Social transformation in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce over the long Sixties

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Abstract

This thesis examines the changes that took place in the Montreal district of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (NDG) over the course of the long Sixties. It argues that the suburban order that its leaders strove to maintain in the late 1950s became untenable by the early 1970s, as the community had been transformed by urban development, the Quiet Revolution, the coming of age of the baby-boom generation, and the recognition of the economic and social diversity in the community. It traces the changes in the district by looking at how the local social organizations adapted or formed. Focus is given to the NDG Community Council, which operated throughout the period under consideration, and to Head & Hands, a youth clinic and drop-in centre that was founded in 1970 to address the needs of young people involved in the mass countercultural movement. This thesis supplements the existing scholarship by analysing the Sixties through the lens of a middle-class inner suburb, where there was a mixed level of participation in, and resistance to, the cultural and social ferment of the time.

Cette thèse examine la transformation du quartier montréalais de Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (NDG) au cours des années soixante. Elle propose que l'ordre suburbain que ses dirigeants ont essayé de maintenir à la fin des années 1950 est devenu insoutenable au début des années 1970, car la communauté avait été perturbée par le développement urbain, la Révolution tranquille, l'arrivée à maturité de la génération du baby-boom et la reconnaissance de la diversité économique et sociale dans la communauté. Elle retrace les changements dans ce district en examinant comment les organisations sociales locales se sont adaptées ou formées. L'accent est mis sur le Conseil communautaire de NDG, qui a fonctionné tout au long de la période considérée, et sur Head & Hands, une clinique jeunesse et centre d'accueil qui a été fondé en 1970 pour répondre aux

besoins des jeunes impliqués dans le mouvement de la contreculture. Cette thèse complément les recherches existantes en analysant les années soixante du cadre d'analyse d'une banlieue de classe moyenne, où il y avait un niveau mixte de participation et de résistance au bouleversement culturel et social de l'époque.

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Introduction

On 31 March 1973, dozens of activist groups and social service organizations operating in the west end Montreal community of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (NDG) gathered for a day of workshops to look at the problems in the district, to exchange information, and to discuss recommendations for action. The event, called the "N.D.G. Conference on the Quality of Life," was sponsored by the Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community Council, a non-governmental community organization. A pillar of the community in the 1940s and 1950s, by 1973 the organization had grown increasingly disconnected from the concerns of the district. The Community Council intended the conference to facilitate interchange between groups and to get a pulse of what was going on in the area. It was completely unprepared for the near-unanimous response from the twelve workshops, which criticized the Community Council for not playing a more socially active role in the community. In the few years preceding the conference, new activist groups had emerged to address such issues as poverty, facilities for senior citizens, pollution, equal rights for women, racism, and youth alienation. The conference revealed how much the concerns of engaged citizens in NDG had changed.

While the N.D.G. Conference on the Quality of Life may appear to be of minor significance – it only received third page coverage from the Montreal daily newspapers the *Gazette* and *La Presse* on the Monday following the conference – nevertheless, examining the changes in NDG that led up to it provide a fresh insight into the societal changes that took place in Montreal and Quebec over the course of the long Sixties. For NDG sits uncomfortably in the historical representations of this period. Historians have, by and large, divided their interests between the Quiet Revolution and the considerably noisier revolutionary movements taking

place at the same time. Scholars in the first group have been preoccupied with the political modernization of Quebec, the social and economic advancement of francophones, and the establishment of the Quebec state as the primary instrument of national development.[1] Alternatively, those in the second have focused on oppositional politics, social activism, liberation movements, and youthful ebullience.[2] NDG neither had a francophone majority nor was it home to the anglophone elite; it was not a hotbed of revolutionary politics; and it was not a principal centre of Sixties counterculture. Thus, it is perhaps not surprising that it has received scant mention in this historiography.

Indeed, NDG defies easy characterization. It has been referred to as anything from "a neat suburb of hell"[3] to the district where "Montreal's charms are the most pronounced."[4] Annexed to Montreal in 1910, it no longer had an independent government and its perceived borders seldom aligned with those of the city ward. Often characterized as middle class, it was socioeconomically mixed, with approximately half its employed population engaged in blue collar and service jobs in 1961.[5] In the period following the Second World War, a substantial number of high-density, low-rent housing units were built there. While often characterized as an English-speaking district, the area had a significant and influential French-speaking population,

[1] The historiography is replete with examples. Martin Pâquet et Stéphane Savard, *Brève histoire de la révolution tranquille* (Montréal: Boréal, 2021) is a recent survey that, in addition to being an example in this vein, provides a selective biography of the period. pp.263-274

[2] Examples include: Bryan D. Palmer, *Canada's 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), Sean Mills, *The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010); Jean-Philippe Warren, *Une douce anarchie: les années 68 au Québec* (Montréal: Boréal, 2008); 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 (2007): 516-538.; Jean-Philippe Warren and Andrée Fortin, *Pratiques et discours de la contreculture au Québec* (Québec: Septentrion, 2015); and François Ricard, *La génération lyrique: essai sur la vie et l'œuvre des premiers-nés du baby-boom* (Montréal: Boréal, 1992).

[3] Constance Beresford-Howe, *The Book of Eve* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1989), p. 137.

[4] Jean-Guy Pilon, "Le présent est aussi le prélude de l'avenir," *Liberté* 5, no. 4 (July-August 1963), p. 311. Original: "*Car à Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, les charmes de Montréal sont beaucoup plus évidents*."

[5] Raymond Guardia and David Schulze, "Community Activism in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Since World War II: An Analysis Based on Oral History," unpublished report, Montreal, 1984, p. 25.

which represented about twenty per cent of its inhabitants and included Montreal Mayor Sarto Fournier and Quebec Premier Daniel Johnson.[6] The area was religiously mixed and ethnically diverse, with no single group dominating numerically.[7] Originally developed as a tramway suburb, by the Sixties, NDG was contradictorily being characterized both as a downtown district and a suburb.[8] Although it has been overlooked, its heterogeneity provides a rich source to complicate oversimplistic narratives of this period in Montreal.

This thesis investigates how changing social norms, urban development, the Quiet Revolution, and the coming of age of the baby-boom generation transformed NDG over the long Sixties. It argues that, in the early 1960s, public opinion in NDG was becoming less obedient to authority and more open to change, which allowed social activism to gain a foothold. As the decade wore on, the charged political atmosphere and the counterculture movement created an environment in which activism could accelerate. When activist groups began to get federal grants in 1971, they had the means to become more vocal and assertive. Many of those groups came together at the Conference on the Quality of Life and, subsequently, cooperated with the NDG Community Council, which brought social activism into the mainstream of life in NDG.

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[6] The francophone population was approximately twenty per cent from 1951 through 1976. In 1971 and 1976, twenty per cent of NDG listed French as a mother tongue. In prior censuses, tract-level data language spoken was recorded as English only, French only, both, or neither, so only crude approximation is possible. In 1961, 7% of NDG residents spoke only French and 35% spoke both French and English. Jack Trent, "The man from Oxford Avenue buried in St. Pie de Bagot," *Monitor*, 2 October 1968, p. 4. and Wilbur Arkison, "Fournier Returns to Law," *Gazette*, 25 October 1960, p. 3.

[7] In 1961, the religious breakdown in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce was 49% Roman Catholic, 38% Protestant, and 10% Jewish. The Roman Catholic population was approximately 18% French, 25% Irish, Scots, and other national origins, and 6% Italian. The Protestant population was 15% Anglican, 13% United Church, 6% Presbyterian, 2.5% Lutheran, and 1% Baptist. Source: 1961 Census of Canada, *Population and housing characteristics by census tracts: Montréal*, Bulletin CT-4, Catalogue 95-519.

[8] Dorothy W. Williams, *Blacks in Montreal, 1628-1986: An Urban Demography* (Cowansville, Quebec: Éditions Yvon Blais, 1989), p. 73. and Edgar Andrew Collard, "The Old Church of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce," *Gazette*, 8 July 1972, p. 6.

The evidence of this transformation is drawn primarily from the actions of the social organizations in the district. The NDG Community Council features most prominently in this investigation, as it operated throughout the period and was the closest approximation NDG had to a local government. The Council's affiliated members included about seventy social, cultural, religious, political, and business associations in the district. The foundation of another organization, the youth clinic Head & Hands, plays a key role in the change that took place there. The NDG Community Council had been primarily focused on the education, recreation, and safety of the baby-boom youth through the 1950s and 1960s. When many young people in the district were swept up in the mass countercultural movement, the Community Council was ill-equipped to respond. Head & Hands was one of several organizations that were founded around the same time, but it is singled out here because it was arguably the most visible and, thus, impactful. The proliferation of the new groups that participated in the Conference on the Quality of Life demonstrated the broadening set of issues that stirred the people of NDG into action.

This thesis is structured into four chapters that describe NDG's long Sixties, which took place between 1960 and 1973.[9] The first chapter describes the NDG of the late 1950s to set the stage for the changes that come afterwards. It presents the relatively snug postwar suburban community that operated somewhat autonomously from the rest of Montreal. The NDG Community Council played a central leadership role in providing services to the community and negotiating the complexities of municipal and provincial politics in Duplessis's Quebec. The

[9] This corresponds roughly with the periodization of the global long Sixties described by historian Arthur Marwick and literary critic Frederic Jameson. Marwick proposes 1958 to 1974, whereas Jameson proposes from the late 1950s to between 1972 and 1974. Here I blend Bryan Palmer's contention that to understand Canada's 1960s, it is necessary to start in the Cold War, with Sean Mills' contention that the Sixties activist movements in Montreal reached a high point in the early 1970s. Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Transformation in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958 – c. 1974* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.7; Fredric Jameson, "Periodizing the 60s," in *Social Text*, no. 9/10 (Spring-Summer, 1984), pp.180-184; Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*, p. 23; and Mills, *The Empire Within*, p. 15.

second chapter explores the period from 1960 to 1967, when NDG experienced rapid change in dialogue with changes at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels. It examines five developments that illustrate how NDG was gradually rejecting the institutions and mode of governance that had defined the area since it was established half a century earlier. The third chapter considers the impact that the youth had in reorienting local politics. It describes the founding of Head & Hands in response to the participation of local youth in the global countercultural movement, which raised alarm in the district by the end of 1967. It follows the establishment of the youth clinic until 1973, by which time it was holding festivals in NDG Park that attracted thousands of participants. The fourth and final chapter covers an overlapping period. It describes the rise of other activist groups in NDG and the NDG Community Council's efforts to revive its connection with the community. This led to the N.D.G. Conference on the Quality of Life and the subsequent effort to act on the resultant recommendations.

This historical research intertwines four fields of inquiry: the Sixties, urban history, studies of the middle class, and the crossroads between English and French Canada. Analysing the Sixties through the lens of a middle-class inner suburb on the periphery of the cultural and social ferment provides insight into how the ideas and movements of radical groups radiated out and were adapted and applied. For urban history, this provides the case of how a district with no government, no fixed boundaries, and no taxation authority could maintain a degree of autonomy and identity. Studies of postwar middle-class Canada are relatively rare and studies of a progressive middle-class are even rarer; this study adds something to that sparsely populated historiography. Finally, it supplements the literature of the Quiet Revolution by detailing the activities in a predominantly English-speaking district in the years prior to the assertion of French as the primary language of Quebec.

While much has been written about the Sixties in Canada, there are a few works that this study particularly complements.[10] One of those is Sean Mills' *The Empire Within*: *Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal.* It examines oppositional political activism in Montreal, which, Mills argues, took place in a framework of global dissent. He contends that oppositional politics in Montreal were motivated by a shared set of ideas that were based on notions of decolonization. It was a mass movement that involved quite different groups in overlapping worlds, yet they interacted and influenced one another across linguistic and ethnic boundaries.[11] Although NDG does not figure in this intellectual history, the interaction and mutual influence he describes extended to NDG. For example, C.G. Gifford, a McGill University sociology professor who was a perennial candidate for the New Democratic Party in NDG and involved in local organizing, was also active in the anti-nuclear movement, which Mills says "sparked the imagination of young English-speaking radicals."[12] The grass-roots organizing in working-class neighbourhoods that Mills describes also filtered into NDG, influencing the formation of the Head & Hands clinic, as well as the antipoverty group, Voices in Social Action (VISA). The Sir George Williams Affair drew sharp reaction from the prominent local NDG weekly, the *Monitor*, but also led indirectly to the formation of the Black Community Association of NDG. As a final example, the publication of the *Birth Control Handbook* by the

[10] Some examples of works that are not being highlighted in the discussion that follows are: Myrna Kostash, *Long Way from Home: The Story of the Sixties Generation in Canada* (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1980); Doug Owram *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom in Canada.* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); M. Athena Palaeologu, *The Sixties in Canada: A Turbulent and Creative Decade* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2009); Karen Dubinsky, Catherine Krull, Susan Lord, Sean Mills, and Scott Rutherford, ed. *New World Coming: the Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009); and Ian Milligan, *Rebel Youth: 1960s Labour Unrest, Young Workers, and New Leftists in English Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014).
[11] Mills, *The Empire Within*, p. 9.
[12] Mills, *The Empire Within*, p. 49.

Students' Society of McGill University, which Mill's describes as "one of the first major texts" of the local women's liberation movement, was distributed widely at Head & Hands.[13]

Bryan Palmer's *Canada's 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era* is one of the few historiographic works that attempts to capture a national history of the Sixties. In contrast to Mills, Palmer contends that Canada's Sixties were specific to the country and happened less in response to international events than in response to domestic issues, such as nationalism in Quebec and labour unrest. Palmer sees the Sixties as a pivotal decade in which "Canada as it had been known ceased, for all practical purposes, to exist." His thesis is that "the old attachment to British Canada was finally and decisively shed [and] it was replaced only with uncertainty."[14] Palmer's meticulously researched work emphasizes the confrontational and the ironic. Given the varied nature of NDG and its in-betweenness, it abounds in irony. For instance, "Lindberg," a Québécois pop song closely associated with the burgeoning independentist movement was written in NDG, [15] despite the area's reputation for being so resolutely anglophone that in French it was colloquially called "Enne-Di-Dji," imitating the English pronunciation.[16] NDG, however, was minimally confrontational. Palmer contends that "Canada's 1960s lost momentum with the October Crisis,"[17] whereas NDG's social activism was just hitting its stride at that time and accelerated for a few years afterwards.

Stuart Henderson's *Making the Scene: Yorkville and Hip Toronto in the 1960s* documents the epicentre of Toronto's countercultural scene, which contrasts with Mills, who appears

[13] Mills, *The Empire Within*, p. 124.
[14] Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*, p. 5.
[15] Bruno Roy, "*Lindberg*: de la modernité dans 'l'air,'" *Urgences*, 26, p. 37.
[16] From Jean Forest, *Le mur de Berlin, P.Q.*, as quoted in Sherry Simon, *Translating Montreal: Episodes in the Life of a Divided City* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), p. 43.
[17] Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*, p.364.

determined to avoid discussion of counterculture, and with Palmer, who only considers it in passing. Henderson's study is one of the few monographs that focuses on a single locality in Canada during the Sixties.[18] He describes the establishment of the youth scene there, centred around coffee houses surrounded by low rent rental accommodation, followed by the development of a hippie scene. The area then developed social problems, such as drug consumption, bike gangs, and mental illness. Henderson describes the city government's tactics to try to "clean-up" the area, as well as the efforts of charitable organizations to help tend to the needs of the young people who needed help. In May 1968, a mobile unit known as "The Trailer" was set up to provide health and counselling services run by people from the community. [19] This may have been a model for Head & Hands. Closer to home, Jean-Philippe Warren and Andrée Fortin's *Pratiques et discours de la contreculture au Québec* looks at the development of the countercultural movement in Quebec, which they state had its origins in Anglo-Montreal.[20] NDG provides an alternate case to Henderson's account and additional detail for Warren and Fortin's.

In the field of urban history, this thesis adds to the histories of the districts of Montreal that have proliferated since Paul-André Linteau wrote *Maisonneuve: comment des promoteurs fabriquent une ville 1883-1918*.[21] The only published history of NDG covers the period when it

[18] Stuart Henderson, *Making the Scene: Yorkville and Hip Toronto in the 1960s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011). Another example is Lawrence Aronsen, *City of Love and Revolution: Vancouver in the Sixties* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 2010).
[19] Henderson. *Making the Scene*, p. 228-34.
[20] Warren and Fortin, *Pratiques et discours*, p. 33
[21] Paul-André Linteau, *Maisonneuve: comment des promoteurs fabriquent une ville 1883-1918*. (Montreal: Boréal Express, 1981). Some examples: L.D. McCann, "Planning and building the corporate suburb of Mount Royal, 1910-1925," *Planning Perspectives* 11 (1996): 259-301.; Aline Gubbay, *A View of Their Own: The Story of Westmount* (Montreal: Price-Patterson, 1998); Bérubé, "Une gouvernance suburbaine distincte," 41-61.; Gilles Lauzon, *Pointe-Saint-Charles: l'urbanisation d'un quartier ouvrier de Montréal, 1840-1930* (Québec: Septentrion, 2014); and Matthew Barlow, *Griffintown: Identity and Memory in an Irish Diaspora Neighbourhood*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017).

existed as an independent village, and then town, from 1876 to 1910.[22] In a related study of elite Montreal-area suburbs, which included the neighbouring municipality of Westmount, Harold Bérubé posed two questions for further research: How do communities without an autonomous government nevertheless acquire the institutional tools necessary to influence or substitute for the central city? Once these tools are in place, how were they maintained and renewed in the postwar period?[23] NDG provides an excellent case to answer both questions. The former is given cursory treatment in the first chapter. The latter question is answered more fully, particularly when looking at the Community Council's waning influence and its subsequent renewal.

This thesis also supplements some excellent recent studies of activism in the working-class districts of Pointe-Saint-Charles, Little Burgundy, and Saint-Henri in southwestern Montreal, which each deal, at least in part, with the 1960s and the 1970s.[24] These works contend with the complexities of social activism that was both organized and animated by experts from the outside – for example, activists from universities, social agencies, and government programs such as the *Compagnie des jeunes Canadiens* as well as by local activists working from the bottom up.[25] The challenges in NDG were different than the southwestern districts, however there was dialogue between the activist organizations in both areas and even some common

[22] Walter van Nus. "The Role of Suburban Government in the City-Building Process: The Case of Notre Dame de Grâces, Quebec, 1876-1910." Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine 13, no. 2 (1984): 91–103.
[23] Harold Bérubé, "Des banlieues qui se distinguent: Gouverner Westmount, Pointe-Claire et Mont-Royal (1880-1939), " (PhD diss., Université du Québec, Institut national de la recherche scientifique – Urbanisation, Culture et société, 2008), p. 42., and p. 140; and Harold Bérubé, "Une gouvernance suburbaine distincte: les banlieues élitaires de Montréal (1880-1939)," *Recherches sociographiques* 53, no. 1 (Janvier–Avril 2012), p. 59.
[24] Will Langford, *The Global Politics of Poverty in Canada: Development Programs and Democracy, 1964-1979.* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020), ch.3 and ch.4; Collectif CourtePointe, *Pointe Saint-Charles: un quartier, des femmes, une histoire communautaire*, (Montréal: les Éditions du remue-ménage, 2006); Simon Vickers, "Jobs, Homes, and the Right to Exist: Neighbourhood Activism in Deindustrializing Toronto and Montreal, 1963-1989," (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2011); and Steven High. *Deindustrializing Montreal: Entangled Histories of Race, Residence, and Class* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022), ch.4.
[25] See Vicker, "Jobs, Homes, and the Right to Exist," pp. 113-120 for a critique of the way this history has been framed.

personnel. For example, there are links between Head & Hands and some of the other local clinics started at the same time, and the Greater Montreal Anti-Poverty Co-ordinating Committee (GMAPCC) was at work in the Southwest and NDG. Some of the activism in NDG in the early seventies was sustained by the same government programs – Opportunities for Youth (OFY) and Local Initiatives Program (LIP) – as in the other districts that have been the focus of the recent historiography. This study makes a modest start towards connecting the activism in the working-class districts with NDG, a more middling one.

The middle class and suburbanites in the 1960s and 1970s have attracted little attention from historians of Canada. A rare exception is Steve Penfold's *The Donut*, which uses a simple commodity as a key to understand the development of postwar Canadian middle-class culture.[26] In the United States, suburban histories of that period have focused on the rise of right-wing populism.[27] NDG, in the period from 1957 through 1973, was largely moving in the opposite direction. Robert D. Johnston's *The Radical Middle Class*, which looks at Portland, Oregon in the early twentieth century provides a better model for looking at NDG. Johnston rejects a monolithic definition of the middle class, preferring to see the combination of a number of distinct groups like workers, small employers and property owners as forming a more amorphous "middling class" that was at different moments capable of either identifying with the very powerful or with the needs and sufferings of the less privileged.[28] Johnston demonstrates that, for a time, the petty bourgeois population made common cause with working class Portland to

[26] Steve Penfold, *The Donut: A Canadian History*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).
[27] Examples include: Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); and Stacie Taranto, *Kitchen Table Politics: Conservative Women and Family Values in New York*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).
[28] Robert D. Johnston, *The Radical Middle Class: Populist Democracy and the Question of Capitalism in Progressive Era Portland, Oregon*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 3-17

advance a form of moral economy. Sylvie Murray's *The Progressive Housewife*, looking at Queens in a period that overlaps with this thesis, demonstrates that suburban middle-class activism is not exclusively reactionary, but is also capable of advocating progressive politics.[29]

This thesis extends the literature of the Quiet Revolution by examining the activities and preoccupations of a community that was a contact zone between anglophones and francophones.[30] It was relatively peaceful and respectful, although not completely without acrimony. For example, the lawyer for the FLQ, Robert Lemieux, referred to NDG as "the place where the [capitalist] pigs live." That, however, did not stop Lemieux, who grew up in NDG, from visiting his parents there three or four times a week.[31] A study conducted in 1972 on behalf of the NDG Community Council reported that ninety-eight per cent of respondents felt that "the English and French communities live together peacefully."[32] Relations did grow more rancorous immediately following the period considered in this study, after Robert Bourassa's provincial government passed Bill 22, which declared French the official language of Quebec. In Quiet Revolution historiography, there is sparse examination of the experience of the English-speaking population prior to the introduction of Bill 22 and the first election of the Parti Québécois in 1976. The notable exception is historian Marc Levine's *The Reconquest of Montreal: Language Policy and Social Change in a Bilingual City.*[33]

Just as NDG has been largely overlooked in the historiography of the long Sixties, the archival record of this period is scattered and somewhat sparse. This thesis has relied on records

[29] Sylvie Murray, *The Progressive Housewife: Community Activism in Suburban Queens, 1945-1965* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).
[30] The notion of "contact zone" is borrowed from Simon, *Translating Montreal*, pp. 7-11.
[31] Adrian Walker, "'What Kind of Guy Am I? Look, See for Yourself!'" *Gazette*, 12 October 1970, p. 7.
[32] "Report of Committee to Review the N.D.G. Community Council," 23 March 1972.
[33] Marc V. Levine, *The Reconquest of Montreal: Language Policy and Social Change in a Bilingual City*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990).

retained by the Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community Council and Head & Hands. Additionally, there are some relevant documents held in archives of McGill University,[34] Concordia University,[35] and the *Archives de Montréal*. [36] The research also made extensive use of journalism, primarily from the local weekly newspaper, the *Monitor*, and three citywide daily papers available in digital form: G*azette*, *Le Devoir*, *La Presse*. A pair of unpublished student research projects produced in the 1980s were also valuable sources: a research report on Head & Hands by a master's student in social work[37] and a report on community activism in NDG based on oral history interviews conducted by undergraduate students in political science.[38] The textual sources were supplemented by a few oral history interviews. The combination of this variety of sources permits the emergence of a provisional picture of NDG in the 1960s and early 1970s.

This history was constructed heuristically. Following an initial literature review, the research proceeded to an examination of the available NDG Community Council records for the period from 1960 to 1974. The records were missing for the late 1950s and were inconsistent in detail beyond that. The Council did not have a systematic method of producing or retaining records. These records provided the initial framework for understanding the activities and preoccupations of much of the district. While the Council prided itself on representing all sectors of the population, the area's French-speaking, Italian, and Black populations were underrepresented. The archives of Head & Hands were also consulted, which yielded helpful material despite most records from the period under consideration having been destroyed by a

[34] McGill University Archives, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Women's Club fonds, MG4023; and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community Council, N.D.G. Conference on The Quality of Life, MG 2076-04-1041. McGill University Rare Books and Special Collections, Roy States Black History Collection.
[35] Concordia University Archives, YMCA of Montreal fonds, P145/01B
[36] Archives de Montréal, Histoire - Quartier Notre-Dame-de-Grâce: Community Council, D3035-92-1, Historique, D3035-92-30; and Routes - Autoroute Décarie, D2090-6.
[37] D. K. Taylor Letourneau, "The Head and Hands Youth Clinic: A Case Study of an Alternative Health and Social Service Agency," (M. Sw. Research Report, McGill University School of Social Work, 1987).
[38] Guardia and Schulze, "Community Activism in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce."

fire in 1979. This was followed by a thorough survey of the volumes of the *Monitor* for 1957 and 1958 and from 1968 through 1974. The volumes from 1959 through 1967 have not been deposited at the *Bibliothèques et Archives National du Québec* and the copies that had been at the Fraser-Hickson Library prior to its closing in 2007 were lost. The *Monitor* provided a rich weekly slice of life in NDG. It had journalists with distinctive voices who represented a spectrum of political opinion, although the paper had a decidedly anglophone bias. Despite their gaps and biases, these three sources provided the underpinning for the narrative that follows.

