna Wood came to see the working class as necessary to the movement, and argued that the successful organization of working-class people was intimately linked to the social position of women, writing with SDS activist Kathy McAfee: “A women’s liberation movement will be necessary if unity of the working class is ever to be achieved.”¹³⁵ Equally, a transformation of capitalist society was considered a requirement for women’s liberation. The SUPA paper, “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” emphasized this understanding with the statement:

It is obvious that the granting to women of equal rights to work and to be creative within the present society cannot be considered liberation, since work in a capitalist society is unfulfilling and alienating. The question of the role of women in production cannot be divorced from that of the necessity of a transition from capitalism to socialism.¹³⁶

¹³³ Ibid, and Evans, *Personal Politics*, 147.

¹³⁴ MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletters, Vol. III,’ *SUPA Newsletter*, Special Centennial Issue Being...A Symposium of Articles on the Waterloo Conference, undated; MUA, SUPA, Box 15a, File ‘RIPP Publications,’ Stan Gray, “Ideology and Revolution,” undated; Ruby, interview; and Wood, interview.

¹³⁵ MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File ‘Sex,’ Kathy McAfee and Myrna Wood, “Bread & Roses,” June 1969.

¹³⁶ Bernstein, et al., “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...,” 34.

This analysis was informed by an engagement with the works of socialist thinkers, as will be discussed in chapter six, but was also the result of direct experiences organizing women in the community projects of 1965 and 1966.

Other SUPA women who worked in community organizing expressed a broader consciousness of gender issues in reflections of their time in the field. For example, Pat Uhl's writings on her experiences as a community organizer reveal that she did not self-identify with constructs of white femininity. After the summer of 1965, Uhl wrote about conversations she had with community women about health and education, and her observations about her own identity. She described her participation in the daily chores on a reserve in Prince Albert, stating: "I washed clothes all day with mothers and hayed in the fields with the fathers and their sons. I milked cows, baked bannock and weeded gardens, made butter, helped lay the cement foundation of a house, chopped wood and helped do beadwork on Indian costumes. The word would get around quickly that I was a different kind of white lady."¹³⁷ Beyond demonstrating a consciousness of behaving outside the confines of white womanhood, Uhl framed a transgression of gender and racial identity as central to her work as an organizer.¹³⁸ In other cases, organizers lamented the difficulty of being accepted by the community specifically because they were women. In Project La Macaza, Aline Desjardins reflected on the challenge of being taken seriously by men in a community in which few women worked outside the domestic sphere, with the exception of some teachers, nurses, and secretaries. Desjardins explained:

I had to try to overcome people's natural curiosity about my being in the peace movement or more correctly working in a strictly man's world-politics. I had to try to show how seriously involved I was in the economic problems of the region but (sic) which is rather difficult with people who naturally channel their conversation to the man in a discussion of

¹³⁷ MUA, SUPA, Box 10, File 'Reports: SUPA Projects,' "Report SUPA Neestow Partnership Project," Summer 1965.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

political-economic issues. On one occasion I was more or less expected to talk to the wife on woman to woman terms while the men discussed more serious things.¹³⁹

Desjardins found that her identity as a woman was an obstacle to her participation in discussions about issues of politics and the economy. In addition, she reflected on the negative attention the project received for its mixed-gender living arrangements. As Desjardins explained, “people were mostly interested in us because of our co-habitation.”¹⁴⁰ The example of Project La Macaza illuminates constructions of gender relations and gender roles as impediments to successful community organizing. This reality heightened a consciousness of the limitations imposed by the social construction of women’s roles.

Women community organizers also took note of the gendered expectations that were placed on them within the movement. In the KCP, living arrangements for the organizers were divided by sex. One KCP report to the *SUPA Newsletter* contained a suggestion that roles were divided along gender lines, stating that the five men “will go to the girls’ apartment for meals.”¹⁴¹ This has been reinforced by the recollections of one anonymous KCP organizer who observed: “Myself and two other women did virtually all the cooking. The men didn’t do any of the housework.”¹⁴² The gendered expectation on SUPA women to perform the menial chores of the movement has been framed as the driving force behind their decision to raise the issue of gender inequality in the New Left. SUPA women’s confrontation with gendered expectations in the movement played an important role in their decision to call upon New Leftists to consider issues of gender relations, but it does not account for the sense of empowerment that was also

¹³⁹ MUA, SUPA, Box 8, File ‘La Macaza 1965,’ “Project La Macaza ’65,” undated.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletter, Vol. 1,’ Dennis McDermott, “Kingston Community Project,” *SUPA Newsletter*, 6 June 1965.

¹⁴² Unattributed quote in Kostash, *Long Way from Home*, 18. See also, Harris, *Democracy in Kingston*, 18, and Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s*, 84.

contained in SUPA women's call for women's liberation. Community organizing contributed to the development of the confidence needed for women to assert that gender relations should be integrated into the New Leftist agenda. In the field, New Leftist women gained valuable experience as organizers. Women such as Joan Kuyek and Myrna Wood functioned as project leaders, while Linda Seese drew on the skills that she developed as a SNCC volunteer to train inexperienced field workers in SNPP. Looking back, Jim Harding names Pat Uhl and Linda Seese as "the major voices" of SNPP after he left in 1966.¹⁴³ Rocky Jones identified himself and his wife, Joan, as the project leaders of the NSP, while adding that "Lynn Burrows was also really an integral part of the leadership."¹⁴⁴ Similarly, John Cleveland remembers community organizing as an area in which "women [were] coming to the fore."¹⁴⁵ The confidence that was built through community organizing would contribute to SUPA women's resolution to bring women's issues into the fold of the movement, which will be discussed in chapter six.

Conclusion

In 1965, community organizing was identified by SUPA as an effective approach to building grassroots leadership and a movement of the dispossessed alongside civil rights activists and student activists in SNCC and SDS. From Nova Scotia to British Columbia, Canadian New Leftists attempted to facilitate collective actions that would unify local communities around a sense of empowerment to demand a greater voice in the decisions affecting their lives. Community actions were organized around a breadth of issues, demonstrating the overlap between peace activism, civil rights activism, and student activism, contained in SUPA. Going into the summer of 1965, the dispossessed, identified as the agents of social change, consisted of

¹⁴³ Harding, interview.

¹⁴⁴ Jones and Walker, *Burnley "Rocky" Jones Revolutionary*, 74.

¹⁴⁵ Cleveland, interview.

racialized groups, students, and the working and welfare poor. Through an engagement in these communities, some organizers also came to view women as important agents of social change. Organizers observed the vital roles that women played in their communities and the potential to develop their leadership. The economic and social constraints that women faced were also brought into clearer focus through community organizing work. Some SUPA women used these observations in their analysis of the relationship between capitalism and patriarchy, as will be discussed in chapter six.

In “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen,” SUPA women identified themselves as “followers and maintainers” of the New Left, explaining that women “are the typists, fundraisers and community organizers.”¹⁴⁶ The addition of community organizing work to the mundane tasks of typing and fundraising requires some consideration. As SUPA’s focus in the summer of 1965 demonstrated, community organizing was identified by New Leftists as central to the task of building a movement of the dispossessed. Men and women alike participated in the organization and execution of the projects, which extended across the country. To understand how community organizing came to be categorized alongside the movement chores of typing and fundraising by 1967, it is necessary to examine shifts in the status of community organizing within the movement. As will be explored in the following chapter, a re-orientation of the movement’s strategies and priorities shifted SUPA’s overall emphasis away from the community organizing approach. This impacted those activists in community organizing who already felt at times that they were on the margins of the movement.

¹⁴⁶ Bernstein, et al., “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...,” 38.

CHAPTER FIVE

“FREEDOM IS A CONSTANT MEETING”:

Debates over Leadership, Decision-Making, and Movement-Building in SUPA

In September 1965, SUPA gathered for a conference in Saint-Calixte, Quebec to reflect on their summer projects and discuss the future of the movement. The event received a four-page spread in *Maclean's* magazine, in which reporter Peter Gzowski described the purpose of the conference as a time for New Leftists “to talk...and talk, and talk...”¹ SUPA’s vision of a movement for participatory democracy rested on their own ability to model horizontal communication, consensus-building, and a decentralization of power. “Freedom is a constant meeting,” wrote SUPA activist Harvey Shepherd in a report on SUPA’s approaches to leadership and decision-making.² This phrase, a variation on a line from a freedom song of the civil rights movement, captured the feeling in SUPA that democracy “can be maintained only through the long and often painful getting-together of people with people, working out mutually satisfactory actions and solutions.”³ The group’s efforts to reach decisions by consensus, and to encourage an exchange of ideas among activists with varied levels of experience, reflected an experiment in the types of relationships and political processes they sought to bring about through the movement. Saint-Calixte represented a successful engagement with these strategies, and engendered “a real feeling of community,” according to one SUPA report.⁴

The meetings at Saint-Calixte unified the New Leftists who had spent the summer of 1965 scattered across the country in SUPA’s community organizing projects, and served as a

¹ Peter Gzowski, “The righteous crusaders of the New Left,” *Maclean's*, 15 November 1965.

² MUA, SUPA, Box 8, File ‘Projects—Summer, 1965,’ ‘A Report on Community Organizing Projects,’ Summer 1965.

³ *Ibid.* The song title is “Freedom is a Constant Struggle.”

⁴ MUA, SUPA, Box 2, File ‘National Office Correspondence Summer 1965,’ Letter from SUPA to ICDP, undated.

testament to the potential of participatory democracy; however, the energy generated by the conference would not endure. As SUPA activist Tony Hyde put it: “Ste. Calixte blew up a bubble which inevitably had to burst.”⁵ Struggles over leadership and decision-making, and disagreements over the priorities and strategies of the movement, fractured any sense of unification that had developed out of the meeting. By the next Federal Council meeting in December 1965, key actors in SUPA began to shift the group’s attention to a national movement against the war in Vietnam, with an emphasis on the issue of Canadian complicity. Although community organizing still existed alongside this anti-war effort, it was no longer regarded with the same importance as a movement builder. As will be seen, this shift in focus played a role in the Nova Scotia Project’s decision to align with the government-sponsored group, the Company of Young Canadians (CYC). Furthermore, a lack of consensus over the organization of SUPA’s major anti-war effort in 1966, the Ottawa-Vietnam Action, raised questions over who held the power to make decisions and define the priorities of the movement.

Regional tensions between SUPA branches in Toronto, Montreal, and western Canada contributed to a lack of unification in the movement. Activist perspectives were informed by their unique contexts.⁶ Toronto was closely connected with American New Leftists; Montreal remained more tightly linked to peace activism, and was operating within the context of the Quebec nationalist movement; and several activists in western Canadian were shaped by a political upbringing in the CCF.⁷ Jim Harding from Saskatchewan argues that the statement of purpose which emerged out of SUPA’s founding conference reflected particular regional positions, stating: “The drafting committee was heavily influenced by the Montreal positive

⁵ Ibid., Box 12, File ‘SUPA Conference Material,’ Tony Hyde, with the assistance of Michael Rowan, “The Student Union for Peace Action: An Analysis,” undated.

⁶ Daniel Drache, Interview with author, 29 October 2015.

⁷ Harris, *Democracy in Kingston*, 55-56, and Palmer, “New Left Liberations,” 79.

neutralist, anti-nation state peaceniks, and the Ontario SDS influence, liberal activists. And I never felt that the statement was an adequate statement rooted in popular Canadian history.”⁸

Harding was raised in the political tradition of the CCF-NDP and lamented that SUPA’s statement did not consider the activist efforts upon which it was building. He elaborated that had SUPA’s statement of purpose included a greater western Canadian perspective, it would have “said something more about the attempts to democratize Canada, including the labour movement, the co-op movements, the indigenous movements, the suffragette movement.”⁹

Regional tensions were also expressed through conflicts over leadership and decision-making. As discussed in chapter one, Harding interprets his election to SUPA federal chairman as evidence that many in the movement wanted to avoid a centralization of control “from the east,” as had been the case in the CUCND.¹⁰ Despite Harding’s election, and subsequent attempts to decentralize the control of the SUPA federal office in Toronto, discontent remained. John Conway from the Saskatchewan SUPA branch recalls: “There was always tension between us and the Toronto office. We felt they were overbearing, and arrogant, and trying to dictate policy.”¹¹ A similar perspective was shared by Montreal activists. In 1966, SUPA activist Don McKelvey observed that Montreal SUPA possessed a “feeling of being in a permanent minority, removed from control of the central office and of most of all of the decision-making on national activities.”¹² These regional tensions reveal SUPA’s struggle to maintain a unified movement, and form a backdrop against which debates over movement priorities and orientations should be considered.

⁸ Harding, interview.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Conway, interview.

¹² MUA, SUPA, Box 12, File ‘SUPA Conference Material, 1966-1967,’ Don McKelvey, “More on the Conflict between Toronto and Montreal,” 11 December 1966.

This chapter will explore how tensions and debates over a range of issues, from disputes over the group's relationship to the CYC, to disagreements over the agent of social change, played out across four SUPA conferences: the training conference and Federal Council meeting in Saint-Calixte in September 1965; the Federal Conference meeting in Saskatoon in December 1965; the educational institute in Waterloo in December 1966; and SUPA's final conference in Goderich in September 1967. Divisions in the movement will further be explored through the *SUPA Newsletter*, which was designed not only as a source of information, but also as a site for discussion and debate. A study of SUPA's 1966 Ottawa-Vietnam Action will also highlight debates over decision-making and strategies of movement-building. This chapter further discusses SUPA's engagement with nationalist discourse and Marxist analysis. As will be seen, both orientations contributed to debates over the agent of social change, and the splintering of the movement.

It was ultimately within debates over leadership, decision-making, and movement-building that concerns over the gender dynamics of the movement were expressed, beginning with a separate meeting of SUPA women in the spring of 1967, and culminating in the presentation of the women's manifesto, "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..." in the fall of that year. While this chapter touches on some of the gendered implications of the debates that permeated SUPA, a deeper analysis of gender will follow in chapter six. A study of the feminist analyses that developed within SUPA, and the conflicts that emerged as a result, will build on the context of this chapter.

The Saint-Calixte Conference and Federal Council Meeting, September 1965

The Saint-Calixte conference was attended by approximately 125 SUPA activists, in addition to reporters from the CBC and *Maclean's*, and observers from other groups such as the

CYC and the United Church youth group, KAIROS.¹³ The conference was funded by the CYC, in exchange for a report on SUPA's community organizing projects from the summer of 1965. The report was prepared by Harvey Shepherd, in conjunction with Art Pape. Working with the CYC to receive conference funding was a controversial decision. Shepherd recalls: "Some people thought that it was cooperating with the enemy, and others said that that's how they got the money for the conference."¹⁴ While Saint-Calixte was largely an experience that brought SUPA organizers together, tensions over the movement's relationship with the CYC were already beginning to emerge.

As discussed in chapter four, SUPA's summer projects predominantly laid the groundwork for future activism. SUPA activist Tony Hyde reported that the lack of tangible achievements made over the summer meant that many community organizers came to Saint-Calixte "up tight" about the state of their projects, but "the tension that resulted was dispelled during the first day or so of the conference in an outburst of emotion, verging on 'togetherness,' in which people could admit to each other what actually happened over the summer."¹⁵ Issues of leadership and decision-making were among the topics that community organizers discussed. This section will explore those discussions and how they fit into SUPA's broader questions about how to structure the group in order to facilitate a participatory movement.

Project leadership was one topic of conversation at Saint-Calixte. In some cases, there was a single person who had a title of "project director," such as Dennis McDermott for the Kingston Community Project, and Peter Boothroyd for the Kootenays Project. McDermott

¹³ Ibid., File 'SUPA Conference Material, 1966-1967,' Tony Hyde with the assistance of Michael Rowan, "The Student union for Peace Action: An Analysis," undated.

¹⁴ Harvey Shepherd, Interview with author, 24 November 2015.

¹⁵ MUA, SUPA, Box 12, File 'SUPA Conference Material, 1966-1967,' Tony Hyde with the assistance of Michael Rowan, "The Student union for Peace Action: An Analysis," undated.

admitted that his leadership style was ineffective. He viewed himself as “an organizer of organizers” who privileged his directive role over community engagement.¹⁶ A summary of McDermott’s reflection on the issue was reported to the CYC: “he now believes he should have been out on the blocks more, exercising his leadership as a co-worker and exemplar rather than by trying to organize the project.”¹⁷ The notion of leadership as a function to be shared, rather than as a role to be occupied by a single individual, was emphasized at Saint-Calixte. This was attempted in the Kootenays Project. Rather than act as a source of authority, project director Peter Boothroyd “exercised responsibility and initiative.”¹⁸ One worker, Carolyn Delessio, reflected on the positive results of this approach, stating: “Our director refused to take the role of ‘leader.’ This encouraged people to take leadership more than they naturally would have.”¹⁹ Looking back, Boothroyd’s memories of how the group functioned are not as positive, recalling that “they were not people who were well adapted to living and working together for a common purpose.”²⁰ Activists preferred to “do their own thing,” rather than discuss their responsibilities, make decisions as a group, and work collectively.²¹

SUPA reported to the CYC that although the challenge of sharing leadership functions was a common issue across the projects, it was a vital component of community organizing. Just as project workers were seeking to facilitate the growth of grassroots leadership, rather than impose directives upon “the dispossessed,” so too were they attempting to create a spirit of partnership amongst themselves. Although this was not perfected in their summer projects, they

¹⁶ Ibid., Box 8, File ‘Projects—Summer, 1965,’ “A Report on Community Organizing Projects,” Summer 1965.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Boothroyd, interview.

²¹ Ibid.

nevertheless emphasized its importance to the CYC, stating that relationships within the projects cannot be “one-way teacher-pupil or supervisor-trainee ones.”²²

The decentralization of decision-making was also seen as necessary in order for leadership to be exercised as a “function of the project group.”²³ For this reason, all projects and SUPA meetings used the consensus-building method to make decisions. This method, as explained in SUPA’s report to the CYC, involves the development of an idea “until there is general satisfaction with it.”²⁴ Open discussions are facilitated by a chairperson, without standard meeting procedures. In SUPA, this often resulted in lengthy meetings, as decisions could only be made with the consent of all participants.

The use of consensus by New Leftists has been explored in the American context by sociologist Francesca Polletta. She explains that New Leftists in SDS and SNCC used consensus to facilitate solidarity and promote a heightened interest in the movement’s success by giving everyone a stake in the decisions made.²⁵ Historically, this style of decision-making was used by pacifists, although as Polletta explains, they “generally publicized their egalitarian organizational forms and deliberative styles less aggressively than they did their nonviolent methods.”²⁶ Nevertheless, an older generation of pacifists, such as A.J. Muste and Staughton Lynd who were sceptical of hierarchical decision-making structures, served as influences to SUPA activists, in addition to the student-led groups of SDS and SNCC.²⁷

²² MUA, SUPA, Box 8, File ‘Projects—Summer, 1965,’ “A Report on Community Organizing Projects,” Summer 1965.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Francesca Polletta, *Freedom is an Endless Meeting: Democracy and Social Movements* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 2 and 9.

²⁶ Ibid., 39.

²⁷ Ibid., and Staughton Lynd and Alice Lynd, *Stepping Stones: Memoir of a Life Together* (United Kingdom: Lexington Books, 2009), 47.

While consensus-building afforded the benefits described by Polletta, SUPA activists also recall significant frustration around the approach. Shepherd notes: “It did seem to have the result that it was very difficult to make any decisions at all.”²⁸ Joan Kuyek’s memories elaborate on this point, explaining: “Some of the consensus worked really well and some of the consensus was a disaster because there wasn’t actually a basis of unity. And you can’t have consensus if there’s not a real basis of unity.”²⁹ Nevertheless, as a movement that was seeking to democratize decision-making, SUPA remained committed to the approach. As Clayton Ruby summed it up after discussing the frustrating elements of consensus-building: “When it worked, and it often worked, it really produced good decision-making.”³⁰

Equally significant to decision-making was the requirement for community project decisions to remain independent from the control of their sponsoring bodies. The projects were not managed by the SUPA Federal Council, federal office, or funding group, but rather by the community organizers themselves. This component of SUPA’s approach was of particular importance in their advice to the CYC, which was established and funded by the Government of Canada. Their report concluded that “the vision—the goals and the approaches—of any agency will be reflected ultimately in the decision-making structures of that agency.”³¹ Given the emphasis placed on leadership and the decentralization of decision-making in discussions about community organizing at Saint-Calixte, it is not surprising that these themes also dominated the SUPA Federal Council meeting attached to the conference.

²⁸ Shepherd, interview.

²⁹ Kuyek, interview.

³⁰ Ruby, interview.

³¹ MUA, SUPA, Box 8, File ‘Projects—Summer, 1965,’ “A Report on Community Organizing Projects,” Summer 1965.

SUPA's Federal Council meeting in Saint-Calixte resulted in a number of developments in the group's structure and communications. The Federal Council meetings resembled informal conversations, with discussions taking place cross-legged on the grass, and in clusters of sleeping bags on the floor.³² Formal meeting procedures were abandoned in favour of SUPA's rules of order: "Gonna talk when the spirit says talk."³³ This atmosphere emphasized SUPA's identification as a movement rather than an organization. Cathleen Kneen, who prepared the minutes of the Federal Council meeting, explained that this identification made the topic of SUPA's structure a primary concern:

One of the most important things which came out of our discussion on federal structure was our recognition that no matter what structure we decide on, in a way it will be irrelevant to the real essence of SUPA, since we are a movement, not an organization; and yet the structure is important for this very reason, since we must devise ways of preventing the organization SUPA from stifling and killing the movement SUPA. This we recognize as one of our most tricky problems.³⁴

At Saint-Calixte, changes were made in an attempt to better align SUPA's structure with SUPA's values as a movement. Some decisions from the founding conference in Regina were maintained, such as the group's regional structure. The key concern at Saint-Calixte was to decentralize the control of the federal office in Toronto. To this end, the federal office was reconceived as a "communications centre," rather than as a staff with executive roles.³⁵ The role of liaising with other activist groups, which had previously been the responsibility of the Toronto staff, was distributed across several small committees composed of SUPA activists from various regions in an effort to prevent "vertical control."³⁶ It was further decided that

³² Ibid., Box 1, File 'SUPA Federal Council Minutes,' Student Union for Peace Action Minutes of the Federal Council, 9-12 September 1965.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., and MUA, SUPA, Box 7, File 'Worklist, 1965,' Michael Rowan, "SUPA Worklist Bulletin," no. 1, 16 November 1965.

these committees, along with the Federal Council, would form a worklist to circulate news about developments in the movement and information about SUPA's relationships with other activist groups. The intent of the worklist, as described by Michael Rowan, was to "decentralize initiative taking and communication in major areas of SUPA's operations, and to democratize decision-taking (sic)."³⁷ While the worklist was a private communications network among committee people and members of the Federal Council, the *SUPA Newsletter* was open to the entire movement. To facilitate communication and participation in discussions on SUPA, the newsletter was reconceived at Saint-Calixte as "a forum for real searching and debate on the problems of the movement," rather than simply as a source for updates and reports.³⁸ Taken together, the restructuring of the federal office, the decentralization of the task of liaising with other activist groups, the creation of the worklist, and the reconceptualization of the function of the *SUPA Newsletter*, were all actions taken at Saint-Calixte in an effort to achieve the movement's goal of "lateral communication."³⁹

The Saint-Calixte conference was also a time of movement-building. In addition to the sense of community and togetherness generated, and the reforms to structures and communications made, new projects were also adopted, including the Vietnam Research Project, to explore Canadian complicity in the war; the Research, Information, and Publications Project (RIPP), to liaise with the press and circulate literature to subscribers; and the Nova Scotia Project, discussed in chapter four.⁴⁰ The value of the conference at Saint-Calixte was noted in the minutes. As Cathleen Kneen reported, a number of factors contributed to the event's success:

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ MUA, SUPA, Box 1, File 'SUPA Federal Council Minutes,' Student Union for Peace Action Minutes of the Federal Council Meeting, 9-12 September 1965.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

“We had enough time to get to know each other and to share some common experiences, and our facilities were unusually good—community living, outdoor country atmosphere and plenty of sunshine, a pub very close at hand.”⁴¹ These elements of the conference reflect the role of meetings as “collective rituals that re-create group solidarity,” as explained by Francesca Polletta.⁴² SUPA’s positive evaluation of Saint-Calixte was reinforced by the national coverage of their meeting. Impressed by the discussions he witnessed, *Maclean’s* reporter Peter Gzowski declared that this group of New Leftists might “do something other reformers before them have never done: succeed.”⁴³

SUPA activists left Saint-Calixte encouraged by the group’s successful engagement with participatory democracy in its meetings, and by the sense of community it had generated; however, this would not be enough to maintain a unified movement. In his recollections of Saint-Calixte, Dimitri Roussopoulos reflected that the conference had failed to engage in the type of analysis needed to offer a clear direction for the movement.⁴⁴ Although the movement would succeed in a number of respects, several debates over leadership and movement-building would overwhelm the group over the following two years. The next sections will explore these debates, beginning with arguments over SUPA’s relationship to the CYC.

Divisions over the Company of Young Canadians

The CYC was a government-sponsored youth organization with an objective to “advance social and economic development in Canada.”⁴⁵ The CYC was introduced under Pearson’s Liberal government in the Speech from the Throne on 5 April 1965, which emphasized the need

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Polletta, *Freedom is an Endless Meeting*, 39.

⁴³ Peter Gzowski, “The righteous crusaders of the New Left,” *Maclean’s*, 15 November 1965.

⁴⁴ Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 75-76.

⁴⁵ LAC, LB Pearson Papers, Speeches, MG 26 N, Vol. 38, File ‘1965 December, Press Release,’ “Report of the Organizing Committee—Company of Young Canadians,” 22 December 1965.

to enlist “the energies and talents of youth” in order to address issues of poverty and inequality, and “enhance the unity of our country.”⁴⁶ The CYC was established under the *Company of Young Canadians Act* as an independent Crown Corporation in July 1966.⁴⁷ There were conflicting responses to the CYC within SUPA. While some prominent SUPA people such as Art Pape took leadership positions in the CYC to help direct its vision and approach, others criticized such participation, arguing that it was simply a government attempt to co-opt the radical elements of the movement. This section will explore the various responses to the CYC within SUPA, and will evaluate their impact on the movement.

The government’s language around the CYC provides some insight into the debates that emerged within SUPA. During the second reading of Bill C-174 to provide for the establishment of the CYC, Pearson framed the group within an historical narrative of Canadian service, declaring: “The Company of Young Canadians will, I believe, continue a good Canadian tradition reaching back to the Jesuit missions of New France right on down to the Grenfell medical outposts of Labrador and the bus-camp classrooms of frontier colleges.”⁴⁸ Pearson described the CYC as an extension of Canadian tradition, rather than as a new venture in radical social change. He further compared his vision of the CYC to the work of young Canadians in the Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO), stating that the group evidenced an “immensely exciting and stimulating resurgence of social concern and responsibility among young people.”⁴⁹ Formed in June 1961, CUSO was a secular nongovernmental voluntary organization that engaged in development work abroad. As historian Ruth Compton Brouwer has noted in her

⁴⁶ Ibid., Vol. 33, File ‘1965 April,’ “Speech from the Throne Opening Third Session Twenty-Sixth Parliament,” 5 April 1965.

⁴⁷ MUA, Ontario Union of Students fonds (hereafter OUS), Box 26, File ‘CYC,’ “Information Brochure: Company of Young Canadians,” undated.

⁴⁸ Ibid., “Company of Young Canadians, Provision for Establishment,” House of Commons Debates Volume III, no. 95, 1st Session, 27th Parliament, Official Report, 10 June 1966.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

work on CUSO, the organization's volunteers were widely regarded as "fine young Canadians."⁵⁰ This was evidenced by media coverage, speaking invitations from women's groups, churches, and service clubs, and praise from the country's politicians. In fact, just after Pearson proposed the CYC in the spring of 1965, an announcement was made that CUSO would receive half-a-million dollars of federal funding.⁵¹ Thus, by comparing the CYC's domestic work to that of CUSO abroad, Pearson made a positive connection to Canadian youth that were widely viewed as exercising a healthy idealism. Similar comparisons were never made with SUPA.

The comparison between the CYC and CUSO was not greeted with enthusiasm by activists in SUPA, even among those such as Art Pape, who joined the CYC staff. After hearing that CUSO would receive half-a-million dollars from the government, Pape wrote to Jim Harding: "That is sad because C.U.S.O. does not deserve it and this will probably act to make their program even less worthwhile."⁵² According to SUPA activist Ken Drushka, a domestic equivalent to CUSO would not challenge the "root of the very evils the volunteers are trying to eliminate." While he noted that there were likely "pragmatic realities" that made this difficult for CUSO overseas, he argued "there is no reason to apply the CUSO service-principles in this country, unless the intent is to prevent the necessary social change."⁵³

While the comparison to CUSO reinforced the notion of the CYC as a service-oriented organization among some in SUPA, it worked to gain the favour of Parliament. In one enthusiastic vote of support, Member of Parliament R.N. Thompson of the Social Credit Party

⁵⁰ Ruth Compton Brouwer, *Global Villagers: CUSO in Development, 1961-86* (Toronto: UBC Press, 2013), 26.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 25 and 27.

⁵² MUA, SUPA, Box 13, File 'SUPA History, Chronology and Miscellaneous,' Letter from Art Pape to Jim Harding, 14 April 1965.

⁵³ MUA, OUS, Box 26, File 'CYC,' Ken Drushka, "The CYC," reprinted from *Canadian Forum*, February 1966.

reinforced both connections that Pearson made between the CYC and Canadian tradition, and the CYC and CUSO, stating:

In a very quiet and typically Canadian way hundreds of our young people have gone out and have been doing work in foreign countries, a job similar to that intended to be done by The Company of Young Canadians at home...Through the Company of Young Canadians there will be provided an opportunity for the young people of today to repeat, and perform in their own right, actions which belong to the heritage of our past.⁵⁴

Given SUPA's history of bringing attention to issues by upsetting business-as-usual through civil disobedience, it is not surprising that they would have been less than satisfied with an organization envisioned to do "quiet" organizing. At least one Liberal Member of Parliament, John Reid, who identified himself as "the youngest member in the house," offered an alternative conception of the CYC's task, stating: "If The Company of Young Canadians is to be a success it must create a disturbance."⁵⁵ SUPA activists were divided on the question of whether this would be possible under a government-sponsored organization.

Some in SUPA believed that indeed the CYC could "create a disturbance." Pape was among the first to express a confidence in the possibilities available through the CYC. Pape joined the eighteen-member provisional Advisory Council of the CYC, along with SUPA activist Richard Thompson and CUS president Doug Ward.⁵⁶ Just over a week after the CYC was introduced in the Speech from the Throne, Pape voiced his intention to "try to teach the Government that useful community service means helping people help themselves and that, in the process, people in positions of power are going to be challenged or forced to change."⁵⁷ Pape's influence in the CYC has been emphasized as a defining feature of the organization's

⁵⁴ Ibid., "Company of Young Canadians, Provision for Establishment," House of Commons Debates Volume III, no. 95, 1st Session, 27th Parliament, Official Report, 10 June 1966.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ward was president in 1965-1966 and had also been involved in SUPA.

⁵⁷ MUA, SUPA, Box 13, File 'SUPA History, Chronology and Miscellaneous,' Letter from Art Pape to Jim Harding, 14 April 1965.

direction. In his book on the CYC, former CYC member Ian Hamilton argues that Pape's "social action" emphasis won out over the "liberal do-gooders" in the organization.⁵⁸ Journalist Margaret Daly, who also wrote a book on the CYC, named Art Pape along with Doug Ward as formative influences on the group's approach, stating that if they had "not decided to join the CYC, the organization would have been very different," adding that "Pape steered the CYC more than any other council leader."⁵⁹

The structure of the CYC made this level of influence possible. Based on a report prepared by the CYC organizing committee, it was decided that the CYC council should have the freedom to make decisions "with a maximum degree of independence."⁶⁰ With Doug Ward as chairman of the provisional council, it is not surprising that Pape played an influential role.⁶¹ From its inception, it was also planned that the interim advisory council would be replaced by a council of fifteen members, out of which ten would be CYC fieldworkers elected by the volunteers themselves. As Pearson explained, this would allow the CYC to be "a company in which young Canadians themselves will play a major role in determining plans, operations and objectives."⁶² A volunteer-represented permanent council, however, would only be effective for two months before being disbanded by the government and replaced by an entirely government-

⁵⁸ Ian Hamilton, *The Children's Crusade: The Story of the Company of Young Canadians* (Toronto: Peter Martin, 1970).

⁵⁹ Margaret Daly, *The Revolution Game: The Short, Unhappy Life of the Company of Young Canadians* (Toronto: New Press, 1970), 29 and 31-32.

⁶⁰ LAC, LB Pearson Papers, Speeches, Volume 38, File '1965 December,' Press Release "Report of the Organizing Committee—Company of Young Canadians," 22 December 1965.

⁶¹ For biographies of all council members see LAC, LB Pearson Papers, Speeches, Volume 39, Press Release "Announcement of the Appointment of 18 members to the provisional Advisory Council of the Company of Young Canadians," undated.

⁶² MUA, OUS, Box 26, File 'CYC,' "Company of Young Canadians, Provision for Establishment, House of Commons Debates Volume III, no. 95, 1st Session, 27th Parliament, Official Report, 10 June 1966.

appointed body in October 1969.⁶³ Up until that point, Pape maintained that the CYC was able to act with minimal government interference, stating in a 2006 interview with historian Carrie A. Dickenson that between 1965 and 1969, the government made “no efforts to politically control it or make it something used in partisan political ways.”⁶⁴ According to Pape, it was not until 1969 when the CYC was restructured to reduce volunteer control, that the government directed the decisions of the organization.

