
David S. Churchill

Résumé de l’article
Cet article explore l’histoire des expatriés et insoumis américains dans les communautés politiques et culturelles alternatives de Toronto à la fin des années 60 et au début des années 70. Comme tels, ces expatriés ont été des acteurs importants dans l’élaboration et la création de nouveaux espaces sociaux, de la politique militante et d’autres formes d’expression issues du sein des communautés contre culturelles et des mouvements de la Nouvelle gauche. Aidés par la classe et le privilège racial, bon nombre de ces expatriés ont été en mesure de participer à la culture publique de la ville et de l’engager comme peu d’autres migrants. Cette capacité à intégrer les quartiers alternatifs de Toronto, ses scènes et ses communautés intentionnelles a néanmoins été facilitée par les connexions transnationales et les objectifs liant actions locales avec aspirations et collaborateurs mondiaux.

David S. Churchill

This article explores the history of U.S. expatriates and draft resisters in alternative political and cultural communities within Toronto during the late 1960s and early 1970s. As such these expatriates were important players in shaping and creating new social spaces, activist politics, and alternative forms of expression generated within the city’s counterculture communities and New Left movements. Aided by their class and racial privilege, many of these expatriates were able to participate in and engage the public culture of the city as few other migrants could. This ability to become part of the Toronto’s alternative neighbourhoods, scenes, and intentional communities was nonetheless facilitated by the transnational connections and objectives that linked local actions with global aspirations and collaborators.

Ethel Starbird’s 1975 *National Geographic* profile of Toronto utilizes tropes of urban modernization juxtaposed to the supposedly more traditional and local culture of the inner city and core neighbourhoods. Starbird’s article reads part travel log, part popular urban sociology. Toronto is thus simultaneously a site of dynamic immigrant cultures, stodgy Anglo-Canadian heritage, and international-style corporate architecture. Key elements in the author’s developmental narrative are the place of ethnic and immigrant communities—a supposedly recent addition to the metropole—simultaneously new, traditional, global, and locally situated. Here the construction of the CN Tower and “colorful Kensington Market” are presented as evidence of a vibrant and emerging city that welcomes and accommodates diversity and difference. Eschewing the melting pot versus the mosaic, Starbird compares the “one big stew” of New York City to Toronto’s more nourishing nouvelle cuisine of “mixed salad, where each minority retains its own distinctive flavor.” American expatriates, particularly draft resisters from the U.S. war in Vietnam, are a key component in this salad, and had by the time the article was published been migrating to Canada for nearly a decade.

By the mid-1970s American expatriates had gone from being a small, though much remarked upon, group to being an important element within the symbolic life of Toronto. A visible expatriate presence was proof that Toronto was, in the words of geographer James Lemon, the place to realize “liberal dreams.” Draft resisters and American academics were signs of the new Toronto, a more progressively and cosmopolitan place than it had been in the immediate postwar decades. Starbird spotlights Toronto’s U.S. expatriate community through a profile of draft resisters Charles and Maryanne Campbell, who came to Canada in 1969 from Philadelphia. Pictured with their young Canadian-born son, the couple are the very image of a young, countercultural family. Posed in an armchair surrounded by bookshelves, the bearded and bespectacled Charles is seated above Maryanne and their infant son, who sit at Charles’s feet. This comfortable and reassuringly paternostalistic family tableau is countered by Starbird’s text, which mentions the economic downturn in Canada resulting “in limited job opportunities” for Charles, despite his professional qualifications. Toronto might be a vibrant, culturally diverse, and somewhat familiar place, but it was still ultimately a place of limitations.

This article explores the place of U.S. expatriates within the public culture of Toronto, situating them in the counterculture, alternative political communities, as well as social movements, between 1965 and 1977. As such, it argues that U.S. expatriates were crucial (though by no means exclusive) participants in creating, building, and sustaining these alternative institutions, organizations, and movements within Toronto. Despite their relatively small numbers, in comparison to other immigrant groups, U.S. expatriates played a disproportionately large role in conceptualizations of Toronto of this era. This influence was greatly aided by the fact that U.S. expatriates came from an economically and politically dominant neighbouring power and as such were a focus of media curiosity and interest. Moreover, the vast majority of expatriates were white, middle-class, and educated young people fluent in English. This class and racial privilege aided U.S. expatriates in their ability to access networks of association, political action, and cultural production that was unparalleled by any other immigrant group. Because of language,
education, and familiarity with North American mass culture, Americans were able to enter, participate in, and even generate “Canadian” modernity—at least in its alternative manifestations.

Expatriate Americans, such as the Campbells, motivated to migrate at least in part by anti-imperialist sentiments, were not simply oppositional subjects critiquing U.S. state action. Rather, some of these American migrants were building new lives, institutions, and communities. Some—practically activists, radicals, and artists—were able to engage in, participate in, and in some cases create alternative additions to the public and political culture of Toronto. Here I borrow from literary critic Leela Ghanti to argue that these efforts constituted “affectional communities” that cultivated space for experimentation, difference, alternative expression, and social attachment. More than territorial spaces (though many of these communities had material and embodied elements), these were intentional communities of shared sensibility, political conviction, and affinity, but they lacked singular coherence. Without romanticizing these communities (many of which proved ephemeral and would fracture), their importance should not be discounted in producing intellectual and conceptual ways of being that challenged norms, facilitated belonging, and identity. As such the migration and reconfiguration of these ideas, along with historical actions of American expatriates, help construct what Fredric Jameson terms a “condition of possibility” in late 1960s and early 1970s Toronto.

Expatriate Americans began settling, joining, and creating alternative social space in Toronto in greater numbers in the mid-1960s. Some had come north to escape military induction and service in the expanding war in Vietnam while others chose to come north for work, school, or even a change of scene. Many draft resisters, such as Charles Campbell, travelled to Canada with girlfriends, wives, and in some cases as part of entire families. Urban theorist Jane Jacobs and her husband, for example, migrated to protect their draft-aged sons from induction. For others, particularly individuals not in jeopardy of being drafted, coming to Canada was a political choice based on deep opposition to the United States government. In all, approximately 250,000 Americans settled in Canada between 1966 and 1976. Though it is impossible to know how many came as a consequence of the U.S. military draft or opposition to the war in Vietnam, the rate of migration is doubtless what it had been the previous decade. In his careful analysis of the Canadian immigration statistics, as well as U.S.-based sources, Joseph Jones found that the figure of 60,000 migrants represented a “magnitude that averages narrow and broad assumptions.” Thus the figure of 60,000 is not a necessarily true or accurate accounting of resisters, but rather an attempt to reconcile the possible high and low estimates for the numbers of migrant resisters and deserters.

Determining the place of U.S. expatriates in Toronto is an even more elusive process than determining how many there were, partly because a significant portion of the Americans who settled in Toronto moved relatively easily into existing communities, neighbourhoods and networks of affiliation. In Toronto’s already transient countercultural communities, English-speaking, middle-class, and university-educated Americans could, at times, find familiar social worlds commensurate with what they had left behind. Places such as Yorkville, Rochdale College, Baldwin Street, and other neighbourhoods close to the University of Toronto campus offered elements of North American youth culture and individuals who could often connect them to more political and artistic scenes. Indeed, determining where the counterculture in Toronto began and the U.S. war-resister scene ended was not always an easy task. What emerged was a complicated social constellation that connected people through a range of anti-draft aid groups, countercultural hangouts, political activism, alternative commercial spaces, communal living arrangements, and the expansive production of art, music, and theatre. Within this constellation emerged a structure of feeling that connected the myriad participants, be they migrants or native-born Canadians, in a world of shared sensibility, practices, and lived experience. These practices were decidedly alternative, countercultural, and expressive, and more often than not inflected with New Left politics, particularly anti-U.S. imperialism and Canadian Left nationalism.