The daily papers provided the bulk of the detail to flesh out the story. Reporting in the papers was not only used to augment and corroborate information but was also used to provide a countervailing perspective to the biases in the foundational sources. For example, the bias of the Monitor was so pronounced that the French-language newspaper issued by the local parish, *Manoir Express,* started publishing a weekly regional paper in 1971 to counter the "anti-French-Canadian bias" in the *Monitor.*[39] Although *Manoir Express* is available on microfilm, it was not consulted in writing this thesis due to time and access constraints. That omission is somewhat mitigated by the use of the French-language dailies. The task of finding pertinent articles was made considerably easier thanks to the files of press clippings available at the *Archives de Montréal*. Information from other archival collections, as well as from secondary sources, provided additional detail and perspective.

Four oral history interviews helped animate this project. These interviews were conducted under the constraints of COVID-19 protocols with Anne Usher, who chaired one of the workshops at the Conference on the Quality of Life and eventually became president of the NDG Community Council, Linda Scott, one of the founders of the medical clinic at Head &

[39] "Manoir Express devient l'hebdo régional des francophones de l'Ouest," *Le Petit Journal,* 7 March 1971, p. 32.

Hands, Peter Lowery, an organizer of Head & Hands Sunday in the Park festivals, and Sam Boskey, who grew up in NDG in the 1950s and subsequently became a city councillor in the 1980s and 1990s. These interviews provided invaluable insight into the significance and impact of the changes that took place in NDG.

There is a stark contrast between NDG as it was in the late 1950s and the district it became by the time of the 1973 N.D.G. Conference on the Quality of Life. In the late 1950s, the tramways that had been the basis for the district's development were being replaced by buses, the last of the steam locomotives still operated out of the roundhouse in the Turcot railyards in the southern part of the district, the tallest building was five storeys tall, and there was still lawn bowling and tennis where less than a decade later there would be an expressway. By 1973, the roundhouse was gone, multistorey apartments had been built, and the discussion about public transportation was focused on an eventual extension of the underground Metro. Along with the changes in infrastructure and the built environment, which is not the focus of this thesis, there was significant social change in NDG over the long Sixties. By examining that history, this thesis makes a modest contribution to understanding the monumental transformations taking place over the same period in Montreal, Quebec, and Canada.

Chapter 1: Old Suburbia

> *We have always contended that the normal community – big city or small town – with all its elements of rich and poor, young and old, widely differing backgrounds and tastes – is a healthful, democratic environment. The boy or girl who grows up knowing "how the other half lives" surely is better equipped than one forced into the "set" of a one class community in which his or her parents set up mortgage keeping.*
>
> *New suburbia undoubtedly has its attractions of open spaces, fresh surroundings and all the rest. But if this be "Old Suburbia" where we now live, here we prefer to stay and enjoy, with our children, its old virtues.*[1]

This editorial reveals both pride in the community that Notre-Dame-de-Grâce had become in the over half century since it began developing as a suburban community and trepidation that it was under threat. The rapid growth that the district had undergone since the end of the Second World War was coming to an end. Almost every plot of subdivided land in the area had been built upon. Veterans of the war had settled in the area and were taking leadership positions in the social organizations and institutions that had been founded over the past years. The local schools were overflowing with the children of the postwar baby boom. Municipal politics were dominated by Joseph Omer Asselin, who established himself in the area in the 1930s as a leader in the Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Proprietors' League and had been a powerful member of Montreal city government. There were signs that change was on the horizon. In 1958,

[1] "New Suburbia vs. Old Virtues," editorial, *Monitor*, 14 February 1957, p. 4.

radio broadcaster Mary Peate, who had grown up in NDG, shared on weekly CBC radio programme her deliberations about whether to leave NDG to raise her young sons in the newer suburbs. She resolved to move to Baie d'Urfé near the western extreme of the Island of Montreal and reported that many of the people she and her husband had known in NDG had also moved to the western suburbs.[2] That movement towards the West Island is cited as one cause of declining membership in Wesley United Church, one of the larger churches in an older section of NDG.[3] Nevertheless, in the late 1950s, NDG was at its peak of population and had all the outward signs of a thriving and well-ordered community.

A Community Apart

NDG was somewhat isolated from the rest of the City of Montreal. It was set on an escarpment that overlooked railyards and the industrial Lachine Canal, so there was minimal connection with the adjacent wards of Saint-Henri and Côte-Saint-Paul to the south. In almost every other direction it was surrounded by the well-to-do separate municipalities of Westmount, Hampstead, and Montreal West, as well as the developing middle-class Côte-Saint-Luc. Demographically, as a district in which fifty-six per cent of its population spoke only English,[4] it had more in common with some of the surrounding municipalities, as well as with Verdun to the south, and with Mount Royal Ward (present day Côte-des-Neiges) to the northwest. The area had begun as a separate municipality and continued to maintain a degree of autonomy following its annexation to the centre city.

[2] Mary Peate, *Girl in a CBC Studio* (Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, Quebec: Shoreline, 1999), pp.15-44, 180-181. Peate's deliberation process is described in William Weintraub, *City Unique: Montreal Days and Nights in the 1940s and '50s* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1996), pp. 161-162.
[3] David Hanna, "Wesley: Committed to Community," (unpublished, Montreal: Wesley United Church, 2004), p. 15.
[4] 1961 Census of Canada, *Population and housing characteristics by census tracts: Montréal*, Bulletin CT-4.

Suburban development began in NDG in 1895, when a tramway was extended to skirt its eastern side. Development accelerated once the tramway was extended to NDG's western edge in 1908. The most rapid rate of growth in NDG occurred in the dozen years between the end of the First World War and 1930. Development then stalled during the Depression and then resumed in a frenzy. The population of NDG peaked in 1961 at over 80,000,[5] having grown by 58% between 1941 and 1956. [6] Correspondingly, the number of residential housing units more than doubled between 1946 and 1960.[7] Housing construction had been suppressed in NDG during the Depression and the Second World War, which resulted in a housing shortage that grew worse when the war veterans were demobilized.[8] The veterans settled in the newly built housing and began raising families. Subsequently, NDG experienced the same baby boom that swept across North America. In 1961, twenty-three per cent of NDG residents were under fifteen years of age,[9] which was just slightly below the provincial figure of twenty-five per cent.[10] To meet the needs of the expanding postwar population, additions were built on the local schools and eight additional schools were added in the district, to bring the total number to twenty-two by 1960. Similarly, by 1960 there were twenty churches and synagogues in the district, including six that were established following the war.[11]

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[5] *1961 Census of Canada, Bulletin CT-4*, pp. 9-10. In fact, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Ward had a population of over 100,000, almost a tenth of the City of Montreal. All figures in this thesis exclude the portion of the ward north of Chemin-de-la-Côte-Saint-Luc. The northern section, Snowdon, was often perceived as quite separate. The numbers used in this paper are based on census tract data.
[6] *Eighth Census of Canada,* 1941, Vol. II, Table 9, p. 19.; and *1961 Census of Canada, Bulletin CT-4*, pp. 9-10.
[7] Dorothy W. Williams, *NDG and Poverty: Looking through the Census*. (Montreal: The NDG Anti-Poverty Group, 2000), p. 30.
[8] Christopher M. Lyons, "Battles on the Homes Front: Montreal's Response to Federal Housing Initiatives, 1941-1947" (MA thesis, Concordia University, 2002), p.1.
[9] *1961 Census of Canada, Bulletin CT-4*, pp. 9-10.
[10] *1961 Census of Canada, Bulletin 1.2-2*, p. 5.
[11] In 1960, the number of houses of worship by denomination were as follows: Catholic (6), Anglican (5), United Church (3), Jewish (2), Presbyterian (2), Lutheran (1), and Baptist (1).

The older sections of NDG, for the most part, consisted of middle-class semi-detached cottages, and spacious duplexes, as well as apartment houses located along the main arteries. [12] Walter van Nus argues that this housing profile grew out of the original plans of NDG's Town Council, which were created in the first decade of the twentieth century to make the town "a high-class residential suburb."[13] Postwar development introduced low-cost rental housing in areas such as Benny Farm and the Westhaven-Elmhurst neighbourhood, which made the area more affordable for returning veterans, recent immigrants, and migrants from lower-income parts of Montreal. This altered the socio-economic profile of the district slightly, however there was no significant shift in the occupational make-up of the district between 1951 and 1961.[14]

NDG had a diverse population that was forty-nine per cent Catholic, thirty-eight per cent Protestant, and ten per cent Jewish. Ethnically, thirty-eight per cent of the population listed themselves as coming from the British Isles, including Ireland, and eighteen per cent from France.[15] The population was much less physically segregated along ethnic and religious lines than other parts of the city, although each community maintained separate institutions. The twenty houses of worship scattered throughout the district also separated the community. French-language Catholic, English-language Protestant, and English-language Catholic schools neighboured one another. Two funeral homes – one English-language Catholic and the other Protestant – stood on opposite corners across from NDG Park, and the French-language one was only a few blocks away.

[12] Paul-André Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal depuis la Confédération*, 2nd. (Montréal: Boréal, 2000), p. 364.
[13] Walter Van Nus, "The Role of Suburban Government," p. 97.
[14] Guardia and Schulze, "Community Activism in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce," Appendix I.
[15] 1961 Census of Canada, *Population and housing characteristics by census tracts: Montréal*, Bulletin CT-4, Catalogue 95-519.

Despite the separation in schools and houses of worship, NDG did have its common meeting places. The sporting culture, for which the area was known, crossed linguistic, religious, and racial lines. Children participated in sports leagues that were comprised of park-based teams supported by neighbourhood volunteers, about which historian Terry Copps recalled, "no one cared which school you went to or what faith your parents professed."[16] Adults joined tennis and lawn bowling clubs. Spectator sports also united the district. The Snowdon Fastball League played games in several NDG parks. The fastball teams featured professional hockey players, such as Doug Harvey of the Canadiens de Montreal, and the games attracted large crowds. In the autumn, the NDG Maple Leafs, a junior football club in the Quebec Rugby Football Union, was also popular. Beyond sports, the neighbourhood also came together in gardening, politics, commerce, the cinemas, and in other community associations.

Development of Social Organizations

Although NDG had relinquished autonomous control of its local governance when it was annexed to the city in 1910, the district still retained some control of its destiny and identity through the formation of local associations and organizations.[17] Such associations were formed both in response to specific circumstances in the district and as part of broader trends. In the 1920s, for example, the Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Citizens' Association (initially called the Property Owners' Protective Association) formed to lobby the city government to fulfil its obligations under the annexation agreement. The Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Women's Club was established in 1922 in association with the Federation of Women's Clubs. At one of its first meetings, Sir Arthur Currie, then Principal of McGill University, praised the club for focusing on education,

[16] Terry Copp, "Workers and Soldiers: Adventures in History," *The Canadian Historical Review* 93, no. 3 (September 2012): p. 464.
[17] Bérubé, "Des banlieues qui se distinguent, " p. 42.

social service, and child welfare rather than electoral politics.[18] For at least seventy years, the club dedicated itself to charitable causes and meeting the social and educational needs of local women.[19] The Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Proprietors' League operated from the 1930s into the mid-1950s to lobby on behalf of the interests of property owners. It consistently lobbied for lower taxes, reduced property valuations, and the continuation of a government moratorium on mortgage rate increases. More locally, the League opposed the building of government subsidized housing in the years following the Second World War.[20] The Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Businessmen's Association operated from the early 1930s into the mid-1960s to promote the interests of local business. In its early years it staged exhibitions, featuring booths representing the manufacturing and retail interests in NDG, which attracted thousands of attendees. By the end of the 1950s, however, arguably the most representative organization in the district, was the Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community Council, in which both the N.D.G. Women's Club and the N.D.G. Businessmen's Association were members.

The NDG Community Council began operation in 1942. It had been founded at the initiative of the community leader J.M.C. Duckworth. As executive secretary of the NDG YMCA from its founding in 1929, Duckworth built the institution over the course of the 1930s into a social and recreational hub for NDG. Finally, in 1940, he succeeded in having a permanent YMCA building constructed following delays caused by the Depression. Also, through the 1930s, he was head of the Wesley United Church Sunday School, then the largest Sunday school organization in Canada, and he organized the Kensington Home and School Association.[21] In 1941, he brought together leaders of local groups to form the Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community

[18] "Disliked Women's Political Clubs," *Gazette*, 4 November 1922, p. 5.
[19] Charlie Fidelman, "Do-gooders Still Exist, Club President Says," *Gazette*, 20 February 1992, pp. 69-70.
[20] Lyons, "Battles on the Homes Front," pp. 55-56.
[21] "J.M.C. Duckworth Will Be Honoured," *Gazette*, 27 August 1947, p. 11.

Council to deal co-operatively with community problems and to promote social welfare in the area. The first president, Gilbert Layton, was elected in April 1942 by forty-seven representatives of various recreational, religious, and educational organizations.[22] At an earlier meeting, it was reported that delegates came from "French, English, Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish organizations."[23] In its first years, the Community Council's efforts focused on such areas as juvenile delinquency, combatting the licensing of taverns and pool halls, improving recreational facilities, and planning for the re-integration of veterans returning from service in the Second World War. At the end of the war, the Community Council had fifty-one dues-paying organizations as voting members.[24]

NDG Community Council: Influence without Authority

By 1957, membership in the NDG Community Council had increased to seventy-five affiliated organizations and 360 associated members,[25] and the Council had established itself in a leadership role in the district. One bold initiative it undertook in 1957 was to lead NDG in an attempt to regain its independent status by seceding from the City of Montreal. It did this with apparent popular support. A letter to the editor of the *Monitor* complained: "We are taxed to the hilt and what do we get for our money? Very little!"[26] The possibility of secession was discussed at length at three consecutive monthly meetings of the Community Council from September through November.[27] The Council argued that the growth of the community, relative to the surrounding municipalities, justified the move. NDG had twice the population of Outremont and

[22] "Community Group in N.D.G. Launched," *Gazette*, 17 April 1942, p. 20.
[23] "N.D.G. Community Council Soon to Be a Reality," *Gazette*, 9 February 1942, p. 11.
[24] John Schaechter, "Neighborhood Power and the Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community Council," *City Magazine* 6, no. 2 (1983), p. 23.
[25] "CD, Libraries, Letters NDG Council Activities," *Gazette*, 14 May 1957, p. 3.
[26] John Gibson, " Notre-Dame-de-Grâce's Annexation to the City of Westmount Proposed," *Monitor*, 7 February 1957, p. 4.
[27] "Secession Question Is Still Not Faced by Community Group," *Monitor*, 28 November 1957, p. 1.

three times that of Westmount and needed control over its local affairs. Ironically, the move towards independence was shut down by J.O. Asselin, a long-time NDG city councillor and former chairman of the Montreal executive committee. Curiously, Asselin felt so comfortable in his position that he expressed this opposition just prior to the municipal election that was coming up at the end of October. He claimed that NDG owed its growth to the City of Montreal and would have to absorb its portion of the city debt. [28] Asselin handily won re-election, although in a category of councillor that was selected by property owners only. At the November meeting of the Community Council, John Cerini, who had originally proposed the motion for NDG to secede, was left in the awkward position of having to quell the demand for secession that he had stirred up. He requested more time to complete a study of the question and delivered an ambiguous message that included the phrase, "we have no wish to embarrass our elected officials."[29] As the topic does not come up again in the press, it appears that it died a quiet death.

One method the Community Council used to gauge public concern and to set priorities for its efforts was an annual citizens' forum, known as "Beef Night," which by 1958 had become "a tradition in N.D.G."[30] The attending citizens were invited to express their complaints about things going on in the district. The citizens who raised the best and most constructive "beefs," as judged by a panel of community leaders, were awarded roasts and steaks that had been donated by local butchers and grocery stores. The meetings were attended by municipal, provincial, and federal representatives and the city's daily papers reported on the proceedings. The 1958 event was attended by William Hamilton, the member of parliament for the local federal riding, and by four of the six city councillors representing the ward. The winner that year was concerned that

[28] Schaechter, "Neighborhood Power," p. 22.; and "N.-D.-de-Grâce ne peut pas divorcer Concordia, " *La Patrie*, 6 October 1957, p. 67.
[29] *Monitor*, "Secession Question Is Still Not Faced."
[30] "'Beef Night' on Monday," *Monitor*, 18 September 1958.

"youngsters were cycling against the traffic on one-way streets" and recommended that it be corrected through publicity and police enforcement. Other citizens raised concerns about litterbugs, rotting garbage, drivers who run through amber lights, broken sidewalks, Montreal's lack of a subway system, and necking teenagers in the parks.[31] By 1961, the event name was changed to "Beef and Bouquet Night," recognizing that citizens may wish to express praise about the community. While these evenings influenced the actions of the Community Council, it appears that their main purpose was to act as a liaison between the community and its representatives. They provided a safety valve, so that the community could feel as if they were being heard, and a non-threatening and efficient method for politicians to get a sample of public opinion.

Nurturing the Young and Imposing Sobriety

From its founding, the NDG Community Council dedicated a substantial share of its attention to the needs of the district's youth. In 1957, four of six operational committees of the Council were dedicated to children's education and safety: libraries, traffic safety, parks and playgrounds, and the Arts and Letters Festival.[32] In that same year, an additional committee was added to focus exclusively on youth.[33] The library committee administered the NDG Boys and Girls Library that the Council had founded in 1943. By 1957, it had grown to three branches and lent over 70,000 books annually.[34] The West End Traffic Safety Council developed and delivered traffic safety programs that not only served NDG, but also schools from across Quebec.[35] The parks and playgrounds committee monitored the state of the parks in the district

[31] "Beefs Run Wide Gamut as Citizens Complain to Community Council," *Monitor*, 25 September 1958.
[32] *Gazette*, "CD, Libraries, Letters."
[33] "New Committee to Seek Help for Plan Here," *Monitor*, 29 August 1957.
[34] *Gazette*, "CD, Libraries, Letters."
[35] Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community Council, Inc. Annual Report, 1960-61.

and liaised with the City of Montreal to advocate for facility improvements and additional parks. The Council was, according to an editorial in the *Gazette*, "probably best known for its lively Arts and Letters Festival,"[36] an annual event in French and English that included competitions in eleven categories including poetry, public speaking, spelling, book reviews, essays, ballet, and musical performance. The Arts and Letters Festival spanned weeks of the year, depended on hundreds of volunteers, and involved more than two dozen public and private schools in NDG. In 1957, 2,500 students participated in the festival.[37]

A major preoccupation of the NDG Community Council, also from its inception, was keeping licensed drinking establishments out of NDG. The most commonly stated objections to taverns were that they would create a moral danger for young people, and they would degrade the community. The effort had been entirely successful, such that, at the start of 1958, there were no licensed taverns in the community. In early December of that year, the editorial office of the *Monitor* was "deluged with telephone calls and letters from angry NDG residents protesting the establishment of a tavern at the corner of Monkland and Old Orchard Avenues."[38] A shop at that corner was concealed in plywood hoardings, completely obscuring the renovation work inside. The shop owner denied having a license for a tavern, claiming that he was going to open an independent drugstore. The denials were not believed by the community. The French- and English-language Roman Catholic parishes in the area sent protests to the Quebec Liquor Commission. When no response was received, they appealed directly to Premier Duplessis.[39]

[36] "They Pull Together in N.D.G.," *Gazette*, 5 April 1957, p. 6.
[37] *Gazette*, "CD, Libraries, Letters."
[38] Gerry Kane, "Owner Denies Bar Rumour," *Monitor*, 4 December 1958, p. 1.
[39] "Six St. Augustine Groups Send Wire to Duplessis Protesting Tavern Here," *Monitor*, 11 December 1958, p. 1.; and "Tavern Opens Despite Protests," *Monitor*, 18 December 1958, p. 1.

The NDG Community Council also received many calls and letters of protest, and it took an active role in opposing the tavern.

The tavern opened just before Christmas, but the opposition did not end there. In January, Paul Earl, the provincial Liberal member of the Legislative Assembly for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, placed a motion on the order paper demanding the release of all available information relating to the granting of the tavern permit. Three weeks later, on 10 February 1959, Premier Duplessis presented a thin file that contained "almost no information," only a letter requesting the permit with no acknowledgement nor evidence that the permit was actually issued.[40] He dismissed the concerns of the great number of NDG citizens and community organizations, stating, "I do not blame the people of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce for intervening by opposing the permit. It is their business ... but Notre-Dame-de-Grâce is in Montreal, where there are no prohibition regulations."[41] He claimed he had no power to intervene, citing the Roncarelli case, a Supreme Court judgement rendered less than two weeks earlier, in which Duplessis himself had been found guilty of wrongfully ordering the revocation of a liquor licence and ordered to pay damages.[42] This clever yet cynical response cannot have satisfied a well-organized community who wished to have a say in the conduct of "their own affairs."[43]

Independent Municipal Politics

It is hard to reconcile the vehement opposition to liquor licenses in NDG with the voting pattern exhibited by its citizens in the 1957 municipal election. In the mayoralty race, the voters

[40] Débats de l'Assemblée législative (débats reconstitués), 25e législature, 3e session, Séance du mercredi, 11 février 1959, Questions et réponses, Taverne à Notre-Dame-de-Grâce.
[41] Débats de l'Assemblée législative (débats reconstitués), 25e législature, 3e session, Séance du mardi 10 février 1959, Demande et dépôt de documents, Permis de la Commission des liqueurs, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce.
[42] Roncarelli v. Duplessis, 1959 CanLII 50 (SCC), [1959] SCR 121.
[43] "Community Council Takes Active Part Opposing Tavern," *Monitor*, 18 December 1958, p. 1.

of NDG voted overwhelmingly for Sarto Fournier to defeat the incumbent mayor, Jean Drapeau.[44] Drapeau had been elected in 1954 in the wake of the Caron Commission judgement that identified widespread corruption in the city's police force. Fournier promised to return Montreal to being an "open city," which implied tolerating the gambling, prostitution, and unlicensed liquor sales that Drapeau had been attempting to control. Fournier, a Conservative senator and NDG resident, was fully supported by Premier Duplessis's Union Nationale electoral machine.[45] In that election, although the majority of city council seats went to Drapeau's Civic Action League, NDG bucked the trend and was swept by six associated independent counsellors. Those counsellors had run unopposed by Fournier's party under the banner of the NDG Citizen's Committee, which was led by J.-O. Asselin. Asselin, who was elected for his seventh consecutive term, had been chairman of the city's executive committee and was arguably the most powerful municipal politician in Montreal from 1940 until 1954. He had been accused of complicity in the city's corruption but was subsequently exonerated by the Caron judgement. The result of the election bewildered journalists at *Le Devoir*. Editor-in-chief André Laurendeau pointed out that Drapeau's Civic Action League should have been more appealing to anglophone voters in the west end, as it showed "more civic-mindedness, more municipal pride, and a more exacting sense of public morality."[46] Germaine Bernier commented that "Notre-Dame de-Grâce voted exactly like the slums and the districts organized by the underworld. "[47]

[44] Herb Lampert, "NDG Voters Choose Independents Support Metropolitan Government," *Gazette*, 29 October 1957, p. 13. In the district, Fournier garnered 9,554 votes (66%) to Drapeau's 4,898 (34%).
[45] Weintraub, *City Unique*, p. 272.
[46] André Laurendeau, " Canadiens français vs anglophones?" *Le* Devoir, 31 October 1957, p. 4. Original: Certains arguments de la Ligue auraient même dû atteindre plus directement l'électorat anglo-canadien: il a souvent, montré plus de civisme, plus de fierté municipale, un sens plus exigeant de la moralité publique.
[47] Germaine Bernier, "L'ouest contre l'est," *Le* Devoir, 31 October 1957, p. 6. Original: "Quand on songe que dans cette élection qui vient d'avoir lieu, Notre-Dame de-Grâce a exactement voté comme le bas de la ville et les districts organisés par la pègre, il y a là ample matière à réflexion. "

Laurendeau's perplexity points to a possible reconciliation between the demonstrative abstemiousness of the NDG community and their apparent tolerance for the "open city." The impulse that led NDG residents to seek separation from the city provides an indication of the mindset of the community. A sufficient portion of the NDG population may have seen itself as exempt from the corruption in the city centre if it exercised vigilance in guarding its boundaries. On the other hand, it could rather be that NDG voters were not focused on corruption per se but rather cast their votes based primarily on fiscal management and self-interest. During the campaign, Asselin had attacked the Drapeau administration for financial malfeasance.[48] He had also run on a platform supporting metropolitan government for Montreal, which may have been aimed at providing greater independence for NDG from the central city.