Stewart Goodings was another New Leftist who believed that the CYC could be used for the purposes of the movement. In one *SUPA Newsletter*, Goodings addressed concerns within SUPA that the CYC was “simply a device to divert radical energies into safe, responsible and conventional channels.”⁶⁵ He emphasized that the volunteers would have freedom and independence in the organization in order to “minimize the possibility of political pressure being applied to our work.” He referenced SUPA’s Kingston Community Project as a model for CYC organizing, believing that it was necessary to cultivate grassroots leadership, rather than impose decisions upon a community. He closed with the simple assertion that the CYC “can undertake new and radical projects.”⁶⁶

Not everyone in SUPA shared Goodings’ optimism. Others expressed a deep concern about the impact of the CYC on the movement. One of the main criticisms of the CYC to emerge from SUPA was that it could not engage in radical work as an instrument of the federal government. Ken Drushka captured this critique in an article published in *Canadian Forum*, in

⁶³ Carrie A. Dickenson and William J. Campbell, “Strange Bedfellows: Youth Activists, Government Sponsorship, and the Company of Young Canadians,” *European Journal of American Studies* 3, no. 2 (2008), available online. <https://ejas.revues.org/2862#ftn53>. Accessed 18 January 2016.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletters Vol. I,’ Stewart Goodings, “The Company of Young Canadians,” *SUPA Newsletter*, Vol I, No. 8, 30 August 1965.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

which he argued that the CYC had “an addiction to the service concept” which did not target the root of social and economic inequalities in Canada.⁶⁷ Drushka believed that the government’s priorities were ultimately at odds with those of New Leftists, and that it would therefore not allow the CYC to truly alter the structures perpetuating inequality. Similarly, Jim Russell wrote that his main concern with SUPA’s relationship with the CYC was less about the issue of “selling-out” and more about the problem that “an independent radical cannot impress his ideas on a bureaucratic organization.” When it came to the CYC, Russell projected: “we can expect nothing but trouble.”⁶⁸ Jim Harding further argued for the importance of remaining independent from the CYC. Harding’s interpretation of the problem posed by the CYC was informed by his participation in SUPA’s Student Neestow Partnership Project. He describes his response as follows:

We were working with Métis and First Nations emerging leaders who themselves were in a catch-22 over being forced to work under Indian Affairs funding. And why would we take funding from another federal agency when these poor communities were trying to get out from under the oppression of Indian Affairs which was controlling their housing, their budgets for food, whether they could kill cattle to eat when they were starving? It was pretty bad stuff. So I was quite passionate about our independence because I was also seeing just how much more influence it had in indigenous communities.⁶⁹

In Harding’s view, the CYC was an expression of government-control that the movement was seeking to overcome, particularly in the context of indigenous communities.⁷⁰

Another concern for the future of the movement was articulated by SUPA activist Richard Thompson, who had also served on the CYC’s provisional Advisory Council. Thompson came to view the CYC as a threat to radical community organizing, writing in October 1966:

⁶⁷ MUA, OUS, Box 26. File ‘CYC,’ Ken Drushka, “The CYC,” reprinted from *Canadian Forum*, February 1966.

⁶⁸ MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File, ‘SUPA Newsletter, Vol. III,’ Jim Russell, “SUPA and the CYC,” *SUPA Newsletter*, Vol. III, No. 6, April 1967.

⁶⁹ Harding, interview.

⁷⁰ Harding also critiqued the government’s treatment of indigenous communities in “Canada’s Indians: A Powerless Minority,” originally published by RIPP, 1965. Reprinted in Jim Harding, *Student Radicalism and Liberation: Essays from the New Left Revolt in Canada, 1964-74* (Fort Qu’Appelle, SK: Crows Nest Publishing, 2006).

“The CYC scare is on, and unless we come up with some decent ideas about radical action outside the campuses they could monopolize community work by default.”⁷¹ Thompson argued that the only way to avoid the co-option of the movement was through “commitment to something called community organizing.”⁷² As this chapter will explore, while some SUPA activists remained dedicated to local projects, in 1966 the overall movement was shifting its attention from community organizing to anti-war action. For Thompson, a deeper engagement with radical community organizing would be SUPA’s best chance to survive the perceived threat of the CYC. He issued a call to SUPA: “CYC is upon us...We have a choice. Yes we do. We can reaffirm our faith in community organizing...or...let it slip by the board.”⁷³

SUPA, it seemed, would not heed Thompson’s call. By April 1967 Jim Russell lamented in the *SUPA Newsletter*: “Since the CYC’s formation SUPA’s community organizing projects have dwindled both in number and importance to SUPA...To all intents, CYC has taken over the role of community organizing in Canada, with SUPA’s help.”⁷⁴ This assistance took the form of both personnel and direction, with activists leaving SUPA for paid positions in the CYC, and with SUPA accepting money from the CYC in exchange for a report on community organizing. SUPA activists such as Art Pape were criticized for “selling out” by joining the CYC Advisory Council. This perception has remained dominant in memories of some former SUPA activists. For Myrna Wood, those in SUPA who joined the CYC were mainly concerned with “their career, their degree, their lives.”⁷⁵ Daniel Drache shares a similar interpretation, explaining: “It’s

⁷¹ MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletter Vol.’ Richard Thompson, “Radicalism with Rich,’ *SUPA Newsletter*, Vol. II, No. 11, 5 October 1966.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, File ‘SUPA Newsletter, Vol. III,’ Jim Russell, “SUPA and the CYC—The Need for Independent Organizing,” *SUPA Newsletter*, Vol. III, No. 6, April 1967.

⁷⁵ Wood, interview.

careerism. All of a sudden they're now working for the Company of Young Canadians."⁷⁶ John Cleveland views the issue with less cynicism, explaining the episode of the CYC as one that illuminates the different ideologies and personal trajectories of people in SUPA. He describes those who were attracted to the CYC as "progressive liberal people [who] were going to continue to take their values into their professions...whereas the other people who were just getting started were going to keep going, and that meant going further left."⁷⁷

The need for money to carry out community organizing work was one reason why some SUPA activists joined the CYC. For Joan Kuyek and Myrna Wood in the Kingston Community Project, this need motivated them to draw upon the resources of the CYC, without joining themselves. As explained by Kuyek, they believed that local residents should apply to the CYC because "we didn't believe in outside organizers, and that's paid organizers."⁷⁸ As a result, Dennis Crossfield and Les Hutchison, two "working-class kids from Kingston" applied to be organizers with the CYC. Kuyek recalls that "their two CYC salaries...supported all four of us."⁷⁹ The Nova Scotia Project also required more funding, leading Joan Jones to become a CYC worker. By August 1966, the project was linked with the CYC.⁸⁰ Although Rocky did not accept pay from the CYC, he recalled that "at least four of us became paid CYC workers in the Project, and there was never any open interference in our activities."⁸¹

SUPA could not offer the same financial assistance to organizers as the CYC. For the Nova Scotia Project, SUPA funding was minimal, and "was really only enough to get us started,"

⁷⁶ Drache, interview.

⁷⁷ Cleveland, interview.

⁷⁸ Kuyek, interview.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ LAC, Bernard Muzeen fonds, Vol. 1, Series 4: Company of Young Canadians, File 'Miscellaneous, n.d., 1967,' Alan, Jacques, and Stewart to Members of the Company, Company of Young Canadians Memorandum Number 7, 17 March 1967.

⁸¹ Jones and Walker, *Burnley "Rocky" Jones Revolutionary*, 75.

according to Jones.⁸² In 1966, project organizers emphasized the lack of “any kind of assistance from ‘SUPA’” in a letter to the federal office.⁸³ This criticism was later acknowledged by an anonymous SUPA activist in a reflection on Rocky Jones and the Nova Scotia Project: “We sent him down without any money. I think he must have eventually given up on us.”⁸⁴ In addition to the CYC salaries, the project raised money through a group of supporters called the Friends of the Nova Scotia Project. Jones credited this group as the source of “most of our funding.”⁸⁵

Looking back on the relationship between the Kingston Community Project and SUPA, Joan Kuyek recalls: “There was never any money from SUPA. In fact, you were often expected to support SUPA. And so we just couldn’t do it.”⁸⁶ Kingston project workers remained connected to SUPA by attending meetings, but as Kuyek reflects, they were not located in “Toronto, or Vancouver, or Regina which was where the movement had its centre...And we were really busy, so we had very little contact with the movement.”⁸⁷ The isolation of the projects, combined with minimal financial assistance from SUPA, contributed to a fragmented movement, in which community organizing was left in the hands of small pockets of SUPA activists and the CYC.

To what extent can the CYC be blamed for the dissolution of SUPA? Former sixties activist and journalist, Myrna Kostash, gives it considerable weight in her analysis, writing: “When SUPA’s report on the summer projects was compiled with CYC money for the CYC, it was the beginning of the end.”⁸⁸ Certainly, memories of former SUPA activists reinforce that the CYC was a major source of discord within the group.⁸⁹ John Conway remembers: “It was a

⁸² Ibid., 73.

⁸³ MUA, SUPA, Box 9, File ‘Nova Scotia Project, 1965-1966,’ Letter from Lynn Burrows to RIPP, 22 February 1966.

⁸⁴ Kostash, *Long Way from Home*, 12.

⁸⁵ Jones and Walker, *Burnley “Rocky” Jones Revolutionary*, 99.

⁸⁶ Kuyek, interview.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Kostash, *Long Way from Home*, 21.

⁸⁹ Wood, interview, and Drache, interview.

major diversion; it provoked a big split in the organization.”⁹⁰ Jim Harding goes even further, stating: “I would say the CYC broke the solidarity.”⁹¹ While the CYC certainly played a key role, there were a variety of other issues that divided the movement, as this chapter will demonstrate. Even if SUPA lost activists to Ottawa, and disagreed over the movement’s relationship to the CYC, they suffered from a number of other conflicts, including debates over leadership, decision-making, orientation, and the agent of social change.⁹² The question of how to build the movement encompassed all of these issues. The following section will examine the debates over community organizing as a movement builder.

Debating the Position of Community Organizing in SUPA: The Saskatoon Conference, December 1965

Following the meeting at Saint-Calixte in September 1965, community organizers returned to their projects with renewed enthusiasm. This excitement was captured by Halifax organizer Rocky Jones, who wrote: “My head is so full of ideas that I feel I could create a Utopia.”⁹³ Nevertheless, following the next SUPA evaluation meeting in December, federal chairman Jim Harding reported a steep decline in the morale of community organizers. The December meeting was held in Saskatoon, and was ill-attended by only sixty-eight SUPA people, a considerable drop from the previous meeting at Saint-Calixte.⁹⁴ Following the meeting, Harding declared in the *SUPA Newsletter*: “The myth has been shattered! Community organizing will not save the world... The Saskatoon meetings dispelled of many myths that people seemed to

⁹⁰ Conway, interview.

⁹¹ Harding, interview.

⁹² These various other conflicts have also been identified in Dickenson and Campbell, *Strange Bedfellows*, online; Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 80; and Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s*, 97.

⁹³ Rocky Jones quoted in Gzowski, “The righteous crusaders of the New Left,” *Maclean’s*, 15 November 1965.

⁹⁴ MUA, SUPA, Box 12. File ‘SUPA Conference Material, 1966-1967,’ Peter Warrian, “SUPA: 1964-1966: A Social-Psychological Portrait,” undated.

have invested themselves into out of the summer projects and the Saint-Calixte institute.”⁹⁵ He listed some of the issues that were discussed at the meeting, including the difficulty of facilitating self-determination, the challenge of finding issues around which a community movement could be built, and the struggle of identifying any real difference between social work and the community organizing approach in practice. Based on these discussions, Harding concluded that activists in the field failed to recognize that community organizing was merely “one invention of movement building,” adding that “naïve enthusiasm seems to have been replaced by cynicism for many.”⁹⁶

As SUPA’s federal chairman, Harding’s assertions about the “myth” of community organizing bore considerable weight. This was reflected in a document on SUPA’s history produced by activists Tony Hyde and Michael Rowan, before the group disbanded. In their narrative of SUPA, Hyde and Rowan identify the Saskatoon Conference as the moment when “the myth of a SUPA student community organizing movement working toward basic revolutionary change, had been shown up as unreal.”⁹⁷ The repetition of Harding’s evaluation in this document on the history of SUPA indicates that his interpretations were influential; however, a review of the *SUPA Newsletter* reveals that there were others in SUPA who contested Harding’s assessment. Community organizers Linda Seese and Robertson Wood both responded to Harding’s evaluation of the Saskatoon meeting with a different point of view. First, Seese specified that only seven community organizers had attended the conference. Consequently, she argued that Harding’s evaluation was not adequately informed by the perspectives of the

⁹⁵ Ibid., Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletter Vol.,’ Jim Harding, “SUPA at Saskatoon: An Evaluation,” *SUPA Newsletter*, 27 January 1966.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ MUA, SUPA, Box 12, File ‘SUPA Conference Material, 1966-1967,’ Tony Hyde with the assistance of Michael Rowan, “The Student Union for Peace Action: An Analysis,” undated.

organizers themselves. Robertson Wood wrote that he felt “emasculated” by Harding’s relegation of community organizing projects to the level of “worthy experiments.”⁹⁸ Seese expanded on this sentiment, stating that “some people have faith in that experiment and are working on it.”⁹⁹ In another reflection on the position of community organizing within SUPA, she criticized the leaders of the movement for not allowing “the ‘followers,’ the ones doing the organizing,” to take a leading role in the movement, adding: “These leaders...must be sensitive to our needs and permit us to be leaders too. They can continue their writing or whatever it is they do.”¹⁰⁰ As will be seen later in this chapter, Seese’s criticism of movement intellectuals dominating leadership functions would also be expressed by members of the Nova Scotia Project at SUPA’s educational conference in December 1966.

It is important to note that at Saskatoon, Harding did not completely dismiss community organizing as a component of the movement. As an originator of the Neestow project, Harding was quite passionate about the possibilities of community organizing. His reflections on the legacies of the Neestow project, discussed in chapter four, further reveal that his appreciation for community organizing did not end with the Saskatoon meeting. Harding’s statements about community organizing in 1966 were informed by a perceived need to move SUPA beyond dispossessed organizing. As Peter Warrian explained it, another focus was necessary for “a rejuvenation of the organization’s spirit.”¹⁰¹ With this goal, it was decided to move forward with an anti-war initiative called the Ottawa-Vietnam Action. At Saskatoon, it was conceived that an anti-war action would bring the movement together, and also draw attention to a growing topic

⁹⁸ Ibid., Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletter Vol.,’ Robertson Wood, “A Response to Harding,” *SUPA Newsletter*, 15 March 1966.

⁹⁹ Ibid., Linda Seese, “Seese’s Thing on Harding’s Thing,” *SUPA Newsletter*, 15 March 1966.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., Box 14, File ‘SUPA reorganization papers, 1966-1967,’ Linda Seese, “Revolutionary or Radical?” undated.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., Box 12, File ‘SUPA Conference Material, 1966-1967,’ Peter Warrian, SUPA: 1964-1966: A Social-Psychological Portrait,” undated.

of interest: Canadian nationalism. In Warrian's analysis, Saskatoon initiated "a new myth-building...around a push for Canadian nationalism and in the concrete, Canada's complicity in the Vietnam War."¹⁰² The idea that a "new myth-building" was rising to replace the old "myth" of community organizing was articulated by Tony Hyde, who stated that the Ottawa-Vietnam Action was designed "to shift the organization away from its commitment to community organizing, a commitment that could not be met."¹⁰³ This statement on the intention of the Ottawa-Vietnam Action suggests that community organizing was losing support as a movement-builder. Community organizers, however, continued their efforts to build a movement of the dispossessed with projects in Kingston, Halifax, Saskatchewan, and Toronto.¹⁰⁴

The hope that the Ottawa-Vietnam Action would generate a broader and stronger movement must be understood in the context of the period. The escalation of American involvement in the war under Lyndon Johnson in 1965 generated considerable protest within the United States. As a major issue that was producing widespread unrest, and tied in with the New Leftist emphasis on self-determination and critique of imperialism, it is not surprising that SUPA located potential in anti-war work as a movement-builder. It is interesting to note that although SDS had organized a March on Washington in April 1965 in opposition to the war in Vietnam, which attracted between fifteen and twenty thousand demonstrators, the group voted in June 1965 that they would not become a national anti-war movement, choosing instead to leave the organization of anti-war actions to individual SDS chapters.¹⁰⁵ SUPA's decision in December

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ MUA, SUPA, Box 12, File 'SUPA Conference Material,' Tony Hyde, with the assistance of Michael Rowan, "The Student Union for Peace Action: An Analysis," undated.

¹⁰⁴ SUPA activist Sarah Spinks would lead a community organizing project in Toronto's Trefann Court in 1967.

¹⁰⁵ Christopher Powell, "'Vietnam: It's Our War Too': The Antiwar Movement in Canada: 1963-1975," (PhD diss., University of New Brunswick, 2011), 120-1, and Daniel S. Lucks, *Selma to Saigon: The Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War* (USA: The University Press of Kentucky, 2014), 88.

1965 to organize a national action against the war in Vietnam therefore represented a marked difference from SDS.

SUPA would direct much of its time and resources to anti-war activities, with some considerable success, particularly around anti-draft work. On the other hand, the Ottawa-Vietnam Action generated debate within the group. Some community organizers expressed their reservations about the allocation of the bulk of movement resources to these efforts. In addition, some activists voiced concerns that the decision-making processes of the SUPA Vietnam Action Committee were inconsistent with the participatory rhetoric of the movement. The Ottawa-Vietnam Action offers a case study of the challenges surrounding leadership and decision-making processes in SUPA. The following section will explore these issues and assess their gendered implications.

SUPA's Ottawa-Vietnam Action, 1966

SUPA's concern over the situation in Vietnam began under the CUCND as early as October 1963, when the group communicated with SDS about protests in the United States against American policy in South Vietnam.¹⁰⁶ Under SUPA, a Vietnam Research Project was formed at the Saint-Calixte conference in September 1965. The project was set up in Montreal with the purpose of exploring American-Canadian relations and Canada's complicity in the war, a concern that would remain a central feature of the group's anti-war work.¹⁰⁷ In December 1965, Dimitri Roussopoulos urged SUPA to begin a more serious consideration of the group's position on the war with a piece in the newsletter titled, "What is Your Position on the Vietnam Question." Roussopoulos encouraged SUPA to use the newsletter to debate issues related to the

¹⁰⁶ MUA, SUPA, Box 1, File 'Secretariat Meetings—Minutes Dec. 1962-Feb. 1964,' Letter from Tom Hayden, Dick Flacks and Todd Gitlin to Arthur Pape, 8 October 1963.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., File 'SUPA Federal Council Minutes,' Student Union for Peace Action Minutes of the Federal Council Meeting, 9-12 September 1965.

war in preparation for the Federal Council meeting later that month in Saskatoon, where as previously noted, it was decided to organize the Ottawa-Vietnam Action.¹⁰⁸

During this time, Canadian nationalism was becoming of prime importance in the movement. The publication of McMaster religion professor George Grant's *Lament for a Nation* in 1965 gave the movement's critiques "a new legitimacy" according to Roussopoulos.¹⁰⁹ Grant's lament of Canada's absorption into the "American empire" strengthened and broadened a New Leftist criticism of American control over Canada.¹¹⁰ Beyond reading Grant's work, SUPA activists met directly with him. Nancy Hannum remembers "a big meeting we had with George Grant" at the SUPA co-op house on Spadina Avenue in Toronto.¹¹¹ The meeting with Grant was particularly influential for SUPA activist Matt Cohen, who was a twenty-two-year-old graduate student at the University of Toronto at the time. In his memoir, *Typing: A life in 26 keys*, Cohen wrote: "I was meeting Grant almost every week and staying up all night reading the texts he demanded I master."¹¹² After completing his master's degree, Cohen took a position in the Department of Religious Studies at McMaster University, and pursued a PhD with Grant as his advisor. Cohen explained the somewhat unlikely relationship that existed between Grant as a social conservative and SUPA as a New Leftist movement, writing that leftists were "fascinated by him because he took them seriously and could clearly articulate ideas they sensed but couldn't properly say."¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File 'SUPA Newsletter, Vol.' Cathie Kneen "Towards and Open Door Policy," *SUPA Newsletter*, 12 December 1965.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Box 7, File 'Worklist, 1965,' Dimitrios Roussopoulos, "A Proposal for Building the Movement," 1965.

¹¹⁰ George Grant, *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism*, 40th anniversary ed., (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 9.

¹¹¹ Hannum, interview.

¹¹² Matt Cohen, *Typing: A life in 26 keys* (Canada: Strickland Ltd., 2000), 35.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 42.

The SUPA Vietnam Research Project emphasized the twin objectives of ending Canadian subjugation to the United States and complicity in the war. Consequently, they proposed a campaign centred on the issue of Canada's exportation of Canadian resources, such as iron ore, to the United States, which were "key to the U.S. (war) machine."¹¹⁴ As the project explained, "such a stoppage would be a step the (sic) kind of independent, free, peaceful Canada we want to see."¹¹⁵ It was decided to centre the Ottawa-Vietnam Action on the theme of Canadian-American relations and call upon the government to admit Canada's complicity in the war and debate the issue in Parliament. Grant himself was a member of SUPA's Vietnam Organizing Committee for this action in 1966.¹¹⁶

Initial plans for the Ottawa-Vietnam Action discussed at the Saskatoon Federal Council meeting included lobbying, a vigil, and civil disobedience. In the discussions that followed in January 1966, debates emerged around the use of civil disobedience, with some opposing the strategy arguing that "SUPA was not strong enough for the action; and there has not been enough conventional action to justify (sic) such militant action."¹¹⁷ The Vietnam Action Committee devised two proposals for the action which were put to a poll through the SUPA worklist. Both proposals involved the production and circulation of a letter to Parliament, issuing the group's demands and calling for a parliamentary debate on Canada's position on the war in Vietnam.

Despite the previous debates over the use of civil disobedience, both proposals also called for the use of civil disobedience if their demand for parliamentary debate was not met. The first proposal included a centralized effort to plan local actions in conjunction with the Ottawa-

¹¹⁴ MUA, SUPA, Box 1, File 'SUPA Federal Council Minutes,' Student Union for Peace Action Minutes of the Federal Council Meeting, 9-12 September 1965.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ MUA, SUPA, Box 7, File 'SUPA Worklist 1966,' Worklist Mailing, No. 5, 12 February 1966.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., Box 21, File 'SUPA Newsletter Vol.' Ken Drushka, "The Ottawa-Vietnam Action," *SUPA Newsletter*, 27 January 1966

Vietnam Action, and the use of a chartered train to bring activists from across the country to Ottawa for a second act of civil disobedience. The second proposal left the planning of support actions to local SUPA branches, and did not offer cross-country transportation to Ottawa.¹¹⁸ Through the worklist, SUPA activists were asked a number of questions, including if they would support the action; which proposal they preferred; what they would be willing to do for the action; and if they would participate in civil disobedience.¹¹⁹ On 1 and 2 February, ballot responses were discussed at a meeting in Toronto attended by Art Pape, Dimitri Roussopoulos, Doug Ward, Tony Hyde, Jim Laxer, Mike Rowan, John Seeley and Malcolm Fast. The majority of the responses favoured the second proposal, arguing that the first proposal's plan of a chartered train and centralized planning of local actions was too ambitious.¹²⁰ It was decided to schedule the action from 28 February to 5 March. The action would begin with a silent vigil and teach-in while political leaders considered the contents of their letter to Parliament. Civil disobedience would follow if no promise of parliamentary debate was made.

Although the ballot responses provided the Vietnam Action Committee enough support to move forward with plans, several responses offered insight into some of the debates over the group's decision-making practices and priorities. Some SUPA people critiqued the use of a poll to make a major decision about SUPA's activities. Joan Kuyek drew attention to this issue in a letter to the Federal Council in which she criticized the Vietnam Action Committee for "the finding of false consensus" and "the imposition of the will of the majority upon the minority."¹²¹ As previously discussed, reaching decisions by consensus was embraced as an important aspect

¹¹⁸ Ibid., Box 7, File 'SUPA Worklist 1966,' "Viet Nam Action Committee Report #3," undated.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., "Ballot."

¹²⁰ MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File 'SUPA Newsletter, Vol.,' "Report on the Vietnam Action Plan" *SUPA Newsletter*, Vol II, No. 2, 14 February 1966.

¹²¹ Ibid., Box 13, File 'Worklist Response to Vietnam Letter 1966,' Letter from Joan Newman to the Federal Office, 31 January 1965 (sic).

of SUPA's operations at the group's founding conference in December 1964, and was central to discussions at Ste-Calixte in September 1965. Since the group could not reach a consensus on the Vietnam Action, Kuyek suggested that it be undertaken by individuals in SUPA interested in expressing their opposition to Canada's complicity in the war in Vietnam, but that it not be organized under SUPA's name.¹²² Myrna Wood expressed similar concerns, stating: "I also do not understand why a consensus is being asked for (when the splits have been made so very apparent), especially in this manner, i.e. votes and ballots. Is this not an obvious example of the form of democracy our society at present is using, when voting will not reflect a consensus?"¹²³ Wood also wrote an open letter to the Vietnam Action Committee, which was published in the *SUPA Newsletter*. She identified the committee's decision-making processes as the root of her opposition to the Ottawa-Vietnam Action, explaining: "I attended two of the committee meetings in Ottawa and Toronto and I was disgusted to watch a power struggle going on instead of taking part in a group trying to reach consensus on a very complex situation."¹²⁴

Most SUPA people did not critique the Vietnam Action Committee for making its decision based on a poll, rather than consensus. In addition, this episode is not prominent in the memories of those interviewed for this dissertation. The fact that none of the interviewees raised this episode when asked about divisive moments in SUPA, reveals that its impact was not interpreted as being as significant as other issues, such as debates over the CYC. Nevertheless, it reflects an instance when SUPA's practices fell short of its ideals, and demonstrates a tension between community organizers and other pockets of SUPA activists, an issue that was raised by

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid., Letter from Myrna Aiken to the Federal Office, 13 February 1966. Note that in this period, Myrna Wood went by Myrna Aiken as an effort to "deal with a feminist identity." For a time, she also went by Myrna X "after Malcolm's example." In the end, she kept the surname Wood. Myrna Wood, e-mail message to author, 3 April 2017.

¹²⁴ MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File 'SUPA Newsletter Vol.' Myrna Aiken, "An Open Letter to the Ottawa Action Committee, *SUPA Newsletter*, 12 January 1966.

interviewees.¹²⁵ For this reason, the debates over the extent to which SUPA should organize around the war in Vietnam deserves attention as an issue that illuminates the competing priorities of different types of SUPA activists.

The decision to hold the Ottawa-Vietnam Action did not have the consent of all SUPA activists. In addition to Joan Kuyek, and Myrna Wood, others such as Cathleen and Brewster Kneen, Aline Desjardins, Pat Uhl, and Sarah Spinks, indicated a lack of support for the action. Insight into their reasoning can be gleaned from letters accompanying their ballot responses. Although the ballots themselves offered space for written responses, some activists attached a letter elaborating on their position. One prevailing sentiment emerging from their letters centred on the issue of the movement's priorities. This was revealed in several ways. Some called attention to the danger of viewing the action as a movement-builder for SUPA. Community organizer Pat Uhl expressed her concern that too much emphasis was being placed on the Ottawa-Vietnam Action for this reason, stating: "The Ottawa action should be seen as an experiment much as the organization of the Métis of Saskatchewan is an experiment. We fall into traps if one action, or approach, or phase, or fad becomes in our minds the factor to make or break the movement."¹²⁶ In Kingston, Joan Kuyek feared that the action would divert attention away from the important work being carried out in community projects: "I think that at this time there is some valuable and relatively un-glamorous work being done by a few individuals in Canada. I fear the pressure that this action will put upon them to leave that work and devote their energies to Ottawa."¹²⁷ Sarah Spinks, who worked on the Kingston Community Project in the summer of 1965 before her first year of university, was also concerned that other SUPA projects

¹²⁵ Conway, interview, Hannum, interview, and Warrion, interview.

¹²⁶ MUA, SUPA, Box 13, File 'Worklist Response to Vietnam Letter 1966,' Letter from Pat Uhl, undated.

¹²⁷ Ibid., Letter from Joan Newman to the Federal Office, 31 January 1965 (sic).

would suffer as a result of the Ottawa-Vietnam Action, explaining: “an action at this time could be devastating to the movement because it is going to use TIME that we can not (sic) spare and it will tap resources that we are going to need both for branches and projects.”¹²⁸ When asked if she would participate in the Ottawa-Vietnam Action, Cathleen Kneen responded that she would fulfill her responsibilities to the action as a federal office worker, but “my priority is working on organizing summer projects.”¹²⁹ These reactions to the Ottawa-Vietnam Action all reveal a concern about SUPA’s level of commitment to the local projects.

SUPA’s focus on the Ottawa-Vietnam Action intensified the isolation of some community organizers. This was expressed in a letter to the federal SUPA office from community organizers in the Nova Scotia Project. As Lynn Burrows wrote in February 1966: “Bill, Rocky, Joan and I all feel very strongly about the fact that SUPA has not fulfilled her responsibilities to the projects. We feel that the Vietnam issue is very crucial but we also feel that SUPA formulated and took on responsibilities at St. Calixte which she has not faced up to.”¹³⁰ Burrows identified one of these responsibilities as publishing more information on their project and other community projects in the *SUPA Newsletter*, explaining: “Somehow we feel much closer to project workers (even if we don’t communicate) than to people we hear about continually in the newsletter.”¹³¹ The Nova Scotia Project wrote a letter to the federal office stating “that we are resigning (as a project) from SUPA.”¹³² The central reason, as explained by Rocky Jones, was because “SUPA is not fulfilling its commitment to the people involved in

¹²⁸ Ibid., Ballot from Sarah Spinks, undated.

¹²⁹ Ibid., Ballot from Cathie Kneen, undated.

¹³⁰ MUA, SUPA, Box 9, File ‘Nova Scotia Project, 1965-1966,’ Letter from Lynn Burrows of the NSP to RIPP Office, 22 February 1966.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletters, Vol.,’ Rocky Jones, Letter to the editor of the *SUPA Newsletter*, *SUPA Newsletter*, 15 March 1966.

it.”¹³³ Jones not only expressed his criticism that SUPA was not doing enough to help finance the Nova Scotia Project, but also his concern for the situations of other community organizers, such as Linda Seese in Green Lake, who required “financial and moral support.”¹³⁴ Jones believed that SUPA was privileging the Ottawa-Vietnam Action over community organizing projects. Updates on the Ottawa-Vietnam Action were sent to him and other movement people by special delivery, something which Jones saw as a mismanagement of funds. He assertively requested: “from now on please send mine regular delivery and send the extra twenty cents to Green Lake.”¹³⁵ As previously discussed, community projects received minimal funding from SUPA, and were required to raise money on their own. When looking at where SUPA chose to allocate its funds and resources, Jones argued that community organizing was low on the list of the movement’s priorities: “People in Green Lake are starving and money is sucked into the ‘Action.’” He ended his letter with a plea: “For the sake of building a movement, please show some responsibility toward people who are working in the field.”¹³⁶

Peter Warrian’s perspective on SUPA provides further insight into the responses of community organizers. Warrian describes SUPA as encompassing two camps, one based around the university, and the other based around community projects. He explains how this dynamic related to activism around the war in Vietnam as follows:

Now I was in the group of SUPA that maintained the link to the campus, the others went into community organizing. That became a division, I think it’s fair to say, the community organizing wing of it, versus the university-based wing of it. And as things start to escalate around the war in Vietnam, it’s the university part of that SUPA family that escalates into the major protests, 68-9.¹³⁷

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid. Linda Seese also recalled Jones’ request in our interview.

¹³⁵ MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletters, Vol.,’ Rocky Jones, Letter to the editor of the *SUPA Newsletter*, 15 March 1966.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Warrian, interview.

Several activists in community organizing certainly participated in SUPA's anti-war efforts as well, and viewed the war in Vietnam as a significant issue. In the Nova Scotia Project, Jones recalled: "We spoke out very strongly against the war in Vietnam, and we supported a lot of things."¹³⁸ Nevertheless, many community organizers held primary identifications as field workers creating a movement of the dispossessed, rather than as campus activists creating a movement of students through anti-war work. Their response to the Ottawa-Vietnam Action illuminated their efforts to have SUPA recognize dispossessed organizing as a priority as well. John Conway's recollections reinforce this tension between campus and anti-war activism on the one hand, and community organizing on the other, explaining:

Many of us were becoming very active in the student power movement on the campuses. That was really taking off. Many of us were also very active in the anti-Vietnam War movement which was really taking off, and that began to consume more and more of our time. And we began seeing students as perhaps the vanguard of a youth agent of change and decided to focus more and more of our work on there. And of course, that provoked a debate within the organization and perhaps contributed to its split, or its collapse.¹³⁹

While dispossessed organizing existed alongside campus and anti-war organizing, they did not co-exist easily in SUPA. Nancy Hannum reflects: "There was an attempt to kind of do the local organizing at the same time as you're doing the campus organizing, at the same time as you're trying to do intellectual analysis. And I think all three of those strains were there, and people were doing a lot of the same, but they didn't all fit together very comfortably."¹⁴⁰ As an issue that was galvanizing student activism, the war in Vietnam gained prominence within SUPA. The extent to which SUPA should focus on the single issue of the war was a point of contention between campus and anti-war activists on the one hand, and community organizers on the other. A national movement became increasingly difficult to maintain as activists

¹³⁸ Jones and Walker, *Burnley "Rocky" Jones Revolutionary*, 82.

¹³⁹ Conway, interview.