As a destination, Toronto had a lot to offer American expatriates. Its position as Canada’s centre of commerce and industry made it a good place to find work, both in the private sector and in the rapidly expanding federal, provincial, and municipal public sectors. The presence of two major universities, York University and the University of Toronto, both with large graduate and professional schools, afforded excellent educational opportunities to the predominantly young migrants. Moreover, Toronto’s importance as a centre for cultural, religious, and organizational networks provided young expatriate Americans with resources and contacts unparalleled in the rest of Canada. Finally, the city’s location, only a day’s drive from the huge population base in the American Northeast and Midwest made it an easily accessible destination.

The escalation of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and the corresponding arrival of American expatriates in Toronto, coincided with a period of rapid state modernization and expansion in Canada. Institutional and infrastructural building projects were reaching their zenith between 1965 and 1970. Some expatriates, most notably university professors, came to Toronto to take jobs in the expanding post-secondary educational sector. New institutions, such as York University and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, relied heavily on Americans to fill their faculties. Moreover, established schools such as the University of Toronto, the Ontario College of Art, and Ryerson Polytechnic Institute expanded dramatically during these years, hiring U.S. instructors to teach their newly enlarged classes. Yet this expansion within the higher educational sector was only a part of a larger process, which saw hospitals built, social services extended, and transportation networks and utilities constructed, expanded, and redeveloped. All these things were the material elements of political modernity—symbols of new prosperity and growth.

That Toronto was a modern or at least modernizing city came as something of a shock to some Americans with little or no experience north of the border. American expatriate and architecture critic John Bentley Mays recalls his initial surprise in encountering the city:

I arrived in Toronto, by bus, on a blazing day in August, 1969. Though I had been living only twenty miles across Lake Ontario, in Rochester, New York, I imagined Toronto to be a quaint old fishing village with a large and famous university settled improbably in the middle of it. This misperception—not less absurd, because unquestioned—is not unusual among Americans, who tend to have odd ideas about Canada in any case. Upon
stepping out of the bus station on Elizabeth Street, I was astonished to see, almost at once, the dark towers of the Toronto-Dominion Centre rising into the white-hot summer sky.  

Despite Mays’s embarrassed realization, Toronto shared many characteristics of postwar modernization and development that was underway throughout North America.  

As such, the intensifying metropolitan reality of Toronto was characterized by modernizing transportation infrastructure, rapid suburbanization, public housing projects, and a concomitant uneven development that often exacerbated inner-city poverty.

These physical changes in the built environment were matched both in scope and speed by dramatic changes in the population of Toronto. Mass immigration from southern Europe—Italian, Greek, and Portuguese, followed in the 1960s by immigration from the Caribbean, as well as South and East Asia in the 1970s—altered the demographics of the city. Thus, this “new” Toronto was not simply becoming physically distinct from the old, its residents and its attenuated public culture were dramatically transforming. As a city, Toronto was becoming linguistically, ethnically, and racially diverse, an increasingly visible symbol of Canada’s official policy of multiculturalism.

Though thousands of Americans did arrive in Canada, this number never represented a significant statistical group within the city of Toronto. The 1971 census found that only 1.5 per cent of the city’s residents were born in the United States. For the Metropolitan Toronto area, this was even lower at 1.3 per cent of the total population. Nonetheless, American expatriates received a degree of attention and access to cultural capital that far outpaced their statistically marginal numbers. Writing in the introduction to his study of “hidden” Toronto, sociologist William Mann listed draft resisters as part of the new social profile of Toronto. By the late 1960s, draft resisters had come to play a symbolic political role within the public culture of the city, illustrating the supposed enlightened tolerance of the Canadian state, and demarcating Toronto as a politically “happening” place. “Toronto is also a city at the edge of American History,” William Irwin Thompson fancifully enthused in his 1984 reminiscence. “With its draft dodgers, deserters and émigré academics, it is almost Tolkien’s Rivendell, safe from the ragings of the archaic darkness of Sauron and the Ring wraiths.”

Here the idea of Toronto as a haven in a hostile world is central to the representation of the city. The actual work of helping these U.S. war resisters navigate their way across the border and settle into homes and jobs was accomplished through networks of aid and solidarity. Many of these initial efforts were drawn from the nascent Canadian New Left, the emergent counterculture, and more established communities of faith, particularly with traditions of non-violence and pacifism, such as the Quakers and the Mennonites.

To accommodate and assist the ever-increasing numbers of draft resisters beginning to arrive in Canada throughout the winter and spring of 1966, more formal networks of support began to be established. It was the New Left in Toronto who first provided aid to U.S. resisters. The Student Union for Peace Action (SUPA), established in late December 1964, had emerged out of the Combined University Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CUND), whose members had sought to broaden their political activism beyond opposition to nuclear proliferation and the fight over stationing U.S. Bomarc missiles on Canadian soil. SUPA undertook numerous initiatives, based on the community-organizing model of participatory democracy advocated by the U.S.-based Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). This amalgamation of peace activism, a critique of U.S. imperialism and militarism, and the increasing physical presence of U.S. war resisters coming to Canada, motivated SUPA to organize support, assistance, and counselling for draft resisters.

In the fall of 1965 SUPA established an initiative to deal directly with draft resisters. SUPA veterans Daniel Drache and Heather Dean coordinated efforts in the city to help resisters find housing, legal advice, and employment counselling. With the help of draft resister Richard Paterak, SUPA produced a pamphlet, “Escape from Freedom,” providing advice for Americans who wanted to come to Canada. Through its extensive contacts with SDS chapters on American college campuses, SUPA was able to distribute the pamphlet throughout the United States.

In 1966 SUPA made space in their crowded Spadina Avenue offices to conduct counselling and give new arrivals a place to hang out, get information, and make crucial contacts. SUPA’s aid efforts went into high gear when they hired a draft resister by the name of Mark Satin. Satin, who left the University of Illinois after only one year, came to Canada in January 1967 and was soon recruited by Heather Dean to work with other newly arrived draft resisters. After only a few months in Canada, Satin was the director of SUPA’s Anti-Draft Programme, which would become the Toronto Anti-Draft Programme (TADP) after SUPA’s official demise at the end of 1967. Building on the “Escape from Freedom” pamphlet, materials produced by other fledgling aid groups, and his own research on immigration procedure, Satin compiled The Manual for Draft-Age Immigration into Canada. This slim document would become the bible for resisters who wanted to make the move north. It would also become a major source of revenue for the TADP and the book’s publisher, the House of Anansi.

Kenneth Emerick described the TADP offices as a suite of rooms, cluttered with recently arrived resisters, girlfriends, and family: “No one remains a stranger for long. Everybody busily compares notes on life in the military, where they came from; asking about rooms, jobs, immigration, city bus and subway service, or the way to the ‘john’ . . . Little piles of brochures and leaflets are stacked in corners or piled on window sills.” Much of TADP’s everyday activity was the scramble to find housing for resisters, who would walk in the door having just arrived from the U.S. and needing a place to stay for the night. Calls to supporters, asking them to once again put up another young American, were a frequent activity in the office. When nothing could be arranged, kids would just crash on the couch or the floor for the night and try to get a bed in a hostel, the YMCA, or, after 1968, at Rochdale College. For a while, Holy Trinity Church allowed its basement to be used as a hostel. Eventually other hostels would be established for resisters on John Street, Huntley Street, and Wellesley Street, all in Toronto’s core neighbourhoods.