Still Answering the Call

Another area in which NDG cut an independent path from the City of Montreal in the 1950s was in respect to civil defence. NDG had been exceptionally supportive of the federal government's efforts to implement civil defence plans. NDG had had a high rate of enlistment in military service during the Second World War[49] and then continued to show its patriotic effort by commemorating the fallen, visiting hospitalized veterans, and supporting other veteran's causes.[50] This enthusiasm carried over to preparations for the possibility of a nuclear war. Even after Montreal's municipal government disbanded its civil defence office in 1954, volunteers in NDG maintained the most active municipal civil defence organization in the Montreal

[48] "Asselin Charges $179,052 City 'Scandal'," *Gazette,* 19 October 1957, p. 31.
[49] Serge Marc Durflinger, "City at War: The Effects of the Second World War on Verdun, Québec," (PhD diss., McGill University, 1997), p. 68n8.
[50] Lyons, "Battles on the Homes Front", pp. 56-58.; McGill University Archives, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Women's Club fonds, MG4023, Minute Book 27, p. 7. and Book 28, p.7.; and "Legion to Mark Remembrance at NDG Cenotaph," *Gazette,* 2 November 1959, p. 45.

metropolitan area, outdoing the separate municipalities of Verdun, Lachine, and Saint-Lambert. NDG's volunteers obtained recognition from the NDG Community Council and later from the federal government.[51] In 1958, Major Maurice St. Pierre, the co-ordinator for civil defence in greater Montreal, announced that NDG's civil defence unit, working in collaboration with civil defence headquarters, would develop and implement tactics to be later incorporated in the civil defence plan for Greater Montreal.[52] This support for civil defence showed great patriotic loyalty, but NDG would not swim against the tide on this issue much longer.

[51] Andrew Paul Burtch," If We Are Attacked, Let Us Be Prepared: Canada and the Failure of Civil Defence, 1945-1963" (PhD diss., Carleton University, 2009), p. 133.
[52] "N.D.G. Selected as CD Guinea Pig," *Monitor*, 13 November 1958, p. 1.

Chapter 2: The 1960s in NDG: The Shifting Focus of Public Action

The years between 1960 and 1967, stand out as a period of tremendous change for each of Montreal, Quebec, and Canada in different, yet interrelated, ways. For Montreal, those years mark a period of modernization that physically transformed the city, culminating in the 1967 hosting of the International and Universal Exposition, commonly referred to as Expo 67.[1] In Quebec, the Quiet Revolution took shape, as the provincial government sought to establish itself as a secular welfare-state, obtain greater autonomy from the federal government, and assert itself as a French-speaking nation.[2] Canada grappled with defining its national identity as it approached the centennial anniversary of Confederation.[3] NDG, too, changed during this period, both in dialogue with the effervescence at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels, but also due to its own internal dynamics.

This chapter examines five developments in NDG that illustrate how NDG was changing: the abrupt end to support for civil defence; the construction of an expressway through eastern NDG; a battle waged by the NDG Community Council to prevent a cabaret from opening in the district; the engagement of the public with Quebec nationalism; and a shift in the political orientation of the district, as it began to support more socially progressive candidates for public office.

[1] André Lortie, ed., *The 60s: Montreal Thinks Big* (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 2004).
[2] Martin Pâquet et Stéphane Savard, *Brève histoire de la révolution tranquille* (Montréal: Boréal, 2021), pp. 18-20.
[3] See Palmer, *Canada's 1960s* and Jose Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution: National Identities in English Canada, 1945-71* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006)

For both Montreal and Quebec, 1960 was a turning point. At the provincial level, it marked the election of the Liberal government of Jean Lesage, which is often cited as the beginning of the Quiet Revolution. The electoral victory was celebrated as the end of the Duplessis era and as a "liberation" by intellectuals, urbanites, and partisans of the Liberal Party.[4] For NDG, which had not elected a Union Nationale MLA since 1936, this meant having representation in the governing party in the Legislative Assembly for the first time in sixteen years. NDG's long-serving MLA, Paul Earl, was selected to Lesage's cabinet, first as Minister of Mines[5] and then as Minister of Revenue. Although the inaugural issue of *Cité Libre* – an anti-Duplessis intellectual periodical – had listed its publication address in NDG,[6] there is no record of how widespread nor ecstatic the celebration of Lesage's victory was in the district. Complicating the story, the Union Nationale had had its strongest result in the riding since 1936, albeit with only 34% of the vote, but that more than doubled the vote count of any intervening election.

In the Montreal municipal election, Jean Drapeau swept to power. Drapeau took fifty-three per cent of the vote in a five-candidate field, with his nearest competitor, incumbent Mayor Sarto Fournier taking thirty-three per cent. Drapeau's recently formed Civic Party won two thirds of elected council seats, providing him with strong support on Council. Drapeau had grand visions to make Montreal into a great modern city and subsequently held the mayoralty for twenty-six years. During his tenure, and particularly in the 1960s, the city embarked on a series of ambitious projects, including Expo 67, constructing a subway system – the Metro, and constructing over 170 km of highways and bridges. At the time of the 1960 election, while NDG

[4] Léon Dion, *La révolution déroutée, 1960-1976* (Montréal: Boréal, 1998), p. 37.; and Gérard Filion, "La fin d'une ère politique," *Le Devoir*, 23 June 1960, p. 1.
[5] This is a responsibility he relinquished to René Lévesque, who expanded his role as Minister of Natural Resources.
[6] *Cité libre*, 1, no. 1, p. 2.

voters were supportive of some major projects, such as building a subway system and improving traffic circulation, it still voted for Fournier, inverting the pattern for the city as a whole, with Fournier outpolling Drapeau by forty-seven to thirty per cent. Moreover, independent candidates once again took all six council seats. J.O. Asselin chose not to run after representing NDG for twenty years, however his son Edmund was elected for his fourth consecutive term.

While there was no significant change in provincial and municipal voting in 1960, there was some evidence that things were changing in the community. At Beef Night in 1960, the prize-winning beef of the night was awarded to Gordon MacDonald, "who lashed out at the apathy of NDGers who refused to take part in community organizations."[7] It is not clear whether this was a premeditated complaint or whether with was a response to having only seventy-five citizens attend the meeting. Low community spirit would nonetheless become a recurrent theme over the next few years. In 1962, Mayor Jean Drapeau and Chairman of the Executive Board Lucien Saulnier were invited by the Community Council to speak together to the citizens of NDG. It was rare for Drapeau and Saulnier to appear on the same platform. Over one thousand letters were sent to citizens and groups inviting them to the event and it received weeks of advance publicity. A school hall with 450 seats was secured with provision for overflow. Very few people attended the meeting and the *Monitor* subsequently lamented that "it is sad knowledge that people in N.D.G. are still as apathetic about municipal government as ever."[8]

Civil Defence: Fact or Fraud

Indicative of the change in NDG attitudes, the district could no longer be relied upon to unquestioningly support civil defence. In November 1961, the NDG Community Council

[7] "'Beef Night' Attracts 75," *Gazette*, 28 September 1960, p.24.
[8] "N.D.G. Can Learn from Montreal West," *Monitor*, 17 May 1962.

convened a panel discussion with the provocative title "Civil Defence, Fact or Fraud."[9] In advance of the meeting, the chairman of the programme committee of the NDG Community Council wrote to Minister of Defence Douglas Harkness to inform him that "the citizens find it controversial ... that the government's civil defence role to date is to tell the nation to 'build Shelters.' But NDG [Notre-Dame-de-Grâce] and eight miles away will be total destruction and uninhabitable."[10] The gathering was decidedly hostile to civil defence measures, according to the report of J.W. Bailey, a training officer who argued at the meeting for shelters. Bailey noted that the shelter policy's opponents, "students, beatnicks (sic) and pinks," were well organized and used emotional appeals that were more likely to impress the public than the government's less passionate expert advice. Shortly after that meeting, the government instructed local volunteers not to engage in public debates with opponents of planning, as it would contribute to the public perception that local CD organizations were opposed to peace.[11] There was, however, no contrition on the part of the NDG Community Council. In his annual report, Patrick Farrell, chairman of the programme committee, reported that the panel had been well-attended and had "sparked a series of such meetings across Canada."[12]

Several members of the Community Council executive at the time of the 1961 meeting had until recently been enthusiastic supporters of the civil defence initiatives. Two of them, Cyril Durocher and Edward Livingstone, had been directors of the NDG CD unit in the late 1950s. In 1956, Livingstone wrote to the Federal Civil Defence Co-ordinator, Major-General Frank Worthington: "We are doing this not only because it is in our own and our fellow-citizens'

[9] "The Local Scene," *Gazette*, 24 November 1961, p. 34.
[10] Andrew Paul Burtch, *Give Me Shelter: The Failure of Canada's Cold War Civil Defence*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012), p. 184-185.
[11] Burtch, *Give Me Shelter*, p. 185.
[12] Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community Association, Inc., "Annual Summary Report, 1961-62."

absolute right to have Civil Defence in peacetime to meet all disaster (sic), but also because it is our bounden duty to insist on that right."[13] Durocher, though, looking back at the effort a quarter century afterwards recalled bitterly: "The majority of the people didn't give a damn. They didn't even know about it, I guess. But it was the policy of the government of Canada to institute civil defence organizations."[14] Community indifference may have caused the change to the Community Council's position on civil defence. It is quite possible that the lack of support for civil defence was the basis for Gordon MacDonald's prize-winning "beef" at the 1960 Beef Night. In any case, the Community Council's Civil Defence Committee was no longer meeting or reporting by September 1960.[15] There is no outward indication that Durocher, Livingstone, or any other member of Council objected to the stance in 1961. The timing of that smart about-face is concurrent with the formation of nuclear disarmament groups across Canada and globally.[16] Just prior to the Community Council's panel discussion on civil defence, NDG resident and professor of social work at McGill University Cuthbert G. "Giff" Gifford joined the NDP as a means to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament. He ran for Parliament the next spring and gained a growing following.

The Road to Expo

The first half of the 1960s brought not only changes in attitudes but also changes to the built environment. The rapid development of the suburbs to the north and west of NDG had resulted in persistent traffic congestion and planning forecasts anticipated the metropolis to grow

[13] Andrew Paul Burtch," If We Are Attacked," p. 134
[14] Guardia and Schulze, "Community Activism in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce," p. 4.
[15] Minutes of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community Council 14 September 1960; see also Annual Summary Report, 1960-61.
[16] Nicole Marion "Canada's Disarmers: The Complicated Struggle Against Nuclear Weapons, 1959-1963" (PhD diss., Carleton University, 2017), pp. 1-4.

at a rate that in retrospect appears exaggerated.[17] Based on plans put in place during Jean Drapeau's first term in office, in 1958, Montreal's Executive Board commissioned a study to prepare preliminary plans and determine the cost of building a north-south expressway along Décarie Boulevard between Snowdon and the new Metropolitan Boulevard under construction across the north of the city.[18] The report, delivered in July 1959, recommended three variations of a route all of which would cut through the eastern portion of NDG.[19] Jean Drapeau had campaigned in the 1960 election on a promise to build the expressway, but by January of 1962, the civic administration was reluctant to shoulder its full cost. It proposed a scaled-back "semi-expressway" at one quarter of the cost. The reduced plan would, according to James Bellin, a Civic Party councillor, save a thousand homes from expropriation and demolition.[20] This reduced plan was abandoned once the city had been awarded the Universal Exposition for 1967, because it was believed that a north-south expressway was required to transport people to and from the World's Fair site. Provincial and federal funding were committed to the project; the province stepped in to purchase the land; expropriations were expedited; and construction began in earnest.[21] After years of discussion the expressway was opened four days prior to the opening of Expo 1967. [22]

It appears that there was very little public resistance to the building of the expressway, even in NDG. The daily newspapers in both French and English were generally positive about the development, reporting communiqués from government officials and writing editorials that

[17] Growth to 7 million was anticipated by the year 2000. Lortie, *Montreal Thinks Big*, p.77.
[18] "Vote $50,000 to Examine Expressway," *Montreal Star*, 11 April 1958.
[19] "Un projet d'autostrade Décarie: $43,000,000," *Le Devoir*, 17 July 1959.
[20] "Thousand Homes Were Saved," *Monitor*, 19 April 1962.
[21] Charles Lazarus, "Decarie Land to Be Bought," *Montreal Star*, 3 February 1964; Gordon Pape, "$12,000,000 Outlay Approved for Decarie Expropriations," *Gazette,* 12 February 1964; and "Démolition," *Montréal-Matin* 11 August 1964.
[22] "Finished on Time," *Gazette*, 25 April 1967.

were supportive of the project. An exception was *Le Petit Journal*, a weekly tabloid that pointed out that the hundreds of homes in the route of the expressway were in the French-speaking part of the district. The *Montreal Star* published a letter to the editor signed by "N.D.G. Citizen" that "vehemently protested the proposed construction" and declared that because of a "World's Fair lasting for six months, NDG is going to be ruined forever."[23] The newspapers reported the annoyance of residents and business owners about the effects of construction. The topic only came up at the Community Council's Beef Night in complaints about construction noise. There is no evidence of an organized local objection to the construction of the expressway nor resistance to expropriation, such as had been organized in Toronto to fight the proposed Spadina Expressway and in New York against the Lower Manhattan Expressway.[24]

The business community, represented by the NDG Businessmen's Association and the Snowdon Merchants' Association were strong supporters of the project to build an expressway. They saw it as a means to draw more customers to their enterprises and even as an opportunity to arrest the perceived deterioration of Sherbrooke Street. The most voluble support came from Harold Cummings, the president of the NDG Businessmen's Association, who owned a car dealership and served as a city councillor from 1957 to 1962. Cummings was a charismatic figure, well-known for his televised advertisements for his car dealership and high-profile publicity stunts, such as having the American comedian Bob Hope appear at the 1956 opening of his business. Cummings advocated quick action to begin building the expressway as early as

[23] N.D.G. Citizen, "Depressed Expressway Means Unsightly Gouge through N.D.G.," letter to the editor, *Montreal Star*, 25 February 1964.
[24] David Nowlan and Nadine Nowlan, *The Bad Trip: The Untold Story of the Spadina Expressway*, (Toronto: House of Anansi, 1970); Ian Milligan, "'This Board Has a Duty to Intervene': Challenging the Spadina Expressway through the Ontario Municipal Board, 1963-1971," *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine* 39, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 25-39.; and Anthony Flint, *Wrestling with Moses: How Jane Jacobs Took on New York's Master Builder and Transformed the American City*, (New York: Random House, 2009) pp. 146-149

1959.[25] The reduced plan for the expressway in January 1962 brought "howls of protest" from NDG councillors, who favoured a full-scale expressway. Harold Cummings called the *Monitor* from his vacation in Mexico to issue a challenge to Mayor Drapeau and Lucien Saulnier, Chairman of the Executive Committee.[26] Once the expressway was back on track and in the planning stages, Cummings and the NDG Businessmen's Association attempted to position themselves as the watchdogs for the detailed design of the highway and advocates for the residents of NDG. They sought involvement in the design of entrances and exits, as well as expedited information about, and compensation for, expropriation.[27] They lobbied unsuccessfully to retain the original design that would have included parking spaces above the expressway north of Queen Mary Road.[28] In 1966, they also sought tax relief for businesses affected by the construction.[29] This appears to be the final act of the NDG Businessmen's Association, which ceased operations around that point, more likely because Harold Cummings moved away from the area at that time, rather than for reasons related to the expressway. It appears that he had sustained the association with his outsized personality.

Ooh La La! Not in NDG

While opposition to the Décarie Expressway may have been muted, the announcement in January 1963 of the impending opening of "Royal Follies," an "ultra-chic" cabaret on Sherbrooke Street in NDG, created a commotion that drew impassioned protests and received such sustained attention from the newspapers that *Le Devoir* felt compelled to label it "*l'affaire*

[25] Harold Cummings, letter to editor, *Gazette*, 11 November 1959.
[26] "More Study of Decarie is Needed," *Monitor*, 25 January 1962.
[27] "NDG Group Asks Data on Expressway," *Gazette*, 17 April 1964.
[28] "Overhead Parking Out for Snowdon," *Monitor*, 28 January 1965.
[29] "Decarie Merchants Seek Help," *Monitor*, 14 April 1964.

du théâtre Empress."[30] This "affair" presented the clash of the vision of Montreal as a sophisticated world city with NDG's tradition as an abstemious and quiet residential district. It took place in the wake of the provincial government having modernized the oversight of liquor licensing[31] and the municipal government demonstrating the will and the power to clean up the entertainment industry. The NDG Community Council, with the support of its member organizations, was at the forefront of the battle to prevent the cabaret from opening.

The ambitious plans for the Royal Follies came to light when the press reported that a Montreal group had acquired the palatial Empress Theatre, a 1550-seat 1920s-era movie house that was ornately decorated in an ancient Egyptian style.[32] The restaurateur Gabriel "Gaby" Richard, a former national president of *la Corporation des cuisiniers et pâtissiers du Canada*, was the principal spokesperson for the group and his name appeared on the cabaret license that had been issued on November 27, 1962. Richard described the night club as being in the style of the Lido in Paris, the Latin Quarter in New York, and the Tropicana in Las Vegas. It would present variety shows featuring dancing showgirls and a full orchestra. The fixed seating was to be removed and replaced by terraced tables at which champagne and meals would be served. As of January 1963, the investors in the Royal Follies had already spent $500,000. From the start, they considered it as "an accessory" to the upcoming World's Fair in 1967.[33] One of Richard's partners, the impresario Johnny Reed, secured a provisional commitment from the French singer

[30] "Me Mackay somme Me Dugas de nommer les appuis influents de M. G. Richard, " *Le Devoir*, 24 January 1963, p. 1.
[31] Bill 34, An Act respecting the Quebec Liquor Board, 2nd Sess, 26th Leg 10 Elizabeth II, Quebec, 1961 (assented to 13 April 1961), SQ 1961, c 255.
[32] Gerald FitzGerald, "Theatre Cabaret for West End," On and Off the Record, *Gazette*, 10 January 1963, p. 4.; and Camille Bédard, "Traveling in Time and Space: The Cinematic Landscape of the Empress Theatre," in John Potvin, ed., *Oriental Interiors: Design, Identity, Space* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), pp. 219–34.
[33] Claude Gendron, "On s'est opposé trop tard au cabaret de NDG," *La Presse*, p. 3.; and Al Palmer, "Show Time," Ourtown, *Gazette*, 17 May 1965, p. 3.

and actor Maurice Chevalier to attend the opening night on February 12, 1963.[34] That opening, however, would be delayed by more than two years.

The day after the news about the purchase of the Empress appeared in the paper, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community Council President Kenneth C. Mackay[35] provided a written statement in which he demanded that the Quebec Liquor Board "immediately" rescind its decision to grant a cabaret permit to Gabriel Richard or those members of the board who were responsible for the issuing of the permit should resign "in order to preserve the integrity of the board in the eyes of the general public and to prevent it from enjoying in the future the disreputable reputation of its predecessor, the Quebec Liquor Commission." He objected to the permit as having been issued without a public hearing, even though one had been promised, and it was in direct contravention of a city bylaw which prohibits cabarets, taverns and nightclubs on Sherbrooke Street and Monkland Avenues in NDG. As there was no form of appeal to the Liquor Board's decisions, the Council sent a letter of protest to the Attorney General, Georges-Émile Lapalme.[36]

A few days later, Lucien Saulnier, Chairman of Montreal's Executive Committee, said that the City would take legal action against the new owners of the Empress Theatre were it to open as a converted cabaret for violating the city bylaws. This was the only method available to safeguard its bylaws, as the actions of the Liquor Board were beyond its jurisdiction. Saulnier indicated, however, that this draconian method of dealing with such cases would no longer be required in the future, as the city and the liquor board had recently arranged that no liquor

[34] Photograph caption, *Le Devoir*, 16 January 1963, p. 8.
[35] Kenneth C. Mackay was appointed as a judge on the Quebec Superior Court. In 1971, he presided over the jury trial of Roosevelt Douglas, Ann Cools, and Brenda Dickinson-Dash in relation to the Sir George Williams Affair.
[36] Hans Grottke, "N.D.G. Permit Blasted," *Gazette*, 12 January 1963, p. 3.; and "Des citoyens protestent contre l'établissement d'un cabaret dans NDG," *Le* Devoir, 14 January 1963, p. 3.

permits are to be issued unless the designated holder first could produce a city permit showing compliance with all municipal regulations.[37] Legal action followed swiftly and preceded the nightclub's opening. Following two prior warnings, Gaby Richard and seven employees were arrested on January 22 on charges that they had performed building renovations illegally. This stopped all construction work until a court hearing could be held.[38] Richard subsequently met with the director of the permits and inspections department at City Hall and, finding he could skirt the bylaws by converting the Empress into a hotel, Richard withdrew his three permit applications for a theater, cabaret and dining room and submitted new plans the following week to include the hotel.[39] This satisfied Saulnier's objection to the cabaret and renovation work recommenced in July 1963.[40]

The NDG Community Council could not be so easily placated. For a couple of weeks in January 1963, it sparred in the media with Judge Lucien Dugas, Chairman of the Quebec Liquor Board. The Council invited him to attend a public meeting on January 28 to explain the board's stand regarding the cabaret. The judge did not show up, but that did not prevent the meeting from being fervid. The discussion, the *Gazette* reported, "assumed comic opera proportions."[41] After considering a number of motions and amendments, the assembly unanimously passed resolutions to oppose granting any further liquor licenses in NDG, to prevent the establishment of any hotels in the area, and to oppose the conversion of the Empress Theatre into a cabaret. These resolutions, combined with the publicly expressed support from Provincial Revenue Minister

[37] "'If It Opens We'll Sue' - Saulnier," *Gazette*, 12 January 1963, p. 17.
[38] "NDG Cabaret Case Reaches Court," *Gazette*, 12 January 1963, p. 19.; "Travaux interrompus au cabaret de NDG," *La Presse*, 23 January 1963, p. 8.
[39] "Le cabaret sera… un hôtel," *La Presse*, 25 January 1963, p. 3.; "NDG 'Cabaret' May Be Hotel to Conform with City's Bylaws," *Gazette*, p. 3.; and "Le théâtre Empress converti en hôtel?" *Le Devoir*, 25 January 1963, p. 3.
[40] "'Folies Royale' Fight Looms all over again," *Gazette*, 30 July 1963, p. 21.
[41] "No Hotel, N.D.G. Council 'Resolves'," *Gazette*, 29 January 1963, p. 3.

Paul Earl, the Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Liberal Association,[42] and the three city councillors for NDG,[43] may have given the impression that the cabaret could be stopped.

Two days later, the Quebec Liquor Board made it known that if the promoters of the "Follies Royal" gain the permit to build the hotel, their original liquor permit for a cabaret would be void and they would be obliged to make application for another permit. [44] By the regulations of the Liquor Board at least fifty rooms were required to classify as a hotel in Montreal, so Richard proposed plans to add two floors to the building to meet that requirement and relinquished his cabaret permit.[45] This was cold comfort for the NDG Community Council. When a new application for the cabaret permit was published the following October, the Council filed an objection to the Quebec Liquor Board. Of the roughly seventy member organizations in the Community Council, only one favoured granting liquor licenses in the area.[46] Finally, in December 1964, after a two-year battle and three public hearings, the Royal Follies obtained a cabaret liquor license from the Quebec Liquor Board and approval to operate a hotel by the City of Montreal.[47] The hotel plans had expanded to include a fifteen-storey, two-hundred-room hotel, which would include parking on each level, with automobiles to be carried up and down on elevators. [48] The final impediment to opening the cabaret was a strike by the employees of the Quebec Liquor Board that lasted two-and-a-half months, ending on February 18, 1965. The grand opening finally took place on April 21, 1965.

[42] "Earl Joins Cabaret Permit Fight," *Gazette*, 15 January 1963, p. 3.
[43] *Gazette*, "'If It Opens We'll Sue' – Saulnier."
[44] "Hotel Permit Given in NDG; QLB States New License Needed; Court Case Postponed," *Gazette*, 31 January 1963, p. 13.
[45] Claude Gendron, "L'hôtel-cabaret de NDG est sorti de l'impasse," *La Presse*, 1 February 1963, p. 3.
[46] "Bar Bid Brings Objection," *Gazette*, 16 October 1963, p. 15.
[47] "NDG Theatre-Cabaret Set as QLB and City Approve," *Gazette*, 19 December 1964, p. 3.
[48] Gerald FitzGerald, "15 Storey Hotel-motel Atop Follies," *Gazette*, 19 December 1964, p. 4.