¹⁴⁰ Hannum, interview.

asserted their priorities. John Conway concludes: “So I suppose one could say that SUPA gradually began to die simply because we were making those kinds of choices at a personal level in terms of our work, and our priorities organizing.”¹⁴¹

Gender Issues and the Ottawa-Vietnam Action

The Ottawa-Vietnam Action offers insight into the gender dynamics of activist work in SUPA. As discussed in chapter four, although both men and women participated in community organizing projects, it was a sphere of movement activity that tended to be more receptive to women’s leadership than others. The exclusively male Vietnam Action Committee, composed of Doug Ward, Art Pape, Dimitri Roussopoulos, Tony Hyde, Mike Rowan, Jim Laxer, George Grant, Rollie Caccione, and Michael Forand, reveals that the organization of the action did not function as the same type of site for women’s involvement and leadership.¹⁴² The absence of women’s participation on the committee was particularly significant considering that the action was constructed as a SUPA “movement-builder.” In their study of leadership in social movement organizations, sociologists Neil Sutherland, Christopher Land, and Steffan Böhm explain that when a particular project or action is “framed as a core movement activity,” the subsequent effect on other activities is that they become viewed as “less valuable.”¹⁴³ In SUPA, the Ottawa-Vietnam Action was framed as a core activity that could energize and expand the movement. With no female representation on the organizing committee for this key action, it follows that women’s contributions to SUPA through other areas were viewed as less valuable to the overall movement. Chapter six will examine how women voiced this issue at SUPA’s final conference in 1967.

¹⁴¹ Conway, interview.

¹⁴² MUA, SUPA, Box 7, File ‘SUPA Worklist 1966,’ Worklist Mailing No. 6, 26 February 1966.

¹⁴³ Neil Sutherland, Christopher Land, and Steffan Böhm, “Anti-leaders(hip) in Social Movement Organizations: The case of autonomous grassroots groups,” (2013). doi 10.1177/1350508413480254.

An overview of the Ottawa-Vietnam Action demonstrates that women participated in the action, but were not included as formal leaders of its events. This was clearly reflected by the individuals selected to lead the teach-in accompanying the action.¹⁴⁴ It opened with a presentation on Vietnam's history given by SUPA activist Tony Hyde, which was followed by discussion. That evening, five hundred people attended a lecture titled "Big Lie on America's Peace Offensive," by American peace activist, Staughton Lynd.¹⁴⁵ Born in 1929, Lynd acted as a mentor to student activists. His participation in the teach-in demonstrates the inter-generational relationships within the New Left, discussed in chapter one. His own activism further illuminates an integration of peace work and grassroots organizing, characteristic of SUPA's New Leftism.¹⁴⁶ On 2 March, other sessions were led by Don Forsyth, James Steele, Dimitri Roussopoulos, Michael Forand, Art Pape, and Kenneth McNaught. Like the composition of the Vietnam Action Committee, the all-male leadership of the teach-in demonstrates its construction as a male sphere of activity. Chapter six will develop the themes of gender and leadership in SUPA further.

While the formal leadership of the Ottawa-Vietnam Action did not include women, and while many female community organizers criticized SUPA for focusing too narrowly on the action, they nevertheless viewed the war as a significant issue. This was clearly expressed during the interviews for this dissertation. Peggy Morton recounted that when she moved to Toronto in 1966, she began to work in the SUPA office where she devoted a "huge amount of energy" to making kits containing information on Vietnam, which were sold and sent out to SUPA

¹⁴⁴ According to *Sanity*, the teach-in was held at Carleton University, while the *Varsity* reported that it took place at the University of Ottawa. Dimitrios Roussopoulos, "Canada: A Growing Protest Movement," *Sanity*, Vol. 3, No. 6, April 1966, and "The Fact of Complicity," *Varsity*, 2 March 1966.

¹⁴⁵ MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File 'SUPA Newsletter, Vol.,' "61 Arrested. Canada Vietnam Week," *SUPA Newsletter*, 15 March 1966.

¹⁴⁶ Kent State University, Staughton and Alice Lynd Collection, "Biographical Note," available online. <http://www.library.kent.edu/staughton-and-alice-lynd-collection>. Accessed 16 November 2015.

branches.¹⁴⁷ Morton further assisted resisters and deserters in activities “done under the radar.”¹⁴⁸ She named the war in Vietnam as “a decisive moment” in her political thinking, elaborating: “for a generation, that was the touchstone that we discovered that America was not the beacon of freedom and democracy, and we started taking an anti-imperialist stand.”¹⁴⁹ Linda Seese also mentioned her involvement in anti-war work in Toronto after the Neestow project, explaining that she participated in “a lot of demonstrations at the U.S. consulate.”¹⁵⁰ Further, when describing the group of community organizers in the Kingston Community Project, Joan Kuyek stated: “on top of it, we were peaceniks, you know. We were against the war in Vietnam.”¹⁵¹ These examples illuminate the overlap of activist identities among women in SUPA. The concern that some women raised about the prioritization of the Ottawa-Vietnam Action over community projects discussed earlier did not reflect a belief that anti-war work was unimportant, or that they did not want to be involved in anti-war or anti-draft efforts; rather, it reflected a more general discontent with SUPA’s level of commitment to community organizing at that time.

The Events of the Ottawa-Vietnam Action

The events of the Ottawa-Vietnam Action were covered in the *SUPA Newsletter*. It began with a vigil of twenty-five to fifty people on Parliament Hill on 28 February 1966. The vigil ended at midnight and resumed the next morning with more activists arriving from Montreal and Toronto. During this time, an open letter was delivered to each party leader. The letter demanded that the Canadian government call for an end to the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam and scorched earth policy in South Vietnam; revoke permission for the Canadian exportation of “any

¹⁴⁷ Morton, interview.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Seese, interview.

¹⁵¹ Kuyek, interview.

arms or material” to be used in the war; support the recognition of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam as “a full participant in any negotiations to settle the war”; demand that the Geneva Conference reconvene; and announce support for the principles of the 1954 Geneva agreement “as providing the basis for a true peace in Vietnam.”¹⁵² The activists held the teach-in while the party leaders considered the contents of the letter.

During the teach-in, other activists arrived from Kingston, Montreal, Toronto, Regina, and Saskatoon.¹⁵³ With no announcement for parliamentary debate, it was decided to begin civil disobedience on 3 March. A group of sixty resumed vigil at Parliament Hill, while those committing civil disobedience participated in a training session, which included role-playing and instruction on the philosophy of nonviolence. Following the session, they joined the vigil until they heard the Peace Tower ring at 2pm, which cued them to march in lines of four to the steps of the Parliament Building where they were met by the RCMP. This group, in addition to twenty-five others who arrived later, seated themselves across the steps, “effectively blocking the main entrance” according to a SUPA report.¹⁵⁴ The RCMP responded by first dragging the group on the right to the sidewalk, and then proceeding to clear the group on the left. Each time, the demonstrators returned to their spots. Both groups were removed six times as they sang songs like, “We Shall Not Be Moved.” Finally, the demonstrators were informed that they would be arrested if they refused to disperse. By 6:30pm, sixty-one demonstrators were arrested.¹⁵⁵ Bail was set at twenty-seven dollars for the men, while women were released on their own personal recognizance. After the men refused bail “on the principle that the bail system was unjust and

¹⁵² This last demand included “the withdrawal of all foreign troops and bases, and supervised free elections to lead to the reunification of Vietnam.” MUA, SUPA, Box 13, File ‘Ottawa Vietnam Action 1966,’ “Students and Professors Join to Launch Canada/Vietnam Week (March 1-5),” *Campus Prebium*, 21 February 1966.

¹⁵³ MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletter, Vol.,’ “61 Arrested. Canada Vietnam Week,” *SUPA Newsletter*, 15 March 1966.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

discriminatory,” they were also released on personal recognizance.¹⁵⁶ By 1am on Saturday 4 March, all those had been arrested gathered at St. George Church. Those who had not participated in civil disobedience wrote a letter explaining the reasons for the action, and distributed it to fifteen Ottawa churches on 5 March. That afternoon, “four girls,” unnamed in the *SUPA Newsletter*’s description of events, sat down in the driveway of Prime Minister Pearson’s residence after their request for a meeting had been refused.¹⁵⁷ A supporting vigil was held across the street, but nothing came of the action which ended at 10pm that night.

On Monday 6 March, the demonstrators went to court. Of the sixty-one who had been arrested, two appeared before juvenile court. Two students from McGill pled guilty to the charge of “creating a disturbance by impeding other persons at the Parliament Buildings,” receiving a lecture and a fifteen-dollar fine. The rest of the group pled not guilty and a trial was set for 19 May.¹⁵⁸ Although the *SUPA Newsletter* reported that subsequent actions in May would focus on “the issues of Canada in Vietnam, rather than on the sentences,” there is no evidence that the group organized around the time of the trial.¹⁵⁹

The Ottawa-Vietnam Action failed as a movement builder. As historian Christopher Powell observes: “The Ottawa action had created much dissension within SUPA, compounding existing divisions.”¹⁶⁰ This was evidenced by concerns within SUPA over the decision-making processes used by the leaders of the action, and the allocation of time and resources to the action, at the expense of other SUPA projects. Not only did it exacerbate cleavages within SUPA, but it

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ MUA, SUPA, Box 12, File ‘SUPA Conference Material, 1966-1967,’ “Two demonstrators fined: others await trial,” *The Varsity* 85, no. 64 (9 March 1966). Two members of the group pleaded “morally innocent, legally guilty.” Their pleas were entered as not guilty.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletter, Vol.,’ “61 Arrested. Canada Vietnam Week,” *SUPA Newsletter*, 15 March 1966, and Malcolm Fast and Cathie Kneen, “Federal Council,” *SUPA Newsletter*, 15 March 1966.

¹⁶⁰ Powell, “‘Vietnam: It’s Our War Too,’” 158.

also failed to inspire sympathetic actions across Canada, with only one demonstration at the University of Alberta on 28 February.¹⁶¹ Media coverage of the Ottawa-Vietnam Action was also limited and did not publish the group's concerns about Canada's complicity in the war.¹⁶² In their analysis of the action, SUPA activists Tony Hyde and Michael Rowan wrote that "Canada/Vietnam Week left the organization in a shambles." One of the prime reasons for this was that it had been "a top-down, elitist style action."¹⁶³ The gap between the ideal of participatory democracy, and the reality of the entirely male leadership of the Ottawa-Vietnam Action, in addition to the absence of consensus-building around the demonstration, revealed that SUPA had fallen short of the vision they had created at Saint-Calixte of an open and non-hierarchical movement.

SUPA's Anti-Draft Work

SUPA's anti-draft work was arguably its most successful engagement with anti-war activism. With its operations in Toronto, however, it did not serve as a source of common activism for SUPA groups across the country. The possibility of participating in anti-draft work was discussed as early as November 1965 in Toronto, when SUPA began to research the legal implications of helping American draft dodgers.¹⁶⁴ The result of this research was the production of the pamphlet, "Coming to Canada," which offered information to potential draft dodgers about immigration.¹⁶⁵ This pamphlet, along with a publication by the Vancouver Committee to Aid American War Objectors, were both circulated through RIPP, and resulted in a stream of

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 155.

¹⁶² As Powell notes, the *Globe and Mail* printed one article of the demonstration on 4 March 1966, which focused on civil disobedience, Powell, "'Vietnam: It's Our War Too,'" 157.

¹⁶³ MUA, SUPA, Box 12, File 'SUPA Conference Material,' Tony Hyde, with the assistance of Michael Rowan, "The Student Union for Peace Action: An Analysis," undated.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., Box 21, File 'SUPA Newsletter, Vol.' Cathie Kneen "Towards an Open Door Policy," *SUPA Newsletter*, November 1965.

¹⁶⁵ Squires, *Building Sanctuary*, 32.

letters from potential draft dodgers. Tony Hyde recalls helping approximately fifty draft dodgers find housing in Toronto in 1966.¹⁶⁶ With growing interest in draft resistance, SUPA established the Toronto Anti-Draft Programme in late 1966 and produced a longer twelve-page booklet in 1967 titled, *Escape from Freedom, or, I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Canadian*.¹⁶⁷ The booklet was written by Richard Paterak, a sociology graduate from Massachusetts who had been part of the American national service program VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) before receiving a 1-A draft classification and moving to Canada.¹⁶⁸ Approximately 20,000 copies of the booklet were sent to the United States.¹⁶⁹ One copy landed in the hands of Mark Satin, a twenty-year-old activist with SDS who had recently dropped out of the State University of New York's Harpur College.¹⁷⁰ Satin joined SUPA as a counsellor for the Toronto Anti-Draft Programme in April 1967 and soon became the program director. There were several key activists involved in the programme, including Brenda Berke, a Quaker who answered letters from Americans interested in immigrating to Canada; Jack and Nancy Pocock, also Quakers and long-time peace activists; and Bill Spira, who fled the United States during the McCarthy era.¹⁷¹ Their engagement with SUPA's anti-draft work demonstrates that the inter-generational cooperation of the peace movement discussed in chapter one could also be seen in the anti-draft work carried out by SUPA. The TADP was part of a larger network of anti-draft activists, with about twenty-three other groups located in cities across Canada.¹⁷² In her analysis of the anti-draft movement in Canada, historian Jessica Squires emphasizes its character as a

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ This classification made him eligible for military service. Oliver Clausen, "Boys Without A Country," *New York Times*, 21 May 1967.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library (hereafter TFRBL), Mark Satin Papers, Box 1, File 'Satin's Memoir of Real Life at TADP,' 1974-75 with revisions in 1996 and 2006.

¹⁷² Squires, *Building Sanctuary*, 21.

“multigenerational movement with influences from multiple sources—peace churches, pacifist traditions, and the crucible of radical ideas of the sixties.”¹⁷³

The gender dynamics of the anti-draft movement have been discussed in a few key works by both American and Canadian scholars. In the American context, Sara Evans has observed that “women after 1966 found that they were auxiliaries to the central issue of the movement—the draft.”¹⁷⁴ This dynamic was not the same in the Canadian context, since neither men nor women in Canada were subject to the draft. Several women were involved in the TADP, including Naomi Wall, Heather Dean, Mona Stevens, Sylvia Tucker, Nancy Pocock, and Katie McGovern.¹⁷⁵ In particular, Wall spearheaded a program to collect job offers for war resisters applying for landed immigrant status. By 1968, she was working full-time for the TADP and was given a “token salary.”¹⁷⁶ McGovern became an important player in the TADP’s later years. In 1970, McGovern moved to Toronto from Illinois where she had been involved in anti-war work. She carried the TADP through its final years, becoming its last organizer in 1974.¹⁷⁷

Gender studies of the anti-draft movement in Canada tend to focus not on the activism of Canadian women, but on the politics of American women war resisters. For example, Canadian historian Jessica Squires, observes that “both the anti-draft movement of the period and scholarship about American war resisters have neglected women war resisters, treating them as either companions of men or ignoring them completely.”¹⁷⁸ It was evident that at least some American women of the period were unsatisfied with the classification of “companions” when a

¹⁷³ Ibid., 186.

¹⁷⁴ Evans, *Personal Politics*, 179.

¹⁷⁵ Matthew McKenzie Bryant Roth, “Crossing Borders: The Toronto Anti-Draft Programme and the Canadian Anti-Vietnam War Movement,” (MA thesis, University of Waterloo, 2008), 16, and John Hagan, *Northern Passage: American Vietnam War Resisters in Canada* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 78.

¹⁷⁶ Hagan, *Northern Passage*, 100-101.

¹⁷⁷ Roth, “Crossing Borders,” 15-16.

¹⁷⁸ Squires, *Building Sanctuary*, 42.

group came together in Toronto to criticize the assumption that they had simply followed their husbands or boyfriends to Canada. At the Pan-Canadian Conference of US War Resisters in 1970, this group called upon the movement to “respect women war resisters as equal alongside their male counterparts.”¹⁷⁹

Sociologist John Hagan has studied the diverse motivations that led American women to immigrate to Canada during the war in Vietnam. While some women’s decisions were informed by their relationships to men dodging the draft, others came on their own as a political statement against the war.¹⁸⁰ In his dissertation on American expatriates in Toronto, historian David Churchill explains that he decided to explore not only those who were direct subjects of the draft, but also those whose lives were affected by it, naming women as the “most visible” of this group.¹⁸¹ Several of the women who immigrated to Toronto became involved in the women’s liberation movement, and impacted its development in the city. This influence will be explored in chapter seven.

The TADP gained attention in 1967 with an article written by Oliver Clausen from the *Globe and Mail* for the *New York Times*. The article, “Boys Without a Country,” did not provide a favourable description of SUPA, stating: “Despite SUPA’s name, peace is certainly not its primary concern,” going on to reference the “Chinese Communist propaganda” in the SUPA office.¹⁸² Mark Satin was Clausen’s main contact in SUPA and was described as a drop-out with long hair who looked like “a boy many a citizen of Wichita Falls, Tex., would love to give a good spanking too.”¹⁸³ Satin remembers TADP staff being infuriated with him after the article

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 41.

¹⁸⁰ Hagan, *Northern Passage*, 29.

¹⁸¹ David Stewart Churchill, “When Home Became Away: American Expatriates and New Social Movements in Toronto, 1965-1977,” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2001), 15-16.

¹⁸² Clausen, “Boys Without A Country,” *New York Times*, 21 May 1967.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

was published for not referring the reporter to one of the more established activists in the group.¹⁸⁴ While the article did not promote SUPA, it widened the reach of information about the TADP. According to Satin, the office received about thirty letters a day for over a year after the article's publication. Among these were both inquiries about draft resistance, and criticisms of the Programme. Nevertheless, by the end of the summer of 1967, SUPA placed draft dodgers and their wives and girlfriends in over one hundred houses across Toronto.¹⁸⁵ In January 1968, Satin released the *Manual for Draft-Age Immigrants to Canada*, which ran over 65,000 copies between 1968 and 1970.¹⁸⁶ The manual was a comprehensive resource, one-hundred pages in length, covering topics ranging from legal information to Canadian weather. As Churchill has noted, the manual sought to provide potential draft dodgers with a sense of life in Canada. It further informed them of the growing leftist nationalist discourse within Canadian New Leftist circles, which was highly critical of American foreign policy.¹⁸⁷

The emerging left nationalist movement in Canada informed the TADP's approach of assisting war resisters. While Mark Satin favoured "the formation of a visible and vibrant neighborhood of "American exiles" in Toronto," others insisted that they "fade into the Canadian woodwork."¹⁸⁸ The TADP embraced an assimilationist position for American war resisters, which encouraged "the adoption of Canadian nationalism and integration into Canadian society."¹⁸⁹ The Union of New Canadians was formed in May 1967 for this purpose. American war resisters were encouraged to criticize the war from an explicitly Canadian perspective, which

¹⁸⁴ TFRBL, Mark Satin Papers, Box 1, File 'Satin's Memoir of Real Life at TADP,' 1974-75 with revisions in 1996 and 2006.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Churchill, "When Home Became Away, 188.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 191, and Harding, interview.

¹⁸⁸ Mark Satin, "Bringing Draft Dodgers to Canada in the 1960s: The Reality Behind the Romance," available online. <http://www.radicalmiddle.com/dodgers.htm>. Accessed 28 January 2016.

¹⁸⁹ Churchill, "When Home Became Away," 254.

emphasized independence from American control. Canadian nationalism was conceived as an appropriate partner to criticisms of the war in Vietnam, as explained by TADP leader Bill Spira, “precisely because it was an anti-imperialist movement.”¹⁹⁰

SUPA’s anti-draft work also represented a brief break from the tactics of the American New Leftists in SDS, who did not support immigration to Canada as a form of war resistance, favouring imprisonment or going “underground” as alternatives.¹⁹¹ One reason for this position was that “by coming to Canada young men were diminishing the ranks of those who opposed the Vietnamese war at home.”¹⁹² For a time, SDS did not publish information on immigrating to Canada. They changed this policy by early 1967 when they passed a resolution to “provide information about emigration” to those considering it as an option.¹⁹³ While this demonstrates some level of co-operation, it also highlights a source of tension between American New Leftists who wanted to keep war resisters in the United States in order to build the movement there, and Canadian New Leftists, who urged American war resisters to join the anti-war movement on Canadian terms after crossing the border.

Aiding deserters was a problematic issue for the TADP. The Canadian immigration policy was technically open to deserters, but in mid-1968 an amendment was made to give border officials full discretion to bar entry to anyone whose military status might make them obligated to remain in their country of origin.¹⁹⁴ As a result, deserters were turned away at the border. The TADP decided to run a sub-program “to handle deserters separately.”¹⁹⁵ In early 1969, however, the sub-program became public in an effort to change the government’s policy.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 162.

¹⁹¹ Mark Satin, “Bringing Draft Dodgers to Canada in the 1960s.”

¹⁹² Jan Schreiber, “Canada’s Haven for Draft Dodgers,” *The Progressive*, January 1968, available online. <http://www.radicalmiddle.com/tadp.htm>. Accessed 28 January 2016.

¹⁹³ Ibid., and “SDS Resolution on Draft Resistance” reprinted in Squires, *Building Sanctuary*, 25.

¹⁹⁴ Squires, *Building Sanctuary*, ix and xx.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 87.

By this time, SUPA was no longer in existence, as it had disbanded in 1967, so the TADP continued its work independently. The TADP's arguments to open the border to deserters were framed within a nationalist discourse. They circulated a flyer titled, *Another Case of Complicity*, which argued that Canada's immigration policy in regards to deserters was "bent to suit the wishes of the US military."¹⁹⁶ Appealing to the left nationalist movement, the flyer continued: "The right of Canada to maintain its own immigration policy without outside interference and pressure must be actively defended by all those who are fighting against the war in Vietnam and all those who oppose the piecemeal sell-out of Canadian sovereignty."¹⁹⁷ This was part of a larger effort by the anti-draft movement to change Canada's policy on deserters. Their national campaign to open the border to deserters resulted in a flood of letters to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration, Allan MacEachen. Public pressure ultimately resulted in a change in policy in May 1969 that allowed for deserters to immigrate to Canada.¹⁹⁸ The anti-draft campaign's use of a nationalist discourse to open the border to deserters demonstrates the continuation of the approach SUPA employed in their earlier anti-war activism.

Canadian nationalism was not solely discussed in relation to the war. In the fall of 1966, activists Wilf Day, Jim Laxer, and Krista Maeots organized the SUPA Seminar in Canadian Nationalism at Queen's. Seminars were held bi-weekly on a number of issues that sought "to relate nationalism to issues of social change," including French-English relations; Canadian-American relations; centralism, regionalism, and continentalism; the role of the university in Canada; the economy; and the history of Canadian political action.¹⁹⁹ The success of the

¹⁹⁶ *Another Case of Complicity*, quoted in Squires, *Building Sanctuary*, 133.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ Churchill, "When Home Became Away," 209.

¹⁹⁹ MUA, SUPA, File 'SUPA Newsletters, Vol III,' Don Roebuck, "Canadian Nationalism Seminars," *SUPA Newsletter*, February 1967.

seminars led to the formation of the Committee for Seminars on Canada in January 1967 to organize similar seminars on other campuses. Later, after SUPA disbanded, some activists involved in these seminars focused their energies on the issue of Canadian nationalism, with James Laxer forming the Waffle in 1969 for Canadian economic independence, and Daniel Drache founding the Canadian Liberation Movement in Toronto in 1970.²⁰⁰

This nationalist perspective informed some criticisms of SUPA. Notably, James Laxer argued that the movement clung too tightly to the strategies of American New Leftists. Viewing the United States as an empire, and Canada as a dependent country, Laxer reasoned that by following the American New Leftist guide of challenging national institutions, Canadian leftists were further preparing the country for American takeover. Furthermore, he argued that Canadian New Leftists should not have identified dispossessed groups as the agents of social change, especially because “no minority group here is analogous to the American blacks in terms of numbers, exploitation, and strategic location in the great urban centres.”²⁰¹ Although Laxer did not write this critique until 1970, it did reflect a broader debate that unfolded in SUPA around the agent of social change. The following section will explore SUPA’s discussions about the agent of social change in 1966 and 1967, and their impact on the movement.

Debates over the Agent of Social Change and the Orientation of the Movement, December 1966-September 1967

Chapter one discussed the features that distinguished SUPA’s New Leftism from the Old Left. Chief among them was the rejection of the working class as the agent of social change. SUPA’s denunciation of the revolutionary potential of the working class was informed by theorists like C. Wright Mills, whose “Letter to the New Left” called upon “the young

²⁰⁰ Drache, interview.

²⁰¹ James Laxer, “The Americanization of the Canadian Student Movement,” in *Close the 49th Parallel: The Americanization of Canada*, Ian Lumsden, ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 280.

intelligentsia” to lead the movement.²⁰² German-American theorist Herbert Marcuse was another major source of influence within SUPA. His 1964 book, *One-Dimensional Man* argued that the working class had been “integrated into contemporary capitalism” and therefore could no longer serve as the vehicle for revolutionary change.²⁰³ Consequently, Marcuse saw revolutionary power in an alliance of “non-integrated forces” which encompassed racial and ethnic minorities, and the young intelligentsia.²⁰⁴ During this time, the civil rights movement was illuminating the possibilities of such an alliance.²⁰⁵ These influences informed SUPA’s organization of the “dispossessed” through community organizing discussed in chapter four.

New understandings of “class” also contributed to New Leftists’ ideas about the agent of social change. The concept of student syndicalism, which was introduced to English-Canadian activists through Quebec, identified students as intellectual workers with a responsibility to work outside the university to advance social change. The category of “class” was further complicated by sociologist John Porter, whose seminal work *The Vertical Mosaic*, published in 1965, challenged the Marxist notion of a unified proletariat. Porter posited that the nature of labour in the post-Marxian industrial world meant that there was no class unity or solidarity.²⁰⁶ He argued instead that Canada’s class structure was stratified by ethnicity. A hierarchically structured society was created by the uneven distribution of power among ethnic groups, with elites sharing a common background in the British “charter group.”²⁰⁷ A class structure that focused on

²⁰² C. Wright Mills, “Letter to the New Left,” *New Left Review*, No. 5 (September-October 1960).

²⁰³ Douglas Kellner, “Radical Politics, Marcuse, and the New Left,” in *The New Left and the 1960s: Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse*, ed. Douglas Kellner (New York: Routledge, 2004), 5.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.* The intellectual influences of Mills and Marcuse are discussed in greater detail in Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 67-70.

²⁰⁵ Douglas Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 364.

²⁰⁶ John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada*, 50th anniversary ed., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 20.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 285-86.

ethnicity and power meant that the industrial working class was not recognized, as it was in Marxist theory, as a revolutionary force.²⁰⁸

The intellectual influences above contributed to SUPA's identification of those outside channels of power as the agents of social change. By 1966, however, it was clear that New Leftists in SUPA were not satisfied with the products of their attempt to build a movement of the dispossessed. As previously discussed, organizing around the war in Vietnam was elevated as a hopeful alternative for movement-building. At the same time, some SUPA people identified a lack of analysis as the movement's central problem. As Jim Best of the Quebec SUPA branch noted in 1966: "we have no adequate intellectual basis for our actions."²⁰⁹ In an effort to remedy this, the Quebec group organized a summer study project focusing on thinkers such as Marx, Mills, and Marcuse. SUPA Federal Chairman Jim Harding further called upon the movement to engage in more rigorous intellectual work in 1966, when he described SUPA as "an ethical movement in search of an analysis."²¹⁰ To build the movement, it was decided that SUPA required an "'analysis' on which a 'strategy' could be based."²¹¹

SUPA's desire for analysis led to the formation of a Manifesto Committee at the group's Waterloo educational conference in December 1966, which was attended by approximately 120 people.²¹² The Manifesto Committee was tasked to produce a document that would define the movement by outlining SUPA's origins, methods, values, analysis, strategy, and tactics.²¹³ Like

²⁰⁸ Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 72.

²⁰⁹ MUA, SUPA, Box 4, File 'Quebec Region SUPA, 1966,' Letter to Jim Harding from Jim Best, 8 July 1966.

²¹⁰ James Harding, "An Ethical Movement In Search of an Analysis," *Our Generation* Vol. 3, No. 4 (May 1966).

²¹¹ MUA, SUPA, Box 12, File 'SUPA Conference Material,' Tony Hyde, with the assistance of Michael Rowan, "The Student Union for Peace Action: An Analysis," undated.

²¹² *Ibid.*, Box 21, File 'SUPA Newsletters, Vol. 3,' Donald McKelvey, untitled, *SUPA Newsletter*, Special Centennial Issue Being...A Symposium of Articles on the Waterloo Conference, undated.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, Box 7, File 'SUPA Manifesto 1967,' "Toward a 'Manifesto' for SUPA: A Rough Table of Contents," undated.

the Vietnam Action Committee, SUPA's Manifesto Committee was entirely male.²¹⁴ This was reflective of the reality that men in SUPA largely dominated meetings and discussions, a pattern that will be discussed in chapter six.

An identification of the "new working class" as the agent for social change was one of the results of SUPA's search for analysis. It was clear at the Waterloo conference that a Marxist orientation was growing within the group. Conference speaker Paul Goodman noted its prevalence, while conference attendee Tim Walsh, who self-identified as an Old Leftist, noted after the conference that SUPA "appeared...to be moving away from anarchism towards Marxism."²¹⁵ Harding reflected on this development in the *SUPA Newsletter*, writing: "Anarchist oriented people have lost the insights of Marxist political economy. I don't believe that radicalism can be relevant without such insights."²¹⁶ Harding, however, did not promote a rigid adherence to Marxist ideology; rather, he encouraged SUPA to "use insights of socialism" in the development of a political analysis.²¹⁷

This approach was evidenced by the SUPA Manifesto Committee, which proposed the radicalization of the "new working class," described as a segment of the working class "defined by their relation to the means of production training[,which] brings them into contact with society's contradictions—inclined towards liberal views but alienated from power."²¹⁸ The concept of the new working class was developed by French theorists and was intimately tied to the New Leftist critique of the type of education that students were receiving at university. New

²¹⁴ The all-male composition of the committee has also been noted in Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 79. It was composed of Jon Bordo, Ted Folkman, Jim Harding, Tony Hyde, James Laxer, Donald McKelvey, and Jim Russell.

²¹⁵ Harding, interview, Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*, 274, and MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File 'SUPA Newsletters, Vol. III,' Tim Walsh, untitled, *SUPA Newsletter*, Special Centennial Issue Being...A Symposium of Articles on the Waterloo Conference, undated.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Jim Harding, untitled, *SUPA Newsletter*, Special Centennial Issue Being...A Symposium of Articles on the Waterloo Conference, undated.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ "SUPA Manifesto," 10 June 1967, as quoted in Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 79-80.

Leftists argued that universities were managed as factories, designed to produce a “new working class” required for the growing white-collar sector.²¹⁹ As SUPA activist Stan Gray put it, the purpose of university education was to create ‘technically qualified and efficiently socialized robots.’²²⁰ Peter Boothroyd further expressed this understanding of the university’s objective, lamenting that the focus was not on education, but ‘training for white collar jobs in the bureaucracies.’²²¹ A New Leftist criticism of the university as a “servant of government and industry,” thus informed SUPA’s experiments with free education in the School for Social Theory, and their identification of the new working class as the agent for social change.²²²

An emphasis on the new working class was paired with a call for radical education. The Waterloo conference emphasized the importance of “radical intellectual work” to the movement.²²³ This work was being carried out by RIPP, which circulated writings produced by SUPA activists and other New Leftists. Donald McKelvey of the RIPP staff wrote an article in preparation for the Waterloo conference in which he stated: “If radical action is not possible, at least radical education is, and it is the quality of this education that should distinguish SUPA activity from other groups.”²²⁴ Not everyone at the Waterloo conference agreed with this assessment. Community organizers from the Nova Scotia Project critiqued the movement’s growing prioritization of intellectual work over community action. In their analysis of the

²¹⁹ Patricia Jasen, “‘In Pursuit of Human Values (or Laugh When you Say That)’: The Student Critique of the Arts Curriculum in the 1960s,” in *Youth, University and Canadian Society: Essays in the Social History of Higher Education*, eds., Paul Axelrod and John G. Reid (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989), 253 and Owram, *Born at the Right Time*, 179.

²²⁰ Gray quoted in Owram, *Born at the Right Time*, 238.

²²¹ Boothroyd, quoted in Owram, *Born at the Right Time*, 237.

²²² Jasen, “‘In Pursuit of Human Values,’” 252. For more on the connection between students and the new working class, see Wini Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left, 1962-1968: The Great Refusal* (London: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 96-122.