As an organization, TADP attracted Americans. Bill Spira, a leading figure in TADP during the late 1960s and early 1970s, was himself an expatriate, having come to Canada in 1953 because of McCarthyism. In addition to Spira and Satin, a number of other long-time staff were
American. Niomi Binder Wall, who came to Toronto in 1964 with her husband (a professor at the University of Toronto), played a variety of roles within TADP. Other Americans, such as resister Bernard Jaffe and expatriate Max Allen (who had been involved with the New York–based resistance group associated with writer Paul Goodman’s Support in Action), worked as counsellors, helping to settle resisters and guiding them through the process of applying for Landed Immigrant status.32 In Jaffe’s view, TADP was “a self-help group and it mainly provides housing for draft dodgers coming up. It also provides us with a sense of community.”33 More than anything else, TADP provided basic services to resisters, helping them settle into life in Toronto and connecting them with useful contacts. Resister Charlie Schafflie recalls coming to Toronto and spending his entire first day in the TADP offices, eventually finding lodging and people who would aid in his adjustment to life in Toronto.32

Despite its American staff, TADP advocated an assimilationist approach to the resisters and deserters who came through its doors. This integrationist emphasis of TADP generated a tense debate among organized resister and deserter groups regarding the efficacy of certain political actions and the relationship that expatriates should have to the United States. Generally, Spira and TADP argued forcefully for an integrationist approach to life in Canada, one that encouraged Americans to involve themselves in local politics and organizing and to learn about their new nation’s history, arts, and culture. In an interview with AMEX magazine, Spira encouraged political activism and called on politically committed Americans to channel their energies toward Canadian causes. “My feeling,” he said, “is that people, after they are here for a while, really look at the Canadian Left very seriously, and really look at the various factions, the various sections of the Canadian Left, and then work with those sections.”33

For Spira, the political work of expatriates was futile if it continued only to cast its gaze southward toward Washington and the Pentagon. This was not to say that Americans in Canada should cease their efforts to oppose the war in Vietnam, but that they should do so as Canadians and embrace the emerging movement of Canadian nationalism, precisely because it was an anti-imperialist movement. Recalling an anti-war rally in Toronto where members of the Communist Party shouted, “Stop the bombing now!” Spira expressed his frustration at hearing such obviously borrowed slogans. After all, Canada, he noted, sent no troops to Vietnam, and they conducted no bombing. “If we are serious [about opposing the war in Vietnam], if we wanted to not just show our sympathy on the one hand with the anti-war struggle in the United States,” Spira reasoned, “but also, more important with the Vietnamese, our role should have been one of stopping Canadian goods from going to the States for the war machine.”34 Opposition to the Vietnam war in Canada needed to be initiated from a Canadian perspective, one that required protesters to identify themselves as Canadian political actors and not as Americans in exile.

Such positions earned Spira considerable antipathy from resisters and deserters who saw their stay in Canada very much in terms of exile. In sociologist David Surrey’s view, the predominately middle-class makeup of SUPA and TADP made the organizations insensitive to the needs and concerns of deserters who tended to be more working-class than most draft resisters. According to Surrey, TADP “represented a predominately higher-class draft dodger constituency whose publicly stated goal was assimilation, in order to retain its rather favorable image with the Canadian public and government.”35 From TADP’s perspective, the difference in treatment of deserters and resisters had a lot to do with TADP’s concern that too much public scrutiny of deserters would jeopardize the program and make it much harder for deserters to gain entry. In the view of TADP board member Nancy Pocock, the Canadian media were keen to do a story about deserters and how they were coming into the country. This in turn made the TADP staff even more cautious. In her evaluation of the handling of deserters, Pocock writes, “When deserters came to TADP, the standard answer was, ‘Look we can’t help you here, but here is the name and address of a fellow who will help you.’”36

Deserter John Swalby confirms this approach. Upon coming to Toronto he contacted TADP, who told him that the organization did not directly handle military cases but could “refer you to another party,” and they did. That other party were a group of Toronto Quakers who, according to Swalby, were “all pretty much in the community there, in Toronto at the time, every one of them had an American living in their basement as temporary measures.”37

According to Bill Spira, this cautious, even “cloak and dagger” approach to deserters by TADP was simply a response to concerns “about the public image of the Toronto Anti-Draft Programme and of donations etc. So whenever asked, for example, by reporters about deserters the standard answer was, ‘Oh there must be some of them up here.’ We anticipated that the Canadian government would be more negative toward them than toward resisters.”38

From the perspective of AMEX editor and deserter Jack Colhoun, TADP was being overly cautious and apolitical to a dangerous degree. In his view, TADP “feared that media coverage would cause the Canadian government to reduce or end the flow of war resisters across the border.”39 This sort of deference to authority as well as TADP’s financial connections to church groups and the more liberal elements of the media, was a source of conflict with more radical resisters, especially those in and around AMEX magazine. For TADP staff member Niomi Binder Wall, the issue had nothing to do with political commitment or radicalism, but rather was about responsibility. In her view, TADP’s approach was necessary, considering the tenuous nature of their enterprise and the political realities of the time.40

Attempting to provide direction and cohesion to resisters and deserters was a major concern for a number of other aid organizations in Toronto. In April 1968, Toronto’s second resister aid group, the Union of American Exiles (UAE), was founded. The union would have a lasting legacy on resisters and deserters that its newsletter would become AMEX magazine, a periodical produced for and by resisters and deserters. Long after UAE had ceased operation, AMEX continued to publish; indeed, it would remain in operation until the granting of amnesty by U.S. President Jimmy Carter in 1977.41

The UAE Newsletter began publication in September 1968. The first issue was a meagre two mimeographed pages announcing the opening of office at the corner of St. George and Russell Streets and laying out a potential counselling service program for the coming year.42 Over the next few issues the newsletter grew rapidly, its pages filling with
employment advice, meeting news, and guidance on adjusting to life in Toronto. One of the popular jobs, which the newsletter was quick to identify as a good way “to keep body and soul together,” was as a supply teacher for the Toronto Board of Education. At thirty-two dollars a day, resisters with a BA could make a modest income.43

In late 1968, the UAE Newsletter changed its name to the American Expatriate in Canada and began a three-part series titled “Surviving in Toronto.” These articles were a primer for young Americans negotiating their way through the city, offering advice on how to get car registration and a driver’s licence, where to buy inexpensive household supplies, and how to get phone and gas service installed.44 Another article by Linda Krasnor provided a glossary of Canadian English and word usage. Krasnor explained that public toilets were called “washrooms,” as opposed to the more common “restroom” in the United States, that “Hydro” referred to electricity (as in hydroelectric power), that holidays were vacations, and serviettes were paper napkins. In addition to differences in spoken English, Krasnor went over a number of differences in spelling and word usage that reflected the cultural legacy of Great Britain in Canada. Thus, words that end in -or in the US, such as color or flavor, are spelled with -our in Canada, as in colour and flavour.45

In addition to trying to help provide resisters with social adjustment and fostering a community, UAE sought to be politically engaged and committed, in a number of different ways. First, UAE involved itself directly in protest activities, such as a 28 October 1968 vigil and picket outside the U.S. consulate on University Avenue, protesting the war in Vietnam.46 UAE was also heavily involved in organizing the boycott of California grapes in the Dominion chain of grocery stores.47 In both cases, the UAE’s activities were an extension of similar protest movements in the United States. In addition, the UAE sought to organize political discussion groups for its members and used the newsletter as a forum for political debate and commentary. Articles on the Americanization of Canadian universities and on American imperialism in Canada appeared alongside articles about the Oakland Seven and the election of Richard Nixon as president.48 According to union member and newsletter editor Stan Pietlock, UAE sought “to define a community in exile” while engaging Canadian groups and educating readers about Canadian issues.49