The initial show, "*Vive Les Girls!*" had been produced in Paris and performed in Las Vegas. It included thirty-three performers and was headlined by singer and dancer Jacqueline Douguet, who had previously starred at the Casino de Paris. The reviews were replete with superlatives. Gerald FitzGerald of the *Gazette* praised the high calibre of the stage presentation and the décor, stating that "seldom if ever has such a cabaret show been offered in Montreal."[49] Manuel Maître of *La Patrie*, a French immigrant, thought the show was worthy of the Lido in Paris, and despite the fact that the local community had fought the licensing tooth and nail, he saw the presence of such a cabaret as an indication that Montrealers were finally maturing and were "capable of seeing a light, even sensual show, without ever being vulgar, trivial, grotesque, ridiculous or indecent."[50] The *Gazette*'s Al Palmer, who had written extensively about Montreal's glamorous cabarets, restaurants, late night bars, singers and dancers, and various underworld characters during the height of Montreal's period as an "open city,"[51] claimed that no night clubs in Montreal during the halcyon era of the 1930s came near the size and sophistication of the Royal Follies.[52]

This promising start for the enterprise could not be sustained. The Royal Follies operated for two years before Expo 67 and then mounted a huge new show that opened on 25 April 1967, two days before Expo. An advertisement for the show promised forty-five "great continental artists" and that it was "without a doubt, the biggest and greatest show ever to appear in Canada."[53] The World's Fair did not deliver the anticipated boom, however. The management

[49] "Folies Royale," On the Night Beat, *Gazette*, 21 April 1965, p. 8.
[50] Manuel Maître, "'Vive(nt) les girls' ou Eve avant le péché aux Follies Royal," *La Patrie*, 22 April 1965 p. 38.
[51] William Weintraub, *City Unique*, pp. 135-136.
[52] Al Palmer, "Show Time."
[53] Advertisement, *Gazette*, 24 April 1967, p. 19.

struggled with cash flow, as evidenced by a steady stream of lawsuits with creditors.[54] The hotel was never built. The Royal Follies went bankrupt in September 1967 and so the final curtain dropped before Expo closed its gates.[55]

The impact of *l'affaire du théâtre Empress* on NDG remains unclear. The NDG Community Council succeeded in delaying the opening of the Royal Follies and may have contributed to its ultimate demise. Council President Mackay admitted that most people in NDG did not oppose a cabaret, apart from those living nearby. Only thirty people or so attended the public meeting on January 28, 1963, at the peak of the media frenzy. Although the resolutions of that meeting were passed unanimously, the representative from the NDG Businessmen's Association, said that he felt the Council was getting away from "the original ideas which led to its establishment" and that it seemed that it was "devoting all of its time to fighting liquor permits for the area when there was plenty of other good work it could do."[56] It appeared the Community Council was losing touch with the priorities of the district. It was falling far short of its fund-raising goals and attendance at its meetings had fallen off sharply. [57]

The Two Solitudes Meet in NDG

An event held on 6 March 1964 provides some insight into what was actually preoccupying the people of NDG and would draw a crowd. The Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Young Liberals Association arranged a debate on the theme of "What should English Canada do to resolve the problems facing the Nation today?" The Young Liberals invited two provocative and eloquent speakers: René Levesque, Quebec Minister of Natural Resources, and Douglas Fisher,

[54] Bailiff sale notices appeared in *Gazette* on 22February 1964 (p.25), 18 September 1965 (pp. 18 and 58), 12 November 1966 (p. 34), 14 August 1967 (p. 41).and 19 August 1967 (p. 43).
[55] Gerald FitzGerald, "Show Business," On and Off the Record, *Gazette*, 6 September 1967, p. 4.
[56] *Gazette*, "No hotel, N.D.G. Council 'Resolves'."
[57] Walter Turner, "Community Group is Facing a Slump," *Montreal Star*, 14 May 1964.

Deputy Leader of the Federal NDP and an MP representing the Northwest Ontario riding of Port Arthur. The debate was moderated by Laurier Lapierre, director of the French Canada Studies Program at McGill University. An overflow audience of 1500 filled the 845-seat hall at Le Manoir Notre-Dame de-Grâce.

The keen interest can be explained in part by the charged political atmosphere at that time. The Quiet Revolution was in full stride and the provincial government under Jean Lesage was asserting Quebec's right to control its own affairs. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism had been established in July 1963 to address the place of French and English in Canadian society. It had received extensive press coverage. Also in 1963, the separatist *Front de la Libération du Quebec* (FLQ) had conducted a terror campaign that included, on May 17, planting a dozen time-bombs in neighbouring Westmount. Half of the bombs exploded, causing some property damage and serious injury to a Canadian Army bomb disposal officer.[58] One indication that the tension weighed on people in NDG is provided by a tragic local incident. When a propane tank explosion destroyed an NDG house in October 1963 with a blast that was detected by the seismograph four kilometres away at Collège Jean-de-Brebeuf, the bystanders assumed it was "another FLQ outrage."[59] In an article on the debate in NDG, *Globe and Mail* journalist William French claimed it was difficult to get Montrealers, both English and French, to speak of anything other than separatism and Quebec's destiny.[60]

The audience size was proportional to the appeal of the invited debaters. René Lévesque was amongst the highest profile cabinet ministers in Jean Lesage's *équipe de tonnere.* He had

[58] Anthony Kellett et al., *Terrorism in Canada 1960-1989: No. 1990-16*, (Ottawa: National Security Coordination Centre (NSCC) of Solicitor General Canada, 1991), pp. 232-34.
[59] Gérald Godin, "Le Cauchemar du Professor Roland Haumont," *Le Magazine Maclean*, April 1964.
[60] William French, "The Focus of Montreal's B&B Debate," *Globe and Mail*, 13 March 1964 p. 7.

been an ardent proponent of nationalizing the remaining eleven private electricity generation companies in Quebec, which was presented as a key step in the "economic emancipation of the province." Those nationalizations had just been completed in mid-December, less than three months prior to the debate.[61] Lévesque was also becoming, more generally, a spokesman for the national aspirations of the people of Quebec. Lévesque's foil that evening, Douglas Fisher, first came to national attention when he defeated long-time Liberal cabinet minister C.D. Howe in one of the biggest upsets in the 1957 federal election. He made a name for himself in Quebec in 1961, as a participant on a panel at a conference to discuss the future of the Canadian constitution held at Laval University. Fisher made challenging statements taken to be disparaging of Quebec culture and dismissive of its aspirations.[62] His remarks sparked calls for his removal from the CCF caucus and prompted Defence Minister Pierre Sévigny to call him "an imbecile, a windbag, and a cretin" before an audience at Sir George Williams University.[63] In his opening remarks at the debate in NDG, Fisher suggested in jest that he and Mr Lévesque "probably had been invited on the same platform because we've got a reputation for putting [their] feet in [their] mouths" and were likely to make fools of themselves.[64]

Interest in the debate spread beyond NDG and created a rarely seen commotion. Outside the hall, members of the separatist group *Le Rassemblement pour l'Indépendance Nationale* handed out leaflets saying Canada should break its ties with the British Royal Family.[65] Inside the hall, nineteen microphones, four television cameras, and television lighting had been erected,

[61] Pâquet and Savard, *Brève histoire de la révolution tranquille*, pp. 102-03.
[62] "'Nous n'avons pas besoin des Canadiens français',' affirme M. Douglas Fisher, " *Le Devoir*, 20 November 1961, p. 1.
[63] "M. Douglas Fisher, sera-t-il expulsé du NPD?" *Le Devoir*, 23 November 1961, p. 1.; and "Sévigny: Fisher est un imbécile, un prétentieux et un crétin-né!" *Le Devoir*, 23 November 1961, p. 7.
[64] "Eight Groups Listed by NDP Speaker," *Gazette*, 7 March 1964, p. 7.
[65] In a sidebar to his report on the event, Jean-Vincent Dufresne remarked that this was possibly the first time the RIN had distributed information in English. (" Dehors la radio!" *La Presse*, 7 March 1964, p. 2.)

despite Lévesque's prior statement that he would not speak if the event were broadcast. Both speakers arrived late and then there was a further delay as Lévesque insisted on the removal of the radio equipment. Lévesque was concerned that hasty editing for news broadcast would distort the message and blow things out of proportion. He allowed the television cameras to remain, as he and Fisher would have the time to supervise the editing. The debate started almost an hour and a half late around 9:30 p.m. in a room that had grown tense.[66] Lapierre opened the meeting by stating that the circumstances of this debate were unprecedented and that "Canadian politics will never be dull again."[67]

Whatever the significance of this debate in national politics, the extensive reporting about the mood of the audience and its response to the speakers provide a rare glimpse into the political attitude and opinions of NDG. It remains unclear what percentage of the attendees was local to the district nor the degree to which the audience represented the common viewpoint of the area. Before considering the audience, a summary of the speakers' positions is required to place the public response in context.

Lévesque opened the debate by expressing his discouragement that the chasm between French and English Canada seemed to be widening. The dialogue on biculturalism and bilingualism, in his view, increased the mutual misunderstanding. Consequently, he declared that this was the last time he would try to explain his position in English, unless he was certain that it would help make things clearer. "It is impossible for me to tell you what English Canada should do for Quebec," he said.[68] It was up to English Canada to inform itself what was happening in Quebec and then decide what attitude it should adopt. He then read from an unpublished essay

[66] "Encore les deux solitudes," *Le Devoir*, 9 March 1964, p. 9.
[67] Tim Peters, "Preliminaries Delay Bout," *Gazette*, 7 March 1964, p. 7.
[68] "Levesque Declares Biculture Dialogue Getting Nowhere," *Gazette*, 7 March 1964, p. 1.

by Montreal-based historian and author Murray Ballantyne to demonstrate that it is possible for an English-Canadian to understand and explain French Canada. He finished his talk by extensively quoting from an article he had written for *Le Devoir* in the previous year that claimed it was a matter of life or death for Quebec to be able to exercise all the power that was possible within the present constitution.[69]

Fisher responded by placing English-Canadian attitudes toward French-speaking Canada in eight categories. The categories ranged in a spectrum from the "socialist loving-hearts," who demonstrate a fawning admiration for Quebec, to the "intransigents," who would have French-Canadians fall in line with the English-speaking majority. He declared himself most closely aligned with the "mosaicers," who see Canada as composed of ethnicities, which combine to contribute to the country's heritage. Citing a questionnaire that he had sent to his constituents ranking priorities for Canada's future, Fisher said that English-speakers outside Quebec were more focused on matters such as improved welfare, medicare, and pensions, full employment, and economic growth, than on French-Canadian rights. He claimed that most Canadians identified more strongly with the country than their province and that there was support for the federal government to take a stronger role in "almost every field." This was based on a belief that the whole was greater than the sum of its parts. He was not hopeful that the Royal Commission would address the issues facing the country. He encouraged Quebecers collectively to determine what they needed, nominate a spokesman on behalf of the province, and then sit down to negotiate. Lévesque, in his rebuttal, indicated that parts must have priority over the whole; since

[69] "French View Given in Two Essays," *Gazette*, 7 March 1964, p. 7.

they are vital to the functioning of the whole. He also said the desire for plain, unhyphenated Canadianism was understandable, but too simplistic.[70]

The audience listening to the two speakers appeared to be composed largely of young married couples and middle-aged people. There were very few students.[71] English-speaking attendees formed the majority, however French-Canadian representation was remarkably high.[72] (*La Presse* described it as a bilingual audience; *Le Devoir* as heterogenous.)[73] The crowd was remarkably placid, particularly considering the ninety-minute delay at the start. William French observed that audience members seemed sincerely interested in getting answers to the "puzzling and vexing dilemma" of how to address the differences between French and English Canada.[74] There were two policemen on hand, but their services were not required.[75]

When Lévesque entered the hall from the backroom he was met with a mingling of cheers and boos. As he explained why he refused radio coverage of the debate, the ambivalent response continued, with a mix of applause and occasional shouts. Those shouts, however, were met by censure from other members of the audience with calls for calm. Lévesque quickly dissipated the tension and won the audience over with his "good-humored" appraisal of current French-English relations.[76] The audience laughed when he said it was natural for him to speak English in "a province which has 20% of its population" speaking that language.[77] As he was reading from the section of Ballantyne's essay regarding the history of dishonest government in Quebec, the audience applauded lightly when he underlined that it was the English population of

[70] *Gazette*, "Eight Groups Listed by NDP Speaker."
[71] Roger Bird, "Sidelights to the Debate – Before and After," *Gazette*, 7 March 1964, p. 7.
[72] Bird, "Sidelights to the Debate – Before and After."; and French, "The Focus of Montreal's B&B Debate."
[73] "Encore les deux solitudes."
[74] French, "The Focus of Montreal's B&B Debate."
[75] Bird, "Sidelights to the Debate – Before and After."
[76] *Gazette*, "Levesque Declares Biculture Dialogue Getting Nowhere."
[77] *Gazette*, "French View Given in Two Essays."

Montreal and Quebec City that always had propped up feeble and corrupt governments.[78] Shortly afterwards, when Lévesque stated that Montreal's two English language newspapers (*Gazette* and *Montreal Star*) notably never criticized the late Union Nationale premier, Maurice Duplessis, and never reported the strikes in Asbestos and Louiseville, the audience responded with heavy applause.[79]

Overall, it appears that Fisher received a less enthusiastic response from the audience. When describing his categories of English-Canadians, when he claimed that the "socialist loving-hearts" thought Réné Lévesque should really be one of them, there were shouts of "Hear, hear!"[80] His third group, the "status-quoers," were said to believe that all they had to do is "sit tight." When he suggested that was especially possible with "a good, quiet do-nothing government in Ottawa," the crowd laughed and applauded.[81] The newspaper reports did not indicate any negative reaction when Fisher told the audience that Montreal and its English-speaking community was not the heart of Canada, and that even figures in his own party such as Charles Taylor of University of Montreal and Michael Oliver of McGill University did not understand Canada "out there," beyond the borders of Quebec. The listeners applauded Fisher's statement that "the majority of Canadians are joyfully unaware of Quebec's Quiet Revolution."[82] There was also a burst of applause when Fisher said one of the strongest feelings that people in provinces outside Quebec have is that they are, first and foremost, Canadians.[83] In contrast, during the question period, when Lévesque stated that an independent Quebec would be viable

[78] *Gazette*, "French View Given in Two Essays."
[79] Jean-V. Dufresne, "Lévesque et Fisher s'affrontent: match nul," *La Presse*, 7 March 1964, p. 2.
[80] *Gazette*, "Eight Groups Listed by NDP Speaker."
[81] *Gazette*, "Eight Groups Listed by NDP Speaker."
[82] Jean-V. Dufresne, "Lévesque et Fisher s'affrontent: match nul."
[83] Jean-V. Dufresne, "Lévesque et Fisher s'affrontent: match nul."

socially, economically, and culturally, and that it would not necessarily be dominated by its neighbours any more than it is now, and probably less, the audience burst into strong applause.[84]

After the meeting, Fisher said that, to his surprise it was a very well-behaved crowd.[85] The debate contrasted the sharply different perspectives of the "two solitudes," however it was conducted with "moderation and serenity."[86] The audience response indicated an appreciation of both points of view, which suggests that the range of opinion lay mostly between the poles represented by the speakers. A *Gazette* reporter observed that the crowd coming out of the auditorium after the debate was in a good mood. When questioned, most people said they had enjoyed it very much.[87] The attendees that evening may well have concurred with the sentiment expressed in a 1963 *Montreal Star* response to a *Globe and Mail* editorial. The Toronto paper gave "fatherly" advice to Eric Kierans after his victory in a by-election to replace Paul Earl, who had died in office. *The Globe* implored Kierans to hold back nationalism. The Star dismissed this advice: "This will be no part of his task; rather it will be to help the surging forces in Quebec into the most constructive channels, some of which are bound to be new."[88] There is no doubt that the audience was politically engaged.

"I Would Rather Be Defeated than Do Things in the Old Way"

The Lévesque-Fisher debate provides evidence that political revitalization had developed in NDG over the previous few years. Curiously, the creative force of the revitalization was rooted in local and municipal politics but manifested itself in contests for federal office. The candidates for the 1962 federal election were the incumbent Postmaster-General William "Bill"

[84] William French, "Biculturalism Failing, Levesque Warns Rally," *Globe and Mail*, 7 March 1964, p. 1.
[85] Bird, "Sidelights to the Debate – Before and After."
[86] "Douglas Fisher et René Lévesque ont exploré les deux solitudes," *Le Devoir*, 9 March 1964, p. 1.
[87] Bird, "Sidelights to the Debate – Before and After."
[88] "The Result in N.D.G.," *Montreal Star*, 26 September 1963.

Hamilton for the Progressive Conservatives, Edmund "Eddie" Asselin for the Liberals, and Giff Gifford, for the New Democratic Party. Hamilton had held the seat since 1953, when he attacked Louis St. Laurent's government for being soft on communism and was the only Progressive Conservative elected on the Island of Montreal in that election.[89] In 1958, he had won by an almost nine thousand vote margin. His Liberal opponent, Asselin came from a political family. His father had been Chairman of Montreal's Executive Committee; his mother had founded the Women's Liberal Association of St. Antoine-Westmount; and his maternal grandfather had been a Liberal MP for thirty years and then a senator. Eddie had been a City Councillor for a dozen years, serving his first term alongside Hamilton, who had been appointed by the Junior Board of Trade.[90] Asselin won the 1962 election in what the *Gazette* described as "the biggest upset on Montreal Island."[91] The novelty in this election, however, was that the campaign of Giff Gifford introduced the notion that politicians were there to serve the needs of all constituents, rather than just courting the powerful ones.

Gifford had made a public name for himself as a strong opponent of nuclear weapons, as well as in his work in the field of juvenile delinquency.[92] He joined the NDP in October 1961 to advance his concerns.[93] Although a neophyte to politics, he ran an energetic grassroots campaign, which solicited the concerns of the constituents. This approach led Gifford to take up a local cause that had been neglected for years; the provision of a park to the residents of the

[89] "P.C. Candidate Hits 'Soft' Liberal Stand against Reds," *Gazette*, 6 August 1953, p.4.
[90] "Council Will Have 23 Newcomers at First Meeting since Elections," *Gazette*, 13 December 1950, p. 15.
[91] "Biggest Upset of 1962 in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce," *Gazette*, 30 March 1963 p. 3.
[92] " Notre-Dame-de-Grâce," *Gazette*, 5 June 1962 p. 11. Gifford had been a vocal supporter and sponsor of the Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament at McGill. See: "Gifford Gives Support to CUCND Viewpoint," *McGill Daily*, February 1, 1961,; and "Position of CUCND," *McGill Daily*, October 30, 1962. His co-sponsors were Dean Frank Scott – Faculty of Law, Assistant Professor Michael Oliver, Department of Political Science, and H. Dion, Vice President of Macdonald College.
[93] *Gazette*, " Notre-Dame-de-Grâce."

low-income Westhaven-Elmhurst neighbourhood, a medium-density rental development in the southwestern corner of the ward that was isolated by the tracks of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Westhaven-Elmhurst had been promised a park since the neighbourhood's development in the late 1940s. The area's developer, Charles-Guy Paré, who was also a city councillor representing NDG and pro-mayor of the City at the time of the development, had set aside some land for a park. Paré claims that he offered land to the city, but the head of the Parks Department, Claude Robillard, had refused it.[94] A newspaper report from 1953 indicated that the cost of the land was too high.[95] That piece of land was sold to the Coca-Cola Company for a bottling plant. In 1957, "for some unexplained reason," a permit had been issued to build a steel plant on land that had been homologated by the city for a park and playground.[96] By the time of the 1962 election campaign, the children of the area had been forced initially to use empty lots as play areas and then, when those had all been developed, they were relegated to alleyways and busy streets.[97]

Despite not getting elected (Gifford had tripled the best prior vote count for the NDP/CCF in NDG), Gifford did not let the issue of the park drop. John Parker, a high-school principal who had worked on Gifford's 1962 campaign, was elected to city council as a member of Drapeau's Civic Party that same year and also vowed to push for a park.[98] Gifford raised the issue at the Community Council's Beef Night in September 1964 and won a five-pound roast.[99] City Councillor James Bellin informed the meeting that negotiations were almost complete to

[94] Guardia and Schulze, "Community Activism in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce," p. 16.
[95] "Montreal Seeks New Park Site," *Gazette*, 26 August 1953, p. 11.
[96] "Unfortunate that Land Homologated for Park Now Has a Steel Plant," *Gazette*, 15 February 1957, p. 3.
[97] "Do-it-yourself Park Plan 'We're Fed Up with Delays'," *Gazette*, 7 April 1966, p. 17.
[98] Guardia and Schulze, "Community Activism in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce," p. 16.
[99] Robert Stall, "N.D.G.'s Garbagemen Come Up Smelling Like Roses," *Montreal Star*, 29 September 1964. "'I really didn't come here to replenish the family larder,' he said apologetically."

acquire land for the park on the opposite side of the CPR tracks and so the complaint would soon be addressed.[100] Lack of progress on the park was once again raised at the 1965 Beef Night.[101] In April of the following year a group of citizens, fed up with waiting for the city, said that they planned to build the park themselves.[102] That initiative was enough to finally get city to move and construction began a few weeks later,[103] and the park was officially opened in October 1966.[104]

In the 1963 election, which was called less than a year after the previous one, Asselin was re-elected with a greater majority, although Gifford also received more votes than in the previous year.[105] Later in 1963, however, in a report investigating land purchases by the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal conducted by Crown Attorney Kenneth Mackay,[106] Asselin was named as profiting from the sale of school property in Saint-Léonard in 1961, one of eight questionable transactions identified in the report.[107] On 13 November 1963, Municipal Affairs Minister Pierre Laporte named a one-man royal commission to investigate land transactions carried out by the Protestant School Board.[108] The report issued by Mr. Justice Arthur I. Smith of Montreal Superior Court found that Asselin and his partner made "an unlawful and unconscionable profit" for themselves, without having invested a dollar nor taken the slightest risk. The report said that they resorted to the subterfuge of interposing a fictitious owner and to lead the Board in paying above market value for the land.[109] The school board subsequently sued

[100] "Wide Complaint Range Covered at NDG Meet," *Gazette*, 29 September 1964, p. 39.
[101] "Beef, Flowers Night in NDG," *Gazette*, 21 September1965, p. 41.
[102] *Gazette*, "Do-it-yourself Park Plan."
[103] "Début des travaux de construction d'un parc dans Westhaven-Elmhurst," *La Presse*, 20 April 1966, p. 83.
[104] "Ouverture du parc Elmhurst," *Le Devoir*, 19 October 1966, p. 3.
[105] "Quebec Reverses '62," *Gazette*, 9 April 1963, p. 2.
[106] This is the same Kenneth Mackay who was president of the NDG Community Council in 1962-1963.
[107] "Asselin Named in Probe," *Gazette*, 31 October 1963, p. 1.
[108] Gordon Pape, "City Judge to Investigate Land Deals," 14 November 1963, p. 1.; John P. Rowat, Chairman of the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal, had served as a city councillor for NDG with J.O. Asselin.
[109] "The Report on School Land Deals," editorial, *Gazette*, 4 September 1964, p. 6.