²²³ MUA, SUPA, Box 7, File ‘SUPA Worklist, 1966,’ Letter from Jim Harding to “Comrades,” 23 April 1967.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, Box 15, File ‘RIPP Publications—Community Organizing,’ Donald McKelvey, “SUPA Organizing Manual,” (1966), 2.

conference, the organizers stated: “It was the general consensus of the group from the East that the intellectual philosophizing was a cover-up for not getting down to the nitty gritty and making a commitment to do something.” Their goal at the conference was to transform SUPA, as they viewed it, “from an intellectual armchair (sic) philosopher’s ass, to an activist body of people.”²²⁵

Their second concern dealt with the identification of white middle-class university students as an exploited group. In a *SUPA Newsletter*, organizers from Nova Scotia summarized their opposition to this view of the student, asserting: “It is easy to talk about the exploited student that is attending university on daddy’s bread until some black kid from the slums tells you that he hates whites, and knows damn well that he hasn’t got a hope in hell of becoming an exploited student because he has quit long ago.”²²⁶ This criticism indicates a disagreement with the Manifesto Committee’s focus on the new working class as the agent of social change. The Nova Scotia Project’s confrontations with the realities of the communities in which they were working informed their view that the movement should prioritize the organization of racialized groups over the organization of educated white students and white-collar workers. This opinion was further shaped by developments in the American movement for black civil rights. As explained in chapter three, black separatism was gaining ground in SNCC in 1966, leading to the expulsion of whites from the group in 1967. Jones was closely connected with SNCC while working on the Nova Scotia Project. He recalled: “I was still travelling quite a bit on behalf of SNCC...I would go away and I would hear about something and I would come back...and we’d discuss it.”²²⁷ Developments in SNCC influenced Jones’ consciousness, leading him to conclude

²²⁵ Ibid., Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletters, Vol. 3,’ Nova Scotia Contingent, untitled, *SUPA Newsletter*, Special Centennial Issue Being...A Symposium of Articles on the Waterloo Conference, undated.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Jones and Walker, *Burnley “Rocky” Jones Revolutionary*, 79.

that “Black people should be in control of their own affairs,” and that the oppression that they needed to confront was race-based, rather than class-based.²²⁸ This awareness was at the root of the Nova Scotia Project’s shift away from SUPA, according to Jones:

On the one hand, I became estranged and cut off from the Toronto peacenik-left-wing philosophy that was growing out of the peace and community-organizing movements from central Canada, and I begin to move more towards the nationalist philosophy because it only made sense. I could see with my own two eyes and by the experience I was living and the experience of the people who lived in the community, that they were being oppressed because of race, and there was a common oppression because of race, and the common solution also had to be racial. My evolution away from SUPA was part of a shift in consciousness about race relations and social justice, about power and democracy. It was sort of a conceptual revolution. Maybe this transition happened to me first, but soon it was happening to others in our Project and in the community more generally.²²⁹

While SUPA focussed on a class-based definition of oppression, the Nova Scotia Project began to articulate that “race is the paramount reason why people are oppressed.”²³⁰ It was within this context that the Nova Scotia Project raised their concerns at the Waterloo conference.

Nova Scotia organizers also spoke of the challenge of participating in SUPA meetings steeped in jargon. To express this point, they decided not to participate in the majority of the discussions at the conference. They explained that this was an attempt on their part to encourage those at the conference to confront a “real problem” facing the movement: “the fact that those who do not understand a system or feel powerless to change it do not participate in it to any great degree.”²³¹ Organizers from Nova Scotia hoped that this lesson, which had been gained through their own experience in the field, could also be applied to the internal workings of the movement. On the Friday evening of the Waterloo conference, the group from Nova Scotia decided to leave the SUPA meeting that was in progress to emphasize this point further. They formed their own

²²⁸ Ibid., 102.

²²⁹ Ibid., 101.

²³⁰ Ibid., 103.

²³¹ MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletters, Vol. 3,’ Nova Scotia Contingent, untitled, *SUPA Newsletter*, Special Centennial Issue Being...A Symposium of Articles on the Waterloo Conference, undated.

circle to discuss their feelings of exclusion and possible solutions. The results were described by Don McKelvey in the *SUPA Newsletter*:

Gradually the circle expanded, as most of the people in the room felt able to articulate their own feelings of malaise. This group decided to use every opportunity the next day to change the situation...An outburst by one of the Halifax people, just as the Saturday morning plenary was about to start, precipitated a turn-around of the conference. Communication was the initial theme, and the rest of the morning plenary and part of the afternoon were taken up with reports from various people about what was happening in their areas... It was also decided that many of the workshop topics were irrelevant and should be dropped.²³²

As a result of these developments, it was decided to initiate a “fit-in” to facilitate communication and understanding among the different pockets of movement activists.

McKelvey described a “fit-in” as “a new thing...in which people from different backgrounds (e.g. community worker, university student, CYC staffer, socialist, anarchist, etc.) would all be thrown together to see if they could communicate.”²³³ While the outcome of this experiment in communication was not recorded, the fact that the community organizers from Nova Scotia successfully initiated a change in the conference plans demonstrates that SUPA could still be influenced from the bottom-up, and that a number of other activists at the conference shared their criticisms of the movement.

Some sense of renewed hope in the possibilities of collective action under SUPA must have emerged out of the conference, as the group decided to stage a Vietnam demonstration together on 2 January 1967 outside the United States Consulate in Toronto. As McKelvey reported: “About the time the demonstration was suggested, the dynamics of the conference were such that the people there were ready to affirm a newly-felt commitment to social action and to

²³² Ibid., Donald McKelvey, untitled, *SUPA Newsletter*, Special Centennial Issue Being...A Symposium of Articles on the Waterloo Conference, undated.

²³³ Ibid.

each other—through this thing called SUPA.”²³⁴ McKelvey called the demonstration “the best demonstration i’ve (sic) been involved in” because of its creative and affirmative approach.²³⁵ The group began the demonstration by marching with posters of brightly coloured flowers, trees, and birds, along with words such as “joy,” “love,” and “peace.” They distributed balloons and paper flowers, played children’s games, and sang songs. After one hour, they marred their posters with words like “hate” and “bomb,” tore them up, and popped each balloon one-by-one in front of the silent crowd that had grown around the Consulate. McKelvey explained that the action “was to be a symbolic representation of the destruction of life and of the joy which life should be, which the US is doing in Vietnam.”²³⁶ The “Demonstration Statement” that was devised at the Waterloo conference reinforced this view with the declaration: “We who are young seek a world in which conditions are such that all people have the freedom to live, build, and create. We see the policy of the United States in Viet Nam as a complete negation of such a world.”²³⁷ The statement continued to emphasize SUPA’s concern with Canada’s complicity in the war, and their demand for Canadian independence from American control. Encouraging Canada to stop behaving “as a satellite of the United States government,” thus remained a central component of their anti-war protest.²³⁸

While McKelvey lauded the demonstration as a success, its message was not effectively received by all. *The Varsity* questioned their approach, reporting that it “left some of the left-wing people who came to join the demonstration shaking their heads in disbelief.”²³⁹ The

²³⁴ MUA, SUPA, Box 21, File ‘SUPA Newsletters, Vol.III,’ Donald McKelvey, “That Vietnam Demonstration,” *SUPA Newsletter*, January 1967, 3.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, “Demonstration Statement,” 3.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ “SUPA plans organizational overhaul,” *Varsity*, 4 January 1967, 11, and Powell, “‘Vietnam: It’s Our War Too,’” 214.

Toronto Daily Star's coverage focused solely on controversy surrounding the participation of two CYC volunteers in the demonstration, David DePoe and Lynn Curtis.²⁴⁰ One article reported on a letter from SUPA to CYC executive director, Alan Clarke, asserting that CYC volunteers should have “the right to participate in anti-Viet Nam war demonstrations.”²⁴¹ As the article explained, this letter was written before Clarke had confirmed at a press conference that “the CYC has no objection to its volunteers taking part in demonstrations like the one in Toronto.”²⁴² While the demonstration did not attract the type of attention SUPA was seeking, it fleetingly unified the various groups that had attended the conference in Waterloo. This unification was brief, as debates over movement-building and the agent of social change would continue to splinter the group until SUPA’s final conference in Goderich in September 1967.

SUPA’s Final Conference: Goderich, September 1967

The Goderich conference was attended by only thirty-five people, a reflection of the weakening of SUPA. While SUPA had always been small in number, with about four hundred activists and a highest conference attendance record of 150, the group had nevertheless been energized by the possibilities of SUPA as a movement.²⁴³ Oral histories and the low turnout to the Goderich conference reveal that this enthusiasm had waned by September 1967. Nancy Hannum did not go to Goderich, explaining simply: “I kind of lost interest in the organization.”²⁴⁴ Jim Harding also did not attend because it was clear to him that SUPA would not survive the conference, recalling: “You know why I didn’t go? Cause it was over. Some of us talked and said we have to go. And I said there won’t be a SUPA council meeting at Goderich.

²⁴⁰ “PM unconcerned over CYC picketing” and “Let the CYC picket, pair ask,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 3 January 1967, 27.

²⁴¹ “Let the CYC picket, pair ask,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 3 January 1967, 27, and MUA, SUPA, Box 7, File ‘SUPA Worklist 1966,’ Jim Mayor, “Worklist #11,” 30 June 1966.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ “SUPA Conference Report Regina 64/65,” *Sanity* 2, no. 7 (February, 1965), 6.

²⁴⁴ Hannum, interview.

There will just be people flailing to try to figure out what happened.”²⁴⁵ SUPA suffered from a lack of unification around questions of movement-building and the agent of social change, and the impact of the CYC on the movement. Myrna Wood, who attended the Goderich conference, remembers that it was “mostly people from Toronto” who showed up.²⁴⁶ The energy of the conference was low according to Harvey Shepherd, who recalls: “People were just tired and wanted to get out.”²⁴⁷

Significant discussions were held at the Goderich conference, despite the reality that SUPA had reached its end. One of the speakers to attend the conference was Stan Gray, a New Leftist from Montreal who had just returned to Canada after studying at Oxford. His views on social change were solidified at Oxford where he “was able to study European Marxism and learn from the British Labour movement.”²⁴⁸ Like others in SUPA, Gray criticized the identification of the dispossessed as the agent of social change. Gray argued that rather than organize those on the fringes of the system, it was necessary to build a movement of those “whose activities are indispensable to the functioning of the system.” This significantly involved “the industrial working class.”²⁴⁹

Myrna Wood recalls the significance of Gray’s attendance at the Goderich conference as “a heavy Marxist.”²⁵⁰ The persistence of the view that the working class had been integrated into the system was evidenced by SUPA activists asking Gray how he could be a Marxist when “the working class has sold out.”²⁵¹ These competing understandings of the working class were

²⁴⁵ Harding, interview.

²⁴⁶ Wood, interview.

²⁴⁷ Shepherd, interview.

²⁴⁸ Stan Gray, “The Greatest Canadian Shit-Disturber,” *Canadian Dimension*, Vol. 38, No. 6 (November-December, 2004), available online. <https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/stan-gray-the-greatest-canadian-shit-disturber>. Accessed 08 February 2016.

²⁴⁹ MUA, SUPA, Box 15a, File ‘RIPP Publications,’ Stan Gray, “Ideology and Revolution,” undated.

²⁵⁰ CWMA, University of Ottawa, Myrna Wood, Interview with John Cleveland, 1984.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

divisive, and have been most comprehensively studied by historian Ian Milligan. As Milligan has argued, SUPA was already weakened by other divisions, but ultimately, “fell apart over the question of the agent of social change.”²⁵² SUPA could not reach a consensus on this question. Former SUPA activist Clayton Ruby recalls that the possibility of consensus was destroyed by some who would not agree to anything other than “a Marxist structure.”²⁵³ Myrna Kostash has also emphasized SUPA’s failure to reach a consensus on whether SUPA should become “a Marxist organization” or radicalize the “new working class,” as proposed by the Manifesto Committee.²⁵⁴ SUPA disbanded at the Goderich conference in September 1967, and set up the twelve-person New Left Committee in its place. The “Statement of the New Left Committee” emphasized the divide that existed in SUPA over the question of Marxist analysis. It was the New Left Committee’s assessment that SUPA had been “greatly hampered by its failure to seriously consider Marxist analyses and socialist perspectives, and by its isolation from and ignorance of working class life and institutions.”²⁵⁵ This debate over Marxist analysis was one expression of the lack of unification in SUPA. As explored throughout this chapter, regional differences, debates over the CYC, and tensions between movement priorities, all contributed to the difficulty of creating a cohesive movement.

Conclusion

At the Saint-Calixte conference of 1965, SUPA decentralized their communications, redefined the functions of the federal office, and reaffirmed their commitment to consensus-building, in an effort to create a more unified and participatory movement. SUPA splintered,

²⁵² Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 80.

²⁵³ Ruby, interview.

²⁵⁴ Kostash, *Long Way from Home*, 25-26.

²⁵⁵ “Statement of the New Left Committee,” in *Student Protest*, ed. Gerald F. McGuigan (Toronto: Methuen Publications, 1968), 107.

however, over questions of leadership, decision-making, and movement-building priorities. While community organizers remained devoted to their local projects and a movement of the dispossessed, SUPA's energies and resources were invested in the Ottawa-Vietnam Action as a movement builder. The action itself generated debates over decision-making and leadership with an organizing committee that reached their decisions by majority vote, rather than consensus. The all-male composition of that committee further reflected the limits of the participatory nature of the action and movement.

Left nationalist and Marxist orientations further complicated and divided the movement. SUPA's Ottawa-Vietnam Action, anti-draft programme, and seminar series on Canadian nationalism all demanded Canadian independence from American control. For some activists, this led to a critique of SUPA's approaches to social change, which they argued, were adopted from the United States. They viewed organized labour and political parties, rather than community organizing, as more suitable avenues for social change in the Canadian context. An engagement with Marxist analysis deepened debates over the agent of social change, and shattered the possibility of consensus.

Conflicting orientations were further revealed through debates over the CYC. While some joined the group confident that it could be used to advance the movement, others remained cynical that a government-sponsored body could work for radical social change. Some SUPA activists turned to the CYC for financial assistance, while others called on SUPA to recommit itself to community organizing as a strategy to prevent the co-option of the movement. At the same time, key SUPA activists devoted their energies to theory and analysis, arguing that radical intellectual work would provide the necessary basis for a movement strategy. A common vision of the movement, however, was never developed, and SUPA disbanded in 1967.

This chapter has sought to illuminate the various debates over leadership, decision-making and movement-building strategies that divided SUPA. As will be seen in the next chapter, gender was a significant element of these debates. The masculinization of the concept of leadership, and women's exclusion from some key moments of decision-making and movement-building, contributed to divisions in the movement, and the development of a feminist consciousness among SUPA activists. Tensions in the movement were further complicated by sexual politics, and the demand issued by some SUPA women for New Leftists to accept gender equality as a necessary component for revolutionary change.

CHAPTER SIX

“WE HAVE THE BACKGROUND OF EXPERIENCE TO DO THIS”:

Raising Women’s Issues in SUPA

SUPA identified a number of actors and strategies to bring about revolutionary change, including community organizing of the dispossessed, student-led anti-war campaigns, and the radicalization of the new working class. These approaches sought to address racial and economic inequality, and enhance democratic decision-making and self-determination. Gender inequality, however, was not included in SUPA’s analysis of the structural social problems that needed to be addressed through movement activity. Gender issues were not raised until women in SUPA voiced their own concerns about their position in the movement, after recognizing their seemingly personal problems as expressions of a deeper social syndrome.

Women in SUPA came to discover that their individual problems were actually shared concerns among New Leftist women. This was gradually realized through observation, conversation, and communication with New Leftist women across the border. This chapter will explore how women in SUPA began to notice patterns in the movement that linked their personal experiences to a wider problem of gender inequality. These patterns included the marginalization of women’s voices at SUPA meetings; the view that female movement leaders were not “real women”; and a connection between women’s sexual relationships and position within the movement.¹ A collective consciousness of their concerns led women in SUPA to name gender inequality as a structural social issue that required the attention of New Leftists.

An awareness of gender inequality as a product of social and cultural views and practices was developed in various sites of movement activity. Chapter three discussed the influence of

¹ Bernstein, et al., “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...,” 38.

black women leaders in the civil rights movement on SUPA women's understanding of gender as a cultural construct, while chapter four explored how the lives of working-class women in the Kingston Community Project illuminated the structural issues that informed the intertwined class and gender-based injustices that they faced. New Leftist movement culture further contributed to this consciousness of gender inequality. The first half of this chapter will explore the various effects of New Leftist culture on women in the movement through a study of leadership and sexual relationships. These two themes have been selected for their centrality to the development of a consciousness of gender inequality among New Leftists. The second half will explore the conversations, meetings, and activist networks that together illuminated the collective nature of women's concerns in the New Left, and the connection between the personal and political. Further, two papers written by women in SUPA will be studied as examples of how they articulated a feminist consciousness, and raised the issue of gender inequality to their fellow New Leftists.

Archival records and oral histories reveal that women in SUPA did not all experience the movement in the same way. For this reason, it is problematic to talk of them as a homogenous group. Women occupied a number of roles in the movement, from formal leadership positions to secretarial work. Some remember SUPA as participatory and receptive to their ideas, while others emphasize that they were peripheral to discussions and debates precisely because of their sex. Even an individual woman's experience in SUPA was multifaceted, and cannot be accurately described as either wholly empowering or marginalizing. For many, a confidence in their qualification as activists, cultivated through an engagement with meaningful work, existed alongside a sense of marginalization within the movement. This was emphasized by Judy Bernstein, Peggy Morton, Linda Seese, and Myrna Wood who, when asserting their intention to

organize around women's issues in 1967, declared: "We have the background of experience to do this. We have the frustration of being excluded to force us to do this."² This chapter will argue that the contradictory themes of empowerment and marginalization created a tension in which women in SUPA worked and lived. It was from this position that they evaluated their place in the movement and came to define their seemingly personal problems as collective issues that could be addressed through social movement activity.

A Gender Analysis of Leadership in SUPA

Leadership was a contentious issue in SUPA, as discussed in chapter five. A gender analysis of leadership offers further insight into the power dynamics of the movement. This section will explore how the masculinization of the concept of leadership affected women in SUPA. This understanding informed the all-male composition of some of the core SUPA bodies, including the Federal Council and Manifesto Committee, but did not necessarily result in a total exclusion of women from leadership roles. As the authors of "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..." observed, some women in SUPA were regarded as leaders, but were consequently not regarded as "real women."³ This situation led to a reflection on the social construction of gender-specific traits.

The connection between masculinity and leadership was recognized in the sixties by activists in the movement. Peter Warrian, a SUPA activist who became the president of the Canadian Union of Students (CUS) in 1968, wrote a paper in the spring of 1967 titled, "Women in New Left Politics." Although Warrian was a male leader of the student movement, he did not view himself as part of the leadership of SUPA, and shared the criticisms that women in the group were raising about the consistent dominance of certain voices in meetings. Warrian

² Ibid., 39.

³ Ibid., 38.

explained in our interview: “I’m not really in the senior leadership of SUPA. I’m a younger male, having just come in somewhat from the outside, so...there are some younger men that are also feeling the same exclusion...well I’m not going to say that it was the same.”⁴ While Warrian admittedly experienced a different sense of exclusion from that of SUPA women, the position he occupied contributed to his understanding of the concerns raised by New Leftist women as an important part of a broader critique of leadership in the movement.

Warrian began the 1967 paper by examining the attributes of a New Leftist leader, naming assertiveness and articulateness as central traits, which seemed to be understood as “more characteristic of the males.”⁵ Warrian explained that this was evidenced at meetings dominated by male “personalities” who gave “the fullest and/or most appealing articulation to the group of the problem and its possible solution.”⁶ In this view, consensus was not reached through participatory discussion; rather, according to Warrian’s observations of the time, “new people and the females are often peripheral to the discussion and decision-making.”⁷

Warrian suggested two approaches to deal with this exclusionary effect of a “masculine” conceptualization of leadership. First, he proposed that New Leftists “move to redefine leadership roles and accepted leadership traits,” and added that “new definitions may accompany or precede new conditions.” Specifically, Warrian theorized that “restructuring in a more rational direction...would allow more easy access of women into leadership positions.”⁸ This assessment followed from his observations of the movement’s tendency to gravitate toward charismatic male leaders, able to sway decisions based on emotion rather than “strategic rationales.”⁹ Second,

⁴ Warrian, interview.

⁵ LAC, Peter Warrian Fonds, Vol. 4, File ‘Women’s Liberation Working Papers, Study Papers,’ Peter Warrian, “Women in New Leftist Politics,” Spring 1967.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

Warrian recommended that New Leftists reconsider “conceptions of the female role and place in society,” and create conditions that would offer women more opportunity to participate in movement work. Warrian stated: “The main thrust here may be liberating women from the home,” a process that would involve a change in the roles occupied by men and women alike in the family. He added that this change must be accompanied by social reforms in the areas of abortion, divorce, employment practices, and child care.¹⁰ Warrian noted that American New Leftists were already beginning to organize around these issues, citing a statement adopted by the SDS National Convention in June 1967 for programs “which will free women from their traditional roles in order that we may participate with all our resources and energies in creative and meaningful activity.”¹¹

In 1967, the authors of “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...,” also alluded to the masculinization of leadership in SUPA, stating: “When a woman attempted to gain a leadership position, they were labeled ‘castrating females.’”¹² SUPA activist Heather Dean articulated a similar view in a 1966 article which focused on gender relations in wider society, rather than in the movement. Observing the social perceptions of women who thrived outside of traditional female spheres of activity, Dean explained: “Those women who succeed in the white man’s world are no true women: they are lesbians, go the rumours, or frigid—desexed and unlovely creatures more to be pitied than emulated.”¹³

Gender identity was intimately bound up with understandings of the behaviours and attributes of a leader. Gender theorist M. Bahati Kuumba has observed this linkage in the

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Bernstein, et al., “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...,” 38.

¹³ MUA, SUPA, Box 15a, File ‘RIPP Publications, Theory,’ Heather Dean, “The Sexual Caste System: On Passing Two Whores and a Nun,” 1966.

“dichotomistic logic” used to categorize participants in social movements as either leaders or followers.¹⁴ Kuumba asserts that the “leaders” of social movements are typically understood as those with titled positions, responsible for the growth of the movement, while “followers” are the participants who merely carry out the leaders’ vision. She argues that within “gender integrated movements, patriarchal assumptions are often superimposed on this hierarchal conception of leadership.”¹⁵ The authors of “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” identified this tendency in SUPA when they wrote that in the movement, “we created father figures or allowed them to be created.”¹⁶

These insights on the relationship between gender identity and leadership have been both reinforced and complicated by activist reflections gathered through oral histories. Toughness, associated with conventional understandings of masculinity, was raised in interviews as a central leadership trait. As Myrna Wood observed: “That was a problem for all the movements: who’s the toughest.”¹⁷ For Cathleen Kneen, this characteristic of leadership prevented her from viewing herself as a leader in SUPA, explaining: “You had to be male-like; you had to be tough in order to be a leader in the early days. It changed, but that’s where it was. I wasn’t a leader because I wasn’t tough like that... I would say that there was a definition of leadership in SUPA which was very masculine, if not male.”¹⁸

The “masculine” definition of leadership in SUPA is complicated by the reality that some women acted as recognized leaders. After stating that in SUPA “the leaders were all men,” Joan Kuyek added that “Liora would be the exception to that, but she fought for it.”¹⁹ Liora Proctor,

¹⁴ Kuumba, *Gender and Social Movements*, 79.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹⁶ Bernstein, et al., “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...,” 39.

¹⁷ Wood, interview.

¹⁸ Kneen, interview.

¹⁹ Kuyek, interview.

introduced in chapters one and two, worked in the CUCND and SUPA Toronto offices. She served on the CUCND's national council, led the North Bay Project, played a central role in the transition to SUPA, and worked as a researcher for the Student Neestow Partnership Project. When asked about leadership in SUPA, Clayton Ruby asserted that "Liora Proctor was one of the top leaders," while Cathleen Kneen, who worked with Proctor in the Toronto SUPA office, recalled: "Liora was one who could hold her own with the guys."²⁰ Jim Harding further reflected: "In the national meetings, I think it's fair to say that Liora was probably the most influential female heavy. I'm going to use that term. She was heavy. She not only had very strong positions, she could express them, and could defend them."²¹ Looking back, Kuyek remembers Proctor's style in discussions and meetings as "intimidating" and "aggressive," two attributes that fit Warrion's definition of the New Leftist leader.²² While this style aligned with ideas of leadership, it did not equate with expectations of female behaviour. This was evidenced by a 1964 letter sent to Proctor by an activist in Saskatoon, who identified himself only by his first name. He wrote: "I suppose in a society like ours any female attempting to repudiate the sex-differentiation of roles tends to become quite bitter, severe and intransigent."²³ While Proctor's experience demonstrates that women were not totally excluded from leadership in SUPA, it nonetheless emphasizes a connection between understandings of leadership and gender identity in the movement.

The behaviours that defined a leader in SUPA form one component of the analysis of how the concept was understood within the group. A second question involves the forms of work

²⁰ Ruby, interview, and Kneen, interview.

²¹ Harding, interview.

²² Kuyek, interview.

²³ MUA, SUPA, Box 2, File, 'Toronto Office Correspondence, October-December 1964,' Letter from John (last name not provided) of CUCND Saskatoon to Liora Proctor, 15 December 1964.

that were considered to be leadership roles. Archival documents and oral histories identify two central functions of the SUPA leader. The first is the leader as a spokesperson for the movement, and the second is the leader as a person who synthesizes various perspectives at meetings and conferences in order to guide the group toward an analysis and strategy. As Warrian described in 1967: “The role of the leader entails articulating an analysis, inspiring and convincing other workers (organizers) and laying out strategy.”²⁴ This leadership function was reinforced by Clayton Ruby, who described SUPA leaders as “masters at synthesizing; taking people’s disparate views and saying, well here’s how we can combine these so that everybody can work together.”²⁵

The roles of spokesperson and synthesizer were carried out by charismatic leaders. Writing about the student movement in 1968, Gerald F. McGuigan described the role of the New Leftist charismatic leader as “the one who can gain emotional consensus, bind it with insight and lead it to action.”²⁶ As a New Leftist movement entrenched in the ideal of participatory democracy, SUPA adopted strategies such as consensus-building and a regional structure in an attempt to avoid dependence on certain personalities. Writing in 1965, Dimitri Roussopoulos maintained: “Just as the New Left stresses grass roots so too does it de-emphasize charismatic personalities. The movement is not built around ‘leaders.’”²⁷ Nevertheless, charismatic leaders emerged, as evidenced by activist reflections from the period. Writing in 1967, Warrian stated: “The style of leadership that arises in the New Left is very much a charismatic style of leadership, in Max Weber’s typology.”²⁸ In this form of leadership, authority is derived through

²⁴ Warrian, “Women in New Left Politics.”

²⁵ Ruby, interview.

²⁶ Gerald F. McGuigan, “In Search of Issues,” in *Student Protest*, ed. Gerald F. McGuigan (Toronto: Methuen Publications, 1968), 26.

²⁷ Dimitrios Roussopoulos, “The American New Left,” *Sanity*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (November, 1965), 6.

²⁸ Warrian, “Women in New Left Politics.”

an individual's personal traits, and as noted in the discussion above, these personal traits were associated with masculinity.²⁹ Jim Harding recalls: "Different people had charisma based on their family background, their politicization, their self-confidence. Most of them were men, for sure, and some of them were women."³⁰

The dominance of charismatic leadership was a barrier to participatory decision-making. It was not only women who experienced a sense of exclusion to the decision-making practices of the movement, nor was it all women. Some men also felt that their voices were not heard or understood by the leaders of the movement. As discussed in chapter four, Robertson Wood thought that Jim Harding had misrepresented the perspectives of many of the community organizers in the movement in his summary of the discussions that unfolded at the Saskatoon conference of 1965. Furthermore, chapter five studied how inaccessible language at the Waterloo educational conference contributed to a sense of marginalization among activists from Nova Scotia, who removed themselves from the meeting in protest. These examples illuminate that marginalization within discussions was not solely a problem of gender relations; rather, it was a broader issue that is brought into clearer focus when studying the gender dynamics of the movement.

Marginalization within discussions and decision-making practices was also not representative of the experiences of all women in SUPA. Nancy Hannum, who spent most of her time working in the Toronto SUPA office, explained: "I felt a very egalitarian sense amongst the people in the office, and I had a lot of respect for the others, and knew that in some ways they knew a lot more than I did about what we were doing; but...I was every bit as much part of the

²⁹ Robnett, *How Long? How Long?*, 29.

³⁰ Harding, interview.

conversation, the dialogue, and so on.”³¹ Hannum’s recollection that others “knew a lot more” than her, emanated not from her gender identity, but from the fact that she was relatively new to both Canada and the movement. She elaborated: “I was still a bit secondary because I was new. I was American, I was learning, but I didn’t see that as second-class.”³²

Cathleen Kneen’s memories also illuminate a participatory culture in SUPA meetings. She recalled men as the visible leaders, but women as full participants in discussions, stating: “The men were the spokespeople...They were out there in front; but when we were debating the issues, we all had a voice.”³³ Hannum and Kneen’s reflections emphasize an inclusive environment for discussion and debate, and constitute one type of experience within SUPA. Another perspective can be gained through Peggy Morton, who asserted: “Surely we all had a voice; but whose voice really counted, I think, was another question.”³⁴ Morton elaborated on how she came to observe a pattern of women’s voices being ignored at SUPA meetings:

You know I have this recollection. One day I’m sitting in a meeting and it hits me that when women make a proposal or say something, it’s just ignored; but first I think, okay, I’m not very good at presenting my ideas because I said that an hour ago and nobody paid any attention, and an hour later somebody says it, and now it’s being discussed, so I’m not very good at presenting my ideas, right, because nobody paid any attention when I said that; and then all of a sudden I said, no it’s not just me, it’s when any woman speaks they’re kind of disregarded. The only people who are regarded here are the leaders; they’re all men.³⁵

A similar reflection on the reception of women’s ideas at SUPA meetings is contained in the archival records. In 1967, one anonymous SUPA activist, quoted in Warrian’s paper on women in the New Left, described their observations of SUPA meetings as follows:

...it seems to me fairly significant that SUPA as a whole never really examined the question of egalitarianism, of the idea of participatory democracy with the fact that a fairly

³¹ Hannum, interview.

³² Ibid.

³³ Kneen, interview.

³⁴ Morton, interview.

³⁵ Ibid.

large proportion of the group was not participating ever. That is, that in decision-making processes, we began to discover ... as soon as a girl opened her mouth in a meeting, everybody shut off.³⁶

This situation was likely connected to the fact that meetings were a site of struggle for status in the movement. SUPA activist John Conway, who served on the Federal Council, recalled:

You gained your high status by your interventions in seminars and meetings, by your analysis, by your debate, by your discussions, and by your leadership in actually doing organizational work. That's where the credibility lay...People who got elected to council tended to be more articulate and active and competent.³⁷

The link between intellectual prowess and status was also noted by McGuigan in 1968, who described the struggle to gain recognition as a leader as “an intellectual combat situation.”³⁸

Within this context, a meeting that in theory was supposed to centre on participatory democracy and consensus-building, could become “dominated by certain voices,” as Hannum recalls.³⁹ This memory is reinforced by John Cleveland, who described SUPA as “male-dominated” and “hyper-intellectual,” explaining that “as long as it was a matter of talk and writing and so on, and meetings, the men dominated.”⁴⁰ Jim Harding further reflected that meetings were a site of “a lot of new left machoism.”⁴¹ The effect of this pattern at meetings was described by the authors of “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” as follows: “We never gained the principles of participatory democracy. A few people were allowed to lead. Many people were excluded from leadership. The largest excluded group was women. SUPA, in respect to women, totally accepted the mores of the dominant society.”⁴² This sense of marginalization led the authors to define women solely as the “followers and maintainers” of the movement.⁴³ This issue was raised in oral histories.

³⁶ Warrian, “Women in New Left Politics.”

³⁷ Conway, interview.

³⁸ McGuigan, “In Search of Issues,” 26.

³⁹ Hannum, interview.

⁴⁰ Cleveland, interview.

⁴¹ Harding, interview.

⁴² Bernstein, et al., “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...,” 38.

⁴³ Ibid.

John Cleveland observed how this split was reinforced at SUPA's educational conference in Waterloo, explaining: "I was struck when I went to Waterloo, how men would claim the ownership, the leadership of all these different things. Most of the women didn't, even though the women did a whole lot and I knew that, you know."⁴⁴ Joan Kuyek identified men as the leaders, the ones with more visible roles making speeches, and women as "the secretaries and mothers and organizers."⁴⁵ She explained the typical role women played at major meetings and events: "So at an event they'd be running a Gestetner, phoning people and pulling together the food and the toilets and whatever else had to happen, and the guys would make the speeches."⁴⁶ This dichotomy between the formal leadership roles occupied by men, and the organizational tasks performed by women, represented a general pattern in SUPA; however, this dichotomy does not accurately communicate the complexity of New Leftist women's experiences and identities as activists, which were informed by an engagement in meaningful work in various sites of the movement, including peace, civil rights, and community organizing, as discussed in chapters two through four.

Analyzing leadership in SUPA through the roles associated with charismatic leadership leads to a study centred only on the form of leadership that was most highly regarded and visible in the movement. This reproduces the "dichotomistic logic" of male leaders and female followers discussed by Kuumba. A more comprehensive study of how SUPA operated reveals a layer of leadership functions that were equally important to the movement as the roles of charismatic leaders, even though they were not accorded the same visibility or status. Community organizing, education, and communication were all critical sites of movement activity that

⁴⁴ Cleveland, interview.

⁴⁵ Kuyek, interview.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

required strong leadership, and were more accessible to women than the roles of spokesperson and synthesizer. Integrating them into a study of New Leftist leadership is important because it brings women's contributions to the movement into clearer focus, while also providing a more complete understanding of how SUPA operated as a decentralized movement. Sociological studies of the American movement for black civil rights provide important theoretical considerations for an analysis of leadership and gender, and the possibilities of an expanded definition of leadership beyond the formal positions of spokesperson and synthesizer. The following section will provide an overview of this scholarship, and will discuss its application to a study of SUPA.