Ultimately UAE’s existence as an organization was short-lived, and by the end of 1969 the group had dissolved. Early in 1970 another group of politically motivated expatriates, most of them resisters and deserters, formed Red, White, and Black. This new group sought “to go beyond the initial immigration process and housing and counseling function carried out in Toronto.”50 Instead, Red, White, and Black attempted to mix political and social concerns of expatriates. The group’s first action was to participate in the Vietnam Mobilization Committee rally in front of the U.S. consulate. In the spring of 1970 Red, White, and Black co-sponsored a fundraiser, along with University of Toronto’s Student Administrative Council, for the Chicago Conspiracy Defense Fund.51 In addition, Red, White, and Black organized French classes and “Canadian affairs seminars” for expatriates and mounted a weekly radio program on one of the city’s FM stations. Because of Red, White, and Black’s association with TADP, writer T. T. Coleman wondered if this new “social” group was just a front for TADP, and a way to “prevent another group from rising” out of TADP’s control. In Coleman’s view, Red, White, and Black was trying to fill the void left by the UAE but without its independence and overt political commitment.52

Adjusting to life in Canada for many middle-class white expatriates, particularly those from the American Midwest and Northeast who were relatively familiar with the climate in Toronto and the pace of urban life, could at times be relatively simple. Groups such as TADP, UAE, and Red, White, and Black served as halfway houses by linking resisters to communities of interest in Toronto with connections to the counter-culture, campus life, and other alternative scenes and institutions into which they could integrate. Resisters who were able to find employment, were in relationships, attended higher education, and received support from their families back in the United States were often in the best position to deal with the very real emotional toll of migrating. Separation from U.S.-based family and friends, anxiety about the future, political disillusionment, and the prospect of a potentially permanent exile could be profoundly depressing and alienating. For others life in Toronto seemed pleasant but dull compared to their experience in the United States. “The subways are clean, and efficient. The side walks are safe after dark,” wrote resister Kurt Gutknect in 1972. “Toronto is a nice city. One wonders whether its blandness is the price exacted for remaining nice. It is not the New York of Canada. It’s the Indianapolis of Canada without the blacks, the war, and the unhealthy attachment to the flag.”53

Even still, adjusting to life in Canada could be difficult. Charlie and Myra Novogrodsky came to Canada in 1969, after graduating from Brandeis University in Massachusetts. Their first year in Toronto proved to be very hard. Charlie, a graduate student at York University—located on the outskirts of Toronto—found life in the suburbs isolating and the graduate program uninteresting. After being deeply involved in the anti-war movement and participating in a civil rights program in Mississippi, the couple found the pace of life in Toronto too slow and too apolitical. In Boston, Charlie recalled, the anti-war movement had been all consuming, “Every day you wake up, you were a protester. As a mood, as an impulse, it was the centre of your life, it was dominant.”54 Only when they moved into Toronto’s inner city and became involved in local causes did the couple begin to imagine staying in Canada and not going back to the United States. For a time, Charlie was involved with the UAE, even writing the blurb for the group that appeared in The Manual for Draft-Aged Immigrants.55 Similarly, draft resister Ken Hopper and his partner found adjusting to life in Canada to be difficult and employment elusive, prompting them to relocate to Spain before returning to Canada and ultimately settling in Toronto. It was only after Hopper was able to find some success as an artist, receiving a Canada Council Grant for painting, that he was able to feel a sense of belonging and permanency in Canada.56

The sense of being part of some greater cause, something that would begin to approach Novogrodsky’s experiences in Boston, came not from one of the “great” issues of the time but from the comparatively intimate and localized issue of daycare. It was as volunteers, and later parents, at the University of Toronto’s Sussex Day Care Centre that a deeper and more significant connection was made to Toronto and life in Canada. Myra Novogrodsky recalls, “We arrived there one day
and asked if we could volunteer there while we were at the Faculty of Education. We made a whole new group of friends who were much like us politically. And there was an interesting mixture of Canadians and Americans, there were a lot of draft dodgers there with kids and ideas about education."  

Moreover, the daycare centre provided a place where draft resisters and Canadians could work on locally defined political objectives, ones that served the immediate needs of children but also had specific institutional links to the University of Toronto and the municipal and provincial governments. Ultimately, the centre provided a political cause—the survival and expansion of the centre itself—that was closely connected to the larger movement of alternative methods of education. For Myra Novogrodsky, the daycare centre was a connection to a feminist reading group led by SUPA veteran and urban activist Sara Sphinx. It would also lead the couple to become part of a communal living arrangement with Sphinx and her husband, Bob Davis, editor of This Magazine Is About Schools. 

Rick Bébout, a nineteen-year-old war resister who came to Toronto from Massachusetts, was able to find social causes and activities that inspired him and brought him together with like-minded individuals. Landing a job at the Book Cellar, a store in the city’s Yorkville neighbourhood, helped integrate Bébout to life in Toronto. Through co-workers and regular Bookseller customers who befriended him, Bébout became involved in efforts to preserve Toronto’s historic Union Station from the wrecker’s ball. With the help of Rochdale College veteran Pam Berton, the daughter of prominent Canadian journalist Pierre Berton, Bébout edited The Open Gate: Toronto Union Station, a history of Union Station, and was at the centre of the successful battle to preserve the building. As Bébout became increasingly a citizen of the city, he also undertook another transformation in his personal life, which ultimately deepened his connections to community-based activism, by coming out as gay. The freedom gained from coming to Toronto acted as a catalyst in making other life changes. Over the next few years, Bébout became increasingly involved in Toronto’s vibrant gay community, particularly its more activist and radical elements around the Body Politic newspaper and the Canadian Gay Archives.

Similarly, draft resister Joe Nickell was able to find a sense of belonging and purpose in Toronto’s arts community. “My mind is freer now,” Nickell recalled, “and I’m involved in a number of things—magic, political cartooning, a bit of guitar playing, writing poems and giving occasional readings. I’ve worked on some specials for CBC Radio, [and] written magazine articles, lectured.” Becoming more involved in activist politics, artistic and literary circles, or in efforts to sustain and run a community daycare centre, drew these expatriates away from specifically “American” communities into other constellations of sentiment, affiliation, and aspiration. This is not to say that expatriates were no longer present in these new communities—they often were—but that the focus of these groups no longer had an explicitly American communal orientation and framing. Again, entering into these communities was much easier for U.S. expatriates than it was for many other migrants. Finding that sense of place, being able to participate in the public culture and social space of Toronto, was of course mitigated by factors including education, class background, opportunity, and race.

Notwithstanding the many similarities between the United States and Canada, some expatriates had difficulty adjusting to life in Canada. For African Americans, these problems were even more acute, as Toronto’s black community was not only small but also predominantly Caribbean or West Indian and thus doubly unfamiliar. Charles Belcher, an African-American deserter from Newark, New Jersey, recalled his difficulty in finding his place in Toronto’s black community. “When I first went to Toronto, the West Indians called me a ‘saltwater Yankee,’ which to them was a West Indian who went to the States and returned to the West Indies speaking like an American.”

In contrast to the dense political and cultural worlds of African Americans with which Belcher would have been familiar in the United States, black Canadians were seemingly diffuse and their place within the public and popular cultures of the nation marginal. As historian Robin Winks has noted, the “self-satisfied” view that Canada was a place where one “would find no racial discrimination” was becoming less common by the mid-1960s. Indeed, the realities of racialized poverty and discrimination were increasingly coming into public consciousness, especially in those parts of the country—Nova Scotia and southwestern Ontario—with large, historic, black Canadian communities.

Race was a marker for the often-arbitrary gatekeeping practices of the Canadian state. Activist and lesbian scholar Amber Hollibaugh, who had come to Canada with a draft resister in the late 1960s, did “a lot of work moving guys across the border.” Hollibaugh asserts that being a presentable and pretty “white girl” was an important mitigating factor in shepherding men, particularly African-American military deserters, into Canada. She recalls the double-edged reality of being a biracial couple trying to enter Canada: “We were a bi-racial couple, and so it was complex, because on the one hand, I was really good at getting people across the border, but on the other hand, I brought more attention to us, rather than less, and so everything had to be weighed about whether I was the right person to send.”