Asselin and lost its case,[110] but the damage to Asselin's reputation was already done.[111] The minority Pearson government in Ottawa was mired in scandal and, although this one was relatively minor, Asselin received no resistance from the prime minister when he decided not to seek re-election.[112] Following the next election, for the first time in twenty-five years, NDG would no longer be represented by an Asselin.[113]

When an election was called in 1965 not long after Asselin's announcement, Gifford had a head start on his opponents. Before the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives could select candidates in NDG, Gifford had set up his campaign headquarters.[114] The NDP had high hopes of electing its first member from Quebec, and it focused its efforts on the two ridings that were seen as having the greatest likelihood of a breakthrough, NDG and Mount Royal, where Charles Taylor was the candidate.[115] Before the Liberals and the Conservatives had even selected candidates in NDG, Gifford had set up his campaign headquarters and he, his wife, and his team of five hundred volunteers were canvassing the riding.[116]

The Liberals nominated a thirty-three-year-old lawyer, Warren Allmand. Although Allmand was a loyal member of the Liberal Party – he had been president of the Young Liberals association in 1962 [117] and had campaigned for Paul Earl, Eddie Asselin, and Eric Kierans[118] – his policy positions and orientation seemed closer to those of Gifford than Asselin. This may

[110] Leon Levinson, "Protestant School Board Unable to Recoup Funds from Asselin," *Gazette*, 28 May 1965, p. 17.
[111] Peter C Newman, "Lester Pearson and the Scandals Around Him; an Opinion Why He Hasn't Done Much about It," *Gazette*, 24 March 1965, p. 4.; and Richard J. Gwyn, *The Shape of Scandal: A Study of a Government in Crisis*, Clarke, Irwin 1965 pp. 96-98
[112] "Asselin Won't Run Again," *Gazette*, 22 July 1965, p. 1.
[113] Jane Asselin, Edmund's daughter, ran for city council in 1990 in the district of Décarie, but was not elected.
[114] "Quick to Start Campaign," *Gazette*, 14 September 1965, p. 3.
[115] "NDP Planning Personal Touch, 22 September 1965, p. 50.
[116] *Gazette*, "Quick Start to Campaign."; and Françoise Coté, "Dans Notre-Dame-de-Grâce l'ombre de M. Asselin se profile sur le mur libéral," *Le Devoir*, 20 October 1965, p. 1.
[117] Gerald FitzGerald, "Person to Person," On and Off the Record, *Gazette*, 14 September 1965, p. 4.
[118] Françoise Coté, "Dans Notre-Dame-de-Grâce l'ombre de M. Asselin se profile."

have been a deliberate competitive strategy.[119] Allmand declared at his nomination meeting that "I would rather be defeated than do things in the old way."[120]

Allmand was a supporter of the United Nations and had spent time studying at the Sorbonne and in Mysore, India. Gifford had spent time in development missions in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). As co-author of the brief from the junior section of the Canadian Bar Association to the Royal Commission on Biculturalism and Bilingualism, Allmand argued for greater bilingualism in the judiciary. Gifford claimed that the NDP was the only federal party that understood the aspirations of Quebec. Allmand had, like Gifford, spent the past several years involving himself in NDG community organizations and, among other roles, served as the chairman of the legal committee on the NDG Community Council.[121] Allmand reinforced his progressive bona fides by selecting a woman, Phyllis Beaton, as his campaign manager. They had worked together on the NDG Community Council, and he recognized her competence as the organizer of the Arts and Letters Festival.

Although the Progressive Conservatives had selected a credible candidate, Egan Chambers,[122] to represent them, the race quickly became a two-way contest. Chambers was dismissed as a "parachute" candidate, as he lived in the neighbouring community of Westmount.[123] Allmand won the election by a margin of more than three thousand votes, but Gifford had doubled the vote for the NDP. *Le Devoir* described it as a half-victory for Gifford.

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[119] Early in the campaign, there was speculation that Harold Cummings or Gerry Snyder, a sporting goods salesman and city councillor, were possible candidates. They would have better fit the mould of Eddie Asselin.
[120] James Ferrabee, "NDG Liberals Pick Allmand," *Gazette*, 24 September 1965, p. 3.
[121] "Protest Fails to Alter N.D.G. Council Slate," *Montreal Star*, 26 June 1962.
[122] Chambers, an insurance broker, had been the MP for St. Lawrence -St. George from 1958 through 1962. Incidentally, Chambers was Charles Taylor's brother-in-law, as he was married to Taylor's elder sister Gretta.
[123] James Ferrabee, "Hopefuls in NDG Debate Issues, " *Gazette*, 26 October 1965, p. 7.; and Richard Perusse, "Pourquoi je voterai pour le NPD et notamment pour Gifford dans N.D.G., le 8 novembre," letter to the editor, *Le Devoir*, 4 November 1965, p. 13.

The headline in a *Gazette* article on the morning after the election – "Allmand Takes NDG Over Gifford" – illustrates how far federal electoral politics had shifted in NDG.[124] Just three years prior, the riding had seemed like a safe seat for the Progressive Conservatives.

Following the 1965 federal election, *Macleans* declared that Gifford had "the best chance, on present form, of being the first NDP or CCF member ever elected to parliament from the Province of Quebec."[125] Gifford ran again in 1968, but Allmand was re-elected in the Trudeaumania sweep. Nonetheless, one can detect the influence of Gifford's years of campaigning in Warren Allmand's inaugural speech in the House of Commons. Allmand started out by saying that one of the main reasons he entered politics was to work towards the abolition of war. He cited a recent dialogue with his constituents, in which they were pushing him further in that direction. He then praised the United Nations as an effective forum for world peace and wished that steps would finally be taken to see that all of China is represented at the United Nations. Getting China into the UN had been one of the main issues that Gifford had been raising during the 1965 electoral campaign. Allmand went on to say that world peace could not be achieved while two-thirds of the world's population did not have adequate food, clothing, and shelter and, consequently, increased foreign aid was required. Finally, Allmand expressed his hope for the newly created Company of Young Canadians to involve young people in solving the world's problems. Clearly, in 1965, NDG had chosen a different sort of politician to represent them than they had in the past several federal elections.

[124] Diane Turner, "Allmand Takes NDG over Gifford," *Gazette*, 9 November 1965, p. 10.
[125] Blair Fraser, "How Laurier Lapierre Stays Famous," Macleans, 1 October 1967.

Apathy or Social Change?

The events and developments discussed in this chapter provide a picture of the changes to the attitudes, values, and politics of the people of NDG in the period from 1960 to 1967. The evaporation of support for civil defence, for example, indicates that the motivation to demonstrate loyalty and to comply with government directives had waned. There was minimal resistance, however, to demolishing businesses, homes, and parkland to make room for the Décarie expressway. This indicates either a tacit acceptance of the need for such infrastructure in a modernizing city or the apathy that had been attributed to the people of NDG. The enthusiasm in the city for the upcoming World's Fair lends credence to the former. The battle waged by the NDG Community Council to prevent the Royal Follies from opening did damage both to the investors who aimed to set up the business and, it seems, to the Community Council. That the community did not rally to the cause, as it did in 1958 to fight the Monkland Tavern, is a clear indicator that the public in NDG were less concerned with policing the moral rectitude of their neighbours and defending the virtuous reputation of the area than engaging in broader political issues. The tremendous interest in the Lévesque-Fisher debate shows that people in NDG were trying to understand how cultural, social, and political changes in Quebec were affecting them. The change in federal electoral politics is a clear indication that the priorities and values of many people in the district had shifted. The apathy attributed to NDG may rather have been an indication that the institutional structures and politics that engaged them previously no longer responded to their concerns.

Chapter 3: Addressing the Youth Problem in NDG

The coming of age of the children of the postwar baby boom was bound to have a considerable impact on NDG. The area had substantially expanded following the Second World War and its social organizations had been focused on providing the large cohort of children with wholesome activities and opportunities for development. The NDG Community Council and its many associated organizations, including the YMCA, had developed programs for the youth that were explicitly aimed at preventing juvenile delinquency, keeping children safe, and preparing them to contribute to civil society. This approach had been successful into the mid- to late-1960s but was no longer sufficient when a significant portion of the youth in NDG began to participate in the global mass movement of counterculture that brought with it widespread consumption of hallucinogenic drugs and an increase in premarital sex. To address the needs of those young people, volunteers formed a youth clinic and drop-in centre, Head & Hands, the services of which were in high demand. The clinic quickly became a highly visible presence in the district thanks in part to its flamboyant and popular outreach program, Sunday in the Park, which drew thousands of attendees and became a symbol for how values had shifted in the community.

"The Problems in Our Community Seem to Have Diminished"

In the spring of 1967, the Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community Council in its annual report could proudly boast of its accomplishments related to care of the youth of the district, which had been a foundational concern of the Council when it was formed in 1942.[1] The youth-related programs that the Council had developed over the years had continued to grow through the

[1] "Community Group in N.D.G. Launched," *Gazette*, 17 April 1942, p. 20.

1960s to meet the surge of demand as the baby-boom children grew. By 1966, over 3,000 school children from forty-six schools were participating in the Arts and Letters Festival; the NDG Libraries for Boys and Girls were circulating over 158,000 books – more than doubling its circulation of a decade earlier – and a fourth branch had just been opened; [2] and the West End Traffic Safety Council had received national and provincial recognition for its driver education program.[3] Combined, those three programs accounted for most of the Council's budget.[4] The Community Council was celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary and, given the diminished community engagement and setbacks it had experienced so far in the decade, these youth programs featured prominently in an information sheet it had prepared for the occasion.

While presenting the 1966-67 annual report, the Community Council president Joe Carroll declared: "the problems in our community seem to have diminished[,] which restricts the workings of this council. However, this may only be the lull before the storm and once Expo is over, the scene can change in many respects and new problems can arise which the council may have to handle."[5] It is difficult to know whether this statement was naïve or prescient. It is credible that the Community Council may not have been able to conceive that the bohemian scene that was being reported in places such as New York's East Village, San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury, and Toronto's Yorkville would soon be affecting NDG too.[6] The journalist

[2] Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community Council, Inc., President's Report, 1966-67.; and "New Library for N.D.G.," *Gazette*, 5 April 1967, p. 5.
[3] "NDG Community Council to Open Drive for Funds," *Gazette*, 21 March 1960, p. 17.; and "Teenage Drivers Are 'the First Love' of Safety League's New Director," *Gazette*, 19 September 1968, p. 34.
[4] These three programs represented 89% and 86% of expenses in 1960 and 1961 respectively.
[5] President's Report, 1966-1967.
[6] *Gazette* published a syndicated article explaining the "hippies" only in April 1967. (Andrew Kopkind, "The New Left's Left-Wing," *Gazette*,12 April 1967, p. 7.) There was only sporadic mention of Yorkville in the *Gazette* through 1966 and into 1967, mostly entertainment reporting, but with a couple of mentions of "rioting" (1 June 1966, p. 4.), "draft dodgers" (10 May 1966, p. 2.), "peaceniks" (4 January 1967, p.1.) On 16 February 1967, an episode of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's documentary series, *20/20*, aired a study of Yorkville Village and its inhabitants.

Pierre Louis Guertin went searching for "the real Bohemia" in Montreal in January 1967, but only found it in isolated pockets in bars and cafés in the centre of the city.[7] Sociologists Jean-Philippe Warren and Andrée Fortin claim that, if one had to attribute a date to the beginning of the counterculture in Quebec, it would be 1967.[8]

Even if Carroll's statement had anticipated the rapid change in youthful comportment that would soon be readily apparent in NDG, it strains the imagination to believe that the NDG Community Council could have "handled it." Following a study of juvenile delinquency that the Community Council had published in 1958, to address the problems identified in the report the Council's new youth committee founded an air cadet squadron and formed a minor baseball league.[9] It also studied a program to have local merchants extend credit privileges to minors to teach them responsible money management.[10] The Community Council had been looking at youth as a problem to solve and its solutions were aimed at maintaining social propriety. These approaches would likely not have been effective with youth who were questioning authority and convention. Moreover, the Community Council was ill-equipped to respond on its own. It was a volunteer organization that acted based on consensus amongst its members and affiliated organizations. Its self-perpetuating board was more focused on managing and incrementally improving existing programs. It was not poised to take on a radically new and complex challenge.

The Montreal YMCA, on the other hand, was in a much better position to recognize the changes taking place in youth culture in the city. Its primary objective, as it reiterated in 1964,

[7] Warren and Fortin, *Pratiques et discours*, p. 25.
[8] Warren and Fortin, p. 26.
[9] "Decline Noted in N.D.G. Delinquency," *Gazette*, 18 May 1961, p. 29.
[10] Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community Council inc. Youth Committee Report, 1960-61.

was "the improvement of the spiritual, mental, social and physical conditions of young persons" and it ran many programs that engaged thousands of young people across the metropolitan area. By the mid-1960s, the YMCA had, "through its contact with youth early become aware of changing habits and attitudes of youth and experiments with new habits and life styles."[11] In order to respond to these "disturbances among adolescents" that were a "somewhat unique feature of the present generation," [12] the YMCA deployed youth and adult members throughout the areas surrounding their branches to "feel the social pulse." The Y developed a program to establish "one-on-one" contacts in the community. At that time, Sir George Williams University was still associated with the YMCA. Two students at that institution who were preparing for careers with the YMCA, Terry Johnson and David Adair, designated themselves "street workers" and spent three nights a week, from 8:00 pm to 4:00 am, on the streets of the "lower area of N.D.G." In the words of F.G. Hubbard, Secretary General of the Montreal YMCA, the street workers encountered young people who, were "drop-outs from school and society generally – many of them 'drifters' with little sense of direction or purpose in life."[13] Gradually, the street workers established links with, and won the trust of, the people they intended to help.

Alienated Young People

Over the course of 1967, counterculture burst on the Montreal scene and reports about the consumption of marijuana and LSD multiplied. In May, young people held a "love-in" on the slopes of Mount Royal, in imitation of similar events held in San Francisco in January and in

[11] Hubbard, "First Quarter of Second Century," p. 31.
[12] Hubbard is quoting a paper Dr. J. Robertson Unwin, a psychiatrist at the Allen Memorial Institute, presented at the 18th Annual Meeting of the Canadian Psychiatric Association at Regina on June 22, 1968.
[13] Hubbard, "First Quarter of Second Century," pp. 33-34. Warren and Fortin (*Pratiques et discours*, p. 43.) quote François Roberge's claim that 90% of the drop-outs came from the privileged classes.

New York in March.[14] Expo 67 attracted millions of visitors and its Youth Pavilion included in its programming performances by rock and roll bands associated with counterculture and the hippie movement, such as the Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane. Correspondingly, the Youth Pavilion was reputed as a principal distribution point for hallucinogenic drugs.[15] It is highly likely that young people from NDG were involved in these events, although only sparse evidence of this has been identified to date. A sixteen-year-old NDG girl wrote a letter to the editor denouncing the heavy-handed tactics used by the police in dispersing the attendees of the Montreal love-in.[16] Two of the eventual organizers of Sunday in the Park, Peter Lowery and Chuck Luffer, met while working summer jobs at Expo. Perhaps the highest-profile indicator that the counterculture movement was present in NDG is the fact that the psychedelic rock ballad, "Lindberg," was written on a night in January 1968 by Robert Charlebois and Claude Péloquin in a commune on Melrose Avenue in the heart of the older residential part of NDG.[17]

By 1968, alarm about the spread of drug consumption and youthful rebellion was widespread in NDG, as reflected in the pages of the local paper, the *Monitor*. An editorial in January took for granted the growing use of LSD, marijuana, and STP by "youngsters" to provide "kicks."[18] In March, it posted a notice that the NDG Community Council was holding a public meeting on the topic of drugs such as marijuana and LSD, which featured a talk by the head of psychiatry at St. Mary's Hospital followed by a panel discussion.[19] In September, the *Monitor* published an article relating the experience of Ray Rouse, secretary of the YMCA

[14] Andy Geller, "Police Move in on City Park Demonstration," *Gazette*, 8 May 1967, p. 3.
[15] Warren and Fortin, *Pratiques et discours*, p. 27.
[16] Diane Soroka, "Police Actions at 'Love-In' Criticized," *Gazette*, 18 May 1967, p. 6.
[17] Bruno Roy, *L'Osstidcho ou le désordre libérateur* (Montréal: XYZ éditeur, 2008), p. 59.
[18] "Blame the Dailies for the Hop Heads," *Monitor*, 31 January 1967, p. 4. Note: STP or "speed" was a psychedelic amphetamine that was available on the black market in Montreal starting in the summer of 1967. See "Wretchedness, Terror on a Bad Trip," *Gazette*, 19 September 1967, p.7.
[19] "Drugs Subject of Meeting," *Monitor,* 20 March 1968, p. 4.

program and field service staff , who had just spent four months supervising an emergency program organized by the Montreal Association of Social Agencies that dealt with youth issues such as drugs, teen pregnancy, and militant activists. He estimated that between fifteen and thirty per cent of young people in Canada were disaffected with society and its institutions. He related that "many of these alienated young people see organized society as conservative, ultra-materialistic, impersonal, non-caring for the individual and apathetic toward social issues of the day."[20] A subsequent editorial called for openness about the topic of drug consumption, encouraging more public awareness and greater involvement from parents.[21] At the end of the year, a bomb threat at a high school in the nearby municipality of St. Laurent prompted an editorial which implored students "to rebel against those who incite them to rebel, not for reform, but for revolution."[22]

The *Monitor* did provide some voice to the perspective of young people. The primary outlet was a column called "Teenage Express" (later renamed "Focus on Youth") written by Michael Gilligan, which mainly reported on the concert scene in town. Although the photograph of Gilligan that appeared atop the column showed a clean-cut young man in suit and tie, his reporting enthusiastically promoted the prime countercultural events in the city. It was apparent that he frequented the New Penelope, a coffee house located in the McGill ghetto that, during its short existence, was the centre of the countercultural movement.[23] He promoted performances by such artists as Jimi Hendrix, Cream, and the locally based draft dodger Jesse Winchester. "Teenage Express" provided the young people of NDG with a guide to the counterculture. For

[20] "Communication Key to Alienated Youth," *Monitor,* 25 September 1968, p. 7. See also Hubbard, "First Quarter of Second Century," p. 32.
[21] "Why All the Secrecy?" editorial, *Monitor,* 23 October 1968, p. 4.
[22] "An Explosive Situation," editorial, *Monitor*, 11 December 1968, p. 4.
[23] Warren and Fortin, *Pratiques et discours*, p. 27.

example, in 1969, Gilligan promoted the Woodstock Music and Art Fair for weeks before the event and then, just before the festival, concluded his column with "see you at WOODSTOCK, this weekend!"[24]

Two events at the beginning of 1969 raised the level of concern in NDG regarding the conduct of the youth. First, a bomb was set and detonated by three teenagers at Saint Luc Secondary School in northeastern NDG on the evening of January 6. The city was already on edge as the previous autumn had seen multiple bombings claimed by the FLQ, including two in Montreal on December 31, so this drew the attention of the daily newspapers and the tabloids. The blast at the school did little damage, as only one of thirteen sticks of dynamite exploded and the perpetrators had failed to ignite the five thousand gallon oil tank as intended. Had the bombers been successful, the results would have been tragic, as there were five hundred night-school students in the building.[25] Detectives ruled out terrorism as a motive, but that was not believed by the *Montreal Star*, *Montréal-Matin*, nor John O'Meara, the journalist from the *Monitor* who reported on this case.[26] It was extraordinary to assign O'Meara to the story as he was generally limited to his mid-paper column, in which he traded in neighbourhood gossip and expressed strong right-wing and anti-French viewpoints. This assignment likely indicates how disturbed the editorial staff were by the incident.

A few weeks later, students at Sir George Williams University occupied the ninth-floor computer centre in protest of alleged racial discrimination by a biology professor and of

[24] Michael Gilligan, "Woodstock This Weekend," Focus on Youth, *Monitor*, 13 August 1969, p. 6.
[25] Albert Noel, "Bomb Disrupts Night Classes," *Gazette*, 7 January 1969, p. 3.; "Police Tell Frightening Tale of Two Young Boys Who Bombed for 'Kicks'," *Gazette*, 9 January 1969, p. 3.; Eddie Collister, "Detective Denies Any Terrorist Link in Latest Arrests," *Gazette*, 10 January 1969, p. 3.; "Les adolescents 'poseurs de bombes': sentence le 22 janvier, " *La Presse*, 9 January 1969, p. 3.; and Gilles Normand, " Les adolescents 'à la dynamite': jugement le 11 mars, " *La Presse*, 27 February 1969, p. 3.
[26] John O'Meara, "Little Boys Sitting on a Time Bomb!" *Monitor*, 15 January 1969, p. 1.

subsequent inaction on the part of the university in addressing it. This affair resulted in the arrest of ninety-seven protesters and damage worth more than two million dollars.[27] While NDG was four kilometres to the west of the institution, the district had strong ties as it was home to both students and faculty, including some central characters in the affair. The professor at the centre of the controversy, Perry Anderson, was an NDG resident,[28] as was Clarence Bayne, a Black professor whose resignation from the hearing committee was a factor that indirectly precipitated the occupation.[29] If the *Monitor* can be used to gauge the response in NDG, it was torn between hostile reaction and sympathetic handwringing. On one hand, John O'Meara in his page-eight column was venomous. At the time the sit-in was still peaceful, he declared it "disgusting" that "200 raggedy-ass Maoists, anarchy 'hashists' and assorted trash had by the weekend made the school's computer centre as fetid with their sit-in as their polluted idealogy (sic)." He opined that "the foreign rabble-rousers should not only be kicked out of Sir George but kicked out of the country," and that "for the home-grown disturbers" authorities should not "spare the muscle in firing them into the street, preferably head first."[30] A more measured response came from the author of the unsigned editorials, presumably the paper's managing editor, Ross Worrall. In the editorial written just prior to the violent conclusion of the occupation, he chastised the older generation for being self-centred and, consequently, responsible for "the growing problems of youth and their reasons for their involvement as rebels and drug takers." The next week, following the end of the occupation, the editorial continued the same theme, claiming that "unlike ourselves, this younger generation … [is] concerned … over the ills of the world and

[27] Mills, *The Empire Within*, p. 105.; see also David Austin, *Fear of a Black Nation: Race, Sex and Security in Sixties Montreal* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2013), pp. 131-37.
[28] Mina Shum, *Ninth Floor* (Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 2015).
[29] Ronald Lebel, "The Black and White Case at Sir George Williams," *Globe and Mail*, 12 February 1969, p.7.; and Brian Stewart and Andrew Geller, "The Trial of Professor Anderson," *Gazette*, 22 February 1969, p. 7.
[30] John O'Meara, "Our Mayor is the Mayor for All That," Picked Up in Passing, *Monitor*, 5 February 1969, p. 8.

those injustices which are visible within eye-sight for any who choose to see them. And their concern is a realistic one."[31]

Through the remainder of 1969, the alarm expressed in the *Monitor* about political militancy of the youth continued to grow. In mid-March, the editorial line was still open to accepting that the challenge coming from the youth had legitimacy, cautioning that "the blame for further youth uprisings may fall squarely on our own doorsteps due to our inability to eradicate the symptoms of a decaying society."[32] Shortly afterwards, following the protest associated with *operation McGill français,* the editorial proclaimed with exasperation that the democratic right to protest was being abused by resorting to violence and property damage.[33] In June, an FLQ bomb exploded in the middle of the night at a construction site in NDG, causing considerable damage and injuring a passerby.[34] This was one of twenty-seven bombings in the Montreal area that year, including one in February at the Montreal Stock Exchange that injured between twenty and thirty people and caused almost a million dollars in damage.[35] When the provincial government announced in August that it was launching more stringent measures for dealing with terrorism in cooperation with police forces at the municipal, provincial and federal levels, the *Monitor* applauded.[36] Ross Worrall reached the limit of his patience with oppositional politics when he attended a press conference held by the *front de libération populaire* in the wake of the violence that had occurred on October 7 during a wildcat strike of police and firefighters. Seeing Stanley Gray as a leader of the group, and that some of the leaders were

[31] "Who Cares? You Should," editorial, *Monitor*, 12 February 1969, p. 4.; and "We're to Blame," editorial, *Monitor*, 19 February 1969, p. 4.
[32] "Correct Corruptiveness," editorial, *Monitor*, 12 March 1969, p. 4.
[33] "The McGill March," editorial, *Monitor*, 2 April 1969, p. 4.
[34] Kellett et al., *Terrorism in Canada*, p. 265.
[35] Kellett et al., *Terrorism in Canada*, pp. 258-269.; and Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*, p. 352.
[36] "They've Finally Grabbed the Bull by the Horns," editorial, *Monitor*, 27 August 1969, p. 4.; and Hal Winter, "War Launched Against Terrorists," *Gazette*, 23 August 1969, p. 1.

wearing the clenched fist badge of the Black Panther Party, convinced Worrall that unrest in the city had gone beyond advocacy for change and that agitators like Gray were fomenting revolution.[37] Gray had been in the public eye for a couple of years; first, as a radical political science lecturer at McGill University, a position from which he had been dismissed, and then as one of the organizers of the *operation McGill français* march. He had been a target of revulsion and ridicule in prior issues of the *Monitor* that year.[38] Shortly afterwards, possibly in an attempt to distract the local youth from radical rebellion, the *Monitor* launched a challenge to the young people in the area to use its columns to suggest constructive ways to improve the West End. It published a letter from the local city councillors commending the initiative, offering their assistance in implementing projects that will improve "the quality of life in our West End," and praising the "responsible journalism" of the *Monitor*.[39]

It is unclear to what extent the youth of NDG was participating in the political militancy that concerned the *Monitor*, but the young people in the area were definitely listening to rock music and taking drugs. In the mid-1960s, dances were held on alternate Fridays at the YMCA branches in NDG and Westmount. These were very popular and the attendees "were doing drugs like crazy."[40] In October 1969, a group, which included Michael Gilligan, launched Cycles, a weekly series of events that Gilligan described as a "permanent underground entertainment centre."[41] He pitched it as a place where one could "go and sit down and relax and enjoy underground cuts in between sets of heavy groups" and he claimed it would test Montreal's