Gender and Leadership in SUPA: Theoretical Considerations from Scholarship on the American Movement for Black Civil Rights

As a decentralized movement rooted in the ideal of participatory democracy, SNCC had a similar approach to leadership as SUPA, and therefore serves as a useful point of comparison. In 1990, historian Charles Payne concluded that there was a dichotomy between the roles occupied by men and women in SNCC's civil rights campaigns during the early 1960s in Mississippi. Payne's work revealed that black women typically occupied behind-the-scenes roles, whereas black men were more often spokespeople with a visible public position. This led to his contention that "men led, but women organized" in the civil rights movement.⁴⁷ One response to Payne's argument came from sociologist Bernice McNair Barnett. Through questionnaires, she asked former civil rights activists to rank and identify leadership roles, and name those individuals whom they viewed as leaders of the movement. Barnett's research resulted in a list of thirteen ranked leadership roles which were performed by both men and women. The most

⁴⁷ Charles Payne, "Men Led, but Women Organized: Movement Participation of Women in the Mississippi Delta" in *Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Torchbearers and Trailblazers, 1941-1965*, ed. Vicki L. Crawford et al. (Brooklyn, New York: Carlson Publishing, 1990), 1.

valued leadership function of “articulating and expressing concerns of followers,” was typically performed by male ministers, and public representatives of civil rights movement organizations; however, other roles that were identified as leadership functions, such as “organize/coordinate action,” and “teach/educate/train followers and leaders,” were important sites of women’s activity.⁴⁸ Using these findings, Barnett challenged Payne’s assertion that “men led, but women organized.” As she stated: “We need to rethink the traditional notion of leadership, for organizing is one important leadership role, as the data here have illustrated.”⁴⁹

Barnett’s argument that “leadership is multi-dimensional” can be applied to a study of how leadership in SUPA operated beyond the one-dimensional definition of the charismatic leader.⁵⁰ A reflection from Cathleen Kneen provides an entry point into this discussion. At a SUPA reunion in the late 1980s, Kneen learned that others in the movement had perceived her as a leader. She explained: “One of the things I was very surprised about was to see that I was regarded as a leader, because I hadn’t understood myself as a leader precisely because I was the one running the Gestetner; I was the typist and the photocopier.”⁵¹ As Kneen emphasized, her work in SUPA did not conform to conventional understandings of leadership roles. Kneen did not act as a spokesperson or synthesizer for the group; rather, she took the minutes at SUPA meetings, offered her opinions in discussions, liaised with other activist groups, and was central to maintaining communications within the movement. While Kneen’s roles did not make her a charismatic leader, her work was nevertheless integral to the health of the movement.

⁴⁸ Bernice McNair Barnett, “Invisible Southern Black Women Leaders in the Civil Rights Movement: The Triple Constraints of Gender, Race, and Class,” *Gender and Society* 7, no. 2 (June, 1993): 172-3 and 167.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 176.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁵¹ Kneen, interview.

Sociologist Belinda Robnett's conceptualization of bridge leadership further advances a multi-dimensional understanding of leadership, which can be applied to a study of Kneen's experience. Robnett expanded on Barnett's study in her 1997 book, *How Long? How Long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights*. Robnett explains that in the civil rights movement, men had access to formal leadership positions, defined as "title positions within a primary movement organization—that is, one that is recognized nationally."⁵² This tier of leadership was largely inaccessible to black women. Instead, black women were bridge leaders, defined as those who "operate through one-on-one, community-based interaction."⁵³ This concept has been used by historians studying women in the movement. One example is Vicki Crawford's analysis of women's roles in the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. Crawford explains how Robnett's concept of bridge leadership allows for a richer understanding of women's contributions to the movement, stating: "When the emphasis takes into account the intermediate layer of leadership, women's participation comes into fuller view."⁵⁴ This work is important, not only for inserting black women's participation into the narratives of civil rights activism, but also for building a more holistic understanding of how the movement operated. This interpretation acknowledges the necessity of both formal leaders, who attracted people to the movement through rousing speeches, and focused their energies on strategies for national movement-building, and bridge leaders, who mobilized activists through a personal approach in community interactions, and communication networks. As Robnett argues: "Both types of leadership are required, and neither the bridge leadership nor the formal leadership is more

⁵² Robnett, *How Long? How Long?*, 18.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁵⁴ Vicki Crawford, "African American Women in the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party" in *Sisters in the Struggle: African-American Women in the Civil Rights Movement*, eds. Bettye Collier-Thomas and V.P. Franklin (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 135.

important than the other. Rather, the two operated in a dialectical relationship marked by symbiosis and conflict.”⁵⁵ A decentralized social movement, such as SNCC or SUPA, involves both forms of leadership, and a gendered study of movement activity brings the bridging leadership tier into clearer view.

Bridge Leadership in SUPA

Bridge leadership was necessary in SUPA as a movement that was comprised of several localized projects that were not directly under the control of the charismatic leaders of the group. It was a layer of leadership that included the efforts of both men and women, and was more accessible to women than the roles of spokesperson and synthesizer. The New Leftist vision of building a movement of the dispossessed, discussed in chapter four, depended on bridge leadership. Bridge leaders made contacts within a community in order to identify issues, grassroots leaders, and funding sources. For example, bridge leaders Joan Kuyek and Myrna Wood connected two working-class youth, Dennis Crossfield and Les Hutchison, to the Kingston Community Project. Crossfield and Hutchison took on leading roles in the establishment of youth community centres and coffee houses where young people met and formed a sense of community.⁵⁶ They ran these centres themselves, and consequently developed “a coherence and momentum” as a group.⁵⁷ The Kingston project’s success around youth organization emanated not from the formal leadership of Kuyek and Wood, but from their skills as bridge leaders who drew individuals into the movement through one-on-one interactions, and facilitated their development as grassroots leaders.

⁵⁵ Robnett, *How Long? How Long?*, 21.

⁵⁶ Kuyek, interview.

⁵⁷ Harris, *Democracy in Kingston*, 87.

Linking activist networks was another important area of bridge leadership in SUPA. Cathleen Kneen and her husband, Brewster Kneen, were both engaged in this strategy of movement building. With close connections to the Christian Left, they led a workshop at SUPA's Saint-Calixte conference, encouraging greater Christian involvement in SUPA's program.⁵⁸ As historian Bruce Douville has noted, the conference attracted young people from Christian groups, such as the Student Christian Movement (SCM) and Kairos, interested in SUPA's community organizing projects. The impact of the seminar conducted by the Kneens can be observed through the responses of these activists. One SCM activist, George Hartwell, quit school to join SUPA full-time, while John Foster of Kairos wrote a paper on SUPA to circulate around churches.⁵⁹ By linking activists in other networks to SUPA through a small-scale workshop, the Kneens acted as bridge leaders to facilitate the growth of the movement.

Bridge leadership was an important component of SUPA women's experiences, but cannot fully or accurately represent all of their work. Running the Gestetner, for example, is not the type of work classified under bridge leadership. The Gestetner was a machine used to crank out copies of newsletters, publications, letters, or other written communications in the movement. A document would be typed onto a waxed stencil and passed through the Gestetner, which would press the ink through the stencil and onto the paper. As Nancy Hannum explained:

You cranked around through the ink for every copy. So if you wanted to make a hundred copies, you had to crank it a hundred times... And so, the job of Gestetnering was a huge job because that's how we copied everything. And I was the main person who did that...but we all did it because it was a nightmare of a job and one person couldn't stand there all day and do that.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Bruce Michael Douville, "The uncomfortable pew: Christianity, the New Left, and the hip counterculture in Toronto, 1965-1976" (PhD diss., York University, 2011), 190.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 190-191.

⁶⁰ Hannum, interview.

While this work demanded a large amount of her time, Hannum identified it as merely “the worst” component of her work in SUPA, rather than its defining feature. She reflected:

I was learning all the time, I was meeting people, I was going to meetings, you know. I wasn't sort of just labouring in the office, not connecting to anything else. But in the “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers” article, there's a reference to the women Gestetnering in the office. I'm sure that was me they're referring to. I mean, I remember at the time being sort of hurt by that... I mean I think it was generally known that I did a lot of Gestetnering, so then it kind of came back on me, I felt in that article, somehow that I was oppressed by that, and I was. (laughs) But I didn't feel...yeah it was an oppressive technology in a way, but I didn't feel like I was kind of second-class.⁶¹

This reflection serves as an important reminder of the diversity of roles and interactions that defined a woman's experience in the movement. Just as women's roles in SUPA cannot exclusively be understood through the lens of bridge leadership, nor can they be studied merely through the lens of office work, even if it occupied a great deal of their time.

When talking about the diversity of women's roles and experiences, it is also necessary to note that some of the work women performed in SUPA should be understood as formal leadership, rather than bridge leadership. Liora Proctor fit this description, as previously discussed. Another example was Diane Burrows, who was central to the organization of the Friends of SNCC and SUPA demonstration in support of civil rights marchers in Selma, Alabama, as discussed in chapter three. Burrows acted as a spokesperson for the group. She delivered speeches, inspired donations, and was quoted in newspaper reports.⁶² Thus, her involvement in the movement was centrally as a formal leader, rather than a bridge leader.

Proctor and Burrows were two exceptions within a more general pattern of women's experiences in SUPA. Bridge leadership provided space in the movement for many women to engage in meaningful work and develop as activists. At the same time, many performed

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² King's College, The Canadianization Movement Papers, “Ottawa Snick March,” 14 March 1965, and Jean Sharp, “Worked On Civil Rights,” *The Montreal Gazette*, 15 December 1964, 19.

mundane office tasks, or felt excluded in discussions and decision-making practices. Women's experiences in SUPA were a mix of support work and leadership; subordination and empowerment. It is from these contradictory positions that they studied their place in the movement, and recognized the need to address gender inequality. As the following section will discuss, the process of identifying their experiences as collective issues was further propelled by observations of sexual relationships in the movement, which illuminated connections between the personal and political.

Sexual Relationships in SUPA

SUPA women's arguments about the subordination of women to men in intimate relationships unfolded against the context of the sexual revolution. The sexual revolution broadly refers to the redefinition of public attitudes surrounding pre-marital sex.⁶³ As discussed in chapter two, prior to the sexual revolution, social values dictated that sex must be reserved for marriage, and that the onus was on the woman to safeguard her virginity. Sexuality was further understood as a private matter, rather than a subject of public discourse. The sexual revolution created more open discussion around sexual behaviour, and replaced the absolute rejection of pre-marital sex with what historian Doug Owrarn calls a "situational ethic."⁶⁴ As American historian Lawrence Aronsen explains, this granted greater flexibility to determine "how, when, and why people engaged in intimate relations."⁶⁵

There is no historiographical agreement on when the sexual revolution began, or the factors that most significantly indicated its arrival. Some emphasize the advent of the birth control pill as its central component, while others focus on social and cultural developments

⁶³ Owrarn, *Born at the Right Time*, 249, and Chalus, "From Friedan to Feminism," 134.

⁶⁴ Owrarn, *Born at the Right Time*, 263.

⁶⁵ Lawrence Aronsen, "The Sodom of the North: Vancouver's Sexual Revolution 1961-1974," *West Coast Line* 42, no. 4 (Winter, 2009): 7.

precipitating a broader change in attitudes, including secularization, rock n' roll, the counter-cultural ethic of the Beatniks, a loosening of censorship regulations, and the growth of the commodification of sex with *Playboy*.⁶⁶ Biologist Joseph Kinsey's works on male and female sexual behaviour, published in 1948 and 1953 respectively, have also been identified as early signals of the breakdown of the private barriers of sexuality, while student groups on university campuses in the sixties further ushered in a public discussion of sexual relationships and contraception.⁶⁷ These interweaving strands of the sexual revolution permeated society and resulted in new attitudes about pre-marital sex. Some scholars interpret this social and cultural transformation as the product of "multiple sexual revolutions" in mass culture, the counter-culture, and academic and intellectual circles.⁶⁸

These revolutions, however, had their limits. For one, wider approval of pre-marital sex did not translate to gender equality or sexual freedom for women. While some popular books and magazines of the time encouraged women to pursue their own sexual fulfillment, many women still did not experience sexual liberation. Stuart Henderson's interviews with sixties Villagers in Toronto's counter-culture reveal that many felt that "this freedom referred to *male* sexuality."⁶⁹ Similarly, historian Elaine Chalus' gender analysis of the University of Alberta concludes that "the essence of the sexual revolution on campus appears to have been the legitimization of premarital sex, not so that women were less trapped by discriminatory social norms, but so that

⁶⁶ For an emphasis on the impact of the pill, see Christabelle Sethna, "The University of Toronto Health Service, Oral Contraception, and Student Demand for Birth Control, 1960-1970," *Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'éducation* 17, no. 2 (October 2005): 267. For an overview of cultural developments, see Ooram, *Born at the Right Time*, 255-261, and Aronsen, "The Sodom of the North."

⁶⁷ Ooram, *Born at the Right Time*, 257; Beth Bailey, "Sexual Revolution(s)," in *The Sixties: From Memory to History*, ed. David Farber (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 236-37, and Aronsen, "The Sodom of the North," 13.

⁶⁸ Aronsen, "The Sodom of the North," 21, and Bailey, "Sexual Revolution(s)," 235-62.

⁶⁹ Henderson, *Making the Scene*, 158.

men could obtain sex more readily.”⁷⁰ It was within this broader context that the SUPA women who wrote “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” identified a persistence of gender inequality within New Leftist sexual relationships, stating: “We are allowed sexual freedom but are still faced with a loss of respect on the part of many males if we take advantage of that freedom.”⁷¹ This section will explore how the sexual revolution related to SUPA, and influenced the development of a feminist analysis of gender relationships.

While issues of sexual relationships in SUPA are largely unrecorded in the archival documents, oral history interviews emphasized them as central to the gender dynamics of the movement. For one, sexual relationships influenced how a woman was perceived in the movement. As Cathleen Kneen explained: “To be sleeping with certain people was good for your status.”⁷² Clayton Ruby also commented on the connection between a woman’s partner and her position in the movement, stating: “There’s a huge amount of resentment about the traditional way of doing it, which was you started sleeping with somebody who was important, as a woman, and you became more important.”⁷³ An anonymous interview quoted in Myrna Kostash’s 1980 book, *Long Way from Home*, further addressed this issue. Reflecting on the discussions among SUPA women about their position in the movement, the interviewee explained: “We talked about...how our political influence in the group was directly related to how “heavy” the guy was that we were coupled with.”⁷⁴ The authors of “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” highlighted another side of this issue when they asked: “How many times have you heard a man express the sentiment that a woman in the movement is taking a particular position because that is what her

⁷⁰ Chalus, “From Friedan to Feminism,” 134.

⁷¹ Bernstein, et al., “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...,” 39.

⁷² Kneen, interview.

⁷³ Ruby, interview.

⁷⁴ Kostash, *Long Way from Home*, 168.

‘man thinks’?”⁷⁵ Consequently, sexual relationships must be understood as one factor that shaped perceptions of women in the movement. These relationships could lead to both an increase in status, and the assumption that a woman was merely adopting the opinions of her partner.

Looking back, some SUPA activists identified these implications of sexual relationships as central forces behind the emergence of discussions of gender roles in the movement. After explaining how a woman’s partner could boost her position in the movement, Ruby added: “From the very beginning we had been developing women who were actually leaders, but there was still that pattern as well. And people started talking about it and changing it.”⁷⁶ Daniel Drache’s reflections are also consistent with this, stating: “it became a very important thing about women...because that whole issue in the movement was around the time of sexual emancipation.”⁷⁷ Joan Kuyek and Cathleen Kneen reflected together on the impact of sexual relationships on women in SUPA shortly before I interviewed them in November 2015. Kuyek summarized their conversation as follows:

We were talking about the sex issue because frankly there had been so much oppression in the fifties and what ended up happening in the sixties, even pre-pill, was that there was this sense of sexual freedom. Like all of a sudden, it was okay, free love and all that stuff. So lust played a huge role in what was going on in SUPA. Conferences you know, people would be looking around for who they were going to sleep with...It just became something that you really didn’t know how to deal with. But I think a lot of the rebellion from the women came out of that.⁷⁸

Against the backdrop of the sexual revolution, intimate relationships became a major part of movement life and contributed to a discovery of the link between the personal and the political. As will be seen later in this chapter, sexuality was a central theme around which the authors of

⁷⁵ Bernstein, et al., “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...,” 39.

⁷⁶ Ruby, interview.

⁷⁷ Drache, interview.

⁷⁸ Kuyek, interview.

“Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” studied the position of women in both society and the movement.

SUPA women’s conversations about New Leftist culture, particularly around issues of leadership and sexual relationships, contributed to an awareness of their experiences as collective concerns. As noted by historian Ian Milligan, it is a challenge to uncover the transmission of ideas among activists because “New Leftists operated in an oral culture.”⁷⁹ The dialogue that occurred among New Leftists around the issue of gender relations was mostly informal. These were casual conversations among friends that illuminated their shared experiences and frustrations. While university chapters of the women’s liberation movement later published information about their consciousness-raising sessions in their newsletters, the many unorganized discussions that took place within SUPA went unrecorded; however, there are strategies to gain some access into this history. Oral histories and written reflections offer some insight into the impact of the conversations that occurred; however, as discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, it is necessary to approach these sources with an understanding of the fallibility of memory. A cross-border approach illuminates more written records that demonstrate a transmission of ideas about gender inequality among New Leftists. As will be seen, observing examples of gender inequality in SDS and the responses of New Leftist women across the border, reinforced the notion in SUPA that women’s personal experiences in the movement were a symptom of a social problem that needed to be addressed. Through an examination of cross-border networks, SUPA meetings, activist writings, and oral histories, the following section will explore how and when New Leftists in SUPA began to voice a consciousness of gender inequality.

⁷⁹ Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 74.

Cross-Border Influences on SUPA's Feminist Consciousness

SUPA activists had frequent interaction with their American New Leftist counterparts in SDS through meetings and training sessions. Looking back on these meetings, SUPA activists recall more examples of overt gender inequality in SDS than SUPA. This speaks to the differences between the two groups, and the subtle and sometimes unconscious means by which gender inequality operated in SUPA. Before looking at the transmission of ideas about gender across the border, it is necessary to compare the gender dynamics of SDS and SUPA.

On the whole, gender inequality in SUPA was not exhibited through direct comments about women, or a conscious exclusion of women's participation. Of course, there were exceptions. As a site of struggle over leadership and status, meetings in SUPA accentuated tensions and unequal power dynamics in the movement. In this context, chauvinist attitudes could creep into responses to women's ideas. One glaring example occurred after Cathleen Kneen presented a suggestion on how to protest against the war in Vietnam. As Nancy Hannum recalls, one of the more prominent men at the meeting responded to Kneen's suggestion with the remark: "Well, we should just make cookies for the Viet Cong." Reflecting on the episode, Hannum explained:

Everybody just howled in laughter. And it was kind of a put-down of what she had said. I mean the sad thing is I don't even remember what she said, I only remember the put-down. And then somebody made a joke and put it in the newsletter...and it kind of carried on as a joke. But it was a put-down of, you know, an idea that seemed to be too small, too petty, not big and worthy of our great leadership and idealism and all that stuff. And I think that, as I say, that's kind of the one standout moment where it sort of flared out in public.⁸⁰

This episode remains at the forefront of Hannum's memory because it was a rare example of overt chauvinism in SUPA. As the authors of "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..." observed, attitudes toward women's full participation as leaders in the movement were displayed in more

⁸⁰ Hannum, interview.

subtle ways. After quoting SNCC leader Stokely Carmichael's famous quip that "the only position for a woman in SNCC is prone," they stated: "We cannot imagine any of the fine SUPA men uttering such a statement, but we can imagine many of them thinking it. In fact they put women in SUPA in two categories or roles--the workers and the wives."⁸¹ This categorization was not communicated directly, but rather through "various unconscious means."⁸² The subtle practices in SUPA that contributed to women's sense of marginalization largely went unnoticed at the time by men in the movement. This is emphasized in oral history interviews, such as the following conversation between spouses Cathleen (CK) and Brewster Kneen (BK):

CK: For a long time, I mean, you had grown up in a house where strong women was normal in a family... You had always assumed certain things.

BK: Yeah, that's right.

CK: And so you were quite invisible to the social structures... It took a long time for him to understand systemic patriarchy, and to change your, your language when you spoke and wrote, from man to human. It took years.

BK: Well I wasn't the only one... I mean, that was a sea change.⁸³

This exchange points to the exclusionary writing practices of using the words "man" or "men" to stand for all people, and addressing letters in the movement, "Dear Sirs." An awareness of these practices as expressions of gender exclusion was largely lacking, and grew as women's issues gained greater recognition. SUPA activists such as Peter Boothroyd and Peter Warrian had not thought about gender inequality in the movement until women began to express their concerns.⁸⁴ As Boothroyd noted: "My not even thinking about it was symptomatic of the problem."⁸⁵ The lack of consciousness around gender inequality was further revealed in the surprise with which women's criticisms were met. John Conway remarked: "When women began to organize within

⁸¹ Bernstein, et al., "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..." 38.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Brewster Kneen and Cathleen Kneen, interview.

⁸⁴ Boothroyd, interview, and Warrian, interview.

⁸⁵ Boothroyd, interview.

SUPA, it was quite a shock to some of the men.”⁸⁶ Myrna Wood’s memory is also that “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...,” “was just a big surprise to them all.”⁸⁷ The low level of awareness that existed in SUPA around gender inequality was reflective of the often indirect expressions of patriarchy in the movement.

By contrast, some SUPA activists recall more blatant examples of gender inequality in SDS. Nancy Hannum attended an SDS meeting with Liora Proctor in Michigan that provided a very clear visual of women’s subordination in the group. Hannum recalls: “There were all these women sitting on the floor around the room, and they would make coffee, and bring the cookies...Then they were all sitting on the floor waiting on the men and I was really struck by that, that that wasn’t right. And I remember thinking that that didn’t happen in SUPA.”⁸⁸ Peter Boothroyd, who also attended the meeting, brought up this episode: “I remember very distinctly the men leaders, they were men, sitting in chairs, and these beautiful young women sitting on the floor around them looking up adoringly.”⁸⁹ Boothroyd was struck by this representation of gender inequality in SDS. He does not recall, however, any equivalent examples in SUPA, stating: “It’s interesting that I don’t have many memories of it...I can’t ever recall the kind of stereotypical view that some people have that the men saw the women as being the people who would run the Gestetners...I just don’t recall that ever coming up.”⁹⁰

Another particularly memorable SDS meeting was held in Kewadin, Michigan in June 1965, which Hannum identified as “the most fraught meeting I’ve ever been to.”⁹¹ The meeting in Kewadin has received scholarly attention as a representation of the gender issues that plagued

⁸⁶ Conway, interview.

⁸⁷ Wood, interview.

⁸⁸ Hannum, interview.

⁸⁹ Boothroyd, interview.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Hannum, interview.

SDS. Sara Evans' description of the meeting in *Personal Politics* emphasizes women's marginalization: "It seemed that women had never been more invisible. All of the working papers and documents for the conference were prepared by men. Hardly a woman spoke in plenaries and only a tiny number in workshops."⁹² SUPA activist Liora Proctor was among the few women to chair a workshop. According to Evans, it was a particularly "tumultuous" session, and Proctor was "booed and hissed" when she attempted to gain control of the room.⁹³ The position of women in SDS did not go unnoticed at the time. Prior to the meeting, SDS activist Harriet Stulman wrote a letter to the central SDS office with the demand: "Include the role of women...really important. Too many people are talking about it for it to go undiscussed."⁹⁴ As Evans observes, there is no evidence that this request was met.

It was not long before discussion among women in SDS led to action. In November 1965, Casey Hayden and Mary King wrote a paper titled "Sex and Caste," which was mailed out to "a number of other women in the peace and freedom movements."⁹⁵ One year prior, Hayden and King had written the position paper on women in SNCC, discussed in chapter three. "Sex and Caste" addressed a number of issues that they had observed in the northern student movement, including the roles assigned to women; the challenge of addressing inequality in personal relationships with men; the need to question institutions which "shape perspectives on men and women"; the lack of open discussion around women's issues in the movement; and the need for more women to talk with one another and create "a community of support."⁹⁶ The letter reflects the absence of women's issues from the New Leftist agenda at the time, observing: "Nobody is

⁹² Evans, *Personal Politics*, 160.

⁹³ Ibid. Evans gives no explanation for the disorderly session, but reports that SDS organizer Carol McEldowney rose to Proctor's defense and criticized the attendees of "male supremacy."

⁹⁴ Ibid., 159.

⁹⁵ Casey Hayden and Mary King, "Sex and Caste," available online.

<https://foundationsofgenderstudies.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/sexcaste.pdf>. Accessed 20 May 2016.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

writing, or organizing, or talking publicly about women, in any way that reflects the problems that various women in the movement come across.”⁹⁷ It further encouraged New Leftists to recognize the possibilities for radical social change that could emanate from a reconsideration of gender relations.

One month after Hayden and King mailed out the paper, SDS women organized the group’s first women’s caucus to discuss gender inequality, and held a workshop for both men and women called “Women in the Movement.”⁹⁸ In June 1967 they also held a women’s liberation workshop at the SDS national convention. Women’s discussions culminated at the National Conference for a New Politics (NCNP) at the end of the summer of 1967 when two New Leftist women, Shulamith Firestone and Jo Freeman, prepared a resolution demanding that women receive fifty-one percent of the vote at the NCNP. The meeting’s chair, William Pepper, a leading anti-war activist, refused to read the resolution. According to a number of accounts, when Firestone confronted him on the platform about his refusal, he patted her on the head saying: “Cool down, little girl. We have more important things to do here than talk about women’s problems.”⁹⁹ According to historian David Barber, this incident “set off a chain reaction among radical women.”¹⁰⁰ In Chicago, New Leftist women started to meet regularly and formed the first women’s liberation group in the United States.

While cross-border connections in the women’s liberation movement itself will be explored in chapter seven, it is important to note here that there were significant moments of interaction between Canadian and American New Leftists as women began to declare their

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Barber, *A Hard Rain Fell*, 106.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 118; Poletta, *Freedom is an Endless Meeting*, 158; Rosen, *The World Split Open*, 129; and Simon Hall, *American Patriotism, American Protest: Social Movements Since the Sixties* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 61. In the accounts written by Rosen and Hall, Pepper says, “Move on, little girl.”

¹⁰⁰ Barber, *A Hard Rain Fell*, 118.

frustration with the movement and desire for women's issues to be addressed. During this period, SUPA activist Clayton Ruby served as the Canadian delegate to SDS. As he recalls, the question of women in the New Left was one of the major issues discussed at SDS meetings that he reported back to Canadian activists.¹⁰¹ In 1965, Judy Bernstein, one of the authors of SUPA's "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..." worked alongside Casey Hayden in Chicago, while activists such as Nancy Hannum, Linda Seese, and Peter Warrian all recall reading Hayden and King's "Sex and Caste," and agreeing with its contents.¹⁰² Warrian identified the paper as "the first time I observed something that was overtly raising the woman's question" and the first time that he began to think about gender relations in the movement.¹⁰³ He passed the paper along to others and became attentive to issues of gender inequality in the Canadian context.

This cross-border network contributed to a growing awareness in SUPA of gender inequality as a social problem that could be addressed through social movement activity. It was within collective moments of discussion and consciousness-raising that many New Leftists came to view their seemingly personal problems as political issues. Reflecting on this important development, Peggy Morton explained:

For the first time people started taking what they had seen as individual experience...that you're a woman who somehow doesn't fit the mold, and maybe there's something wrong with you, but you just don't fit the mold. You just don't see your role as subservient to anybody, and you're not aspiring to that kind of life, and you're a political activist in your own right and you want to be taken seriously as that...For the first time there's a collective consciousness that this is a problem of society. This is not a problem of individuals, or a problem of women themselves. It's not of our making. It's a problem of society.¹⁰⁴

For women in SUPA, a weekend conference in Kingston during the spring of 1967 served as a significant marker in the process of articulating a consciousness of gender inequality as a

¹⁰¹ Ruby, interview.

¹⁰² Hannum, interview; Seese, interview; Warrian, interview.

¹⁰³ Warrian, interview.

¹⁰⁴ Morton, interview.

collective problem. By this time, some SUPA women had begun to voice their frustrations over the pattern of male domination at SUPA meetings, and the style of SUPA leadership more generally. Harding recalls that outside of the few women who were considered leaders, “there were these other women who were not as high profile who were clearly starting to complain in or after meetings; usually after, because they couldn’t probably get that complaint into the meeting.”¹⁰⁵ At the SUPA Kingston meeting, women activists organized a collective challenge to this issue by convening on their own. The significance of the conversation that occurred at this all-women meeting has been described by SUPA activist Bronwen Wallace, who wrote the following reflection in 1997:

I had absolutely no idea...what we would talk about. And I certainly had no idea, theoretically or otherwise, how much this meeting was going to change my life. What we talked about, in one way or another, for about four hours, were our lives. For me, that meeting represented the first time I had ever been in a room full of women talking consciously about their lives, trying to make sense of them, trying to see how the unique and private anecdotes became part of a story that gave each of our lives a public and collective meaning as well. Since then, the majority of my time has been spent listening to women tell the story of their lives in one form or another.¹⁰⁶

The meeting served as a moment of consciousness-raising for women like Bronwen Wallace in SUPA. In another reflection on the meeting, an anonymous SUPA activist told journalist Myrna Kostash: “We were feeling our way into talking about our experience as women but we weren’t sure how to do it.”¹⁰⁷ In an interview from the 1980s, Myrna Wood recalled that no analysis or strategy was developed at the meeting, explaining: “[we] could not even conceive of organizing ourselves” at that point.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, as a collective action, the meeting reflected the early stage of an understanding of women’s experiences in the movement and in society as shared

¹⁰⁵ Harding, interview.

¹⁰⁶ Bronwen Wallace, “One More Woman Talking,” in *New Contexts of Canadian Criticism*, eds. Ajay Heble, Donna Palmateer Pennee, and J.R. Struthers (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1997,) 168.

¹⁰⁷ Kostash, *Long Way From Home*, 168.

¹⁰⁸ CWMA, University of Ottawa, Myrna Wood, interview with John Cleveland, 1984.

political issues. The impact of the meeting was quickly identified within SUPA. One anonymous SUPA activist quoted in Warran's 1967 paper explained: "I think it was a turning point in that that was the first time that the girls realized that others felt the same way and that there were, perhaps, other alternatives. Also, it gave us a chance to do some analysis of what had happened to those of us who had taken on leadership roles."¹⁰⁹ Women in SUPA added a new layer to the broader debates over leadership in SUPA when they demonstrated their refusal to continue to participate in meetings that did not take their voices seriously. The meeting further raised an important debate among the women: should they organize separately, or should they continue to work with the men in the movement? Ultimately, it was decided to call upon their male counterparts to incorporate women's issues into a New Leftist program, but as will be seen in chapter seven, the debate over the autonomous organization of women would emerge as a major point of conflict in the women's liberation movement.

Intellectual Influences and Arguments about Women's Social Position

The Kingston meeting serves as one of the few overt instances of women in SUPA raising the issue of gender inequality. The two other major examples were in written form. The first was Heather Dean's 1966 article, "The Sexual Caste System: On Passing Two Whores and a Nun." The article first appeared in the University of Toronto student publication, *Random* in 1966, and was also sold through RIPP. The second was "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..." written by Bernstein, Wood, Morton and Seese in the fall of 1967. The intellectual work that informed the analysis of these papers emphasizes their roots in the thought and ethic of New Leftism. In true New Leftist fashion, SUPA women searched for the root causes of gender

¹⁰⁹ Warran, "Women in New Left Politics."

inequality and proposed structural social changes as a result. The following section will explore the New Leftist critique of gender relations contained in these papers.

Some biographical information on Heather Dean is necessary before delving into the arguments of her paper. Dean grew up in a middle-class family with “an uneventful conservative background.”¹¹⁰ At the age of eighteen, she got married, had two children, and worked while her husband attended graduate school. Self-admittedly, she was not politically aware until her early twenties when she read an article about the Cuban Missile Crisis and “realized that politics existed.”¹¹¹ A friend introduced her to the NDP and she began to work as a block-canvasser in Toronto apartment buildings. It was after Dean requested to canvass a “slum area” that her activist life began. The living conditions that she witnessed encouraged her to reconsider her own life. Her participation in the SUPA and Friends of SNCC demonstration outside of the U.S. Consulate in Toronto in support of the civil rights marchers in Selma, Alabama further acted as a radicalizing experience. She abandoned traditional politics, divorced her husband, and joined SUPA as a full-time staff member, working primarily with RIPP and the Toronto Anti-Draft Programme.¹¹² She wrote a section of the *Manual for Draft-Age Immigrants to Canada*, discussed in chapter five, in addition to articles that were published by RIPP.

Dean was considered an “intellectual of the New Left” and captured the attention of the Toronto media.¹¹³ She was featured in a centennial special in the *Toronto Daily Star* celebrating “the second century Canadians,” described as “lively Canadians whose ideas are setting patterns of living and thought that will reach far into the new century.”¹¹⁴ In an article titled, “Heather

¹¹⁰ Warren Gerard, “What ever happened to SUPA? It’s all hung up, Baby” *The Globe Magazine*, 17 December 1966, 6, and TFRBL, Mark Satin Papers, Box 1, File ‘Satin’s Memoir of Real Life at TADP,’ 1974-75 with revisions in 1996 and 2006.

¹¹¹ Gary Dunford, “Heather Dean doesn’t like the way YOU live,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 1 July 1967, 71.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Gerard, “What ever happened to SUPA?,” 6.

¹¹⁴ “100 years a nation—and now the second century Canadians!,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 1 July 1967, 1.

Dean doesn't like the way YOU live," she was described as a "rebel and pessimist [who] doesn't like Canadian society."¹¹⁵ The article explores her entry into social activism, and her difficulties maintaining day jobs as a typist due to public displays of her political views. Her interview led the reporter to conclude that "she sounds sometimes like an article in a political science quarterly."¹¹⁶ Dean's work in SUPA, and her representation in the media, accorded her the designation of a movement intellectual. According to her partner Mark Satin of the TADP, two of her papers published through RIPP, including "The Sexual Caste System," were "SUPA's best-sellers by far."¹¹⁷ Dean's status in SUPA as a media figure and intellectual, illuminates the diversity of positions women occupied in the movement. While a sense of marginalization may not have been a significant part of Dean's experience in SUPA, she nevertheless observed gender inequality in society, and brought it to the attention of New Leftists.