Though Hollibaugh’s respectable whiteness could at times assist in getting African Americans into Canada, particularly as a couple, it also ran the risk of highlighting interracial sexuality and the spectre of miscegenation. Here again much depended on the racial biases and consciousness of the Canadian border authorities. Once in Canada, African-American expatriates experienced a measure of dislocation, difference, and estrangement much greater than that experienced by their white counterparts. In large part this came from the relative absence of an identifiable African-American public culture, with social institutions, neighbourhoods, and social venues. Racial difference mitigated assimilation for African Americans in ways that white expatriates never had to confront. E. J. Fletcher, an African-American resister from Cleveland, found that migrating to Canada caused him to reflect on racialization and identity. “Being in Canada forces me to think about my true identity. Being in Canada makes you aware of your blackness,” Fletcher observed, “mainly because you’re in the midst of whiteness. But I think it’s an experience in the sense that I think you really find out what racism is about.” Fletcher’s experience of racism disrupts the narrative of a relatively easy integration of American expatriates into Canadian society. Being African American was a significant mitigating factor. For Fletcher this meant a reflection on the operation...
and everyday experience of racism in the two countries: “Canada, in a sense, is actually more racist because it is more white. The black man in the States has had a profound effect on the country that in fact there are many institutions, the music, the foundations of jazz and blues for instance, which are for the most part black, and so even though the black man sees all this racism in the States, he can also see his own society, a black community, his own culture.”

This sense of not having a community, the absence of family, and of having to adjust to a more homogeneous society were all sentiments echoed by a group of black resisters interviewed by journalist John Edgerton. Eusi Ndugu, a resister originally from Mississippi, found coming to Toronto was “like jumping into a pitcher of buttermilk,” where one was completely immersed within a hegemonic white culture with little or no sustaining alternative. For Ndugu the available public culture was “all white—the music on the radio, the pictures in the papers and magazines and on television. There is a race problem here, just like in the northern cities in the US Whites here are no different.” Where white middle-class expatriates could easily meld into the larger community, in a sense “passing” as presumptively white Canadians, African Americans had to cope with multiple registers of displacement. In addition to being outside the familiar milieu of the United States, African Americans were not only a racial minority in Toronto, they were of a cultural heritage significantly different from that of the majority of the city’s black community. In response to the need for more culturally and racially conscious counselling services, a number of black resisters in Toronto established the Black Refugee Organization (BRO) in 1970. In his book The New Exiles Roger Williams quotes Jim Russell, a member of the BRO, telling a CBC news program, “Canada is a reasonably sane country, not all together, but saner than some I could mention. But it’s not that easy for blacks in Canada, so I would say to the brothers on the other side of the border to stay there if it is all possible—do what you can to resist there.” Who could “make it” in Canada, who could find work, community, and belonging, were, as Russell suggested, mitigated by the realities of race and class. For white middle-class resisters, the ability to find a space for themselves, to find belonging and purpose, was greatly aided by their racial privilege, which helped to allay cultural, national, and other forms of expatriate dislocation.

The construction of alternative social spaces by draft resisters and expatriates was of course a shared project taken up by and participated in by local people, be they native-born Canadians or more recent immigrants themselves. Organizations such as TADP, UAE, and the resister support group Red, White, and Black were critical to finding, securing, and animating these spaces within the city. One of Red, White, and Black’s initiatives was to open a community centre on Huron Street near the intersection with Dundas Street in Toronto’s downtown core. The centre, known as the Hall, was conveniently located near Kensington Market, Baldwin Street, the public library, the University of Toronto, Rochdale College, and Grossman’s Tavern (a very popular hangout for resisters). In addition to providing a drop-in space, a coffeehouse, and a twenty-four-hour switchboard, the Hall provided space for political meetings, yoga classes, and reading groups on Canadian politics, literature, and history. The coffee house was connected to expatriate John Anderson’s Whole Earth Family health food store, and offered customers “unprocessed, unadulterated natural foods.” The Hall afforded expatriate Americans a greater degree of social contact, communal space, and support than TADP was willing or able to provide. More than just a community centre for draft resisters and deserters, the Hall became a venue for alternative cultural and political organizing in Toronto. Groups like Toronto Gay Action and the Toronto Women’s Collective used the building as a meeting place. Regular films and musical bands drew larger crowds, not just exclusively expatriates. Though aimed at expatriates, the Hall became more of a social space for politically active youth living in Toronto and, as such, it was another site within neighbourhoods bordering the University of Toronto that catered to and provided a home for the city’s counterculture.

As young Americans came to Toronto, they gravitated toward the city’s countercultural venues, quickly becoming another ambient detail in the expanding youth scene. One of the earliest and most important places in the city was the Yorkville neighbourhood, directly north of Queen’s Park and the University of Toronto campus. Yorkville would be, for a number of years in the late 1960s, ground zero for Toronto’s countercultural, folk music, and hippie scene. Historian Stuart Henderson has persuasively argued that Yorkville, at least in 1966 and 1967, was one of the most important social spaces for draft resisters and American expatriates. Henderson points not only to the coffee shops and popular street hangout, but also to places such as John and Nancy Pocock’s house on Hazelton Avenue. The Pococks, who were Quakers, were crucial figures in organizing support and solidarity for draft resisters in Toronto. One of the most iconic illustrations of the overlap between draft resister and countercultural spaces from the 1960s was a CBC television report on Yorkville, with nineteen-year-old draft resister (and future author) William Gibson acting as tour guide.

By the late 1960s, the largest countercultural space in Toronto was Rochdale College. Rising eighteen stories at the corner of Bloor and Huron streets, adjacent to the University of Toronto campus, Rochdale was a massive experiment in alternative living and education. Begun as a housing initiative of the university’s Campus Co-Op and financed through the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Rochdale soon evolved into an experimental free university that attempted to blend academics and myriad utopian aspirations. As the 1968 Rochdale College catalogue asserted, “A man learns best when he first discovers what it is he wants to learn and how he wants to learn it.”

Expatriates played a major role in Rochdale, often at the forefront of initiatives and projects. According to one building resident, “There were large numbers of US people, their influence was pronounced. Very often they were in authority positions because they were bright or they had American drive.” Peter Turner, a resister who had been a student activist at Berkeley, served a term as the president of Rochdale College Council in the early 1970s. Expatriate writer Judith Merrill saw in Toronto and Rochdale a place to be involved and to become connected to an entire network of involvements: “One of the many reasons for Toronto in particular was the large number of young war resisters coming here: the idea that it might be less ‘copping-out’ if I went where I could be of some use to others alienated for the same basic reasons, but with less resources or options than I had. In this connection Rochdale was an inadvertent perfect choice that first year, when the street grapevines led to 341 Bloor West.”
One Rochdale initiative was a free clinic started by expatriate Ann Pohl. Pohl, the daughter of science fiction authors Frederick Pohl and Judith Merrill, had followed her mother to Rochdale late in 1968. After working on Eugene McCarthy’s presidential campaign and attending the Chicago Democratic Convention, Pohl had become deeply disillusioned with life in the United States. “I had this long argument with myself,” she recalled, “about whether I should join the Weather Underground resistance or not. I very clearly remember coming to the conclusion that I was too young to decide that that was the way to change society. And that gave me no alternative but to leave the country.”

The clinic, whose descendant, the Hassle Free Clinic, still operates, was a major development in the Rochdale area. The clinic was started by expatriate Ann Pohl, who trained as a medic. The clinic was open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Along with Michael Bilger, a U.S. Army deserter who had trained as a medic, the two were kept busy treating drug problems and sexually transmitted diseases. The clinic also had to deal with mental illness and counselling, which many resisters and deserters needed. Rochdale resident and clinic staff member Dr. Bryn Waern recalls, “There were a lot of people in Rochdale who went through a lot of identity crises of one sort or another. Many of them were refugees from the Vietnam War, and the anguish that they were going through required a lot of healing. So Rochdale was a real therapeutic community in that sense.”