[37] "Beyond a Shadow of a Doubt," editorial, *Monitor*, 15 October 1969, p. 4.
[38] O'Meara, "No Gray Day for McGill," *Monitor*, 19 March 1969, p. 8.; and "Sir George Has the Blues and Shades of Gray Too," *Monitor*, 20 August 1969, p. 1.
[39] "Local Challenge Campaign Continues," *Monitor*, 12 November 1969, p. 1.
[40] Oral history interview with Linda Scott, 25 November 2021.
[41] Michael Gilligan, "A Good Omen," Focus on Youth, *Monitor*, 29 October 1969, p. 6.

appetite for "solid progressive rock."[42] The décor was so psychedelic that "you didn't need to drop acid to have a trip."[43] It was initially held at Le Manoir Notre-Dame de-Grâce and seven hundred people attended the first event[44] and thereafter attendance was generally well over one thousand. Many in attendance were taking drugs and this was one of the sites where the YMCA street workers encountered the local youth.[45] It proved to be so popular that the venue was moved in April 1970 to the Loyola College athletic centre to accommodate the crowd.[46]

Start Seeing Kids Before They Get into Deep Trouble

It was in this context of heightened concern about the youth that, in 1969, an informal group of concerned citizens formed the West End Youth Action Committee (WEYAC) and began to meet regularly. This group of about ten people included two street workers from the downtown YMCA, neighbourhood adults, and local youths recruited from the area. The committee was formed principally to address the problems faced by the youth and the lack of services and resources available to meet the actual needs of young people.[47] The street workers had found that the young people needed health and social services but were distrustful of adult and bureaucratic institutions. *Gazette* journalist Betty Shapiro later described the situation as there being "a mile-high wall between the community's helping professions and a group of young people who most needed help."[48] The contacts of the street workers feared being reported to authorities if they were dealing with a drug issue, or their parents if their problems related to

[42] Michael Gilligan, "Over 1,000 People," Focus on Youth, *Monitor*, 5 November 1969, p. 6.
[43] Oral history interview with Linda Scott, 25 November 2021.
[44] Gilligan, "A Good Omen."
[45] Oral history interview with Linda Scott, 25 November 2021.
[46] Michael Gilligan, "Cycles Finds a New Home," Focus on Youth, *Monitor*, 18 March 1970, p. 6.
[47] Letourneau, "The Head and Hands Youth Clinic," p. 9.
[48] Betty Shapiro, "The Young Have Their Clinic But The Battle's Not Yet Won," *Gazette*, 20 November 1970, p. 8.

sexuality. While the street workers had gained the confidence of the local youth, they in turn required support services and only had recourse to the institutions that the youth distrusted.[49]

Early on, WEYAC resolved to open a youth clinic for NDG. The idea for the clinic was in all likelihood directly inspired by a youth clinic affiliated with the downtown YMCA that opened on Jeanne Mance Street in August 1968 and eventually moved to nearby Ste. Famille Street. The Ste. Famille Youth Clinic, in turn, was one of a couple of dozen of such "hippie" clinics that emerged across the United States and Canada quickly after the establishment of The Haight-Ashbury Free Clinic in June 1967[50] and The Los Angeles Free Clinic that was founded a couple of months later,[51] so those clinics may also have provided inspiration. While there was no formal connection between NDG and Ste. Famille, WEYAC did review the operations of the established clinic's operations[52] and sent future staff members there to train.[53] The plan for the NDG clinic, however, had a different orientation than Ste. Famille. WEYAC determined from the beginning that it would take a preventive approach to its services, whereas the Ste. Famille clinic was more service oriented. The vision for the NDG clinic was a "place where kids could just freely come and hang out and where we could build a relationship with them and hopefully start seeing kids before they got into deep trouble."[54] A couple of years later, the Commission of Inquiry into the Non-Medical Use of Drugs (Ledain Commission) recognized Head & Hands for

[49] *Head & Hands: The Evolution of a Youth Clinic* (Montreal: Head & Hands, 1984), p. 1.
[50] Gregory L. Weiss, *Grassroots Medicine: The Story of America's Free Health Clinics* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowan & Littlefield, 2006), p. 25.
[51] Mike Davis and Jon Wiener, *Set the Night on Fire: L.A. in the Sixties* (London: Verso, 2020), p. 597.
[52] Letourneau, "The Head and Hands Youth Clinic," p. 14.
[53] Oral history interview, Linda Scott, November 25, 2021
[54] Letourneau, "The Head and Hands Youth Clinic," p. 10.

providing "meaningful alternatives to drug use among adolescents" and, in its final report, categorized it and the Ste. Famille Clinic differently.[55]

Through the spring and summer of 1970, WEYAC waged a determined campaign to create public support for the clinic, raise funds, and find a location. Over 225 concerned local residents attended the first information session held at St. Augustine's Parish Hall in April , which was moderated by a representative from the YMCA. It was a forum to discuss "Adolescence and Drugs" presented in three parts: a candid interview with two young former "drug addicts;" a panel where a cross-section of interested parties spoke and fielded questions; and then the group was divided into small group discussions. In the panel discussion, psychiatrist Dr. Sidney Lecker, one of the founders of the Ste. Famille clinic, told the audience that "young people do not go to hospital for fear of being reported to the authorities," and that there is an urgent need for a clinic. Mark Earley, a street worker from the YMCA who would become the director of the clinic within a year, sensitized the audience to the extraordinarily high number of high school students who had tried drugs.[56] The message was well received by the *Monitor*, which published an editorial that praised WEYAC "for undertaking positive measures to correct a situation which has existed [in the West End] too long."[57] In the following months similar information sessions were held around the district.[58]

Fundraising was a challenge for the committee. They intended to open the clinic before summer, but the campaign to raise $25,000 in funding to cover the operating expenses for the

[55] Commission of Inquiry into the Non-Medical Use of Drugs, *Treatment* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1972), p. 90 and Commission of Inquiry into the Non-Medical Use of Drugs, *Final Report* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1973), p. 1102n5 and p. 1102n8.
[56] "New Youth Committee Formed to Deal with Drug Aspect Here," *Monitor*, 8 Apr 1970, p. 1.; and "Establishment of a Youth Clinic a Must Leading Drug Authority Tells Meeting Here," *Monitor*, 15 April 1970, p. 1.
[57] "A Positive Beginning," editorial, *Monitor*, 15 April 1970, p. 4.
[58] "Committee Seeks Quarters to Establish Youth Clinic here," *Monitor*, 29 April 1970, p. 3.; and "Community Forum on Drugs and Youth Set for Saturday," *Monitor*, 23 September 1970, p. 1.

first year went slowly.[59] They solicited contributions in the pages of the *Monitor*. Volunteers operated a carwash, at which, in an early manifestation of the whimsy and creativity that would subsequently be used in the clinic, they promised that not only were the cars cleaned inside and out, but flowers were given "to the ladies."[60] Michael Gilligan showed his support by encouraging his readers to support the clinic[61] and promoting, as a low-pressure fundraiser, amateur rock concerts in NDG Park on Sunday afternoons that teenager and WEYAC member Steve Laudi had initiated. Encouraging participation, Gilligan told his readers that "there is no obligation to contribute, if you are low on bread, be sure to come anyway."[62] Finally, the YMCA offered to pay the first three months' rent on a small two-storey house facing Girouard Avenue in addition to paying the salaries of two street workers.[63] A local automobile dealer provided a small grant, which provided enough funds to get started.[64]

The West End Youth Clinic opened in September 1970. It offered psychiatry, gynaecology, internal medicine, but also handicrafts, general counselling, and a drop-in centre. It was also developing an education program with a similar format to the information sessions it had held in the spring and summer.[65] The clinic staff initially included medical professionals, who were volunteering their time, the street workers from the YMCA, and three young people from WEYAC. [66]

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[59] "West End Youth Campaign for Funds," *Monitor*, 10 June 1970, p. 3.
[60] "Action Group to Stage Car Wash," *Monitor*, 27 May 1970, p. 3.
[61] Michael Gilligan, "James Brown Returns," Focus on Youth, *Monitor*, 2 July 1970, p. 10.
[62] Michael Gilligan, "Rock Benefit Sunday," Focus on Youth, *Monitor*, 22 July 1970, p. 6.; Michael Gilligan, "Manseau – Maybe," Focus on Youth, *Monitor*, 29 July 1970, p. 6.; and Michael Gilligan, "The Manseau Mess," Focus on Youth, *Monitor*, 5 August 1970, p. 6.
[63] "Youth Clinic Opens on Girouard Avenue *Monitor*," 9 September 1970, p. 1.
[64] Letourneau, "The Head and Hands Youth Clinic," p. 10. This contributor may have been Harold Cummings. Another possibility is that it was Ted Tilden, President of Canada's largest car rental agency. Tilden was a NDG resident and was a patron of Head & Hands in its early days.
[65] "West End Youth Action Committee Branches Out; Three Realms of Endeavour Pursued," *Monitor*, 7 October 1970, p.12.
[66] *Head & Hands: The Evolution of a Youth Clinic*, p. 5.

The Clinic received strong moral support from the district, however finances remained precarious. Two city councillors, John Parker and James Bellin, and the federal member of Parliament, Warren Allmand, served as honorary members of WEYAC.[67] A month following the opening, the *Monitor* praised the accomplishments to date, saying that WEYAC has served a community need and that they will soon need a show of appreciation in the form of financial assistance. It insisted, "Don't let them down. Support them."[68] Cycles organized a benefit at the McGill Student Union that supported the NDG Youth Clinic, as well as three other causes.[69] The clinic also received support at NDG Community Council's Beef and Bouquet Night. Carolyn Alexander, a registered nurse and an active volunteer at the clinic, was awarded the third prize in the beef category for outlining the clinic's dire need for financial and material support from the public. At the same event, a bouquet was awarded to a woman who lauded the efforts of the youth centre.[70] The NDG Community Council subsequently organized a public meeting in conjunction with WEYAC on the topic of drugs.[71]

The *Monitor* provided further support by offering to publish a regular column. The first column, published January 20, 1971, still referred to the West End Youth Clinic, although the staff were already calling it "Head & Hands" long before it opened.[72] That first article praised the inter-generational cooperation that created the clinic and presented the available services as a "community within a community." At that time, four months into the operation of the clinic, the crafts offered included workshops in leather, suede, music, candle work, and the media. It had

[67] *Monitor*, "West End Youth Action Committee Branches Out."
[68] "Support Them," editorial, *Monitor*, 7 October 1970, p. 4.
[69] Michael Gilligan, "Cycles Benefit," Focus on Youth, *Monitor*, 11 November 1970, p. 8.
[70] "Residents Tender More Beefs Than Flowery Bouquets at Annual Event," *Monitor*, 25 November 1970, p. 1.
[71] "Drugs Subject of Monday Meeting," *Monitor*, 20 January 1971, p. 1.
[72] Oral history interview, Linda Scott, November 25, 2021.

also implemented a 24-hour hotline.[73] The second article appeared in the *Monitor* on February 3. It invited young people to come to the "Human Resource Centre" (one of several names used for the clinic) to get help with "personality growth" in an "easy-going scene." It offered creative things to do, so they could alleviate boredom more constructively than abusing drugs, committing robbery, or getting into gang fights. It offered a place for people "to be free in" and find a stabilizing influence with people they can trust.[74] The third and final article promoted the craft workshops.[75] The column was then abruptly terminated, and the next articles published about the clinic were not penned by its staff.

On Thursday, April 22, 1971, the clinic was shut down after a centre staff member had referred a 16-year-old high school girl for an illegal abortion. The following Monday, the WEYAC Board of Directors suspended Mark Earley, who was by then director of the centre. The WEYAC Board's policy regarding abortion counselling had been to recommend a legal therapeutic abortion. Under the then recently passed Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1969, abortion was "only legal when performed in an accredited hospital by a licensed physician and only after a therapeutic Abortion Committee consisting of at least three doctors had determined that the pregnancy endangered either the life or the health of the pregnant woman." [76] Under the circumstances, this had almost no chance of being approved. It was overly restrictive and out of keeping with the principles of the Head & Hands staff and the growing movement in Quebec for access to abortion on demand.[77] This situation left the centre worker with the dilemma of either

[73] *Monitor*, Head & Hands, January 20, 1971, p. 7.
[74] *Monitor*, Head & Hands, February 3, 1971, p. 7.
[75] *Monitor*, Head & Hands, March 10, 1971, p. 6.
[76] Shannon Stettner, "A Brief History of Abortion in Canada", in Shannon Stettner, (ed.), *Without Apology: Writings on Abortion in Canada*, (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2016), p.43.
[77] For an overview of the fight for access to abortion in Quebec see Louise Desmarais, *La bataille de l'avortement: chronique québécoise, 1970-2010,* (Montréal: Les Éditions du remue-ménage, 2016).

following policy, and effectively not helping their client, or locating a qualified doctor to perform an illegal abortion competently.[78] For the centre staff, there was no question about how to resolve the dilemma; they supported the client's needs without judgement. The YMCA could not accept that the clinic was ignoring the law, so it fired Earley and replaced him with Terry Coady, an employee of YMCA International. The clinic and drop-in centre were reopened the day after Earley was let go.[79]

Your Sons and Your Daughters Are Beyond Your Command

The firing of Mark Earley ultimately precipitated the complete independence of Head & Hands. Following the abortion incident, the YMCA concluded that Head & Hands required closer supervision and that it needed "the workers to identify more closely with the whole program [of eight centres run by the YMCA] and not only their own centre with its problems."[80] This was anathema to the young group in NDG whose vision for the clinic was based on their own set of principles and values and were determined to design its program to meet the specific needs of the local clientele. The staff remained for the summer to provide services during the period of greatest need and then resigned *en masse* with the intention of severing ties with the YMCA and not affiliating with "anybody else.'[81]

One of the clinic workers who eventually served on the Board explained the situation as follows:

> So they [the YMCA] tried to make it their baby, we tried to run it independently. When they decided to fire our director and put in one of their own, we tried it for a

[78] Chris Allan, "Abortion referral closes NDG youth clinic," *Gazette*, 27 April 1971, p. 1.
[79] Allan, "Abortion referral closes NDG youth clinic."
[80] Allan, "Abortion referral closes NDG youth clinic."
[81] Letourneau, "The Head and Hands Youth Clinic," p. 12.

> summer and then decided no way. The YMCA was not being supportive at all, we were getting directives from this guy who came in and tried to be our director. We just said forget it. … The abortion issue was the straw that broke the camel's back, as there was no dialogue on our ideas about how we wanted to run the place. We decided we would rather close and open up ourselves, with the kinds of services we think kids need, rather than having them [the YMCA] telling us what they want.[82]

The revolution had occurred; the young staff was now unfettered in creating the youth clinic they envisaged, which they modelled on the notion of a therapeutic community.[83] Mark Earley returned to lead the organization along with Pat Crawshaw. Head & Hands Inc. was formally incorporated on October 6, 1971, with Crawshaw named as president and Earley as secretary. They were able to secure a grant from the federal government's Local Initiatives Program (LIP) in December to employ seven people over the winter.[84] They retained the support of the professional volunteers, who clearly believed in the value of the service the clinic was providing and were, at the very least, willing to go along with a non-hierarchical organization run by young people. The staff and its board of directors included women in roles of leadership, for example Linda Scott managed the medical clinic and Carolyn Alexander and Adele Fetterly were active and influential members of the board. The clinic opened at a new location above a paint store on Sherbrooke Street in mid-January. An organizer was quoted as saying, "that the venture is a new one, and has no connection with the former centre." Despite this assertion of

[82] Letourneau, "The Head and Hands Youth Clinic," p. 12.
[83] Oral history interview with Linda Scott, 25 November 2021. This is reinforced by the Ledain Commission report. It is likely derived from the work of Maxwell Jones (starting with *The Therapeutic Community*: *a New Treatment Method in Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1953)) as applied in drug rehabilitation in communities such as Daytop Village in New York State and X-Kalay in Vancouver.
[84] "Youth Clinic Given Grant," *Monitor*, 15 December 1971, p. 3.; and "*L'Association des locataires reçoit d'Ottawa une subvention de $261,362*," *Le Devoir*, 14 December 1971, p.11.

independence, the centre's communications emphasized cooperation with local hospitals and other related services and underscored the breadth of its board of directors, which consisted of youth, parents, and medical professionals.[85]

The initial period of operation was financially precarious, but the clinic appears to have thrived and had good community support. By August 1972, Head & Hands was helping about one hundred and fifty people a week[86] and had added free legal aid. [87] The abortion controversy that had precipitated the rift between the YMCA and the staff received no press attention and does not appear to have been an impediment to establishing the new clinic. According to a questionnaire distributed to 2200 households in NDG by the federal MP Warren Allmand in February 1971, sixty-six per cent of respondents approved of abortion whereas only twenty-three per cent disapproved.[88] The *Monitor* continued to report on the clinic, and politicians did not avoid being associated with it.[89] Funding, though, was scarce and the grants that supported the operation were awarded for only five-month periods. The pressure to curry favour with the community and with the granting bodies may explain why, unlike some of the other clinics in Montreal at that time that had links to broader movements for social change and were involved in oppositional activism, Head & Hands remained politically unaffiliated and only expressed its politics implicitly in its mode of operation.[90] Remaining circumspect about its politics allowed Head & Hands to avoid offending its community and, consequently, increase its chances of survival. This inclusive approach enabled Head & Hands to sustain support, as can be seen from

[85] "Youth Centre Re-opens," *Monitor*, 19 January 1972, p. 1.
[86] "Mark Earley Helps Young People and Worries How He Can Continue," *Gazette*, 21 August 1972, p. 33.
[87] "Youth Legal Clinic Opens," *Monitor*, 21 June 1972, p. 4.
[88] "Residents Approve Wage Price Controls, Disapprove of Legal Marijuana Sale," *Monitor*, 17 February 1971, p. 1.
[89] For example, "Drury Gets Informed," *Monitor*, 12 April 1972, pp. 1 and 8.
[90] Letourneau, "The Head and Hands Youth Clinic," pp. 27-28. For an example of another clinic, see Robert Boivin, *Histoire de la clinique des citoyens de Saint-Jacques, 1968-1988: des comités de citoyens au CLSC du plateau Mont-Royal* (Montréal: VLB, 1988).

the widespread popularity of Sunday in the Park, the community fairs that it hosted several times each summer.

A Real Celebration

In the summer of 1973, Sunday in the Park was "the talk of the city."[91] It was a community fair that Head & Hands held in NDG Park for a single day in each of June, July, and August that year, which attracted an estimated attendance of 40,000 Montrealers of all ages, "from toddlers to oldsters."[92] The approximately 3.5 hectare site was divided into various areas, including two stages, a children's area, a senior citizens' area, and a "creative corner," where amateur musicians could play to a small audience. There were also dozens of information and craft booths. All three events that year operated with a packed schedule from 10:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. The day started with children's programming, including such things as clowns, professional puppet shows, a mime troupe, and games. The police and fire departments put on eye-catching displays; the police showed off their vehicles and gave a canine demonstration, and the fire department lit a shack on fire and extinguished the flames with the help of the audience.[93] At the August event, the Montreal Alouettes of the Canadian Football League played a game of kickball against the Playboy Bunnies. (The Bunnies won, of course.) [94] In the middle of the day, the stage performances were oriented to an adult audience, with classical, folk, and swing music. The fifty-seven member Canada Symphony Orchestra performed at two of the events. The late afternoon and evening were dedicated to rock and blues. Those shows included some of the best-

[91] Juan Rodriguez, "Sunday Sounds," *Montreal Star*, 25 August 1973, p. 23.
[92] Betty Shapiro, "Media Missed Out When Festivals Flourished," *Gazette*, 11 September 1973, p. 13.
[93] Leslie Rubin, "Family Presentation Set for Sunday," *Monitor*, 11 July 1973 p. 6.; and Liane Heller, "Your Choice: Country Picnic or Music in a City Park," *Gazette*, 15 June 1973 p. 18.
[94] Bruce MacDonald, "Thousands Attend Festival," *Monitor*, 19 August 1973, p. 5.; and "Mime, Music to Headline Park Festival," *Gazette*, p. 33.

known recording artists and performers in Montreal, such as Jesse Winchester, the Wackers, and the Ville Émard Blues Band.[95]

Head & Hands did not charge admission for these festivals, nor were donations solicited. Their twofold purpose was to provide constructive and creative activity for the youth in planning and executing the festival, as well as to facilitate intergenerational understanding. In support of those goals, all the performers volunteered their time. Most of the work was performed by volunteers, with the only exception being that two of the organizers received small government grants to cover their salaries. It also relied on the good will of the community. CHOM-FM, a progressive rock radio station, broadcast the performances live. The City of Montreal provided a portable stage. A local audio supply store, The Sound Shop, provided the sound equipment. Hydro Quebec put in a power line and Bell Telephone installed a trunkline. An electrical contractor, Walter Allen, lent and installed the sound system and lighting. Ted Tilden, who operated the largest vehicle rental company in Canada, donated trucks. Even the Musicians' Guild, who were in a dispute with Mayor Drapeau and had blacklisted performances in City parks, made an exception for this event and allowed its members to perform, as they were volunteering their time. Journalist Juan Rodriguez speculated that, if the festivals were operated on a commercial basis, they would never have "seen the light of day."[96]

What eventually became Sunday in the Park started out humbly in 1970. Even before WEYAC had opened its first clinic, Steve Laudi started a series of "ad-hoc Sunday rock concerts to entertain the hippies hanging out in N.D.G. park."[97] At the time, there were many rock and roll bands in NDG who were happy to have the opportunity to play before an audience. Each week,

[95] Rodriguez, "Sunday Sounds."
[96] Rodriguez, "Sunday Sounds."
[97] Bonnie Price, "No Need to Be Barefoot for a Sunday in the Park," *Gazette*, 17 June 1978, p. 4.

three or four bands would perform in what was simply referred to as "free rock concerts." News got around by word of mouth and, by the end of that first summer, Laudi had compiled a list of about ten or fifteen bands that wanted to play. The concerts built up a steady following. The next summer, Laudi, who was coordinating leisure activities at the WEYAC youth clinic, kept the concerts going and combined it with other activities at the centre, such as crafts.[98] For the summer of 1972, following the re-establishment of Head & Hands, Laudi and newly joined volunteer Peter Lowery reconceived the events to offer entertainment for all ages and to involve more neighbourhood organizations. They named the events "Luv-a-Fair," which suggested that it was both a love-in and a community fair. The stated goal was "to allow for easier communication and understanding between people of all ages and life styles."[99] The revised concept was a great success; the first event of the summer had an estimated attendance of three thousand people.[100] For 1973, the name was changed to "Sunday in the Park" and "Dimanche au Soleil" because the previous name did not translate well into French.[101] Lowery recruited Chuck Luffer, who had studied theatre arts at Sir George Williams and was an "amateur impresario," to help organize the events. The organizers realized that they had created something that had a life of its own; as Lowery later recalled, they "had the tiger by the tail."[102]

The success of Sunday in the Park served to establish the reputation and credibility of Head & Hands with the general public. While the clinic had regularly demonstrated its value to its clients and the organizations with which it interacted, such as the hospitals and the police, the festivals gave an opportunity to demonstrate the competence, imagination, and, even, influence

[98] Oral history interview, Peter Lowery, 16 November 2021.
[99] "Community Fair Planned Sunday," *Monitor*, 21 June 1972, p. 1.
[100] "Love-A-Fair II Promises Success," *Monitor*, 2 August 1972, p. 10.
[101] Oral history interview, Peter Lowery, 16 November 2021.
[102] Oral history interview with Peter Lowery conducted by Head & Hands for its fiftieth anniversary.

of the youth centre to the broader community. Praise came from all quarters. The organizers received many complimentary and encouraging letters from the sponsors and the performers.[103] Warren Allmand, then Solicitor General of Canada, wrote in the *Monitor* that "a group of young people from NDG have designed and implemented an ambitious project to do their share in making NDG a better place to live. The project, called 'Sunday in the Park,' deserves the support of all residents."[104] He subsequently attended the August festival and addressed the audience.[105] The journalist Betty Shapiro said of Head & Hands "these young idealists deserve our thanks and support."[106] Bruce MacDonald, who had taken over the youth column in the *Monitor*, concluded his long, descriptive review of one of the festivals with, "… thank you, Head & Hands. NDG loves you dearly."[107]

Beyond publicity, Sunday in the Park also helped advance the objectives of Head & Hands, which were focused on addressing the problems and needs of the youth. Hundreds of adolescents of all backgrounds "gravitated to Head and Hands as soon as they learned about the proposed park festivals." They "solicited contributions, lugged equipment to the site, drove trucks and lent a hand generally."[108] Some also had the opportunity to perform on stage. This provided work experience, built self-confidence, and established character references, which were especially valuable for street kids. It was explicitly the intent of Head & Hands to provide opportunities for the youth to realize their own potential and, thus, to prevent apathy and alienation.[109] They also sought to foster understanding between the generations. In their work,