Dean's 1966 article advanced a New Leftist critique of gender relations by positing that equality can only be achieved through structural social change. As discussed in chapter one, addressing the root causes of inequality and violence was a distinguishing feature of New Leftist activism. In her article, Dean argued that the entire system would have to be transformed for gender equality to be achieved. She appreciated Betty Friedan's ground-breaking book, *The Feminine Mystique*, for outlining the various frustrations and challenges that women experienced, but criticized her proposed solutions, stating that "when it comes to solutions, Friedan can only suggest that women get jobs. It just won't do."¹¹⁸ Dean's opposition stemmed

¹¹⁵ Dunford, "Heather Dean doesn't like the way YOU live," 71.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ TFRBL, Mark Satin Papers, Box 1, File 'Satin's Memoir of Real Life at TADP,' 1974-75.

¹¹⁸ MUA, SUPA, Box 15a, File 'RIPP Publications, Theory,' Heather Dean, "The Sexual Caste System: On Passing Two Whores and a Nun," 1966.

from her New Leftist understanding of modern work as oppressive and alienating. She described a typical day in the life of a working-class man as follows:

At seven in the morning man sallies forth from his humble castle to bring home the bacon. All day he contends with the forces of the Real World, which weary and batter him...He is a cog in the corporate machine of technological society. He is one more sardine in the subway; one more ant on the freeway; one more rat in the race. At five he staggers home, a beaten and belittled man. And there is Woman. She's got 16 hours to get him on his feet again. To make him feel important, necessary, competent, and resourceful.¹¹⁹

Dean's assessment not only illuminates an analysis of capitalist society and work relations as oppressive, but further connects their impact to family life and the expectations placed on women. She argued that the workforce would not dissolve women's frustrations, but would merely cause women to "plunge into the lifestyle that is destroying [men]."¹²⁰ Consequently, she called upon women to meet together independently in order to intellectualize their social position and begin a struggle toward a more liberating life for men and women alike.

The authors of "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..." further developed the argument that the entire society had to change in order to achieve gender equality. The paper was entrenched in the ideas of British socialist feminist Juliet Mitchell, whose influential article, "Women: The Longest Revolution," appeared in the *New Left Review* in December 1966.¹²¹ Bernstein, Morton, Seese, and Wood, drew on Mitchell's categories of production, reproduction, sexuality, and socialization to analyze women's position in society. Like Mitchell, they identified the capitalist system as the primary obstacle to women's liberation. As discussed in chapter five, Marxist thinkers and analyses had become central to SUPA's debates about social change. "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..." added the issue of gender relations to this dialogue.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Juliet Mitchell, "The Longest Revolution," *New Left Review*, no. 40 (December 1966): 11-37.

Myrna Kostash has interpreted the paper's heavy use of socialist theory as a strategy to build an intellectual argument that would be accepted by New Leftists who did not always value women for their intellectual contributions, stating: "Sensitive to the devaluation of women's intellectual capabilities, it defensively covers itself with a cloak of references to Karl Marx, Herbert Marcuse, the British feminist Juliet Mitchell and the French feminist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir."¹²² This interpretation emphasizes women's historical struggle against a social perception of their intellectual inferiority to men; however, it does a disservice to the women who wrote the paper by dismissing their engagement with leftist theorists as merely a strategy to offer an argument that would be palatable to their fellow activists. The paper is evidence of the intellectual work that New Leftist women were doing amongst themselves. If one looks to RIPP, teach-in programs, or conference papers for the intellectual work of SUPA women, there are only a few examples to be found. Nevertheless, women were constantly reading, dialoging, and analyzing. "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..." should be viewed as a product of that intellectual work, rather than merely a product of women's frustration over their secretarial duties. The following section will examine the paper's analysis and importance as a New Leftist document.

"Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..." argued that the "human condition" could be evaluated through women's position in society.¹²³ Most of their analysis within the category of production focused on women's work outside of the paid-labour force, arguing that women's roles as wives, mothers, and homemakers made them "stabilizers of the social order."¹²⁴ This argument was intimately tied to their understanding of productive labour, which was based on

¹²² Kostash, *Long Way from Home*, 169.

¹²³ Bernstein, et al., "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...", 32.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 34.

their position that men had “no control over either the process or the products of their labour.” They posited that men’s frustration over this lack of control in the workplace was quelled in the family home which was maintained by women as a “retreat from the alienating society.” According to Mitchell and the authors of “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” this suppressed men’s frustrations enough to avoid an uprising against the system, resulting in the continuation of oppressive labour relations. Much like Heather Dean, they emphasized that women’s relationship to production would not be adequately changed through freer access to work or through gender equality in the workplace, “since work in a capitalist society is unfulfilling and alienating”; rather, a revolutionary change in women’s position could only occur with “a transition from capitalism to socialism.”¹²⁵

The authors also analyzed reproduction within the context of capitalist society, writing that women were “more in need of protection and less useful as members of the labour force” because of their lack of control over their reproductive capacities.¹²⁶ While they pointed to oral contraceptives as a partial solution, they explained that a deeper transformation had to occur, including the transition to a system “based on human needs rather than profit,” naming economic support for pregnant women or women with young children as important concerns.¹²⁷ In the category of sexuality, they identified men as “conquerors” and women as the “dominated and conquered.”¹²⁸ A reorientation of personal relationships between men and women, they argued, would contribute to a transformation of their expected social roles. Lastly, they explored a separation between men and women’s roles in the socialization of children. They identified

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 35.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

women as the “love symbol” and men as the “authority figure” in the nuclear family, and emphasized this separation as the result of learned behavior, rather than biological difference.¹²⁹

Within their analysis of Juliet Mitchell’s four categories, Bernstein, Morton, Wood, and Seese argued that the maintenance of the capitalist system was dependent on a differentiation of roles along gender lines, and the subordination of women. It is this analysis that firmly roots their demand for women’s liberation within a New Leftist framework. Liberation could not be achieved without addressing the issue of women’s position in society, which was functioning to support the current system that New Leftists had defined as alienating and oppressive. Appealing to their fellow New Leftists in 1967, they explained: “the liberation of women is a revolutionary demand in all its aspects, for it demands the most complete restructuring of the social order. The realization of this would mean, in fact, human liberation.”¹³⁰

Although the demand for women’s liberation was tied into a broader New Leftist critique of society and capitalism, the authors of “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” felt compelled to compare gender inequality to racial discrimination to communicate the seriousness of the situation, stating that in SUPA “one sometimes gets the feeling that we are like a civil rights organization with a leadership of southern racists.”¹³¹ They compared women in SUPA seeking to transcend their roles as the “followers and maintainers” of the movement to African Americans challenging the racial boundaries imposed by a white social order. Further, they associated their growing confidence in their identities as women seeking liberation, with those of African Americans discovering that “black is beautiful.”¹³² Myrna Kostash has interpreted these comparisons as a testament to “the necessity of the women to attract men’s attention to the

¹²⁹ Ibid., 36.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid., 37.

¹³² Ibid., 38 and 39.

gravity of their grievances by turning them into a metaphor.”¹³³ It is necessary to examine the different perceptions between racial and gender inequality during this time in order to understand why this comparison was being made. As discussed in chapter two, while racial inequality came to be viewed as a product of discrimination after World War II, gender inequality was still interpreted as an expression of biological difference. It was against this context that women in SUPA were drawing connections between sex-based and racial-based injustice. The authors of “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” emphasized that gender roles were not the product of natural difference. Drawing on the works of cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead, they pointed to examples of women in particular ethnic groups who performed roles that western culture defined as “male.” They further observed that women were central to the leadership of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, discussed in chapter three. They raised these examples as evidence that “there is no natural inborn instinct for certain roles and personality traits.”¹³⁴

The intellectual foundations of “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” rested on a socialist analysis of women’s social position, and works in cultural anthropology that challenged the notion that a division of roles along gender lines was a result of biological difference. This intellectual work, combined with discussions illuminating gender inequality as a collective issue, contributed to SUPA women’s confidence to challenge women’s position both in the movement and in society. SUPA women’s frustration over the exclusionary nature of New Leftist leadership was a significant component in the development of their feminist consciousness, but should not be used to summarize the significance of the paper; rather, the paper illuminates the tension between their sense of powerlessness as the “followers and maintainers” of the movement, and a

¹³³ Kostash, *Long Way from Home*, 186.

¹³⁴ Bernstein, et al., “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...,” 36.

confidence emerging from their positions as bridge leaders, engagement with intellectual work, and conversations about the collective nature of their seemingly personal problems.

Responses and Debates

“Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” was presented at SUPA’s final conference in Goderich, Ontario between 6 and 10 September 1967. The conference was ill-attended, with approximately thirty-five activists, so the paper did not immediately get the audience hoped for.¹³⁵ As will be discussed in chapter seven, this would change as the paper spread to women throughout Canada and the United States. This section will explore the immediate responses to “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” and the implications of SUPA women’s assertion that the movement needed to address gender inequality.

It is difficult to recover the immediate reaction to the paper at the Goderich conference. There are no written records describing discussion around the paper, and memories from oral history interviews provide only a broad and general sense of the response. The most detailed account of the discussion that followed the presentation of the paper at Goderich comes from a 1984 oral history interview that John Cleveland, a former SUPA activist, conducted with Myrna Wood. Wood recalled that the discussion centred not on the contents of the SUPA paper, but on a question that had emerged out of a woman’s position paper in the United States asking whether women formed a caste or a class. Wood explained: “That’s what I remember. That’s the important debate that happened out of all of this...whether or not women were a class, or whether they were a caste, or what were they?” Trying to understand women’s “position within the class struggle,” she explained in 1984, was an enduring question of the women’s liberation movement.¹³⁶ As discussed in chapter five, a growing emphasis on a socialist revolution through

¹³⁵ CWMA, University of Ottawa, Myrna Wood, interview with John Cleveland, 1984.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

the working class could be discerned within SUPA. Marxist Stan Gray's presence at the Goderich conference was significant for this very reason, according to Wood, who recalled his support for the women's paper.¹³⁷ The relationship between women's issues and class struggle, however, was not agreed upon by all New Leftists. The central criticism of women's liberation from within the New Left was that it was a bourgeois concern. In 1969, Myrna Wood and SDS activist Kathy McAfee co-wrote an article titled "Bread and Roses," to address this perception. They explained that some New Leftists did not support women's liberation because they believed that it was "bound to emphasize the bourgeois and personal aspects of oppression and to obscure the material oppression of working class women *and men*."¹³⁸ Calling this attitude "mistaken and dangerous," they argued:

By setting up (in the name of Marxist class analysis) a dichotomy between the "bourgeois," personal and psychological forms of oppression on the one hand, and the "real" material forms on the other, it substitutes a mechanistic model of class relations for a more profound understanding of how these two aspects of oppression depend upon and reinforce each other. Finally, this anti-women's liberationist attitude makes it easier for us to bypass a confrontation of male chauvinism and the closely related values of elitism and authoritarianism which are weakening our movement.¹³⁹

The view that women's issues represented a bourgeois problem was one criticism that women liberationists faced. Linda Seese provided another reflection on the reception of women's liberation in the late 1960s. Writing in 1969, Seese explained that within New Leftist circles, several activists held the belief that "women's demands are reformist."¹⁴⁰ This was unfolding against the context of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, something that women's liberationists themselves criticized for not confronting the root causes of gender inequality. As chapter seven will explore, the opinion that women's issues were "bourgeois" made it

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ McAfee and Wood, "Bread and Roses." Emphasis in original.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Seese, "You've Come a Long Way, Baby!," 162.

challenging for women to carve out a space for a gender-based movement within the New Left, while their Marxist orientation contributed to disagreements over strategy within the broader women's movement.

The Goderich meeting, nevertheless, demonstrated an openness to "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..." This was reflected in the composition of the New Left Committee (NLC), which replaced the membership-organization of SUPA. Linda Seese was elected chairwoman, while Peggy Morton, Myrna Wood, and Laurel Limpus, a student at the University of Toronto who would play a central role in women's liberation on campus, were also elected as committee members. Following the Goderich Conference, Harvey Shepherd connected the composition of the committee to "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..." stating: "While the one-third representation of women in the NLC falls short of the one-half recommended for such bodies in the paper, it is clear that the women's group has already succeeded in making women a powerful constituency in the committee."¹⁴¹ Looking back, Linda Seese agrees that her election as chairwoman was in response to the paper, adding that it "could have been anybody. Any woman, you know."¹⁴²

The representation of women on the NLC significantly impacted the material that was circulated through the *New Left Committee Bulletin*. The bulletin's editorial policy to "have an article of the 'woman question' in each issue" was heavily influenced by Wood, Morton, Seese, and Judy Skinner, who were four of the six members of the editorial board.¹⁴³ The NLC bulletin was successful in this regard, publishing a letter from the Chicago Women's Liberation Group, the entirety of Juliet Mitchell's article, "Women: The Longest Revolution," and news from the

¹⁴¹ MUA, SUPA, Box 16a, F.8, *New Left Committee Bulletin*, Harvey Shepherd, "SUPA dissolved; New Left Committee Formed," October 1967.

¹⁴² Seese, interview.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, "New Bulletin Policy," November 1967.

Toronto Women's Liberation Group (TWLG), which was started by Wood, Seese, and Morton. Chapter seven will explore the activities of the TWLG and its relationship to the broader feminist movement. Here it is necessary to note that the initiative that SUPA women took to organize a women's group in Toronto was understood as a significant development at the time. As Harvey Shepherd reported one month after the Goderich conference: "Next to the restructuring of the organization, the most significant feature of the Goderich conference was the emergence of a powerful women's liberation group."¹⁴⁴ Women in SUPA acted upon their consciousness of gender issues as collective and political concerns by creating the TWLG. The initiative that they took to launch a women's liberation group is further evidence of the skills that they developed as activists in the various strands of movement activity discussed in this dissertation, including peace work, the civil rights movement, and community organizing.

Conclusion

This chapter has studied the elements of New Leftist culture that contributed to a consciousness of gender inequality as a systemic issue. Contradictions between the movement's ideals and practices were recognized around the themes of leadership and sexual relationships. Discussion around these issues contributed to an awareness of the collective nature of New Leftist women's concerns, and the confidence to raise the problem of gender inequality in the movement. At the same time, this chapter has emphasized the importance of avoiding an essentialist description of women's experiences in SUPA by highlighting the diversity of roles that they occupied in formal leadership, bridge leadership, and office work, in addition to their sometimes conflicting insights on the position of women in the movement.

¹⁴⁴ Shepherd, "SUPA dissolved; New Left Committee Formed."

The contradictory experiences of marginalization and empowerment generated a tension from which women analyzed issues of gender in the movement. Some women in SUPA began to intellectualize these issues, leading to a gender analysis firmly rooted in a New Leftist ethic. This chapter has placed the intellectual analysis of “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” at the centre of its study in order to move beyond the one-dimensional representation of its significance as a statement of New Leftist women’s refusal to continue to merely perform the grunt work of the movement. While this was one element of their manifesto, it was, on a deeper level, a product of their intellectual work. The very existence of this paper is evidence of SUPA women’s experiences beyond the daily organizational tasks of the movement. Through their conversations, reading, writing, and analysis, they advanced a challenge for SUPA to not only consider the gender dynamics of the movement, but also to incorporate gender inequality into the New Leftist critique of capitalism. The contributions of this strand of feminism and its interaction with other positions within the early years of the second-wave of the women’s movement from 1967 to 1970, is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

“WHAT IS THE REVOLUTIONARY POTENTIAL OF WOMEN’S LIBERATION?”:

New Leftist Women’s Activism after SUPA, 1967-1970

Scholars of both Canada and the United States have located the origins of the women’s liberation movement in the New Leftism of the sixties. Sara Evans’ seminal work, *Personal Politics*, identifies the civil rights movement and New Leftist organizing as the roots of the women’s liberation movement in the United States, while Nancy Adamson’s study of women’s liberation in Ontario concludes that the movement emerged out of New Leftist politics, defined differently by women depending on their location.¹ SUPA, the SCM, the NDP, and other leftist political groups were all named by activists interviewed by Adamson as entry points into women’s liberation.² Recorded histories of various women’s liberation chapters reinforce the influence of diverse leftist groups on the emergence and development of the movement. As the London Women’s Liberation Group explained in an undated document: “Women’s Liberation has its roots in the dissatisfaction of women in the student leftist politics of 3 or 4 years ago.”³ For the London group, it was a critique of gender inequality emerging out of the SCM that sparked the creation of their women’s liberation chapter in 1970.⁴ Women in Vancouver recorded that their entry into women’s liberation “started at Simon Fraser University during a time of intense political activity on the left.”⁵ They elaborated that it was their “exclusion from

¹ Evans, *Personal Politics*, and Adamson, “Feminists, Libbers, Lefties, and Radicals,” 259.

² Adamson, “Feminists, Libbers, Lefties, and Radicals,” 259.

³ CWMA, University of Ottawa, Box 51, London Women’s Liberation, “An Introduction to Women’s Liberation,” undated.

⁴ *Ibid.*, “London Women’s Liberation: A History,” undated.

⁵ “Women’s Caucus—A History and Analysis,” ca. December 1970. Included in *How Did the Canadian Women’s Liberation Movement Emerge from the Sixties Student Movements? The Case of Simon Fraser University*, Documents selected and interpreted by Roberta Lexier.

meaningful participation in the struggles on campus” that inspired them to start the Feminine Action League, which became the Vancouver Women’s Caucus in 1968.⁶ A document titled, “The History of the Canadian Women’s Movement,” by the Revolutionary Marxist Group, which existed between 1973 and 1977, further affirms the various leftist sources of women’s liberation, stating: “Toronto and Vancouver had a stronger new left influence although this was true of all the groups. Montreal women’s liberation was affected by Quebecois nationalism and the Ottawa group was dominated by Waffle women...There were different left influences on the women’ (sic) movement which varied from city to city.”⁷

Given the regional specificity of the influences that shaped women’s liberation groups in Canada, a study of SUPA women’s direct impact on the movement centres on Toronto, where the writers of “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” were located. As stated in chapter six, Morton, Seese, and Wood, continued their activism in the city by forming the Toronto Women’s Liberation Group (TWLG) in 1967, which grew into the Toronto Women’s Liberation Movement (TWLM) in January 1968. In 1971, Laurel Limpus of the TWLM singularly identified women in SUPA as the group’s trailblazers: “The initial organizing around the question of women’s liberation, the initial consciousness came out of the women in the Canadian left, in SUPA.”⁸ While their direct impact can be observed mostly through the activities of the TWLM, the influence of their politics, as expressed in “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...,” extended across North America. Journalist and activist Judy Rebeck observed that the article was “passed eagerly from hand to hand among women in the New Left.”⁹ When asked about the

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ MUA, Radical Organizations Archive, File ‘RMG (Revolutionary Marxist Group),’ “The History of the Canadian Women’s Movement,” undated.

⁸ CWMA, University of Ottawa, Box 107, Toronto Women’s Liberation Movement, Laurel Limpus, “The History of the Toronto Women’s Liberation Movement,” February 1971.

⁹ Rebeck, *Ten Thousand Roses*, 8.

response to the paper, Peggy Morton recalled the interest that it sparked among women across the country, who got in touch with her and visited her in Toronto.¹⁰ The paper was also read by American New Leftists. In November 1967, the Chicago Women's Liberation Group wrote: "This group has read a copy of the paper presented at the Goderich founding Conference of NLC (by the Feminine Caucus) and has initiated a dialogue between the U.S. and Canadian groups."¹¹ The paper was published as a pamphlet by the New England Free Press, studied by a women's group in Boston, and distributed by another women's liberation group in Washington D.C.¹² Consequently, the paper was very much part of New Leftist women's conversations and analyses as the women's liberation movement began to emerge in the late 1960s.

This chapter contributes to the conceptualization of the New Left as a collection of movements, which each formed "part of a challenge to the established order."¹³ The SUPA women who wrote "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..." and formed Canada's first women's liberation group in Toronto, argued that a demand for women's liberation not only fit into a New Leftist agenda to restructure institutions and relationships, but was necessary for the achievement of revolutionary change.¹⁴ This chapter will study how they organized around this understanding in the women's liberation movement. It will draw on Ian McKay's "horizontal approach" to the study of Canadian leftist history that "assumes that each period, in complex ways, makes its own practice of leftism; that leftists in each period invent distinctive conceptual systems through which they grasp the world."¹⁵ The sixties social movements that have been explored in this dissertation through SUPA, including the peace and anti-war movements, civil rights movement,

¹⁰ Morton, interview.

¹¹ MUA, SUPA, Box 16a, File F8, "Chicago women form liberation group," *New Left Committee Bulletin*, Vol 1, no. 1, November 1967.

¹² CWMA, University of Ottawa, Box 110-2, File 'Two versions of the paper "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..."'

¹³ Van Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left*, 5.

¹⁴ Bernstein, et al., "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...," 36.

¹⁵ McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals*, 113 and 34.

and community organizing efforts to build a movement of the “dispossessed,” all centred on a New Leftist ethic that emphasized participatory democracy, seeking radical change by addressing the root causes of inequality and violence, and working to bring about a shift in social consciousness. Studying the early years of women’s liberation in the context of the New Leftist politics of the period illuminates not only the movement’s roots in New Leftist activism, but its enduring commitment to its tactics and ideals.

This chapter further complicates the declension narrative of sixties activism, defined in the introduction of this dissertation. Women’s liberationists combined New Leftist discourses of self-determination, participatory democracy, and anti-capitalism, with a feminist consciousness to contribute to a gendered and class analysis of society. This chapter will study the rise of the women’s liberation movement in Canada with particular attention to the activism, writings, and memories of women who participated in SUPA, illuminating the final years of the 1960s as a period of leftist movement-building among women activists.

Women’s Liberation and the Second-Wave of Feminism

Before examining the growth and activities of women’s liberation, it is necessary to contextualize their movement within the broader context of women’s organizing in the 1960s. The character of women’s liberation as a New Leftist movement meant that it promoted a total social transformation, rather than legal reform alone. For this reason, they differentiated themselves from the women’s groups advocating for women’s rights within the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW). Under the leadership of Laura Sabia, over thirty women’s groups came together in 1966 as the Committee for Equality for Women in Canada (CEW), to demand a Royal Commission to investigate the position of women in the country.¹⁶

¹⁶ Roberta Hamilton, *Gendering the Vertical Mosaic: Feminist Perspectives on Canadian Society*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Pearson Education Canada Inc., 2005), 45, and Adamson, “Feminists, Libbers, Lefties, and Radicals,” 252.

With the support of Cabinet Minister Judy LaMarsh, the CEW succeeded in their campaign, and the RCSW was announced in February 1967. The Commission received 468 briefs and approximately 1,000 letters from Canadian women. The commissioners further held hearings across the country, during which they received statements from nearly 900 people.¹⁷ After two and a half years of gathering information, the Commission published its report in September 1970, which included 167 recommendations for the federal government.¹⁸

Women's liberationists differentiated themselves from the women's rights groups who called for the Commission. They described the distinction in the 1972 anthology of the women's liberation movement, *Women Unite!* as follows: "The philosophy of the women's rights groups is that civil liberty and equality can be achieved within the present system, while the underlying belief of women's liberation is that oppression can be overcome only through a radical and fundamental change in the structure of our society."¹⁹ Differences between women's rights groups and women's liberationists were also noted in the report tabled by the RCSW, which acknowledged women's liberation as part of the challenge to gender inequality in Canada, but framed it as something different from the work that was being carried out by the Commission. They compared Canadian women's liberationists to groups in the United States that were "not merely reformist but revolutionary in their aims, seeking radical changes in the economic system as well as in the institution of marriage and the nuclear family."²⁰ Scholars have further distinguished between these strands of the second-wave, referring to the women's rights groups

¹⁷ Florence Bird, et al., *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1970), ix-x, available online. http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2014/priv/CP32-96-1970-1-eng.pdf. Accessed 28 June 2016.

¹⁸ Hamilton, *Gendering the Vertical Mosaic*, 45.

¹⁹ "Introduction," *Women Unite!*, 9.

²⁰ Bird, et al., *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada*, 2.

of the Commission as “institutional feminists” and women’s liberation groups as “grass-roots feminists.”²¹

Some attempts were made to bring these strands of the movement together in 1972 under the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), which was established at the conference “Strategy for Change,” to enforce the implementation of the RCSW’s recommendations. As scholar Naomi Black has observed: “If we sort out the elements of NAC’s membership in the ideological terms most commonly used to discuss feminism, we can say that the organization managed to accommodate groups whose ideologies ran the gamut of feminist belief from liberal through Marxist and socialist to radical.”²² While this may be true, a tension between the objectives of women’s rights groups and women’s liberation groups still existed. This was expressed through the reflections of one woman who attended the “Strategy for Change” conference as a member of the “radical caucus.” In an oral history, she told Meg Luxton:

There was nothing wrong with the Royal Commission recommendations. We were prepared to support any call to have them implemented. But we wanted much more; we wanted the conference to come out loud and clear in support of way more radical positions, like an end to capitalism and for workers’ control—not something those bourgeois ladies were prepared to discuss.²³

Women’s liberationists’ response to the RCSW was consistent with the New Leftist perspective that meaningful change could not be achieved within existing institutions. Women’s liberationists supported the need for legal reforms, but organized around the New Leftist idea that the root causes of social inequality could only be fully addressed within a movement that

²¹ Adamson, et al., *Feminist Organizing for Change*, 29.

²² Naomi Black, “The Canadian Women’s Movement: The Second Wave,” 168.

²³ Meg Luxton, “Feminism as a Class Act: Working-Class Feminism and the Women’s Movement in Canada,” *Labour/Le Travail* 48 (Fall 2001): 79.

challenged the operation of power in society. The following section will examine this orientation through the activism of former SUPA activists, Peggy Morton, Linda Seese, and Myrna Wood.

The Toronto Women's Liberation Group (TWLG) and Abortion Reform, 1967-1969

The TWLG, founded by Morton, Seese, and Wood in 1967, applied a New Leftist orientation to the issue of women's reproductive rights. The New Leftist theme of self-determination has been explored throughout this dissertation. It was reflected in the peace movement and left nationalism, which both sought Canadian political self-determination from American influence; education campaigns, such as SUPA's School for Social Theory and SNCC's Freedom Schools, which attempted to give students greater control over their education; and community organizing projects, which sought to increase the self-determination of the "dispossessed." The TWLG moved the New Leftist accent on self-determination onto new ground as they centred their early activities on women's reproductive control.

In 1967, the TWLG organized against Canada's legal restrictions on birth control and abortion, which made the sale, advertisement, and distribution of information on contraceptives illegal, and permitted abortion only if the mother's life was at risk.²⁴ The TWLG argued that these laws took control away from women to plan their families. To address this concern at the University of Toronto, the TWLG disseminated birth control information on campus, in contravention of the law.²⁵ They further organized around legal reform. In 1967, Justice Minister Pierre Trudeau established the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare to investigate "the effects of illegal abortion on Canadian women and society."²⁶ During the course of five months, over one hundred groups and individuals came before the committee with briefs and

²⁴ Kostash, *Long Way from Home*, 171-72.

²⁵ MUA, SUPA, Box 16a, File F.8, "Listen...Sisters..." *New Left Committee Bulletin* Vol. 1 No. 2 December 1967.

²⁶ Paul Saurette and Kelly Gordon, *The Changing Voice of the Anti-Abortion Movement: The Rise of "Pro-Woman" Rhetoric in Canada and the United States* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 369.

testimonies.²⁷ It was within this context that the TWLG identified abortion law as an issue around which they could build a movement around women's issues. In the fall of 1967, Morton, Seese, and Wood wrote the "Brief to the House of Commons Health and Welfare Committee on Abortion Law Reform" and circulated it to women across the county.²⁸ They signed the brief from the Women's Liberation Group (WLG), which they identified as "a loosely affiliated group of young women across Canada."²⁹ They encouraged women to discuss the brief, hold their own meetings on the issue, and collect signatures.

The WLG abortion campaign was centred on the objective of raising consciousness around the social position of women. In a letter accompanying the brief, Morton, Seese, and Wood explained: "We see this brief primarily as an organising tool and to spur meaningful discussion about the role of women in society."³⁰ Even though the brief called for a national referendum for women citizens on the question of the country's abortion law, Morton, Seese, and Wood did not see this demand as the goal of their action; rather they reiterated: "We intend to use this brief as a means of getting this type of discussion into the mass media and attempting to raise the consciousness of more women (and men)."³¹ The accent of their action on the necessity of generating change at the level of consciousness, rather than solely institute legislative reform, was indicative of their New Leftist orientation. They partially sought to raise awareness by creating a disturbance. Rather than holding their meeting to discuss the brief in a politically neutral environment, they decided to organize a meeting at Hart House on the University of Toronto campus. Hart House, which opened in 1919 as a meeting place for students, prohibited

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ MUA, SUPA, Box 16a, F.7, "Brief to the House of Commons Health and Welfare Committee on Abortion Law Reform."

²⁹ Ibid., Letter to "Sisters," from Myrna Wood, Peggy Morton, Linda Seese, Women's Liberation Group, Toronto Chapter, 20 November 1967.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

female membership until 1972. In 1967, the TWLG challenged the regulation at Hart House that meetings attended by women must include at least an equal proportion of men.³² They successfully declared in the *New Left Committee Bulletin* that they held “an all-woman meeting in Hart House, that bastion of male supremacy.”³³

The WLG’s brief to the Health and Welfare Committee was unusual in its arguments about women’s rights. The majority of the briefs and testimonies that supported a reform to the existing law centred on the necessity for medical professionals to have broader grounds on which to perform legal abortions. The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) supported legal reform, as one spokesperson explained, “to end our life as lawbreakers.”³⁴ The CMA’s proposed grounds for the legalization of abortion included cases “of grave danger to the woman’s physical or mental health, where pregnancy resulted from a sex crime, or if a substantial risk existed that the fetus would be disabled.”³⁵ This framework placed the decision of abortion squarely in the hands of medical professionals, rather than women themselves, and was unsatisfactory to the members of the WLG because it did not address what they identified as the central reasons why women were seeking abortions: “economic reasons and family welfare, or the unmarried state of the woman.”³⁶ They viewed these issues as expressions of women’s economic dependence upon men within capitalist society. As will be seen later in this chapter, their activism around women’s reproductive rights continued alongside other efforts to increase the autonomy of women, such as finding alternatives to the nuclear family, and making gains for women in the workplace.

³² Ibid.

³³ MUA, SUPA, Box 16a, F.8, *New Left Committee Bulletin*, Vol. 1 No. 1, “Subversive Canadian Group, W.L.F. Exposed,” November 1967.

³⁴ Saurette and Gordon, *The Changing Voice of the Anti-Abortion Movement*, 104.

³⁵ Raymond Tatalovich, *The Politics of Abortion in the United States and Canada: A Comparative Study* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 32.

³⁶ MUA, SUPA, Box 16a, F.7, “Brief to the House of Commons Health and Welfare Committee on Abortion Law Reform.”

The WLG, represented by Morton, Seese, Wood, and Judith Bradford, who had worked for the CYC in Toronto and Montreal, presented their brief to the Health and Welfare Committee on 12 December 1967.³⁷ In *The Changing Voice of the Anti-Abortion Movement*, Paul Saurette and Kelly Gordon identify Dr. Henry Morgentaler's brief as the only submission that "foreshadowed the women's rights approach that would come to dominate the debate in the 1970s and 1980s."³⁸ The submission presented by the WLG must also be acknowledged for this approach. They framed their argument for legal reform around the issue of women's subordination in society, stating:

The ability of a woman to control her own reproductive processes is a necessary precondition if women are to throw off the bonds that have for so many centuries stifled their full potential as human beings. The bonds that have kept them tied to menial household chores whatever their capacities and interests, because they could not plan their families. Women must be allowed to choose for themselves, when they wish to bear children and when they do not.³⁹

From this perspective, the WLG posited that "an abortion should be performed for any woman who requests one from a licensed doctor or hospital, subject only to her decision and state of health."⁴⁰ The WLG recognized the contribution of Dr. Morgentaler of the Montreal Humanist Federation to this effort. As they stated in a final note in their brief: "We support the brief by the Humanist Federation of Montreal, the only other group to our knowledge that has had the integrity to recommend acknowledgment of a woman's reality in society."⁴¹ The briefs presented

³⁷ Coverage of the WLG's appearance in *The Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Daily Star* focused on allegations that Wood, Seese, and Morton made during questioning that Toronto police were accepting payments in exchange for protection from doctors performing illegal abortions. Robert Miller, "Women allege police take abortion bribes," *Toronto Daily Star*, 12 December 1967, p. 33; "Women charge abortionist-MDs give kickback to police; have no proof," *The Globe and Mail*, 13 December 1967, p. 11; "Legal action against women in considered," *The Globe and Mail*, 14 December 1967, p. W2.

³⁸ Saurette and Gordon, *The Changing Voice of the Anti-Abortion Movement*, 104.

³⁹ MUA, SUPA, Box 16a, F.7, Women's Liberation Group, "Brief to the House of Commons Health and Welfare Committee on Abortion Law Reform."

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

by both Dr. Morgentaler and the WLG centred on a woman's right to control her body. This understanding, which would inform the position of the later pro-choice movement, was one of the contributions that Morton, Seese, and Wood advanced within Canada's first women's liberation group.

In 1969, legal restrictions on contraception and homosexuality were removed. Abortion law was further reformed by setting up Therapeutic Abortion Committees of at least three medical professionals at accredited hospitals to evaluate requests for abortion.⁴² This reform was based on the notion of abortion as a medical issue, rather than a women's issue.⁴³ Consequently, it did not satisfy the budding women's liberation movement, which by 1969 had chapters across the country. This movement would mobilize in an effort to attain what the WLG brief demanded in 1967, that legal abortion be accessible on the basis of a woman's right to control her body. This issue served as a rallying point for women's liberation in 1970, and sparked the first nationwide action of the movement, the Abortion Caravan, which will be discussed at the end of this chapter. The following section will examine the emergence of women's liberation groups across Canada from 1968 to 1970, establishing the late sixties as a period of leftist movement-building.