When Rochdale College opened in 1968, seventy-five of its residents were Americans, of whom at least twenty-five were, according to author David Scott, draft resisters. Most of these Americans were either Rochdale students or students at the University of Toronto. Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, Rochdale was heavily involved with supporting and housing resisters and deserters. Residents often opened their apartments to newly arrived resisters, putting them up for weeks at a time. Moreover, Rochdale offered its own counselling service, providing resisters with a free room for two weeks, along with a chance “to meet new friends and learn about Canada at night while looking for a job during the day.” In addition, Rochdale worked closely with TADP, even holding fundraising drives for the organization.

Other Americans were drawn to Rochdale because it was open to experimentation and non-traditional forms of education and schooling. Judith Merrill became one of the resource people at Rochdale, holding creative writing and science fiction workshops as well as taking an active part in the life of the college itself. In addition, Merrill left her extensive library of books, which became known as “The Spaced Out Collection,” to the college. Expatriate and TADP volunteer Max Allen’s first job in Toronto was organizing and cataloging the thousands of books Merrill donated to the Rochdale College Library. Other expatriates such as Herschel and Molly Struyman moved from New York City to Toronto to become resource persons within Rochdale, eventually becoming staff at the college’s alternative high school initiative known as the Superschool.

The American atmosphere of Rochdale was not necessarily seen in strictly positive terms. Draft resister Douglas Feathering saw the college as an appalling place, one that had been started with high ideals but ended in brutal and ugly realities:

“Three levels of police were constantly trying to infiltrate the place when not actually raiding it, partly no doubt because of the way Rochdale became a magnet for thrill-seekers from all over the continent and even Europe. What happened at Haight-Ashbury in San Francisco in 1967 on a broad horizontal plane was repeated at Rochdale in Toronto the following year after that, in a tall vertical space that could be made fairly secure against unwanted intrusion. This only increased the paranoia of the authorities without, which in turn did the same for the paranoia of those within. It became the most Americanized place in Toronto, not excluding the US consulate on University Avenue: a kind of tower of urban decay and social chaos, reaching to the sky above the Annex.”

In its idealistic origins and its disastrous ending, Feathering saw clear parallels between Rochdale College and the American nation—a place of utopian idealism mired in dystopic reality. The place was American, according to Featherling, not simply because so many of its residents were from the United States, but because of its failure to function as an ethical, livable, and just social space. Utilizing a Canadian nationalist tone, Featherling argues that the building’s failure as a viable social and political space was ultimately a result of its toxic culture of Americanization.

Through groups like TADP and UAE, institutions such as the Hall and Rochdale, and the pages of underground newspapers, expatriates encountered and participated in New Left political and countercultural life. Moreover, the system of aid that placed people in homes and provided them with temporary shelter also connected them to some of the most politically involved and dedicated activists in the city. This is not to say that this turned those individuals into activists, but it did make them aware of local issues and concerns, matching them with people and groups with whom they could pursue deeper involvement. Just one small example of this sort of encounter was the billeting of draft resisters at Holy Trinity Church in Toronto’s downtown core. When Eaton’s department store wanted to build a massive shopping mall and office complex along Yonge Street, Holy Trinity was scheduled to be demolished to make room for the proposed construction. Draft resisters, some of whom had been temporarily housed in the church, quickly joined the fight to save it from demolition. The church also served as the venue for lesbian and gay dances put on by the Community Homophile Association (CHAT) in the early 1970s—and another community in which some draft resisters would become active participants.

Rochdale College, Holy Trinity, and the Hall were all conduits to other groups, intentional communities, and alternative cultural life throughout Toronto. One of those areas was the emerging theatre scene. Most significantly, the vanguard Theatre Passe Muraille was established at Rochdale College in 1969, while Rochdale veterans Robert Sverdlow and Elizabeth Sverdlow established Global Village Theatre in the early 1970s. Similarly the Hall was the venue for THOG theatre troupe’s reinterpretation of Hamlet. Theatre Passe Muraille, Factory Theatre Lab, THOG, Tarragon Theatre, and Toronto Free Theatre were all alternative theatre initiatives established in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Though many of these theatres would be enthusiastic participants in Canadian cultural nationalism of the period, according to theatre historian Denis...
Johnston they were inspired by “radical theatre in the States.” Drama critic Alan Filewood also noted that “new Canadian theaters included many American war resisters,” even as they sought to localize and nationalize their artistic productions. U.S. war resisters such as Daniel Hennesssey, Steven Bush, Sylvia Tucker, Anne Bannister Stephens, Lina Certais, and Fred Thurey, and expatriate Americans such as Ernst Schwartz and Elizabeth Swardlow were important actors, directors, and creative forces within the alternative and radical theatre communities of the city.

Resister Charlie Novogrodsky recalls that resisters were arriving in Toronto at a crucial historical juncture, one that made them part of the changing reality of the city: “We came here as old Toronto was dying. What we first saw was old Toronto. Then sort of miraculously a lot of things we now associate with Toronto started to happen under our young adult feet. Immigrants, different ethnic and racial groups starting to appear, the politics changing, a lot of the sixties stuff, the cultural and political stuff which was a little behind the U.S. was now accelerating in Canada.”

American expatriates bolstered and augmented Toronto’s youth culture, quickly becoming fixtures in the city’s alternative cultural venues. Though a small “expatriate community” developed for a short time along Baldwin and Huron Streets, Americans never formed a dedicated social and political community but rather integrated into and bolstered existing communities populated by students, artists, activists, and bohemians. It was into the largely ethnic and slightly run-down neighbourhoods surrounding the University of Toronto that American expatriates drifted. In areas such as Yorkville, the Annex, along Spadina Avenue and Kensington Market, American expatriates found shelter, rented rooms, and started co-op houses and communes, thus adding to the swelling numbers of the city’s youth culture. Settling into these residential neighbourhoods corresponded with the emergence of a commercial culture, often identified with draft resisters, but more often aimed at hippies and young people in search of sandals, incense, and other commodities of the counterculture.

Draft resisters, students, activists, and hippies were all embodied subjects—identifiably urban figures—most closely associated with the networks of health food stores, “head shops,” coffee houses, revolutionary bookstores, used clothing stores, and the extended public and commercial culture of campus life that appeared in the neighbourhoods around the sprawling University of Toronto. Other sites such as Grossman’s Tavern on Spadina became known as a “dodger” hangout, part of the shared social space of an alternative urban milieu. Jim Wilson along with his wife Anna opened up a “head shop” on Baldwin Street selling incense, Indian clothes, sandals, and beads. A graduate of the University of North Carolina in anthropology, Wilson had been a participant in Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), before coming to Toronto to avoid the draft.

It was in stores such as the Golden Ant Health Food Store, the Baldwin Street Gallery, the Yellow Ford Truck, and Ragnarok Leather, as well as bars like Grossman’s, that the city’s underground papers, including the draft resister periodical AMEX, could be found. Establishments such as the Golden Ant and the Yellow Ford Truck were connected with urban communes, in which people lived and worked collectively. In the case of the Golden Ant, this communal living and working arrangement was also closely tied to the underground newspaper Harbinger, forming a tight network in which people attempted to integrate work, politics, and everyday life. This was particularly the case for some of the expatriate women living on Baldwin Street.