[103] Letters in the personal collection of Peter Lowery.
[104] Warren Allmand, "Warren Allmand Comments," *Monitor*, 15 August 1972, p. 4.
[105] MacDonald, "Thousands Attend Festival."
[106] Betty Shapiro, "Media Missed Out."
[107] MacDonald, "Thousands Attend Festival."
[108] Betty Shapiro, "Media Missed Out."
[109] Oral history interview, Peter Lowery, 16 November 2021.

the Head & Hands staff were seeing young people estranged from their parents and they sought to open the eyes of both sides to their shared humanity. In recent years, the *Monitor* had published several articles complaining about how adolescents had taken the city parks as their private domain. In 1971, this even led the City to impose a curfew in Outerbridge Park in NDG.[110] Sunday in the Park went some way to open channels of communication. It "brought [together] people who would not normally stand on the same turf together."[111] Sunday in the Park continued for thirty years as an annual event that "brought musicians, artisans, community service organizations, and community members together for a day of fun and education."[112]

Less enduring, but applying similar creative energy, in 1975 the leisure time activities group at Head & Hands created a mini-park, which they named "Echo Park." There was an empty lot beside the clinic, which had been vacant for about fifteen years and was commonly used as a dumping ground. The lot was filled with old appliances, car tires, and other garbage. The leisure time activities group applied for and received an Opportunities for Youth (OFY) grant from the federal government to clean up the lot and transform it into a park. They then scrounged transportation, landscaping materials, and painting equipment. They even acquired City of Montreal benches for the park by approaching Yvon Lamarre, Vice-President of the City's Executive Committee, when he was visiting his family's hardware store.[113] With volunteer help – both office work and manual labour – the space was landscaped and decorated. It provided greenspace and a passageway to residents of the area, as well as allowing Head & Hands to hold its activities close to the clinic rather than in remote locations. They also used it

[110] "City Imposes Closing Hour on Local Park," *Monitor*, 28 July 1971, p. 1.
[111] MacDonald, "Thousands Attend Festival."
[112] "Our Story / Notre Histoire," Head & Hands, https://headandhands.ca/about/since-1970/
[113] Yvon Lamarre was the first public advocate for the establishment of the Lachine Canal as a heritage park. See Steven High. *Deindustrializing Montreal: Entangled Histories of Race, Residence, and Class* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022), pp. 216-18.

for events, such as regular movie screenings. [114] In 1978, during the municipal election campaign, the bus of Guy Duquette, mayoral candidate for the Montreal Citizens Movement, stopped at Echo Park to highlight his party's policy of converting idle lots into mini-parks.[115] Head & Hands moved in 1979 after a fire destroyed the clinic, so Echo Park was abandoned and eventually the lot was built upon.[116]

The Youth Take Charge

Although Sunday in the Park may have drawn the most attention, the Head & Hands staff was primarily focused on the well-being of its clients. The energy that went into the festivals also went into counselling, medical care, and legal assistance. Regardless of the operational success and the enthusiasm of the volunteers funding remained a perennial challenge. The constant need to seek grants left a trail of endorsement letters, which, when read critically, provide a record of how the clinic was perceived and the function it played in the community. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital's Director of Psychiatry wrote that "if [Head & Hands] did not exist, there would be a considerable increase in the load of patients we have to handle directly." The Director of the Family Medicine Unit at that hospital stated that the "quality of care provided [is] equal or better than many of the ambulatory clinics in the Montreal region." The Family Planning Association declared that "we refer clients to them almost daily" and "they are a vital part of Montreal's health and social services." William Tetley, the MNA for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, wrote to his cabinet colleague in Social Services, whose department was deciding the fate of Head & Hands, that "this institution … is of the utmost importance and is the only one of its kind in the whole

[114] "OFY Group Undertakes to Build Mini-Park," *Monitor*, 11 June 1975, p. 1.; and Oral history interviews, Peter Lowery, 18 and 20 November 2021.
[115] "Duquette Takes a Slow Bus to N.D.G. to Spread the Word," *Gazette*, 4 November 1978, p. 4.
[116] Susan Schwartz, "Head and Hands Clinic Needs a Hand after Fire," *Gazette*, 8 May 1979, p. 4.

city and perhaps the province. Head & Hands has truly helped the youth of the riding of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce."[117] Evidently, Head & Hands had provided a service to the community, but how does the emergence of the youth clinic illustrate how NDG had changed?

The incapacity of the existing social organizations in NDG to address the rise of the counterculture and the youth-related unrest opened the door for a new organization to assert itself led by the youth themselves. Gauging by the *Monitor*, NDG was paralyzed by the fear that it had fallen into a state of anomie. The NDG Community Council, which had been coordinating the efforts of the district's social organizations to care for the youth since the Second World War, had no significant response to the drug consumption and vandalism that was being reported. The Montreal YMCA was more attuned to the situation, so it started a program to send street workers to engage wayward young people in constructive activity. That ultimately led to the formation of Head & Hands, but the clinic's young staff ended up parting ways with the YMCA after a year of operation to be free to implement their program without interference. Even without the stabilizing influence of the YMCA and despite the relative inexperience of the staff (the manager of the medical clinic was nineteen years old), Head & Hands was still able to retain or win the support of the medical community, local politicians, and parents. This surrender by the older generation faced with the problems of the baby-boom youth, exemplifies the critic Francois Ricard's observation that "never has society offered so little resistance to its youth."[118] This yielded power and influence to a social organization run by the postwar generation that was guided by principles based in the youth counterculture.

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[117] Head & Hands archives, uncatalogued. Original of Tetley quotation: "cette institution… est de la plus haute importance et la seule du genre de toute la ville et peut-être de la province. Head & Hands a vraiment aidé les jeunes du comté Notre-Dame-de-Grâce."

[118] François Ricard, *La génération lyrique: essai sur la vie et l'œuvre des premiers-nés du baby-boom* (Montréal: Boréal, 1992). p. 167. (translation by Donald Winkler)

Head & Hands offered services that were far more permissive and less oriented towards conformity than the youth of NDG had seen up to that point. Head & Hands frankly addressed drugs, sex, and mental ill health. Its leisure activities allowed the participants to follow their interests and set the rules of engagement, which was the polar opposite of offering the opportunity to join an air cadet squadron, one of the solutions for juvenile delinquency that the Community Council introduced a decade earlier. One of the centre pieces of the Community Council's programs for youth was the annual Arts and Letters Festival, which encouraged participation, but was very much oriented to rewarding the most talented. By contrast, Head & Hands' approach was not competitive, but rather was focused on allowing all to realize their individual potential.

Head & Hands appears to have been indifferent to the parochial religious and linguistic differences that had structured NDG and Montreal to that point and this represents a major shift. While the NDG Community Council proudly proclaimed that it brought together the entire community, it was very respectful of the religious institutions and societies that made up many of its affiliated organizations. In the 1960s, the YMCA loosened its requirement for members to also be a member in good standing of a Protestant Evangelical Church and opened its membership to Roman Catholics and non-Christians, but it still saw its mission as a Christian one."[119] Head & Hands did not shun religious institutions; it was happy to provide education sessions at churches and synagogues.[120] On the other hand, the children's programming at Sunday in the Park started at 10:00 a.m., a time which could conflict with church attendance. More substantially, Head & Hands was offering counselling that was within the traditional

[119] Hubbard, "First Quarter of Second Century," pp. 12-15 and 72-85
[120] *Monitor*, "West End Youth Action Committee Branches Out."

purview of religious institutions. Regarding language, most correspondence of Head & Hands was in English and most staff and volunteers were anglophone, but, as evidenced in Sunday in the Park, Head & Hands embraced Quebecois music. For example, in 1973 the concert lineups included Ville Émard Blues Band, Octobre, and Richard and Marie-Claire Séguin. Chuck Luffer is quoted as saying, "le'me tell ya, this is the first time French music has been exposed en masse to the west end of Montreal, and the crowds will be in awe." [121]

In 1969, "there were hundreds of young people who hung around Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (N.D.G.) Park trying to 'find themselves' smoking grass, dropping acid and talking about building a community."[122] By August 1973, the residents of an NDG senior citizens' home published a request in the *Gazette* for transportation to Sunday in the Park.[123] Times had changed. The postwar children, who long had been the object of so much doting attention, were now taking a leadership role in the community and even delving into the cultural development of youth and creating parks. The NDG Community Council, which had been lavishing that attention, now needed to revise its role or risk growing obsolete.

[121] Rodriguez, "Sunday Sounds."
[122] Price, "No Need to Be Barefoot."
[123] "Elderly Seeking Transport Aid to Park Festival," *Gazette*, 25 August 1973, p. 4.

Chapter 4: Social Activism in the Early 1970s and the NDG Conference on the Quality of Life

As the 1970s began, the NDG Community Council appeared to be on the wane. Although its committees had run their programs competently and the Council could be relied upon to organize all-candidates debates at election time, it offered little that was new or different. Attendance at its events was generally low. Its membership of affiliated organizations had peaked in number a decade earlier, and many of the member organizations, such as the churches, had themselves diminished in membership and influence.[1] A significant number of members were not paying their annual fees nor participating in the work of the Council. The weakened Community Council was poorly positioned to address urgent social issues that were arising in NDG, for example, the question of how to deal with disaffected youth, considered in the previous chapter. The attention of engaged citizens had also turned to matters such as people living in poverty, inadequate housing and care for senior citizens, an emerging feminist movement, incipient racial conflict, and ambient pollution. New independent social organizations proliferated in the early 1970s to address these emerging concerns, as seen above in the case of Head & Hands (Chapter 3). In a bid to connect with these new organizations and seek feedback on how it could better meet the needs of the community, in 1973 the NDG Community Council convened the N.D.G. Conference on the Quality of Life. This ultimately backfired on the council. Those activist groups formed action committees, which operated

[1] Wesley United, for example, saw membership drop from 1,653 in 1962 to 846 in 1971. It had been 2,501 in 1947. David Hanna, "Wesley: Committed to Community," pp. 14, 17.

separately from the Community Council for a time. Ultimately, the action committees took over the Council and social activism became mainstream in NDG.

This chapter begins by relating how the heightened political tension in Montreal in the late 1960s and early 1970s affected NDG. This reveals some of the external pressures that weighed on the NDG Community Council and its affiliated members. It then introduces the federal grants that supported the flourishing of activist groups in NDG, as well as the provincial program that helped organize the Conference on the Quality of Life. Then, the different groups that formed in NDG independently of the Community Council are introduced. The social issues that motivated these groups to organize provide an indication of how the concerns in NDG had transformed. The focus then shifts to the Community Council and its efforts to revive itself and remain relevant to the community. The chapter concludes with the Conference on the Quality of Life and the action committees that followed.

Rising Tensions at the Turn of the 1970s

The politically charged atmosphere in the period leading up to the Quality of Life Conference would have been difficult for the participants to ignore. In provincial politics, anglophones in NDG vigorously contested legislation aimed at the promotion of the French language and educational reform, which they perceived as threatening their own rights and way of life. That perception may have been compounded by recent memories of nationalist violence, as seen in the FLQ bombing campaign, the *Opération McGill français* march, the Saint-Léonard school riot, and the October Crisis. At a municipal level, the 1970 election revealed weakened support for the Drapeau regime and the formation of a nascent opposition. Another political aspect that had a direct impact on the social organizing in NDG was the expanded welfare state at both the provincial and federal levels.

The English-speaking majority in NDG were lulled into a false sense of security in 1968 during the provincial by-election to replace their MNA Eric Kierans, who had resigned to enter federal politics. Union Nationale Premier Jean-Jacques Bertrand comforted the electors by assuring them that all parents in the province would have the freedom to choose the language of instruction for their children.[2] The proposed legislation that would have fulfilled that commitment, Bill 85, received vehement opposition from francophone groups and had to be withdrawn.[3] The succession of bills that followed over the next few years attempted to resolve the enigmatic puzzle of making French the principal language of the province, which would be adopted by all new immigrants, while maintaining the rights and traditions of the English-speaking community. Bills that restructured school boards drew the most animated reactions from NDGers. The NDG Women's Club, which generally restricted itself to social service and uplifting its members, responded to Bill 62 with a brief to the Education Committee of the National Assembly that provided a seven-point set of principles to guide amendment to the bill. They sought assurance that new school boards would be democratically elected and that all groups – French and English, Roman Catholic and Protestant – would maintain their rights and autonomy.[4] The anglophone Protestant community vociferously resisted the legislation, and it was allowed to die on the order paper.[5] In 1971, the Liberal government tried to introduce Bill 28, which modified the Union Nationale's Bill 62 by providing for greater protection for minority-language schooling. The NDG Women's Club promptly sent a telegram to the Minister of Education outlining the amendments it hoped to see, [6] and the NDG Community Council

[2] William Tetley, "Language and Education Rights in Quebec and Canada (A Legislative History and Personal Political Diary)," Law and Contemporary Problems 45, no. 4 (Autumn 1982), p. 190.
[3] Levine, *The Reconquest of Montreal*, p. 75.
[4] McGill University Archives, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Women's Club fonds, MG4023, Minute Book 35, pp. 15-17.
[5] Levine, *The Reconquest of Montreal*, p. 84.
[6] Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Women's Club fonds, Minute Book 36, pp. 75-77.

arranged a panel discussion.[7] That bill also died, having neither sufficient anglophone nor francophone support. A compromise bill, Bill 71, which somewhat rationalized the fragmented school board system but maintained denominational separation, was passed in December 1972.[8] This legislation drew ire from English-speaking Catholics, who feared domination by the French.[9] Just months before, the community had spiritedly resisted the recommended closing of their university, Loyola of Montreal, the only post secondary institution in NDG.[10] In November, Loyola and Sir George Williams agreed to merge to form what would become Concordia University, so there would no longer be an autonomous English-speaking Catholic university.[11] Within a couple of days of the two anglophone universities having reached a tentative merger agreement, news of the school board legislation was revealed.[12] A petition demanding a separate English language Catholic school board attracted eight thousand signatures from parents in NDG and 100,000 across the Island of Montreal.[13] The NDG Community Council sent a letter to the Education Minister deploring that the law was adopted without holding public hearings as requested in the petition.[14] As a predominantly anglophone community, the sense of being under siege provided added urgency to rally the community.

The proliferation of violent acts in 1969 and 1970 must have added to the anxious mood in NDG, although there is little documentary evidence to support this. The *Monitor* devoted little attention to FLQ bombings. It only tangentially alluded to the confrontation in Saint-Léonard over the language of schooling, which culminated in a riot at which the Riot Act was read, one

[7] "Community Council to Sponsor Debate," *Monitor*, 20 October 1971, p. 1.
[8] Levine, *The Reconquest of Montreal*, p. 95.
[9] "Anglo-Catholics Here Rally to Oppose Bill 71," *Monitor*, 13 December 1972, p. 11.
[10] Luana Parker, "Loyola University Phase-out Proposed," *Gazette*, 6 July 1972, p. 1.
[11] Jay Newquist, "Loyola, Sir George Approve University Merger Terms," *Gazette*, 22 November 1972, p. 3.
[12] Jay Newquist, "English-Catholic Plea Rejected by Minister," *Gazette*, 11 November 1972, p. 1.
[13] *Monitor*, "Anglo-Catholics."
[14] "Council Deplores Lack of Hearings on Bill 71," *Monitor*, 20 December 1972, p. 18.

hundred people were injured, and fifty were arrested. *Opération McGill français* did get a rise out of the *Monitor*[15] and the right-wing columnist John O'Meara applauded when the city administration effectively banned all protests in November 1969 with Regulation 3926.[16] Even the reporting on the October Crisis, caused by the FLQ kidnapping of Quebec Deputy Premier Pierre Laporte and British diplomat James Cross, was subdued. Most of the news coverage focused on the concurrent municipal election campaign, and the editorials grumbled about how the situation might have been avoided by having had a better secret service or listening to forewarnings.[17] One editorial tied the two subjects together, imploring readers to vote in the municipal election to "serve as an endorsement of all we hold dear."[18] The NDG Women's Club, perhaps to demonstrate its unflappability, made no mention of the kidnappings in the extensive minutes from its meeting on October 16, 1970, the very day the War Measures Act was invoked. That meeting concluded with the customary singing of God Save the Queen and then tea was served.[19] Warren Allmand, on the other hand, in a speech in the House of Commons supporting the bill to allow the continued use of the powers of the War Measures Act,[20] said, "for those of us who live in Quebec the evidence [of an apprehended insurrection] is obvious. I should point out that my home is in Montreal and my wife and children are still living there [in NDG]. We, in Montreal, have lived with the evidence and have known it intimately."[21]

In municipal politics, support for Mayor Drapeau and his Civic Party began to erode. NDG had elected Civic Party candidates John Parker, James Bellin, and Jacques Brisebois for its

[15] *Monitor*, "The McGill March."
[16] John O'Meara, Picked Up in Passing, *Monitor*, 12 November 1969, p. 10.
[17] "The Need for a Secret Service is Urgent," editorial, *Monitor*, 14 October 1970, p. 4.; and Baz O'Meara, The Passing Show, *Monitor*, 21 October 1970, p. 4.
[18] "The Importance of Sunday's Vote," editorial, *Monitor*, 21 October 1970, p. 4.
[19] Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Women's Club fonds, Minute Book 35, p. 73-93
[20] Bill C-181, 19 Eliz. II, third sess., 28th Parl. (1 Dec. 1970)
[21] Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Debates, 28th Parl., 3rd sess., vol. 1 (1970) pp. 911-12

three seats in 1962 and 1966. In the highly centralized and autocratic Drapeau-Saulnier administration that devoted most of its attention to large projects, the three councillors had little power to address the needs of NDG. They did challenge Drapeau and occasionally won concessions, for example, Parker convinced the city to forego its plan for a single large sports complex in the east end, but rather to build several inexpensive arenas distributed around town, including one in NDG.[22] In the lead up to the 1970 election, Brisebois resigned from the Civic Party to run as an independent. He stated that he "was no longer able to act on the citizens' behalf or serve their best interests"[23] In that same election, a new party, the *Front d'Action Politique* (FRAP) was formed by community activists, labour activists, and students in an attempt to form an opposition to Drapeau.[24] The platform of the FRAP, while somewhat utopian, included decentralized power, urban renovation, and citizen involvement, somewhat resembling the plans that would later be proposed by the action committees issuing from NDG's Quality of Life Conference. The FRAP established a small committee in NDG and endorsed a candidate, journalist Carl Dubuc, for one of the district's council seats in the upcoming election.[25] Dubuc only garnered 7% of the vote, but that low result may be partly attributable to the election having taken place during the October Crisis and the FRAP having been publicly associated with the FLQ by Federal Cabinet Minister Jean Marchand[26] and Mayor Drapeau.[27] Dubuc, when questioned about having tailored his platform for a middle-class electorate, retorted that the people of NDG "are still concerned about the scandalous conditions in which half of Montreal's

[22] "John Parker's heritage," *Gazette*, 16 July 1992, p. G1.
[23] "Lacoste replaces Brisebois," *Monitor*, 30 September 1970, p. 1.
[24] Mills, *The Empire Within*, p.174.
[25] "Journalist Will Run on Anti-Mayor Ticket," *Gazette*, 9 October 1970, p. 3.
[26] Louis Favreau, *Mouvement populaire et intervention communautaire de 1960 à nos jours: continuités et ruptures* (Montréal: les Éditions du Fleuve, 1989), p. 164.
[27] Mills, *The Empire Within*, p.179.

population is forced to live."[28] The social organizing that took place in NDG in the early 1970s provides evidence that Dubuc had described the sentiment of a non-negligible segment of NDG's population.

Funding for Social Programs

Federal and provincial government programs subsidized much of the community work discussed in this chapter and the previous one. Head & Hands after parting company with the YMCA, survived initially on two sorts of federal grants: Opportunities for Youth (OFY) and Local Initiatives Program (LIP).[29] The OFY program was a response to the October Crisis, as well as an anticipated summer of discontent across the country. When announcing the program in the House of Commons, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau challenged young people, saying, "we believe they are well motivated in their concern for the disadvantaged … we have confidence in their value system … we are saying that we intend to challenge them and see if they have the stamina and self-discipline to follow through on their criticism and advice."[30] LIP was modelled on OFY as a general job-creation program. It provided seed money for projects that would improve communities and develop new and innovative services. The projects were run at arm's length to the government and were required to include the unemployed in the development and management of the projects. The grants were offered on a short-term basis to avoid the expectation of perpetual funding.[31] Several of the activist groups in NDG in the early 1970s were funded by LIP. Provincial funding, in part, supported the Quality of Life Conference, which was

[28] *Gazette*, "Journalist Will Run on Anti-Mayor Ticket."
[29] Letourneau, "The Head and Hands Youth Clinic," pp. 32-33
[30] Jennifer Keck and Wayne Fulks, "Meaningful Work and Community Betterment: The Case of Opportunities for Youth and Local Initiatives Program, 1971-1973," in *Community Organizing: Canadian Experiences*, by Brian Wharf, & Michael Clague, 113-136 (Toronto: University of Oxford Press, 1997), pp. 114-15.
[31] Kecks and Fulks, "Meaningful Work and Community Betterment," p.120.

organized by the Association of Leisure Time Services of Quebec, Inc. (ALQ), a bureau that received the majority of its funding from the provincial High Commission of Youth, Leisure and Sports. The ALQ had started in the mid 1960s as a vehicle for Montreal Council of Social Agencies to coordinate efforts of English-speaking groups involved in recreation, but by 1969 it was transitioning into an agency of the provincial government. Under the new arrangement, ALQ was responsible for making provincial programs accessible to English-speakers and for training recreational staff across the province.[32] Government funding, especially the LIP, helped shape social activism in NDG in the early 1970s.

New Activist Groups Form

An editorial in the *Monitor* in 1972 stated that "NDG is no longer the wealthy community it once was,"[33] a claim that is supported by studies of census data.[34] Recognizing this change in the area, City Councillors Parker and Bellin persuaded the City of Montreal to open a welfare office in NDG in November 1970. For the 1900 families in NDG receiving welfare benefits, this relieved them of the need to travel downtown. [35] Concurrent with the opening of the welfare office, members of the Greater Montreal Anti-Poverty Coordinating Committee (GMAPCC) formed an NDG branch, initially called "Citizens for Community Improvement" and then the name was changed to "Voices in Social Action (VISA)." VISA aimed to inform citizens of their welfare rights and to provide information on how to obtain those rights. In keeping with the

[32] Association of Leisure Time Services of Quebec, Inc., *Leisuregram*, 1, no. 1 (December 1969)
[33] "Support Our Councillors," editorial, *Monitor*, 23 August 1972, p. 4.
[34] Anne-Marie Séguin et al., "Poverty and Wealth in the Post-War Montreal Area," in *Montreal: The History of a North American City*, Dany Fougères, and Roderick MacLeod (eds.), (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018), vol 2 p. 359.
[35] "Social Welfare Office to Open in N.D.G.," *Monitor*, 14 October 1970, p. 26.; and *Monitor*, "Residents Tender More Beefs Than Flowery Bouquets."

principals of GMAPCC, VISA considered welfare to be a "community service, not a handout." [36] It sought to transform those on welfare, by allowing them to retain their dignity and to become active citizens, and it advocated on behalf of welfare recipients. For example, the organization objected to a policy that required parents to present an itemized list of school needs to their child's principal and obtain approval in order to qualify for a twenty-five-dollar subsidy.[37] VISA also strongly objected to sending welfare officers to visit recipients in their own homes in order to receive their welfare cheques.[38]

Late in 1971, another group, Community Relief and Social Help (CRASH), was formed to help people of limited means in NDG. Led by Jo Turner, a single mother on welfare, it focused on providing food vouchers and clothing to welfare recipients, old-age pensioners, or people with low incomes, as well as providing counselling.[39] CRASH, to distinguish itself from VISA, would not demonstrate or protest against the government and would not fight, but work with, the welfare offices. They wanted to help people help themselves and get jobs for as many members as possible. They envisaged setting up a permanent food and clothing depot, legal aid, a medical clinic, and a daycare centre to free women up to work.[40] In July 1973, CRASH succeeded in opening a depot offering clothing and furniture.[41]

Some of the poverty in NDG was found amongst its large community of senior citizens. In 1971, fourteen per cent of the population of the area was over the age of sixty-five, which was

[36] "New Citizens Group Seeks to Create Community Improvements in N.D.G.," *Monitor*, 4 November 1970, p. 1.; see Anna K. Kruzynski and Eric Shragge, "Getting Organized: Anti-poverty Organizing and Social Citizenship in the 1970s," *Community Development* Journal, 34, no. 4 (October 1999): 328-39 for more information on GMAPCC.
[37] "NDG Welfare Parents Rap School Subsidy Probe," *Gazette*, 11 September 1971, p. 34.
[38] "VISA Objects to Investigation of Social Welfare Recipients," *Monitor*, 16 February 1972, p. 3.
[39] "New Welfare Group Started in N.D.G.," *Monitor*, 9 February 1972, p. 1.
[40] "Jobs Not Welfare Aim of N.D.G. CRASH," *Monitor*, 16 February 1972, p. 1.
[41] "CRASH Depot Opens," *Monitor*, 25 July 1973, p.3.

almost double the provincial and national rates.[42] The generation that had settled in NDG in the interwar period was near or past retirement age. Younger families had moved to the outer suburbs, leaving older relatives isolated and without adequate support. They were living "in rooming houses and even damp basement apartments [and could] barely afford rent and electricity."[43] The lack of adequate housing for seniors was severe in Montreal; in 1970, there were 14,000 available beds in senior's residences to serve an elderly population of 300,000.[44] John Parker began organizing for housing for seniors in 1969 and secured a promise in January 1972 that two buildings would be built. When that construction was not in the city budget for 1972-73, he rebuked the Drapeau administration for neglecting the needy in NDG, even though he was a member of the ruling Civic Party.[45] In 1974, the city built one of the two buildings. John Parker was the founding president of ALQ and, working with that organization, had established three seniors' groups, the Fifty Plus Clubs.