The Growth of Women's Liberation from 1968 to 1970

The Toronto WLG expanded after presenting their brief in December 1967. They began to meet on a weekly basis in January 1968 as the Toronto Women's Liberation Movement (TWLM). Other women's liberation groups began to spring up across the country against the backdrop of intensifying student activism. Women began to organize at Simon Fraser University (SFU) in June 1968 as the Feminine Action League (FAL). As explained in their accounts of the group's origins, women on campus began to meet "to compare their experiences and problems,"

⁴² Kostash, *Long Way from Home*, 175.

⁴³ Saurette and Gordon, *The Changing Voice of the Anti-Abortion Movement*, 104.

leading to a consciousness of their concerns as “social problems, experienced to one degree or another by the majority of women in this society.”⁴⁴ The women involved in these discussions were considering their position within the university’s Students for a Democratic University (SDU), which had formed in January 1968 to organize around student control of university decisions, and the university’s relationship to society.⁴⁵ SUPA’s influence could be felt on campus, with former SUPA Federal Council members, John Conway and Jim Harding, elected as leaders of student government from March to September 1968.⁴⁶ John Cleveland of SUPA was also instrumental in setting up the SDU. He recalls the gender dynamics of the group, explaining:

We set up Students for a Democratic University and within it there formed a women’s group to try and get equality within SDU. And my girlfriend at the time, Marcy Toms, plus other women, formed a women’s group on campus...It was like the wives of the heavies who had been marginalized...So they very quickly started as a group in SDU.⁴⁷

In 1968, Marcy Toms of the FAL described how the group developed out of women’s consideration of their position within New Leftist campus activism:

Many of us were “involved” in various radical or new left wing groups espousing social action...and all of us involved had played our traditional passive roles as loving, but non-active, repressed conveniences; accepted our “proper places” as posterers, secretaries, canvassers, etc. and denied our rightful places...as potential equal theoreticians, competent speakers, and capable organizers.⁴⁸

This reflection was reminiscent of the frustrations expressed by women in SUPA in “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen...” as discussed in chapter six. The connection was not coincidental. In an interview from 1986, Toms recalled the paper’s influence:

⁴⁴ “I enjoy being a girl,” *The Peak*, 5 February 1969, 5, and Marcy Toms, “Women’s Liberation,” 21 January 1970. Included in *How Did the Canadian Women’s Liberation Movement Emerge from the Sixties Student Movements? The Case of Simon Fraser University*, Documents selected and interpreted by Roberta Lexier.

⁴⁵ Ian Milligan, “Coming off the Mountain: Forging an Outward-Looking New Left at Simon Fraser University,” *BC Studies* no. 171 (Autumn, 2011): 74.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁴⁷ Cleveland, interview.

⁴⁸ Marcy Toms, “Women’s Caucus,” *The Peak*, 18 September 1968, p.13. Included in, *How Did the Canadian Women’s Liberation Movement Emerge from the Sixties Student Movements? The Case of Simon Fraser University*, Documents selected and interpreted by Roberta Lexier.

I had gotten hold of...a pamphlet that had been written by some women in Toronto who were involved in SUPA...It was called "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..."...some of the women...decided [to] be partners and write our paper together and we wrote...a new manifesto for women and called it the "Feminine Action League."⁴⁹

The FAL was soon approached by Margaret Benston, a professor of chemistry at SFU.⁵⁰ Her intervention led to a meeting that would cement the group in a political focus both on and off campus as the Vancouver Women's Caucus (VWC). The group held their first meeting on 11 September 1968.⁵¹ Like the Toronto Women's Liberation Movement, the VWC devoted a great deal of its time and energy to the issues of birth control and abortion. One of their first actions was to organize a campus birth control clinic to offer information on contraceptives, under the guidance of the Vancouver Planning Centre.⁵² The SFU and Toronto women's groups also distributed the McGill Student Society's *Birth Control Handbook* before the dissemination of information on birth control was legalized in 1969.⁵³ The idea for the *Handbook* was initiated by the McGill Students' Council Birth Control Committee, which was established following a talk given at the university by Professor Donald Kingsbury in the fall of 1967 on the impact of illegal abortion on female students on the campus.⁵⁴ The *Handbook* was among the committee's recommendations for making information on birth control available to the student body. It was published in September 1968, in violation of the Criminal Code. Within eight months, fifty thousand copies were circulated across the country.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Toms quoted in 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, July 1990), 57.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁵¹ Toms, "Women's Caucus."

⁵² Wasserlein, "'An Arrow Aimed at the Heart,'" 59.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Christabelle Sethna, "The Evolution of the Birth Control Handbook: From Student Peer-Education Manual to Feminist Self-empowerment Text, 1968-1975," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History / Bulletin canadien d'histoire de la medecine* 23, no. 1 (2006): 92.

⁵⁵ Palmer, "New Left Liberations," 122.

The *Handbook* offers insight into the growth of women's liberation at McGill. As historian Christabelle Sethna has observed, while the first edition was a peer-education manual focused on meeting a student need, the second edition, published in January 1969, "firmly united left-wing student and second-wave feminist politics."⁵⁶ This alliance was entrenched in the 1970 edition of the *Handbook* which contained "a consideration of the women's movement and discussed the need women have to control their own bodies as a first step in controlling their own lives."⁵⁷ In 1970-71 the *Handbook* sold almost two million copies, and profits went toward the establishment of a Women's Centre, operated by the Montreal Women's Liberation Group (MWLG).⁵⁸

The formation of the MWLG in October 1969 reflected the increasing interest in leftist activism around women's issues at McGill.⁵⁹ Writings on women's liberation appeared in the *McGill Daily* supplement, *The Review*, including an article by former SUPA activist, Myrna Wood.⁶⁰ Wood left Toronto for Montreal in 1968, where she worked in McGill's Rare Books Collection.⁶¹ She joined the McGill Socialist Action Committee and wrote on the total social revolution that would both accompany and facilitate a transformation in women's social position. A socialist-feminist perspective on campus was further ushered in by Marlene Dixon, who was appointed to the Sociology department at McGill after being fired from the University of Chicago, allegedly for her statements to students that "marriage perpetuates the oppression of women."⁶²

⁵⁶ Sethna, "The Evolution of the Birth Control Handbook," 95.

⁵⁷ Donna Cherniak and Allan Feingold, "Birth Control Handbook," *Women Unite!*, 110

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Mills, *The Empire Within*, 124.

⁶⁰ Myrna Wood and Marsha Taubenhau, "The doll house, revisited: further notes on the condition of women in our society," *The Review* (*McGill Daily* supplement) 22 November 1968, 7, and Martine Eloy "Woman: why is she?" *The Review*, 6 December 1968, 5.

⁶¹ Wood, interview.

⁶² Paul D. Buchanan, *Radical Feminists: A Guide to an American Subculture* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2011), 54.

The MWLG was an anglophone group that maintained that women's subordination could only be overcome through "a revolution that is both feminist and socialist."⁶³ The group was very much interested in "the specific history of women in Quebec" and joined in alliance with francophone women to challenge a Montreal by-law that banned political protests in the city.⁶⁴ As noted by historian Sean Mills, "the demonstration acted as a watershed in feminist mobilization."⁶⁵ Two hundred women staged a nonviolent demonstration on 28 November 1969 by sitting in a circle on Saint-Laurent Boulevard where they awaited arrest. It took under an hour for police to clear the demonstration; nevertheless, the protest served as a significant moment of movement-building for the women involved, who formed the Front de libération des femmes du Québec (FLF). The FLF represented both English- and French-speaking women in the province, and organized around "the liberation of women through the creation of an independent and socialist Quebec."⁶⁶

The rise of women's liberation groups across English-Canadian university campuses was part of a broader movement of student activism outside the university, as demonstrated by the growing New Leftist orientation of the Canadian Union of Students (CUS). Originally formed as the National Federation of Canadian University Students in 1926, the organization had a tradition of focusing primarily on student services. This orientation was unsatisfactory to francophone students in Quebec, who felt compelled to respond to the social and political events unfolding in the province as student syndicalists. Francophone universities left CUS in September 1964 to establish an independent union, the UGEQ, as discussed in chapter one.

⁶³ Marie Henretta, "Oppression of Women in Canada," *MWL Newsletter*, no. 1 (March 1970) quoted in Mills, *The Empire Within*, 125.

⁶⁴ Mills, *The Empire Within*, 125.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 127, and Mills, "Democracy, Dissent, and the City: Cross-Cultural Encounters in Sixties Montreal," in *The Sixties in Canada*, ed. Palaeologu, 160.

By 1966, CUS began to promote a greater political focus for the union. Movement in this direction was evidenced at the union's 1966 seminar at the University of Waterloo, where discussions on politics and ideology "served to pull in a layer of SUPA activists towards CUS and student union politics," as noted by Douglas Nesbitt.⁶⁷ Among these SUPA activists was University of Waterloo student, Peter Warrian, who would serve as president of CUS for the 1968-69 term. SUPA activists contributed to CUS' shift toward a New Leftist orientation through discussions of Marxism, student power, the war in Vietnam, and approaches to campus organizing, as reflected by papers written by John Cleveland, Dimitri Roussopoulos, and John Bordo for the 1967 Congress.⁶⁸ A transformation in CUS' orientation was evidenced by the adoption of the Declaration of the Canadian Student in 1967, which advanced that "the Canadian student has the right and duty to improve himself as a social being and to contribute to the development of society."⁶⁹ It was further at the 1967 Congress that Warrian, who ran on a platform of increased student engagement in off-campus issues, was elected as CUS president.⁷⁰

With a New Leftist leadership, CUS responded to the tumultuous international events of 1968 with resolutions on "anti-imperialism, anti-capitalism, and women's liberation."⁷¹ The CUS resolution on women was firmly rooted in a New Leftist understanding of the relation between capitalism and the subordination of women. It identified gender inequality within marriage and the workforce, and resolved that CUS recognize "the legitimate demands

⁶⁷ Douglas James Nesbitt, "The 'Radical Trip' of the Canadian Union of Students, 1963-69" (MA thesis, Trent University, 2010), 114.

⁶⁸ John Bordo, "The Situation of the New Left"; John Cleveland, "Social Unionism and Co-operative Services"; Dimitrios Roussopoulos, "The War in Vietnam and the Development of the Student Power Movement," available online. <http://www.studentunion.ca/cfs-documents/documents-of-the-national-union-of-students-canadian-union-of-students-and-national-federation-of-canadian-university-students/>. Accessed 20 July 2016.

⁶⁹ "The Declaration of the Canadian Student," in "Resolutions XXXI C.U.S. Congress," available online. <http://www.studentunion.ca/cfs/1967/1967-09-cus-resolutions.pdf>. Accessed 21 July 2016.

⁷⁰ Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 83.

⁷¹ Nesbitt, "The 'Radical Trip' of the Canadian Union of Students," 6.

of women for liberation from the social, cultural and sexual subordination and exploitation prevailing in Canada to-day.” Further, it supported “the initiation of women’s liberation groups” on university campuses.⁷² As Warrian recalls, this support for women’s liberation was part of a broader effort to create a grand coalition of New Leftists across the country. He reflected: “I think that the political assumption...was that that was going to contribute to the broader movement...We were assuming that there was one great big army going forward, and this is a new and potentially significant boost to that.”⁷³ A national New Leftist coalition, however, did not develop. Students’ councils began to withdraw from CUS over issues of representation and the adoption of political resolutions.⁷⁴ Backlash did not only come from students who did not agree with CUS’ leftist political stance, but also from the New Left Caucus at the University of Toronto, which opposed the union as a “liberal-bourgeois body.”⁷⁵ The New Left Caucus contributed to CUS’ defeat in a referendum on the university’s membership to the union.⁷⁶ Under these circumstances, CUS leadership decided to dissolve the union in October 1969.⁷⁷ This defeat did not signal the death of New Leftism in Canada; rather, a number of New Leftists continued their activism across the country, including women’s liberationists.⁷⁸ John Cleveland recalls how autonomous women’s organizing strengthened when CUS came to an end, explaining: “the women who had been involved in

⁷² MUA, SUPA, Box 16a, F. 14, “Women,” CUS XXXII Congress Resolutions, University of Guelph, 28 August-4 September 1968, p. 6.

⁷³ Warrian, interview.

⁷⁴ Nesbitt, “The ‘Radical Trip’ of the Canadian Union of Students,” 6.

⁷⁵ Owram, *Born at the Right Time*, 297.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 84, and “Alma Mater Society Interdepartmental Memo,” 29 October 1969, available online. <http://www.studentunion.ca/cfs/1969/1969-09-cus-resolutions.pdf>. Accessed 26 July 2016.

⁷⁸ Dimitrios Roussopoulos, “Canada: 1968 and the New Left,” available online. http://www.ghi-dc.org/fileadmin/user_upload/GHI_Washington/Publications/Supplements/Supplement_6/bus6_039.pdf. Accessed 25 July 2016.

these mixed groups...started setting up projects outside.”⁷⁹ By 1970 women’s liberation groups were established in sixteen cities across the country, and were involved in a variety of initiatives including abortion and birth control counselling, teach-ins, co-operative day care, and strike support.

Joining the women’s liberation movement during this period was a key experience in the lives of many activist women. Reflecting back on this time, former SUPA activist Cathleen Kneen, who became involved in co-operative child care organizing within the women’s liberation movement, stated: “This is where I start seeing myself actually exercising leadership.”⁸⁰ The “exhilaration of discovering women's liberation as an issue” was further acknowledged by Myrna Wood and Kathy McAfee in their 1969 essay, “Bread and Roses.”⁸¹ While the excitement of the burgeoning women’s liberation movement made the late 1960s an exhilarating time for many activist women, it was also a challenging period of movement-building as they worked out their relationship with gender-integrated leftist groups.⁸²

Debating the Position of Women’s Liberation in the Broader Left

The relationship between women’s liberation and gender-integrated New Leftist groups was a source of debate in the late 1960s. The TWLM first began to explore this conflict at a 1969 women’s liberation conference in Chicago. The group attended the conference at the encouragement of Linda Seese who, by this time, had moved to Chicago to work full-time for women’s liberation.⁸³ Laurel Limpus of the TWLM described the conference as follows:

There was a tremendous debate in that conference between the women who called themselves “consciousness raisers,” (we had never heard of consciousness raisers before at

⁷⁹ Cleveland, interview.

⁸⁰ Kneen, interview.

⁸¹ McAfee and Wood, “Bread and Roses.”

⁸² McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals*, 197.

⁸³ MUA, CUS, File ‘Human Rights 68-9,’ Letter from Linda Seese to Women’s Liberation, 12 November 1968.

all) and women who said that the basic question of oppression was Marxism...I think it had a lot of effect on what happened in Toronto...We carried a lot away from it.”⁸⁴

When they returned to Toronto, a debate emerged within the group over the source of women’s subordination. While many maintained that capitalism was the central opponent to gender equality, others insisted that patriarchy was the real enemy. Those who held the position that women should organize around the abolition of patriarchy, rather than capitalism, argued that the women’s movement should have no relation to the New Left. The pocket of activists within the TWLM who held this view split from the group in 1969 to form the New Feminists.⁸⁵ This group was unique in the Canadian context, as noted by Myrna Kostash and Nancy Adamson.⁸⁶ The New Feminists was composed mainly of American women who had moved to Toronto in opposition to the draft. Their arguments against organizing around anti-capitalism and New Leftist concerns were more common in the United States among women who called themselves “radical feminists.” Ellen Willis, a leader of New York Radical Women, articulated the radical feminist position in a February 1969 edition of the radical weekly, the *Guardian*. Willis maintained that women must create a separate movement from that of leftist men, stating: “Although we may co-operate with radical men on matters of common concern, we are simply not part of the left. We do not assume that radical men are our allies or that we want the same kind of revolution.”⁸⁷ With the argument that, “our oppression transcends occupations and class lines,” Willis conceived of a women’s movement with a “SPECIFICALLY FEMINIST radical

⁸⁴ CWMA, University of Ottawa, Box 107, Laurel Limpus, “The History of the Toronto Women’s Liberation Movement,” February 1971.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Kostash, *Long Way from Home*, 182, and Adamson, “Feminists, Libbers, Lefties, and Radicals,” 257.

⁸⁷ CWMA, University of Ottawa, Box 14, File ‘CUS/UCE Papers on Women’s Liberation,’ Ellen Willis, “The Feminist Position,” in Toronto Women’s Liberation Group, “Is Feminism Necessary for Women’s Liberation?,” undated.

consciousness,” that sought to transform patriarchy, rather than capitalism, which she equated with “male-oriented radical analysis.”⁸⁸

Women in the TWLM critiqued the “radical feminist” position, espoused by Willis and the New Feminists. They disagreed that women formed a “single class,” and could be organized on the basis of sisterhood.⁸⁹ In a reply to Willis’ article in the *Guardian*, Peggy Morton further took issue with the identification of the leftist anti-capitalist position as “male,” asserting: “I don’t feel that the left either in its present organizational forms or in its historical tradition “belongs” to the men. I don’t feel that the fight for socialism is a ‘male fight.’”⁹⁰ As discussed in chapter six, activist and journalist Myrna Kostsh has argued that women’s liberationists framed their movement as anti-capitalist in order to appeal to New Leftist men. Morton’s reply to Willis’ article indicates that this was not the case; rather, their analysis of gender issues through the lens of New Leftist themes was indicative of the fact that women’s liberationists themselves were New Leftist.

Women’s liberationists shared a complicated relationship with the broader left. In a description of the priorities of gender-integrated New Leftist groups in Canada and the United States, Myrna Wood and Kathy McAfee reflected: “Most movement activists agree that we should talk about women’s oppression...Yet strangely enough, demands for the liberation of women seldom find their way into movement programs, and very little organizing of women, within or apart from other struggles, is actually going on.”⁹¹ They viewed this situation as a product of the “male chauvinism that remains deeply rooted in the movement itself.”⁹² One

⁸⁸ Ibid. Emphasis in original.

⁸⁹ Ibid., Gail Dexter, Laurel Limpus, Judy Oieniak, Caroline Perly, Barbara Gill, Molly Moore, Arlin Paterak, and Patty Rosenbaum, “A Reply.”

⁹⁰ Ibid., Peggy Morton, “A Reply to Ellen Willis and A Reply to the Reply,” undated.

⁹¹ McAfee and Wood, “Bread and Roses.”

⁹² Ibid.

example of this tension existed in Toronto's New Left Caucus (NLC). The membership of the NLC included women such as Laurel Limpus and Judy Pocock, who were actively involved in the women's liberation movement. Among the NLC's six principles of unity was a stated commitment to "support an autonomous women's liberation movement."⁹³ The NLC, however, ultimately split after a debate about the presence of male chauvinism in the group. In January 1969, three men of the NLC circulated a paper composed of a series of short dialogues that characterized women in the group as clucking hens, occupied with gossip and chatter, rather than serious intellectual work.⁹⁴ The paper fell into the hands of NLC women, who responded by gathering together under the satirical name, "The Knitting Circle," to write a reply to the men's document. They explained how each of the vignettes communicated a stereotypical image of womanhood, and expressed that they took the greatest offense to the characterization of the women's liberation movement as "chit chat over dinner."⁹⁵ With a bold rebuttal, the women of the NLC demonstrated the empowerment they experienced as a result of their collective action around, and consciousness of, gender inequality:

You do not have monopoly on Marxist materialist understanding, gentlemen. You are not the guardians of a rare and highly abstracted intellectual gift which enables you to see into the depths of our inability to be Marxist...We as women have long had a developed analysis of the destructiveness of elitist intellectualistic ego-tripping. For years we suffered under it in silence, afraid to question the high priests of Marxist ideology...But now, because of our collectivity, we are not intimidated any longer. Intellectual ego-tripping is not the basis of the struggle for socialism. The terrifying competitiveness of left male heavy struggles, in which we have at most been the sexual pawns which sparked off the hatred of the men for each other, is the antithesis of socialist humanism.⁹⁶

⁹³ Andy Wernick, "A Guide to the Student Left," *The Varsity*, 24 September 1969.

⁹⁴ CWMA, University of Ottawa, Box 107, Laurel Limpus, "The History of the Toronto Women's Liberation Movement," February 1971.

⁹⁵ CWMA, University of Ottawa, Box 76, New Left Caucus, "The Knitting Circle (Toronto, On.) Position Paper," 1969. The members of the Knitting Circle are listed as: Florence Bartoshesky, Terry Dance, Gwen Hauser, Elaine Heaton, Amber Hollibaugh, Linda Keeley, Laurel Limpus, Melody Mayson, Judy Pocock, and Kris Purdy.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

These women left the NLC after the men they addressed in their paper denied the existence of male chauvinism in the group. This type of struggle within gender-integrated leftist groups was recognized by Peggy Morton in a reflection on New Leftist men's attitudes toward women; however, she stipulated that: "Not all men in the left are chauvinists—many will be our allies in our fight to end chauvinism and to smash elitism in the left."⁹⁷

Former SUPA women continued to work in gender-integrated leftist groups while active in women's liberation. Peggy Morton worked as a field worker in CUS, while Myrna Wood joined the Socialist Action Committee at McGill, and Cathleen Kneen led discussions on women at a teach-in sponsored by the SCM.⁹⁸ Their enduring presence in other leftist efforts was further evidenced by a conflict they experienced between their commitment to the women's movement, and commitment to the anti-war movement in May 1970, when a mass action in response to the shootings at Kent State was planned in Toronto on the same day the TWLM was scheduled to leave for Ottawa on the Abortion Caravan. Peggy Morton reflected on the dilemma she experienced in an interview with Shannon Stettner: "Imagine how torn we were. We, who'd been very much a part of the anti-war movement, now we're sort of duty-bound to go and carry on this thing which we've started [the Abortion Caravan], but the whole focus of the movement that weekend is somewhere else."⁹⁹ While there were also women who did not feel as divided over their decision to leave for the Abortion Caravan, Morton's memory reflects how participation in multiple leftist movements informed her activist identity.¹⁰⁰ For Morton and the TWLM, the goal

⁹⁷ CWMA, Box 14, File 'CUS/UCE Papers on Women's Liberation,' Peggy Morton, "A Reply to Ellen Willis and A Reply to the Reply," undated.

⁹⁸ CWMA, Box 51 London Women's Liberation, "Teach-in on the role of women, sponsored by the SCM" (pamphlet), 28-30 January 1969. It should also be noted that at this conference Kneen and Morton led one session "For Women Only" to discuss the challenges of organizing around women's liberation "because women often find it difficult to participate fully in discussions where both men and women are present."

⁹⁹ Shannon Stettner, "'We Are Forced to Declare War': Linkages between the 1970 Abortion Caravan and Women's Anti-Vietnam War Activism," *Histoire sociale /Social History* XLVI, no. 92 (November, 2013): 438.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

of achieving women's liberation within a socialist society required the support and success of other leftist movements. As the TWLM explained: "Overcoming capitalism means alliance with a broad spectrum. This does not contradict organizing women around our own oppression but is a realization that most of our demands can be supported by our oppressed brothers."¹⁰¹

As an autonomous movement, women's liberation focused specifically on women's issues within a New Leftist framework. It was this focus that differentiated their activism from that of other leftist groups working toward a socialist society. As the women of the TWLM wrote in 1971: "Unlike other socialist groups, Women's Liberation has not been willing to wait for the revolution to bring about the equality of women. Instead, we see the fight against the oppression of women as an important part of a socialist revolution."¹⁰² The urgency of working around women's issues was further emphasized by Peggy Morton, who described the purpose of women's liberation as a movement to organize "around demands which provide the precondition for autonomy for women."¹⁰³ The following will examine how the women's liberation movement organized around issues that would contribute to this goal, including co-operative childcare and alternatives to the nuclear family, reproductive control, and economic independence.

Building a Movement: Organizing around Family, Reproductive Control, and Labour

Household work and childcare in the context of the nuclear family were identified by women's liberationists as obstacles to gender equality. In her influential 1969 article, "The Political Economy of Women's Liberation," Margaret Benston emphasized the necessity of analyzing the position of women in relation to the means of production, arguing that women's

¹⁰¹ CWMA, Box 107, "Draft Towards a Strategy for Toronto Women's Liberation," undated.

¹⁰² Ibid., Cathy Pike and Barb Cameron, Toronto Women's Liberation, "Collective Child-Care in a Class Society," May 1971.

¹⁰³ Peggy Morton, "Women's Work is Never Done," (1970) in *Women Unite!*, 66-67.

subordination stemmed from their relegation to the “socially necessary production” of unpaid household work and child care.¹⁰⁴ Consequently, she called for the reorientation of household work from “private production” to social responsibility “done in the political economy.”¹⁰⁵

Benston’s article was read by women’s liberationists around the globe as an analysis of “women’s housework from a new left perspective.”¹⁰⁶

Benston’s argument was not accepted without critique. Peggy Morton, for one, argued in her 1970 essay, “Women’s Work is Never Done,” that women did not share a single experience of subordination rooted in household labour; rather, due to their different class positions, it was necessary to acknowledge the “super-exploitation” of women in the workplace, who were doubly subjugated as women and as workers.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, the family unit was an important site of analysis within women’s liberation.¹⁰⁸ As Morton wrote:

We have talked a lot about the functions of the family in capitalist society. As the primary place where people are socialized, it is within the family that we learn to relate to people in a hierarchical way; in particular, the family sets up the authoritarian relationships between parents and children and between men and women.¹⁰⁹

Given their understandings of the nuclear family’s connection to the perpetuation of gender inequality and capitalism, women’s liberationists identified co-operative parenting and socialized childcare as short-term struggles in a movement for the autonomy of women within a socialist society.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ Margaret Benston, “The Political Economy of Women’s Liberation,” *Monthly Review* (September 1969): 15.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁰⁶ Palmer, “New Left Liberations,” 117-118.

¹⁰⁷ Morton, “Women’s Work is Never Done,” (1970) in *Women Unite!*, 62. For another critique see, Mickey and John Rowntree, “More on the Political Economy of Women’s Liberation,” *Monthly Review* 21, no. 8 (January 1970).

¹⁰⁸ A critique of the nuclear family was advanced by women’s liberationists from Canada, Britain, and the United States at the 1969 Year of the Barricade Conference at Glendon College. Ross Munro, “Radical conference: Seek end to family unit,” *The Globe and Mail*, 25 October 1969, p. 5.

¹⁰⁹ CWMA, Box 39, File ‘Hogtown Press,’ Peggy Morton, “they are burning they are burning EFFIGIES why, why, EFFIGIES?,” undated, 2.

¹¹⁰ CWMA, Box 103, Melody Kilian, “Women—Reform or Revolution?,” undated.

Women's liberation groups established co-operative childcare facilities, such as the Louis Riel Family Co-Op at SFU, and the Sussex Day Care in Toronto.¹¹¹ Former SUPA activists were involved in these efforts, including Jim Harding at SFU, and Sarah Spinks at the University of Toronto.¹¹² While the concept of parent-controlled co-operative childcare was not new in the 1960s, women's liberationists viewed its potential through a new lens that centred on the importance of challenging gender roles and expectations.¹¹³ Sarah Spinks, recalled that at the Sussex Day Care, "We dressed boys in dresses and girls in pants."¹¹⁴ The co-operative further emphasized that childcare was not gender-specific work. John Foster of the Sussex Day Care wrote: "The need for the full involvement of men with the children and the centre was given a higher priority than the need for highly trained professionals of either sex."¹¹⁵ Spinks further reflected on this in an interview with Judy Rebick: "The community attracted a huge number of male pioneers, men willing to work to change regular male attitudes. Men who wanted to be around children. We wanted the kids exposed to men and women who were challenging sexism."¹¹⁶

The counter-cultural community of Toronto's Rochdale College, which combined co-operative living and alternative education, also offered fertile ground to experiment with alternatives to childcare within the nuclear family. As former SUPA activist, Cathleen Kneen reflected: "What I remember was the real liberation of the ashrams and people experimenting

¹¹¹ Vancouver Women's Caucus, "Women's Caucus--A History and Analysis," December 1970, Folder "Vancouver Women's Caucus, 1969-1971," Ann Roberts Women's Movement Collection, F-166-0-0-6, Simon Fraser University Archives, Burnaby, British Columbia. Included in *How Did the Canadian Women's Liberation Movement Emerge from the Sixties Student Movements? The Case of Simon Fraser University*, Documents selected and interpreted by Roberta Lexier.

¹¹² Harding, interview.

¹¹³ Lisa Pasolli, "'Talkin' Day Care Blues': Motherhood, Work, and Child Care in Twentieth-Century British Columbia," (PhD diss., University of Victoria, 2012), 202.

¹¹⁴ Sarah Spinks quoted in Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses*, 60.

¹¹⁵ John Foster, "Sussex Day Care," *Women Unite!*, 103.

¹¹⁶ Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses*, 62.

with different ways of living together. It was just so exciting.”¹¹⁷ David Sharpe describes the ashrams in his book on Rochdale as “the most experimental of the living arrangements” at the college. An ashram consisted of four single bedrooms, and four double occupancy rooms with a common kitchen, bathroom, and living space.¹¹⁸ While Kneen recalls the excitement of experimenting with communal living and alternatives to the nuclear family, she added that it eventually “became impossible to raise kids there anymore.”¹¹⁹ By 1969, crashers flooded Rochdale as a result of its open-door policy, and heavy drug use and drug dealing became increasingly part of the college’s culture.¹²⁰ Although Kneen did not know if those families who lived in the ashrams “went off and did other kinds of creative non-nuclear-family living,” at least one legacy from Rochdale’s experiments with co-operative childcare remains.¹²¹ Kneen was instrumental in the establishment of the Rochdale Playschool, which was a co-operative and parent-run childcare centre. When Rochdale Playschool was closed by the fire department, Kneen secured space in the basement of St. Thomas Anglican Church around the corner on Huron Street; the Huron Playschool Co-operative was formed, and is still in operation today.¹²²

Women’s liberationists’ approach to co-operative childcare reflected a New Leftist commitment to participatory democracy. As Julie Mathien of the Sussex Day Care recalled: “We rotated the chair at meetings. We arrived at decisions by consensus rather than voting.”¹²³ In addition, the emphasis on parent-control was indicative of the New Leftist objective of creating a society in which people have greater control over the decisions affecting their everyday lives, as

¹¹⁷ Kneen, interview.

¹¹⁸ David Sharpe, *Rochdale: The Runaway College* (Toronto: Anansi Press Limited, 1987), 29.

¹¹⁹ Kneen, interview

¹²⁰ Henry Mietkiewicz and Bob Mackowycz, *Dream Tower: The Life and Legacy of Rochdale College* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1988), 88, and Stuart Henderson, “Making the Scene: Yorkville and Hip Toronto, 1960-1970,” (PhD Diss., Queen’s University, 2007), 499.

¹²¹ Kneen, interview.

¹²² Ibid, and “Huron Playschool Co-operative Inc.,” <http://www.pcpcontario.org/huron>. Accessed 27 July 2016.

¹²³ Julie Mathien quoted in Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses*, 61.

discussed in chapter four. Organizers of the Sussex Day Care emphasized that they held a different perspective on co-operative daycare from that espoused by the Day Nurseries Branch of the Ontario Department of Social and Family Services, which required “at least one full-time paid staff member possessing qualifications suitable to the Branch,” and processes that demonstrated a commitment to running “as efficiently as possible.”¹²⁴ Women’s liberationists of the Sussex Day Care argued that “matters of staff and standards should be decided by parents and not arbitrarily imposed by ill-informed governments...We see no reason why parents of pre-school children should not be free to select the kind of school and teachers they want.”¹²⁵ The purpose of co-operative daycare within the women’s liberation movement was not simply to offer a service, but to give parents greater control over the socialization of their children, rethink childcare as a social rather than private responsibility, and challenge gender expectations of both parents and children. Reflecting on its legacy, Julie Mathien told Rebeck: “We were trying to break down the nuclear family, and though we live in them now, we have much more porous boundaries.”¹²⁶

While daycare organizing served as an important site of movement activity and contributed to discussions about gender roles and the nuclear family, the TWLM also acknowledged the limitations of their efforts, which largely served the university community, rather than working-class families. Writing in 1971, the TWLM identified the movement’s inability to organize a broad-based campaign for socialized childcare for working women as “the biggest failure in the Women’s Liberation day care strategy.”¹²⁷ As will be explored at the end of

¹²⁴ CWMA, Box 107, File ‘Toronto Women’s Liberation Movement,’ “The Women’s Liberation Campus Community Cooperative Daycare Centre,” undated.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Rebeck, *Ten Thousand Roses*, 61.

¹²⁷ CWMA, Box 107, Cathy Pike and Barb Cameron, Toronto Women’s Liberation, “Collective Child-Care in a Class Society,” May 1971.

this chapter, a relationship between working-class women and women's liberation would develop more fully in labour struggles in the 1970s.

The women's liberation movement's organization around alternatives to the traditional nuclear family in the late 1960s did not yet engage in a serious consideration of homosexuality. As Linda Seese recalls, sexual orientation was "not at all" addressed by women's liberationists in Toronto while she was with the TWLM. Even when she told friends in the women's liberation movement that she was a lesbian at the end of the 1960s, their response indicated to her that it was "still too early" for that discussion in the movement.¹²⁸ According to Vancouver activist Ellen Woodsworth, the Vancouver Indochinese Conference in 1971 was a breakthrough for lesbian feminists. Although the inclusion of lesbianism as a topic of discussion at the conference was not received well by all women's liberationists, Woodsworth identifies it as an empowering moment "because we had found each other and we didn't feel so isolated."¹²⁹ Following the meeting, Woodsworth made efforts to talk about lesbianism in the women's liberation movement. Describing these attempts in the early 1970s, she explained: "Those early years were difficult. It was as if you were afraid all the time of your feelings, of your desires. You were afraid that if you came out, you would give something that was really wonderful—the women's liberation movement—a bad name."¹³⁰ Newsletters from women's liberation groups reveal that sexual orientation was not a central topic of discussion during the period under study.¹³¹

¹²⁸ Seese, interview.