Photographer Laura Jones recalls how important having other women living and working in an alternative counter-cultural community was: “The sense of community was very important to me, especially when Morgan was a baby and I felt I really shared my pregnancy with the other women in the neighbourhood and felt very close when the babies were small. If I wanted to go somewhere and I wanted someone to nurse my baby when I was gone, I could take it to either side of my house, to a woman who would be there and nurse it while I was gone. We were very dependent on each other. I felt that was very good.”

An outgrowth of this close-knit community was the child-care centre Snowflake, which was established with the assistance of a government grant. Located on McCaul Street, around the corner from Baldwin, Snowflake was an extension of the co-operative culture of the neighbourhood. Mary Burdick, whose daughter Alice went to Snowflake, recalls that it was “as much a centre for the parents as it was for children, it turns out. That place was a place where people came in and did shifts working with children. It really wasn’t set up for people with jobs, straight jobs—it more fitted in with our lifestyles.” This alternative approach to the dynamics of intimate relations was informed by a feminist consciousness that rejected the notion that women could not be bohemian. In this sense Burdick, like other participants in the alternative cultures of the late 1960s and 1970s, was politicizing and transforming her personal space in concert with the physical and institutional spaces she was already establishing. As such, Burdick’s comments indicate a “prefigurative politics” of the period that sought to match transformative political goals with intimate and everyday relationships. Historian Lara Campbell has argued that female resisters bore a particular burden “in the struggle to re-establish families, community, and work opportunities and lives in Canada.” Here the demands of child-care, schools, and the desire to establish alternative educational and recreational arrangements remained disproportionately gendered. It also meant that expatriate women were participating in community projects, where Americans were a significant presence but once again were not themselves the focus of the organizing efforts.

Attention to the personal and the development of alternative ways of being were part of the affective political networks in which many expatriates travelled. Draft resister Charlie Schafflie became involved with a commune through a woman he met at the TADP office. Through her he became involved with the group Therailfe, which operated as a “therapeutic community” with intense group therapy and work on a collective farm outside the city, and on the group’s houses in Toronto’s Annex neighbourhood. Communes varied dramatically in size and orientation. Often they were connected with other types of institutions and organizations, as was the case with the Golden Ant and Harbinger. Myra and Charlie Novogrodsky joined a commune on Spadina Avenue with other members of the Sussex Daycare and the radical education periodical This Magazine Is about Education. These sorts of experimental living arrangements were an important part of the experience of many expatriates who circulated in New Left and countercultural
milieus. Moreover, communal forms of living sought to transcend the traditional distinctions between private and public space, and personal and political activity.

The construction of alternative public and personal spaces was also key to the emergence of lesbian and gay liberation in Toronto. Not only were a number of American expatriates important figures in this movement, but the discourse of lesbian and gay liberation was part of the political, personal transaction between the United States and Canada, New York and Toronto, and groups on both sides of the border. By the 1970s Toronto would boast one of the most sophisticated and radical liberation movements in North America. In Toronto one of the first post-Stonewall groups was initiated by U.S. expatriate Jearld Moldenhauer, who placed a small advertisement asking “Anyone interested in discussing the organization of a student homophile league please contact J. Moldenhauer” in the University of Toronto newspaper, the Varsity.”

Moldenhauer would eventually help to establish two of Toronto’s foundational liberationist institutions—the Body Politic newspaper and Glad Day Bookstore. Throughout the 1970s numerous U.S. expatriates such as Rick Bébout, Michael Lynch, Herb Spiers, Jim Steakley, and Bert Hanson would all make contributions to the paper as writers, staff, collective members, and community activists.” What’s more, early gay liberation activists strove to link with other New Left political causes in the city. Speaking at a rally against the Vietnam War and U.S. nuclear testing, gay activist Paul MacDonald asserted, “Together with other minorities, we will achieve the rights to self determination which are being denied in a racist, sexist and imperialist society.”

Articulating a language of common cause, MacDonald placed the cause of gay and lesbian liberation within a larger constellation of universal rights, adding, “Full human rights for gays...will eventually lead to sexual liberation for all mankind.”

The ongoing transaction of political ideals, organizational strategies, forms of self-expression, personal development, and the like were found most explicitly in the pages of Toronto’s underground newspapers. Heavily populated by draft resisters and deserters, such as Jim Brophy, Robert Macdonald, Tom Needham, and Jim Christie, Guerilla was a clearinghouse for New Left politics, hippie culture, and local happenings. In addition to American expatriates, the newspaper’s inner circle included Canadians Maureen Jackman and Sharon Fronczak, both veterans of the student movement. Regular columns about life at Rochdale College, medical advice from Dr. David Collins of the Toronto Free Youth Clinic, and book reviews by prominent Canadian nationalist and economics professor Mel Watkins made Guerilla a publication that appealed to a wide range of alternative and progressive groups in Toronto. In addition to covering movement politics in the United States, the escalation of the Vietnam War, campus unrest, and the activities of groups like the Black Panthers, Guerilla supported more local efforts, including the Stop Spadina campaign, which scuttled plans to build an expressway along Spadina Avenue through a number of inner-city neighbourhoods.

Articles, cartoons, and manifestos that appeared in American underground newspapers such as Ramparts and the Berkeley Barb found their way into the pages of Guerilla. Prior to the publication of the gay liberation periodical Body Politic, Guerilla was a regular source of news, announcements, and thought on lesbian and gay liberation. Though the newspaper thought of itself as a political publication, it had close ties with the city’s counterculture. This was best demonstrated by the paper’s involvement with and promotion of Wacheea, a counter-culture “happening” at the University of Toronto, in the summer of 1971. Wacheea was a campground set up on one of the lawns of the university campus “by the free spirits of the world—who want to learn how to be together, be the people we want to be.”

Less overtly political than Guerilla and more a place of literary and artistic expression, Harbinger provided Toronto readers with another dimension of sixties expression and sensibility. Like Guerilla, the newspaper had key Americans on its staff and, in addition to stories of local interest, ran articles that had been previously published in underground papers throughout the United States. As mentioned earlier, the paper was part of the expatriate constellation of stores and groups on Baldwin Street. According to Canadian David Bush, one of Harbinger’s founders, the people involved with the paper were inspired by the political theatre of Abbie Hoffman and the Yippies, desiring to bring a more zany and irreverent tone to Toronto’s New Left. One key facilitator of this more psychedelic approach was a draft resister by the name of Larry Williams.

A resident of Rochdale College, Williams had worked with the Company of Young Canadians before being suspended for spending grant money on Harbinger and on a research project into hydroponic gardening.

By the end of the 1960s and early 1970s, many American expatriates in Toronto had found their way into a wide variety of alternative social spaces in the city. Some had obvious political dimensions, such as participating in the anti-war movement, sexual liberation, feminism, alternative schools, daycare centres, community organizing, and urban politics. Some of the more culturally oriented expatriates became active in theatre, dance, music, and performing arts. Still others found networks of purpose, belonging, and affinity, as writers, fine artists, journalists, teachers, and students. These bounds of association sometimes formed through contracts as residents in communes and friends—aided by the shared historical experience of draft resistance—were part of the condition of possibility in Toronto. Again this is not to say that all progressive political institutions and alternative cultural production was solely the result of expatriates, but they were nonetheless crucial actors in these efforts.

As immigrants to the city, many American expatriates were able to become fixtures within Toronto’s alternative cultural and political milieu. This entrée, greatly aided by the class and race privilege of many expatriates, facilitated participation in local arrangements that were nonetheless connected to larger transnational movements, sensibilities, and ideologies. The larger framing context of anti-imperialism—particularly opposition to U.S. involvement in the war in Vietnam, and the global exercise of American Cold War hegemony—was a key factor in providing connection between many expatriates and like-minded Torontonians. Within Toronto, expatriates were able to be historic actors within social spaces that were open to experimental ways of living, self-understanding, and expression. As with the more established aid organizations, these “alternative” spaces were sites for people to meet, share gossip, and exchange information on where to stay, find work, and debate politics. As such, they were key venues in the social integration of expatriates into the city, the very sites of transaction, places that would become part of the urban landscape of the new Toronto.
These transactions could most clearly be seen among the staff at TADP, the Hall, on Baldwin Street, at Rochdale College, and in the pages of **Guerilla**, *Harbinger*, *Body Politic*, and AMEX. These sites formed a nexus of personal and political relationships, providing crucial connections to other activities and social services. In the somewhat vague and tangential relationships, in the intimate connections between people and institutions, on the walks between these social spaces, expatriates—along with their Canadian friends and associates—produced new types of intentional spaces, affective communities, and political culture. This complex network of people and places would form a crucial backdrop to some of the new social movements to emerge and reshape Toronto in the 1970s.

**Acknowledgements**

I need to acknowledge the financial support of the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Andrew Mellon Foundation, and the James C. Hormel Foundation. I would like to thank George Chauncey, Sharon Hayashi, Megan Miller, Cynthia Wright, Keith Walden, and the Social History Workshop at the University of Chicago for their critiques and suggestions on earlier drafts of this article. In addition I need to especially thank Krista Walters for all her careful editorial comments, as well as the anonymous readers at *Urban History Review* for their helpful and close consideration of this article. Finally I would like to thank Jordan Stanger-Ross and Franca Iacovetta for their guidance and editorial care.

**Notes**


2. I use the term resister throughout the article to refer to Americans who came to Canada to avoid military service in Vietnam. In addition, I make no distinctions between individuals drafted into the U.S. military and those of draft age who came to Canada because of their opposition to the war in Vietnam but were not in any personal jeopardy of being drafted. Similarly I include those who self-identified as draft resisters and those who came and were later able to obtain some form of deferment. In terms of this study these distinctions are not particularly important. In some cases draft resister was a rejection of the term draft dodger for its slippery and somewhat cowardly connotations. Nonetheless, the use of draft resister for individuals who came to Canada in the 1960s and 1970s continues to be contentious. Some within the United States based anti-draft and anti-war movements felt that coming to Canada was not true political resistance to the Selective Service Administration or the war in Vietnam. In contrast, “true” draft resisters were supposedly those who “confronted” the draft by resisting induction on U.S. soil and as a consequence often served prison time. For a discussion of the debate around resisters, evaders, and doddgers, see Michael Foley, *Confronting the War Machine: Draft Resisting during the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 7–8. See also Jerry Emel, *Felon for Peace* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005), 54; James Failows, “What Did You Do in the Class War Daddy?” *Against the War in Vietnam: Writings by Activists*, ed. Mary Susannah Robbins, 191–210 (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007); David Harris, *Our War: What We Did in Vietnam* (New York: Crown, 1996).


4. Ibid., 201. The article mentions that Maryanne Campbell works for AMEX, the draft resisters, deserters and exiles periodical published in Toronto.

5. Though there are obvious overlaps between my research and John Hagan’s, there are also significant differences. The principal distinction is between Hagan’s internalized focus on networks and communities of resisters that formed an “American ghetto” and my argument that we should understand U.S. expatriates not as islands unto themselves, but rather as participants in larger alternative and affective urban cultures and communities. Where Hagan has closely examined the social process of coming to Canada for draft resisters, this article in contrast situates expatriates in social worlds within Toronto’s vibrant political and countercultures of the late 1960s and early 1970s. See John Hagan, *Northern Passage* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 66–98.


17. For a critical analysis of the public culture and political rhetoric of multiculturalism in Canada, see Himani Banerji, The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender (Toronto: Canadian Scholars, 2002).


30. After reading Clausen’s “Boys without a Country” in the New York Times Magazine, Allen drove to Toronto determined to find out first hand what the situation was like for resisters. After arriving in the city, Allen determined that he could do more for draft resisters in Canada than he could in a U.S. aid organization. Moreover, Allen was not enthusiastic about the Resistance position advocating jail terms over emigration to Canada. See Williams, New Exiles, 64. On Max Allen, see Marjorie Harris, “Mr. Broadloom,” Canadian Magazine, 6 May 1978, 18; Daniel Stoffman, “Maximum Max,” Toronto Star Sunday Magazine, 16 September 1979, 11–14, 29.


43. Ibíd.
51. Speakers at the 11 March 1970 rally included Chicago 7 defendant Jerry Rubin’s wife Nancy Rubin, defendant David Dellinger’s wife Tasha Bird, as well as Rabbi Abraham Feinberg. Fienberg was a prominent human rights and peace activist, as well as the former rabbi at Toronto’s Holly Blossom Temple. See Carmela Patrias and Ruth A. Frager, “This Is Our Country, These Are Our Rights: Minorities and the Origins of Ontario’s Human Rights Campaign,” Canadian Historical Review 82, no. 1 (March 2001): 1–36.
57. Myra Novogrodsky, interview by the author, tape recording, Toronto, 4 September 1998.
58. Charlie Novogrodsky, interview; Myra Novogrodsky, interview.
82. Judith Merrill and Emily Pohl-Weary, Better to Have Loved: The Life of Judith Merrill (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002), 192.


84. Mietkiewicz and Mackowycz, Dream Tower, 71–72.

85. Ibid., 75.

86. Sharpe, Rochdale, 40.

87. “Program for Aiding American Immigrants to Canada,” Rochdale College Papers, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.

88. Sharpe, Rochdale, 41.

89. Though greatly diminished, this collection is now located within the Toronto Public Library System as the Merrill Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy, at the Lilian H. Smith District Branch on College Street near the University of Toronto and many other historic expatriate and resister venues.


91. Featherling, Travels by Night, 135.

92. Holy Trinity’s priest Dan Heap was a long-time social activist in Toronto, Toronto Remembered: A Celebration of the City (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009), 346.


95. Elizabeth Swerdlow was a dancer born and trained in the United States, a choreographer who immigrated to Canada after marrying Robert in 1967. In addition to the Global Village Theatre, Elizabeth Swerdlow was instrumental in the establishment of contemporary dance in Canada as a dancer and choreographer. Denis W. Johnston, Up the Mainstream: The Rise of Toronto’s Alternative Theatres (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 206–207.


97. Johnston, Up the Mainstream, 29. Also see Ryan Edwardsion, Canadian Content: Culture and the Quest for Nationhood (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 153.


100. Charlie Novogrodsky, interview.


102. Laura Jones, interviewed by Mary Mullins, tape recording, 20 December 1978, Multicultural History Society of Ontario, University of Toronto.

103. Mary Burdick, interviewed by Janice Spellerberg, tape recording, 21 January 1979, Multicultural History Society of Ontario, University of Toronto.


107. For more on the roll of U.S. expatriates in the alternative school movement in Toronto, see Churchill, “When Home Became Away.”


110. Though Moldenhauer was the instigator, the three individuals who showed up at the first meeting—Ian Young, Charlie Hill, and George Hislop—were all Canadian. “Classifieds,” Varsity, 15 October 1969, 13. Young had previously sought to organize homophiles through the auspices of the Varsity Christian Fellowship, which had been deeply involved with progressive causes on campus during the 1960s. For more on Young and Moldenhauer’s recollections of the founding of the UTHA, see Rick Bébout, “On the Origins of The Body Politic,” http://www.rbebout.com/oldbeep/concep.htm.

111. Jearid Moldenhauer, interview by the author, tape recording, Toronto, 3 September 1998; Rick Bébout, interview.


113. Ibid.


118. The Company of Young Canadians (CYC) was a federal youth initiative to provide funds for community organizing and development along the lines of SUPA, ERAP, and VISTA. CYC drained badly needed personnel from SUPA and was a key factor in the organization’s demise in 1967. On CYC see Owram, Born at the Right Time, 222–225.