¹²⁹ Woodsworth quoted in Rebeck, *Ten Thousand Roses*, 105.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ By 1971, the TWLM newsletter included information on a "lesbian educational," and by 1972 the Vancouver Women's Caucus printed an article titled, "Lesbians Belong in the Women's Movement." TWLM, Box 107, Toronto Women's Liberation Newsletter, "Lesbian Educational, April 1971, and Vancouver Women's Caucus, "Lesbians Belong in the Movement," 1972.

Consequently, the rise of lesbian and gay liberation activism in the 1970s falls outside the purview of this dissertation.¹³²

Mobilizing around Reproductive Control: The Abortion Caravan, 1970

Reproductive control was a second area of focus for women's liberationists seeking to achieve greater autonomy for women. As previously explored, abortion and birth control had been central issues in the Toronto Women's Liberation Group. The 1969 reforms to Canadian abortion law, also previously discussed, did not satisfy women's liberationists. As a result, they organized a national action called the Abortion Caravan. The idea for the action originated with the Vancouver Women's Caucus at a conference for women in western Canada and the United States, held at the University of British Columbia over Thanksgiving weekend in 1969.¹³³ The organization of the action was led by women activists, but as Jim Harding recalls, men attended the meetings as well, adding, "we were very careful about what we said, and it was clearly driven by the women."¹³⁴ As a concern that could "mobilize all kinds of women," abortion was an effective issue around which to organize a mass action.¹³⁵ The caravan left Vancouver on 27 April 1970, with stops in Kamloops, Edmonton, Regina, Winnipeg, Lakehead, Sudbury, and Toronto before reaching Ottawa.¹³⁶

The activists travelled in two cars and a van with the slogans, "Abortion is our right," and "Smash Capitalism."¹³⁷ Debate over the relevance of the latter statement revealed the varied priorities among women's liberationists. While some maintained that they should frame the

¹³² For studies of gay and lesbian liberation, see Becki L. Ross, *The House that Jill Built: A Lesbian Nation in Formation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), and Miriam Ross, *Lesbian and Gay Rights in Canada: Social Movements and Equality-Seeking, 1971-1995* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

¹³³ Christabelle Sethna and Steve Hewitt, "Clandestine Operations, The Vancouver Women's Caucus, the Abortion Caravan, and the RCMP," *The Canadian Historical Review* 90 no. 3 (September 2009): 481.

¹³⁴ Harding, interview.

¹³⁵ Ellen Woodsworth quoted in Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses*, 37.

¹³⁶ Kostash, *Long Way from Home*, 176.

¹³⁷ Sethna and Hewitt, "Clandestine Operations," 486.

struggle for abortion as part of a broader effort to “smash a system,” others believed that the slogan was misplaced for this particular action and could result in a loss of support.¹³⁸ Following extensive debate, the decision was made to remove the statement from the van in Regina.¹³⁹ This episode foreshadowed open splits that would occur in the women’s liberation movement after the Abortion Caravan. In November 1970, conflicting views on strategy divided attendees at Canada’s first national conference for women’s liberation, held in Saskatoon.¹⁴⁰ Some women advocated for the organization of women around single issues, such as abortion, and others promoted a multi-issue movement that linked gender inequality to a critique of capitalism. The minority of the conference attendees, who supported mass action around abortion, held a separate workshop to plan a nation-wide abortion action for 13 February 1971. Writing on the Saskatoon conference, Lis Angus, Pam Dineen, and L. Robertson of the Toronto Women’s Caucus wrote: “It was at this conference that the abortion campaign became the dividing line in the Canadian women’s liberation movement.”¹⁴¹

The 1970 Abortion Caravan activists collected signatures for their petition for abortions on demand as they crossed the country. They converged on Ottawa on 9 May, where they held a rally and marched to the Prime Minister’s residence, leaving behind a coffin filled with petitions from Canadian women demanding an end to botched abortions.¹⁴² The group maintained a decentralized approach to leadership and decision-making, reflecting one of the hallmarks of New Leftist organizing. As activist Betsy Meadly Wood recalled, the group was met by the

¹³⁸ Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses*, 38-39 and 42.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Bernstein, et al., *Women Unite!*, 11.

¹⁴¹ Lis Angus, Pam Dineen, and L. Robertson, “Toronto Women’s Caucus: A Two-Year Experience in a Cross-City Women’s Liberation Group,” *League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière Discussion Bulletin* 1972 No. 23, December 1972. Available online. <http://www.socialisthistory.ca/Docs/1961-/WomensLib/LSA-TWC.htm>. Accessed 6 July 2016.

¹⁴² Kostash, *Long Way from Home*, 177.

RCMP once they reached Sussex Drive. When asked to identify the group's spokesperson, they responded: "There are no leaders here."¹⁴³ The action continued on 11 May, when about twenty-five women chained themselves to their seats in the public galleries of the House of Commons, chanting: "Abortion on demand" and "Every child a wanted child."¹⁴⁴ The session was adjourned for fifteen minutes as a result of the disturbance, effectively shutting down the House for the first time in Canadian history.¹⁴⁵

Myrna Wood was among the women who chained themselves in Parliament. She had been organizing in Toronto with the TWLM around the issue of abortion in the period leading to the action. They gathered at hospitals in groups of thirty or more to protest against the limitations of the 1969 reform, and put posters around the city with the number of their communal house, trying to rally more women to travel to Ottawa.¹⁴⁶ Wood recalls receiving one phone call from a distressed woman seeking the help of the TWLM:

She was not young, she was in her thirties, she had paid for an abortion and...she hadn't lost the child. She was bleeding a lot; ended up in the hospital. This was standard practice everywhere. They would not finish the job so women could end up laying there for weeks or whatever. So this is what she was telling us and wondering if there was any way we could put pressure on the doctors to help her...We went out and we told the nurses on the floor that we wanted to speak to the doctor, and we're saying to each other, what are we going to do, what are we going to say?...But it hit me, it was like two days later we were going to go on the busses and trains and go to Ottawa. So I said to him, do you realize who we are? We're the women who are going on the caravan to Ottawa and we are going to make this a test case for the media! A brilliant idea, right?...The next day we got a phone call from the woman in the hospital, and they had finished her abortion. That's how scared they were of all this press, and it was having some effect.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Betsy Meadly Wood quoted in Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses*, 41.

¹⁴⁴ Kostash, *Long Way from Home*, 178.

¹⁴⁵ Sethna and Hewitt, "Clandestine Operations," 492, and Palmer, "New Left Liberations," 122.

¹⁴⁶ Wood, interview.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

The Abortion Caravan certainly caught the attention of the nation's media, as Barbara Freeman has studied in her account of the publicity campaign around the action.¹⁴⁸ The caravan successfully raised conversation about women's reproductive rights through its graphic imagery representing the deaths of women who had suffered botched abortions, and through consciousness-raising sessions, guerilla theatre, and their bold direct action at Parliament.¹⁴⁹ The historical significance of the caravan, however, should not be overstated. As historians Christabelle Sethna and Shannon Stettner have argued, the attention that the caravan has received in recent historiography, has resulted in "a level of exposure and an attribution of importance that probably exceeds its actual historical significance to the pro-choice movement in Canada."¹⁵⁰ The caravan did not result in legislative reform for "abortion on demand." It would be another eighteen years before the Supreme Court would remove the legal restriction on abortion.¹⁵¹ Nevertheless, it was a mass action that captured media attention and contributed to the development of a national discussion on the country's abortion law. By bringing together women's liberationists from British Columbia to Ontario, the Abortion Caravan was a movement-building action that complicates the declension narrative of sixties activism.

The Working-Class Orientation of Women's Liberation

Working toward economic independence for women was another central area of women's liberation organizing. As Myrna Wood recalls:

My position during those years was, you know, there wasn't anything more important than the economy...Pay women the same as men, and we could handle our own. We could get a divorce, we could afford to have our own apartment, to look after our kids, to get an

¹⁴⁸ Barbara M. Freeman, *Beyond Bylines: Media Workers and Women's Rights in Canada* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011), 123-156.

¹⁴⁹ Shannon Stettner and Christabelle Sethna, "Reassessing the Abortion Caravan," available online. <http://activehistory.ca/2015/05/reassessing-the-abortion-caravan/>. Accessed 5 July 2016.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

abortion if we needed one... Women's independence depends on them being able...to survive in whatever economy they're in.¹⁵²

While the movement's involvement in labour struggles is largely a story of the 1970s, the identification of working-class women as agents of social change was nevertheless apparent in the writings and actions of women's liberationists in the late 1960s. Myrna Wood and Kathy McAfee stated in 1969: "The potential for revolutionary thought and action lies in the masses of super-oppressed and super-exploited working class women."¹⁵³ The TWLM demonstrated their interest in aligning with working-class women by offering support in the 1969 Hanes Hosiery Strike.¹⁵⁴ Although this chapter focuses on the late 1960s, it is necessary here to extend into the 1970s to describe the growth of women's liberation more fully. This broader timeframe illuminates that sixties activism did not end abruptly with the close of the decade, but continued to inform understandings and strategies of social change in the 1970s and beyond.

Some women's liberationists argued that the organization of working women should be the central focus of the movement. In Vancouver, a group of women left the Vancouver Women's Caucus to form the Working Women's Workshop to focus specifically on the organization of working-class women, rather than other issues in the movement, such as reproductive rights. Out of this workshop, they formed the Vancouver Working Women's Association and created an independent union of women workers called the Service, Office and Retail Workers' Union of Canada in 1972 in response to patterns of male-domination and a lack of democracy in union governance.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Wood, interview.

¹⁵³ Wood and McAfee, "Bread and Roses."

¹⁵⁴ "Introduction," *Women Unite!*, 10.

¹⁵⁵ Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 117. For a study of the SORWUC, see Julia Maureen Smith, "Organizing the Unorganized: The Service, Office, and Retail Workers' Union of Canada (SORWUC), 1972-1986" (MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 2009).

Former SUPA women demonstrated a strong working-class orientation as their activism continued in the 1970s. Peggy Morton briefly worked for Canada Packers before she was laid off at the end of her probationary period, most likely, in her opinion, due to “a mutual understanding between the union and the management that they’d be smart to get rid of me.”¹⁵⁶ By 1978 she was a hospital worker at the Misericordia Hospital. She served as union president for twenty-two of the twenty-five years that she worked there full-time. Morton’s decision to become a worker was rooted in the notion of working-class women as agents of social change. She explained:

Quite a few women said it’s the working class who’s going to change things, so we’re going to organize in the working class. So the first step is to ourselves become workers. So I never took up any kind of career, even though I had gone to university and got a degree. I went to work as a worker...Our joining the trade unions and becoming part of the trade unions, first of all it was a question of proletarianizing ourselves in the sense that we came from the youth and student movement. We had to go and learn by having this direct experience, what the conditions of life are for the workers in these different sectors.¹⁵⁷

Former SUPA activist Joan Kuyek further connected women’s issues with those of the working-class. Writing on the women’s liberation movement in 1975, she stated: “We believe that the solutions to the women question can only be worked out in a society where the ownership of the means of production is in the hands of the people.”¹⁵⁸ In 1970, Kuyek moved to Sudbury and became involved in the city’s women’s liberation group. In addition to opening a day care centre and campaigning for abortion law reform, they founded the group, Women Helping Women, which provided resources to working-class women for dealing with landlords, getting on welfare, and accessing abortion. In 1978-9, Women Helping Women morphed into a citizens’ network to support the Inco Strike.¹⁵⁹ Myrna Wood further became involved in union organizing in

¹⁵⁶ Peggy Morton, Interview, Alberta Labour History Institute. Available online. http://www.labourhistory.ca/Uploads/ALHI_TRANSCRIPTS/PDFs/MortonP.pdf. Accessed 1 July 2016.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ CWMA, J. Kuyek and Z. Farid, “Who Speaks for Working-Class Women?,” *Canadian Dimension* (June 1975): 80.

¹⁵⁹ Kuyek, interview.

Hamilton, while Nancy Hannum participated in a research project on women and the economy, and women in company towns, as part of a campaign to protest the proposed Alaska Highway Gas Pipeline.¹⁶⁰

Other historians have studied the working-class orientation of women's liberation in the 1970s, and their works should be consulted for a fuller interpretation of this history.¹⁶¹ This section has merely sought to demonstrate this area of activism as a site of leftist movement-building that was important to the continued organizing efforts of women who had come out of SUPA. Their activism in the areas of childcare, reproductive rights, labour, and working-class communities in the late 1960s and beyond both challenges the declension narrative of sixties activism, and points to the legacies of their New Leftism.

Conclusion

The Canadian women's liberation movement developed out of various experiences in leftist groups across the country. Although "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..." was read throughout the movement in Canada and the United States, the direct influences of former SUPA activist women were most visible in Toronto where Morton, Seese, and Wood formed the TWLM. Using McKay's "horizontal approach" to study the leftism of the sixties, this chapter has illuminated points of connection between the women's liberation movement and the New Leftism of SUPA. Both movements sought to uncover and confront the root causes of inequality, rather than work within existing institutions; use participatory styles of leadership and decision-making; advocate for self-determination; and contribute to a shift in social consciousness. The women's liberation movement reflected these features of New Leftism through their critique of

¹⁶⁰ Michael Riordon, *An Unauthorized Biography of the World: Oral History on the Front Lines* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2004), 211, and Hannum, interview.

¹⁶¹ A good example is Luxton, "Feminism as a Class Act."

the women's rights approach of the RCSW; identification of capitalist relations as the root cause of gender inequality; use of horizontal leadership and decision-making in the operation of childcare centres and organization of the Abortion Caravan; efforts to achieve reproductive control and economic autonomy for women; and use of campaigns for abortion and co-operative childcare as a means to shift social consciousness.

While studying women's liberation within the wider context of sixties New Leftism reveals several similarities, it also illuminates key differences. The women's liberation movement's identification of gender equality as a condition for revolutionary social change marked it as something new. As McKay has argued, what distinguished the women's liberation movement from other leftist formations, including the New Left, was that it centred on "gendered forms of power that the other formations had not theorized or acted upon."¹⁶² This emphasis made women's liberation an autonomous movement to transform society through a confrontation of gender inequality. At the same time, women's liberationists connected the success of their movement to the success of other leftist struggles against socialism and imperialism, and couched their activism within several of the "distinctive conceptual systems" of New Leftism.

Studying the end of the 1960s through the lens of women's liberation has further illuminated these years as a period of movement-building, complicating the declension narrative of sixties activism. While several articles and book chapters offer more in-depth studies of certain women's liberation groups and actions, a full account of the complex analyses, relationships, and results of the Canadian women's liberation movement remains to be written.¹⁶³

¹⁶² McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals*, 209.

¹⁶³ Adamson, "Feminists, Libbers, Lefties, and Radicals," 252-280; Kostash, *Long Way from Home*, 166-187; Luxton, "Feminism as a Class Act," 63-88; Joan Sangster, "Radical Ruptures: Feminism, Labor, and the Left in the

It has been the contention of this chapter that this history is an important piece of the story of New Leftist sixties activism.

Long Sixties in Canada,” *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 40:1 (March 2010): 1-21; Sethna and Hewitt, “Clandestine Operations,” 463-495; and Stettner, ““We Are Forced to Declare War,”” 423-441.

Conclusion

The multiple sites of movement activity that converged within SUPA, from the anti-nuclear campaign to the first rumblings of the women's liberation movement, each contributed to the shape of the group's New Leftism, and offered different contexts in which gender issues were expressed and analyzed. A consciousness of gender inequality as a political issue was raised not only out of SUPA women's collective frustration around their relegation to gender-normative roles in the SUPA office, but out of their complex engagement with marginalizing and empowering activist experiences within overlapping movements. This consciousness was expressed in their critique of the movement culture in which they worked and lived, and in their argument that New Leftists had to confront the structures maintaining gender inequality to create radical social transformation.

This dissertation has argued that New Leftist history is not only a story of youthful men. Chapter one maintained that the CUCND's shift toward a New Leftist orientation cannot be explained without a discussion of the influences of older thinkers and activists in the pacifist tradition and British New Left. It was necessary for this first chapter to focus on the theme of generational identity because it seems to be on the basis of a generational framework that certain influences have been foregrounded and others have been overlooked in narratives of the CUCND's adoption of New Leftist thought. The concept of polarized generational identities, when applied to a study of the CUCND's transformation into SUPA, illuminates only a partial set of groups and individuals that informed the CUCND's decision to develop a New Leftist program. This dissertation has argued that the adoption of New Leftism within the CUCND reflected a multi-generational intellectual and activist influence.

The impact of inter-generational relationships, however, was not uniform across SUPA's history. In fact, as my oral histories bore out, a generational understanding of New Leftist activism gained strength during the years of SUPA. Examples of inter-generational cooperation still existed, especially around the group's anti-war activism, as discussed in chapter five, but these cross-generational alliances did not shape the movement as profoundly as they had within the CUCND. Nevertheless, attention to moments of inter-generational connection can help historians untangle the various strands of the "sixties generation" that contributed to the era's activism, and identify with more precision when and how a "generational gap" asserted itself.

This dissertation has also argued that women have a central place in SUPA's history, not only because they challenged the gap between the movement's rhetoric and practice, but also because of the meaningful work they performed. Following the gender-conscious leadership theories of Belinda Robnett and M. Bahati Kuumba, this dissertation argued that SUPA relied not only on the visible leadership positions of spokesperson and synthesizer, most commonly occupied by men, but also on a layer of leadership functions around community-based interactions, education, and communications, which were more accessible to women. This gender analysis of leadership illuminated both the contributions women made to the movement, and the diversity of leadership roles on which SUPA depended. A gender analysis of the group also brought broader tensions into sharper focus, including debates around decision-making practices and movement-building strategies, as discussed in chapter five.

The question of how a feminist consciousness developed within SUPA required an exploration of the multiple movements in which SUPA activists were involved. Women not only contributed to these various movements, but were shaped by them in meaningful ways. Like their male counterparts, several women activists entered SUPA through the anti-nuclear movement

and American movement for black civil rights. It was within these movements in the first half of the 1960s that they began to develop their activist skills and networks. As explored in chapter two, women in the CUCND connected with an older generation of women activist leaders in VOW around issues of peace, but not around issues of gender. The context of Cold War gender ideology made this period more conducive to social movement organization around a female consciousness, rather than a feminist consciousness. In addition, there was a sense among women activists across university campuses that their higher education would ensure that their futures would look different from those of the suburban housewives described in *The Feminine Mystique*. At the same time, women students confronted gender expectations on the university campus itself, in the form of strict regulations around their private lives, and messages that marriage should be their primary goal. While the university served as one of the first sites in which women's consciousness of gender inequality developed in the early 1960s, protest against the regulations around women's lives on campus was subsumed under the larger student activist project of abolishing *in loco parentis*, which did not address the gender dimensions of the issues. As the decade wore on, New Leftist women analyzed their experiences, and those of other women, within multiple contexts, and came to define gender inequality as a structural social problem that could be transformed through social movement activity.

For some SUPA women, the American movement for black civil rights played an important role in the development of a feminist consciousness. Chapter three showed that during their time in SNCC, Myrna Wood and Linda Seese observed a difference between the ways black women and white women have been gendered. This contributed to their understanding of gender identity as culturally constructed, rather than biologically determined. Chapter four explored the importance of SUPA's community organizing projects as "free spaces" in which

women could exercise their leadership skills and develop as activists. In some cases, their consciousness was also influenced by the community women with whom they worked. This was evidenced by Joan Kuyek and Myrna Wood in the Kingston Community Project, who observed the ways in which both class and gender injustice shaped the experiences of working-class women.

New Leftist movement culture further shaped women's experiences and consciousness in SUPA. As explored in chapter six, women in SUPA discussed patterns of marginalization in meetings, gendered definitions of leadership, and the limits of the "sexual revolution" in their own relationships. These conversations were also occurring among New Leftist women in the American SDS, and generated a broader context for the identification of seemingly personal problems as shared issues. Women in SUPA intellectualized their position in the movement, and women's position in society, through an engagement with works in socialist analysis and cultural anthropology. "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..." was evidence of this work, and served as an initial attempt to articulate the need for New Leftists to confront gender inequality.

This dissertation further challenged the declension narrative of sixties activism through a study of the emergence of the women's liberation movement in the late 1960s. Chapter seven explored how former SUPA participants linked their feminist consciousness with their activism by forming the Toronto Women's Liberation Group. While women's liberation was certainly a source of debate among New Leftists, and at times divided mixed-gender leftist groups, such as Toronto's New Left Caucus, it nevertheless reflected core tenets of New Leftist activism, including participatory politics, critique of capitalism, and radical approach to social change.

Feminist scholar Alice Echols has lamented that the women's liberation movement, among other identity-based movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s, have been "treated as

pesky subplots that eventually overwhelm the sixties dream of the beloved community, that upend the dream of We-ness.”¹ The significance of the emergence of women’s liberation is not that it fractured a unified New Left. As chapter five of this dissertation demonstrated, longstanding tensions in SUPA had been dividing the movement before the advent of women’s liberation. SUPA was plagued by regional differences, disagreements over movement-building strategies and the agent of social change, and debates over the movement’s relationship to the CYC. There was no unified New Leftist dream for women’s liberationists to destroy. The significance of the emergence of women’s liberation is that it added a previously neglected issue to the New Leftist agenda, and also shifted the movement onto new ground by asserting gender equality as necessary for social revolution. Women’s liberationists extended New Leftist activism into the 1970s. This dissertation did not study that activism, but focused instead on its roots within SUPA, and its early expression in the beginning stage of movement from 1967 to 1970. The national action of the Abortion Caravan, and the first national women’s liberation conference in 1970 signaled the movement’s emergence by this time. The emergence of the women’s liberation movement was occurring while mixed-gender New Leftist groups were dissolving, such as CUS and the UGEQ in Canada, and SDS in the United States.² By 1970, the focus had shifted away from seeking gender equality in mixed-left groups, toward the growth of autonomous women’s activism.³

The women in SUPA who raised the issue of gender inequality illuminated the personal sphere as a site for political activity. Looking back on the impact of “Sisters, Brothers, Lovers,

¹ Echols, “Across the Universe,” 407.

² Each of these groups dissolved in 1969. Robert Fedrick Clift “The Fullest Development of Human Potential: The Canadian Union of Students, 1963-1969,” (MA Thesis: The University of British Columbia, 2002), 74-5, and Doug Rossinow, “Letting Go: Revisiting the New Left’s Demise,” in *The New Left Revisited*, 242.

³ Cleveland, interview.

Listen...” nearly fifty years after its presentation at SUPA’s final conference, Peggy Morton reflected that one of its main achievements was that it began to raise a discussion within the movement that “if you call yourself a revolutionary, it should be reflected in what you do, in everyday relationships.”⁴ By 1970, this idea was succinctly captured by the widely-used slogan, “the personal is political.”⁵ As a new decade began to unfold, the political content of relationships, the family, and sexuality increasingly became a focus for social movement activity. Activist networks confronted violence against women, and issued demands for childcare, and maternity leave. In addition, publicly identifying as gay became an important political act with the emergence of the lesbian and gay liberation movement.⁶ The link between the personal and the political, which was emphasized in the women’s liberation movement, developed and broadened the New Leftist goal of raising a consciousness of the structural basis of individual problems. As the Port Huron Statement declared in 1962: “A new left must...give form to the feelings of helplessness and indifference, so that people may see the political, social and economic sources of their private troubles and organize to change society.”⁷ It was this conceptualization of the New Leftist mission that was carried out in the women’s liberation movement.

⁴ Morton, interview.

⁵ The slogan first appeared in a 1969 underground article by New York radical feminist, Carol Hanisch. The article was reprinted in the 1970 collection, *Notes from the Second Year*. Deborah L. Siegel, “‘The Personal Is Political’: Travels of a Slogan in Second and Third Wave Feminism,” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2001), 38.

⁶ These developments in the 1970s are explored in Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses*, 17-124.

⁷ “The Port Huron Statement of the Students for a Democratic Society,” available online. <http://coursesa.matrix.msu.edu/~hst306/documents/huron.html>. Accessed 21 November 2016.

Legacies of Sixties New Leftist Activism

In 2007, former SUPA activist Tony Hyde summed up the legacy of New Leftist activism as “a redefinition of politics.”⁸ This redefinition expanded the scope of issues that were considered political, and brought new groups of people into the political process. New Leftism further moved political activity outside the realm of party politics, and sought to change society through a transformation of social consciousness. Former SUPA activists are still advancing this vision of politics in various spheres of influence, including new social movements, the academy, justice system, journalism, and workplace. SUPA’s legacies are evident through the continued work of the activists interviewed for this dissertation.

Several New Leftists moved into environmental activism in the 1970s and beyond. The intimate ties between environmental and peace issues, reflected in the founding of Greenpeace in 1971, made the environmental movement a natural site of activity for former SUPA activists.⁹ As Jim Harding reflects: “The continuity is still there between the ban-the-bomb, the student movement, and the environmental movement.”¹⁰ In addition to becoming a left green activist, Harding also entered municipal politics after two decades of inner-city community organizing.¹¹ A link between environmental concerns and community health has served as an avenue into continued activism for several other SUPA people. Joan Kuyek was instrumental in the founding of Mining Watch Canada, which deals with the environmental and social justice impacts of the Canadian mining industry, while Brewster and Cathleen Kneen moved into research and

⁸ Anthony Hyde, “The Legacy of the New Left,” in *The New Left: Legacy and Continuity*, ed. Dimitrios Roussopoulos (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2007), 53.

⁹ Greenpeace originated with a group of activists from Vancouver, protesting against U.S. nuclear weapons tests on Amchitka Island. Frank Zelko, *Make it a Greenpeace: The Rise of Countercultural Environmentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹⁰ Harding, interview.

¹¹ Jim Harding, e-mail message to author, 6 April 2017.

activism around food security, sovereignty, and sustainability.¹² Myrna Wood also became an environmental activist as president of the Prince Edward County Field Naturalists, which seeks to protect natural habitats from industrial development.¹³ She asserts that her experiences as a sixties activist taught her “a lot on how to become an organizer.”¹⁴ Finally, Linda Seese paired women and lesbian activism with environmental activism by helping found the Oregon Women’s Land Trust, to “preserve land for women and children,” and also protect the land from the environmental impacts of logging, and now fracking.¹⁵

Former SUPA activists also moved into labour activism, reflecting the emphasis on working-class organization that began to develop within SUPA.¹⁶ Daniel Drache was involved in the 1971 Texpack strike in Brantford, Ontario, and was also an organizer of the 1972 Artistic Woodwork strike in North York.¹⁷ Peter Warrian also participated in the Artistic strike, and went on to serve as the Canadian Research Director of the United Steelworkers of America.¹⁸ In the 1970s, Peggy Morton became the union president at the hospital where she worked in Edmonton for twenty-five years.¹⁹ Nancy Hannum also became a leader of workplace activism, “organizing...on issues of librarians and social responsibility.”²⁰ She credits the work that she did in SUPA as the leader of the Peace and the Professions Project as the initial experience that allowed her to organize within her field.

¹² Kuyek, interview, and Brewster and Cathleen Kneen, interview.

¹³ Wood, interview.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Seese, e-mail to author, 2 March 2016.

¹⁶ Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 177.

¹⁷ Ibid., 155.

¹⁸ Ibid., 170 and “Peter Warrian, biography,” available online. <https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/people/warrian-peter>. Accessed 25 November 2016.

¹⁹ Peggy Morton, interview, Alberta Labour History Institute, available online.

http://www.labourhistory.ca/Uploads/ALHI_TRANSCRIPTS/PDFs/MortonP.pdf. Accessed 1 November 2016.

²⁰ Hannum, interview.

The enduring influence of former SUPA activists can also be observed in academia. Several activists including Joan Kuyek, Jim Harding, Peter Warrian, Daniel Drache, John Cleveland, John Conway, and Peter Boothroyd, have combined their activist perspectives with academic teaching. When describing the impact of his sixties activism on his life, Boothroyd explained: “It shaped my intellectual perspective...All the stuff I’ve been doing and teaching at UBC is because of, stems from, and is based on what I learned in that period.”²¹ The relationship between universities and movements for social change can be observed in the academic programs that were forged through the efforts of activist scholars. As Jim Harding explains: “Some of us felt that a democratized university changed the climate in which people learned and broadened the scope of the learning. And I think that’s generally true because we broadened the curriculum.”²² The relationship between the women’s movement and the establishment of programs in women’s studies across Canadian universities serves as one example of this legacy.²³

Other activists, such as Clayton Ruby and Harvey Shepherd carried their New Leftist perspectives forward in their professions in law and journalism respectively. Reflecting on this, Ruby explained his path after the SUPA Neestow project: “I went back to law school...and I went back with the idea that I could make law a meaningful force for social change.”²⁴ While SUPA was small in size, it was made up of committed and influential individuals whose impact can be observed in their continued work and activism. As John Cleveland has summed it up:

²¹ Boothroyd, interview.

²² Harding, interview.

²³ Wendy Robbins, et al., eds., *Minds of Our Own: Inventing Feminist Scholarship and Women’s Studies in Canada and Quebec, 1966-76* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007).

²⁴ Ruby, interview.

“SUPA constituted sort of one element...of a New Left generation that carried on, and for those individuals, carried on for the rest of their lives.”²⁵

Future Areas of Research

SUPA’s rich history offers several avenues for future research. While this dissertation provided an overview of SUPA, it did not deeply probe into certain aspects of the movement. More research into SUPA’s finances, on-campus activities, and presence in Quebec would contribute to a deeper understanding of the group’s operations and character. Focused studies of particular SUPA projects, actions, and regions, are also needed to create a historiography that reveals the complexity of the movement. Scholars have begun this work with explorations of CUCND/SUPA actions around La Macaza, the Kingston Community Project, and the Nova Scotia Project.²⁶ More intensive studies of SUPA at the local level could enrich our understandings of SUPA’s contributions, identity as a movement, and legacies.

There were limits to this dissertation’s study of the women’s liberation movement. Several developments and activists fell outside the purview of this study since my focus was on the beginnings of the movement, and on the continued activism of certain women within SUPA. Particularly, lesbian and gay liberation, and women’s anti-racist activism were not explored. Just as this dissertation challenged male-centric histories of SUPA, it is necessary that scholars complicate histories of women’s activism that focus only on white middle-class heterosexual women.²⁷ Furthermore, studies of the women’s liberation groups that emerged across the country

²⁵ Cleveland, interview.

²⁶ Douville, “Project La Macaza”; Harris, *Democracy in Kingston*; and Jones and Walker, *Burnley “Rocky” Jones Revolutionary*, 63-105.

²⁷ For an overview of the diversity of women’s activism during the second-wave, see Rebeck, *Ten Thousand Roses*; Luxton, “Feminism as a Class Act”; Carolyn Egan and Lynda Yanz, “Building Links: Labour and the Women’s Movement, in *Union Sisters: Women in the Labour Movement*, eds. Linda Briskin and Lynda Yanz (Toronto: Women’s Educational Press, 1983); Ross, *The House that Jill Built*; and Joyce Green, ed., *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* (Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 2007).

on university campuses would serve as another interesting avenue into the diversity and depth of women's liberation activism. The Canadian Women's Movement Archives contains a wealth of archival material that would offer insight into these histories. Finally, gender studies of other sixties activist bodies, such as the New Democratic Youth, and the Student Christian Movement, would contribute to a more comprehensive history of the roots of the Canadian women's liberation movement.

This dissertation is part of a larger historiographical project to complicate conventional understandings of Canada's sixties. Recent scholarship has illuminated the importance of widely ignored themes of religion, labour, race, and continuities with the Old Left.²⁸ This study of SUPA demonstrates that the historical significance of New Leftist women must also be reconsidered. The historiographical tendency to reduce discussions of women's experiences in SUPA to the grievances contained in "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen..." has resulted in a narrative that locates their significance centrally in this one moment of opposition, and overlooks many of their contributions to the group. This dissertation has offered a different narrative, based on a gender study of SUPA, and the multiple sites of movement activity in which women in the group exercised their activism, and developed a feminist consciousness. It has argued that while gender expectations in SUPA meant that women at times performed marginal roles, they were not marginal to the movement.

As a gender study, this dissertation not only illuminated new aspects of SUPA women's experiences and contributions to New Leftist activism, but also brought the group's operations

²⁸ Douville, "The Uncomfortable Pew"; Milligan, *Rebel Youth*; David Austin, "All roads led to Montreal: Black Power, the Caribbean, and the Black Radical Tradition in Canada," *The Journal of African-American History* 92, no. 4 (Autumn, 2007): 516-539; Scott Rutherford, "Canada's other Red Scare: Rights, Decolonization, and Indigenous Political Protest in the Global Sixties," (PhD diss., Queen's University, 2011); and Squires, *Building Sanctuary*.

into clearer focus, emphasized SUPA's identity as a collection of movements, and considered the impact of developments within the group, such as the turn away from community organizing, from a new perspective. Tracing the factors that contributed to the development of a feminist consciousness in SUPA has also advanced a more balanced interpretation of the roots of the women's liberation movement in Canada, recognizing both the marginalizing and empowering experiences that led to the identification of gender inequality as a New Leftist issue.

SUPA was a multi-issue movement that linked activism around the nuclear threat of the Cold War, racial and economic inequality, educational freedom, Canada's complicity in the war in Vietnam, and eventually, the social position of women. When Judy Bernstein, Peggy Morton, Linda Seese, and Myrna Wood wrote: "We of the New Left deplore exploitation of all kinds," they identified this range of issues, and themselves, as New Leftist. It is this understanding of Canadian New Leftism and its actors that has emerged out of a gender study of SUPA's history.

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