The African-Canadian community also established a community group in the district – the Black Community Association of NDG (BCA). The African-Canadian community in NDG grew significantly when immigrants from the Caribbean arrived following Canada's introduction of a merit-based immigration policy in 1967.[46] Although African Canadians had lived in NDG at least since the late 1920s[47] and, for a time, the district had been home to the elite of the Black community, [48] the increased numbers resulted in some overt racial conflict. This came to public attention in the summer of 1973, when NDG Park became a "venue for fistic expressions of

[42] The percentage of the population over sixty-five was 6.9% in Quebec and 8.1% in Canada.
[43] *Monitor*, "Support Our Councillors."
[44] "Old Age Homes: No Vacancy," *Gazette*, 21 May 1970, p. 19.
[45] "City's housing policy gets mild criticism," *Gazette*, 15 August 1972, p. 33.
[46] Dorothy W. Williams, *The Road to Now: A History of Blacks in Montreal* (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1997), p. 116.; and Williams, *Blacks in Montreal*, p. 73.
[47] Williams, *The Road to Now*, p. 70.
[48] Williams, *Blacks in Montreal*, p. 95.

racial tension."[49] It began as a series of territorial clashes between young people over the course of a few weeks but took an uglier turn when white adults wielding baseball bats and bicycle chains began chasing Black youths from the park. In July, shortly after a crowd of about two hundred people in the park had dispersed, police arrested two men, apparently one white and the other Black, who were fighting for possession of a revolver.[50] On that same night, a delegation of fifty members of the Black community, likely from the BCA, went to the local police station to present a two-page letter documenting the racial incidents that had taken place over the previous few weeks and asserting their rights, as taxpayers, to use the park.[51] The police said they had no records of the earlier incidents. The following day in a television interview, one of the organizers of Sunday in the Park denied that there were racial tensions in NDG and asserted that all were welcome at the upcoming event.[52] The *Monitor* accused the *Montreal Star* of sensationalizing minor incidents and inciting trouble.[53] LeRoy Butcher, a key figure in the Sir George Williams Affair, concurred that the events had been blown out of proportion, but warned that they could have become as serious as the 1958 Notting Hill race riots in West London.[54]

As the Black community were more vocally defending their rights in early 1970s NDG, women, inspired by a new generation of feminist politics and thought, became more assertive. NDG had known formidable female leaders in the postwar years, such as Sadie Heywood, who was president of the NDG Community Council several times during its formative years, and Jennifer Heller, who had been recognized by Mackenzie King for her efforts during the Second

[49] L.R. Butcher, "No Legal Protection of Rights," *The Black Voice*, August 1973, p. 1
[50] "Three Arrested Here," *Monitor*, 11 July 1973, p. 1.; and "Black Leaders Seek 'Positive' Measures after NDG Incident," *Gazette*, 11 July 1973, p. 3.
[51] "Black Delegation Protests Racial Conflict," *Monitor*, 11 July 1973, p. 1.
[52] Oral history interview, Peter Lowery, 16 November 2021.
[53] "This We Can Do Without," *Monitor*, 25 July 1973, p. 1.
[54] L.R. Butcher, "No Legal Protection of Rights."

World War and who had been favoured for the nomination as the federal candidate for Liberal party in 1957 until she dropped out of the race. By 1969, second wave feminist thought had arrived in Montreal and shortly thereafter, women in NDG were no longer willing to cede opportunity to a few rare exceptions. Influenced by American feminists, a group of anglophone women, founded the Montreal Women's Liberation Movement in 1969, and then in early 1970 a group of francophone and anglophone activists formed the *Front de liberation des femmes du Québec* (the Quebec Women's Liberation Front). [55] Also in 1970, the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (Bird Commission), "helped awaken Quebec women to feminism."[56] Feminist thinking worked its way into NDG. By 1972, women were advocating for day care centres so they could work outside the home.[57] A great early Canadian feminist novel published in 1973, *The Book of Eve*, portrays an NDG housewife, who leaves her bed-ridden and demanding husband of forty years to seek her autonomy.[58] At a more concrete level, a group of women under the name of Female Action Montreal opened a centre on Prud'homme Avenue in March 1973 that had a lounge, a workshop, a playroom, and a library. They established a fruit and vegetable cooperative, a co-op day school, as well as a fully equipped pottery studio. They anticipated adding classes in car mechanics and electronics.[59] They also invited speakers including noted Indigenous women's rights activist, Mary Two-Axe Earley (no evident relation to Mark Earley), who would become the first woman in Canada to have her Indian status restored[60].

[55] Collectif Clio, *Quebec Women: A History. Women's Press History* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1987), p. 359.
[56] Collectif Clio, *Quebec Women*, p. 363.
[57] *Monitor,* "Jobs Not Welfare Aim of N.D.G. CRASH."
[58] Beresford-Howe, *The Book of Eve*. Beresford-Howe was raised in NDG and lived there until she left Montreal in 1969 at the age of forty-seven.
[59] "Women's Center," *Monitor*, 18 April 1973, p. 14.; and Leslie Rubin, "FAM Forms Meeting Place for Women," *Monitor*, 30 May 1973, p. 12.
[60] Courtney Montour, *Mary Two-Axe Earley: I Am Indian Again* (Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 2021)

The environmental activist movement swept through Canada between 1969 and 1971.[61] In 1970, a group of students at Loyola College formed Pollu-fite, which was dedicated to raising public awareness about pollution and lobbying for the ban of non-renewable containers. They sought and obtained support from the NDG Community Council, which supplemented support from the Loyola of Montreal Students' Association and Molson Breweries.[62] The students behind Pollu-fite were bold and enthusiastic in their initial efforts, but the group became "largely inoperative" within a year, due to a "lack of personnel and adequate financing."[63] Another group, The Society to Overcome Pollution (STOP), also formed in 1970, had a more direct impact on NDG. STOP was a large organization, which, by May 1971, had 20 chapters throughout the Montreal area and a membership of two thousand.[64] The NDG chapter was active at that point, running paper drives[65] and blitzing the local supermarkets for Earth Day, when they provided information on pollution and circulated petitions to be presented to United States President Richard Nixon to stop nuclear testing and to Mayor Drapeau to have separate refuse collection for paper and glass.[66] STOP was active in NDG: running neighbourhood clean up campaigns, including clearing empty lots that were used as garbage dumps, and eventually establishing two depots in NDG for the collection of newspaper, glass bottles, coat hangers, and rags.[67] STOP won mainstream approval. The *Monitor* praised STOP's efforts to end underground testing of nuclear weapons.[68] The NDG Women's Club, an organization that was very formal and quite

[61] Ryan O'Connor, *First Green Wave: Pollution Probe and the Origins of Environmental Activism in Ontario*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), p. 6.
[62] "Pollu-fite Budget Request," submitted to the NDG Community Council, 9 September 1970.
[63] Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community Council, Inc., "Thirtieth Annual Report, 1971-1972," p. 4.
[64] Jane E. Barr, "The Origins and Emergence of Quebec's Environmental Movement, 1970-1985" (MA thesis, McGill University, 1995), p. 91.
[65] "STOP Plans Paper Drives in N.D.G.," *Monitor*, 5 May 1971, p. 1.
[66] "Earth Day: Marches, Rallies, Displays Make Up Two-Day Celebration," *Gazette*, 14 May 1971, p. 3. In 1971, Earth Day was celebrated in Montreal on May 14 and 15. "STOP Plans Blitz," *Monitor*, 12 May 1971, p. 1.
[67] "Clean Up Campaign to Be Held in July," *Monitor*, 24 May 1972, p. 1.; "STOP Volunteers Aid in Clearing 'Garbage' Site," *Monitor*, 23 May 1973, p. 1.; and "Recycling Depots Open Here," *Monitor*, 20 June 1973, p. 1.
[68] "STOP Deserves Applause," editorial, *Monitor*, 15 September 1971, p. 4.

selective in choosing causes to support, formed an ecology committee in 1971 and supported STOP. They invited Judy Duncan, co-chair of the NDG branch of STOP, to speak to its members about practical things they could do to reduce pollution.[69]

Seeking the Status Quo Ante

In June 1970, amid the mounting political tension and social turmoil, the NDG Community Council elected Leslie Greenshields to return as president. He had served in that role once before in 1963-64 during the fight against the Royal Follies. That term ended unimpressively, with the Council struggling to raise funds and facing a very low level of participation.[70] He was likely brought back in 1970 because of his experience with youth in NDG. In 1957-58, he had co-authored a report on juvenile delinquency for the Council and, subsequently, he became chairman of the youth committee from 1960 to 1962. During his time on that committee, the Community Council proudly reported a decline in juvenile delinquency in NDG, which was attributed to programs Greenshields had implemented, such as starting a local air cadet squadron.[71] His return coincided with the time when NDG was alarmed by disaffected youth and, concurrently, the West End Youth Action Committee was making its proposal to open a youth clinic. Greenshields seemed ready to apply the same approach to youth that he had done a decade earlier. At his nomination meeting he said that "the best way to develop character and leadership abilities is through such activities as organized recreations, the Arts and Letters Festival and [the] Air Cadet Squadron."[72]

[69] McGill University Archives, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Women's Club fonds, MG4023, Minute Book 36, pp. 74, 124, 126. And Book 37, pp. 41,123, 125,183.
[70] Turner, "Community Group is Facing a Slump."
[71] "Decline Noted in N.D.G. Delinquency," *Gazette*, 18 May 1961, p. 29.
[72] Greenshields, "Remarks."

On accepting the position in 1970, Greenshields painted a dire picture of the situation in NDG. He claimed that the greatest problem the community was facing was that its character had changed in recent years. With the building of expressways and high-rise apartments, the population had become more transient, and people had grown indifferent and apathetic. A change in attitude would be required to keep "N.D.G. as a nice community in which to live and to raise our children, [and] to conduct our business affairs and attract business and professional people." He was concerned about the lack of facilities for senior citizens, the quality of education offered to children, the spread of drug usage, and the loss of local businesses to the shopping centres in the suburbs. He warned local businesses that they should support the Community Council, because without it NDG ran the risk of becoming like major American cities, where the threat of crime and violence empties the streets after dark. [73] Greenshields served for two one-year terms as president and attempted to steer the organization to address these challenges, but he had neither the means nor the personnel to be successful.

In the first year of his presidency, there was considerable turnover in the executive "due to illness and other circumstances." To fill the gap, the Council brought back members who had served in the past, including Sadie Heywood, who had been president of the Council three times in the 1940s. Fundraising fell far short of the Council's objectives in both years. In 1971, twelve member organizations had not paid their fees, and that number increased to twenty-five in 1972.[74] The regular committees of the Community Council continued to function well. The library continued to see circulation of books grow. The Arts and Letters Festival had considerable participation, although the number of students involved was about two-thirds of the

[73] Leslie Greenshields, "Remarks," NDG Community Council, Inc, Annual Meeting, 8 June 1970.
[74] Jeannette McLennan, "Membership Committee Annual Report," Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community Council, Inc., May 1972.

level of 1967 and was diminishing steadily, dropping fifteen percent between 1971 and 1972. The Program Committee continued to hold general meetings of interest to the public, for example to discuss proposed provincial legislation such as Bill 28 on schools and Bill 65, which related to health care. In the fall of 1970, the Community Council held the twenty-first and final Beef and Bouquet Night. Regardless of the scarcity of funds and changing personnel, the Council still attempted to address urban renewal, pollution, and abuse of drugs among NDG's young people.

On urban renewal, the Community Council launched two committees chaired by veterans of the Community Council: Community Development and Improvement, under Patrick Farrell, and Needs and Resources, under Cy Durocher. Community Development and Improvement aimed to clean up the deteriorating appearance of the business district along Sherbrooke Street, by adding off-street parking lots, trees, and potted plants. This relied entirely on funding from, and execution by, the City of Montreal and, at the end of Greenshields' second year, it reported "little progress." Needs and Resources had ambitious plans to do a far-reaching study in "urbanology and urban renewal" in cooperation with the City and Loyola's sociology department. This was mostly dependent on LIP funding which did not materialize. The committee did produce a directory of services available in NDG, which would become the basis for an annual publication of the Community Council. Nominally under the guise of the Needs and Resources Committee, Cy Durocher also supported the effort to get a seniors' residence built, allowing the committee to report progress when the City promised to build two.

The Community Council effectively delegated responsibility for two of the most urgent issues of concern in the community, pollution and youth, which allowed a semblance of effort without the expenditure of additional personnel or funds. It named Pollu-fite a permanent

committee, although it was staffed entirely by Loyola students. When they were not awarded an OFY grant in 1971, their work essentially ceased. Similarly, the Youth Committee was chaired by an employee of the YMCA, and so its efforts were roughly identical with the YMCA's efforts. The Community Council attempted to name WEYAC as a committee shortly after Head & Hands had opened. Bob Austin, the Youth Committee chairman, pointed out that WEYAC was an autonomous body that was in the midst of incorporation, so it could not be responsible to the Community Council. Austin chastised the Community Council for failing to support WEYAC but nevertheless agreed to name it as a "special project" of the Youth Committee.[75] In 1971, the annual report of the Community Council trumpeted the achievements of Head & Hands while indicating they were "informally affiliated" with the Youth Committee. The following year, after Head & Hands was completely independent, the Youth Committee report was two sentences long and communicated nothing specific.

An article in the *Monitor*, on October 1971, announced that the NDG Community Council was concerned with "the changing quality of life and its effect on residents of the area." The Council declared that it was seeking to "play a more active role." It had engaged Kerry Johnston of the Central YMCA to make recommendations on how the Council could relate better to the community and provide greater help to meet the needs of residents and other organizations.[76] When Johnston was reassigned by the YMCA, Bob Austin completed the project. The study was conducted by students at the School of Social Work at McGill University, under the supervision of Sheila Goldbloom. The study's report recommended that the Council become more directly involved in the community, build closer relationships with many of the

[75] Austin to Greenshields, 20 October 1970.
[76] "NDG Community Council Set to Take Active Role in Determining Needs Here," *Monitor*, 13 October 1971, p. 1.

grassroots organizations, engage with contemporary social concerns, and bring groups together to work on community projects. It also suggested that the Council should act as a resource to supply information of all sorts, including the availability of childcare, and aid services to the elderly and the handicapped. The report also recommended that the Council play a role of animation in the community, thereby making citizens more aware of their environment, and educated on such topics as language rights, unemployment, the disenfranchised, welfare rights, education, the youth malaise, community influence in politics, and the quality of political representation.[77] It is not clear specifically what prompted the study, however the report set the direction in motion of the Council for years to come.

The phrase "quality of life" became a watchword for the Community Council. At the 1972 annual meeting, outgoing president Leslie Greenshields struck a very different tone than at previous meetings. His opening and closing remarks echoed the language of the report. He spoke about departing from traditions and becoming involved in such issues as social welfare.[78] When the report was considered for adoption, incoming president Cy Durocher pointed out that some of the recommendations may require amendment to the constitution, so he suggested that they work within the spirit of the report until they could provide the requisite two-months notice to make those changes. The *Monitor* reported that Durocher and members of the executive agreed with the report and would "be studying ways and means of implementing it over the coming year."[79]

[77] Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community Council, Inc., "Thirtieth Annual Report, 1971-1972," pp. 2, 6; and "Report if Committee to Review the N.D.G. Community Council," 23 March 1972.
[78] NDG Community Council, "Thirtieth Annual Report," p.1,6
[79] "Cyril Durocher Named President of N.D.G. Community Council," 24 May 1972, p. 1.

Bringing the Community Together

The report and Durocher's leadership appear to have brought some life back to the Community Council. Durocher, a retired school principal, had been involved in community organizations since before the Second World War and had been in leadership roles in the Council since the 1950s. Durocher appeared to be taking the report to heart himself and giving his vice-presidents latitude to do so as well. In the summer of 1972, Durocher continued to work alongside John Parker to get a seniors' residence built. He also visited a youth hostel that the Loyola Student Association had opened in June. Following a visit to Head & Hands, he gave a speech about that organization's Luv-A-Fair festival. In that same summer, Barbara Davis, a vice-president of the Council, began organizing community experts to investigate the impact that the provincial legislation on health and social services, Bill 65, would have on the local Queen Elizabeth Hospital. She also spoke out on television and protested in writing against the closing of Loyola College.[80] Bob Austin, now also a vice-president, wrote to Durocher in August proposing that the Community Council hold a conference that autumn, to bring together all groups involved in youth recreation in NDG and to coordinate their efforts and make plans. The proposal came as a result of meetings that were being coordinated by Sybil Ross, the resourceful and energetic Executive Director of ALQ. Ross had brought together Louis Fandrich, director of Le Manoir, and Guy Landry, supervisor of the city Department of Recreation responsible for NDG, and Austin of the YMCA.[81] For NDG, cooperation between the YMCA and Le Manoir, which offered parallel recreational services to NDG's French-speaking population, represented a

[80] Barbara Davis, "Vice-President's Report," Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community Council, Inc., 12 July 1972; and Davis to the *Montreal Star*, 13 July 1972.
[81] Austin to Durocher, 1 August 1972.

tremendous milestone in breaking down linguistic and religious barriers. Le Manoir also joined the Community Council at that time.[82]

The proposed conference became a focus of much of the energy at the Community Council, so much so that the Arts and Letters Festival, until recently the pride of the Council, was not held in 1972-73. Bob Austin moved away and was replaced as chairman of the Conference Planning Committee by Stella Dziemian. The scope of the conference increased and by December the planning was in full swing. The date of the conference was fixed for 31 March 1973. An auditorium and twelve workshop rooms were booked at Loyola College. Starting in January, planning meetings became frequent, and the conference planning committee was highly structured and included not only NDG Community Council, YMCA, and ALQ, but also such groups as Head & Hands, VISA, and the Westhaven-Elmhurst Community Association. In the end, twenty-four organizations participated in planning the event.[83] By late January, many of the key roles had been staffed, including Barbara Davis as chairman of Program Co-Ordination. The conference was called the "N.D.G. Conference on the Quality of Life." The planning committee laid out a detailed plan that included training of discussion leaders, and seeking involvement of, and information from, all groups in the district.[84] The minutes of the meetings reveal both enthusiasm and competence. The public relations packages apparently went out on time, as the *Monitor* published a front-page article and an editorial declaring the conference a "must" ten days prior to the event.[85]

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[82] "N.D.G. Community Council Names New V-P; Committees Formed," *Monitor*, 16 August 1972.
[83] Association of Leisure Time Services of Quebec, Inc., "N.D.G. Conference on the Quality of Life: Conference Report," Proceedings, Montreal, 1973.
[84] Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community Council, Inc., Conference Planning Committee minutes.
[85] "Life Quality Conference Next Week," *Monitor*, 21 March 1973, p. 1.; and "A 'Must' Conference," editorial, *Monitor*, 21 March 1973, p. 4.

When the conference took place as planned on 31 March, it was presented as a joint production of the Association of Leisure Time Services of Quebec and the Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community Council. Its 263 participants represented eighty-nine community organizations.[86] The aim was to determine what the various organizations were doing in the community, where their work overlapped, what gaps there were, and how they could work better to improve the quality of life in NDG.[87] Workshops were held on a dozen topics: Community Services; Students; Play and Recreation; Citizens in Action; Pre-School Days Mother & Child; Health; Growing Up in NDG; Raising a Family in NDG; Legal Help; Helping Newcomers to Belong; Life After 60; and Pollution. While each group came up with specific recommendations, there were two common themes: 1) the Community Council was doing an inadequate job of coordinating the 250 social organizations in the area and, 2) they were not providing the organizations and citizens with sufficient information. To address these shortcomings, it was recommended that the Council establish a permanent, staffed office. It was also recommended that it focus more on social action than on providing services. Major problems identified were: a need for senior citizen's facilities; a lack of in-home medical care; a lack of green space, deteriorating conditions in southern NDG; the law against incinerators not being applied; a need for day care facilities; insufficient activities for children after school; a lack of sports organizations for girls; and inadequate legal aid. [88] Many of the groups in the workshops had started discussing solutions and expressed an eagerness to continue the work. Shortly after the conference, the chair of the planning committee, Stella Dziemian, reported that it had been a

[86] Association of Leisure Time Services, "Conference Report;" and "Better NDG Living Charted," *Gazette*, 2 April 1973, p. 3.
[87] "Life Quality Conference Deemed Success," *Monitor*, 4 April 1973, p. 1.
[88] Association of Leisure Time Services, "Conference Report."; *Gazette*, "Better NDG Living Charted."; "La formation d'un ghetto inquiète le citoyen de NDG," *La Presse*, 2 April 1973, p. 3.; and *Monitor*, "Life Quality Conference Deemed Success."

"huge success," but she then realized that the Community Council had quite "a task on their hands," but, if it had "those wonderful people" who participated in the conference to shoulder some of the responsibility, they could "improve our quality of life here in N.D.G."[89]

The conference attracted the attention of television, radio, the daily press, and the local weeklies.[90] Most of the reporting was supportive and enthusiastic, but *La Presse* applied a more critical perspective. It pointed out that, despite its troubles, NDG had distinct advantages over less privileged neighbourhoods in Montreal. The article did not doubt the gravity of the problems identified but pointed out NDG's apparent affluence and the strength of its social institutions. While acknowledging that the Community Council had had its ups and downs, the article pointed out that the Council still had the power to call on three federal Cabinet ministers, the provincial Minister for Financial Institutions, and three city councillors to come to listen to its complaints. Marc Lalonde, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, had been invited to give the keynote address. Solicitor General Warren Allmand spoke at the plenary session at the end of the day and Bud Drury, the President of the Treasury Board, was present because his Westmount riding included an eastern portion of NDG.

La Presse also bluntly stated a concern that was never explicitly mentioned in the English-language press nor in any document; namely, that NDG feared that the area was turning into a slum. "The insidious formation of a ghetto south of Sherbrooke," is listed as one of the major concerns raised by participants. Later, when introducing the concerns of the Black community, the article indicated that the community was concentrated south of Sherbrooke.[91] While there is some ambiguity, the clear implication is that the fear was based in anti-Black racism. When Leslie

[89] Stella Dziemian, "Report," Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community Council, Inc., 11 April 1973.
[90] Terry Kirkman, "Annual report on public relations," Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community Council, Inc., April 1973.
[91] *La Presse*, "La formation d'un ghetto inquiète le citoyen de NDG."

Greenshields raised the specter of crime-ridden American cities in 1970 (and again, almost identically, in 1971) he may have had racial ghettoization in mind. An editorial in the *Monitor* just before the conference stated that NDG was no longer just an anglophone-francophone community but had in recent years become "cosmopolitan." "Ethnic groups" were forming their own organizations to render assistance to "these people" and, although their work was commendable, it was operating "at cross purposes."[92] This is so vaguely worded that it is difficult to decode and may just be referring to multiculturalism, but it does come less than a year after the Black Community Association was formed and just months before the clashes in NDG Park. The *Gazette* merely observed that the citizens were concerned over a vanishing sense of community.[93]

The Community Council had put all its energy into planning and preparing the conference and had no plan for what to do with the resulting recommendations.[94] The conference report was not printed and distributed until November, eight months after the conference.[95] Over the summer, a group of participants in the Conference grew impatient and began to push for follow up. Councillor John Parker and Al Hatton, who had succeeded Bob Austin at the YMCA, formed an implementation committee, and invited Anne Usher to chair it. Usher, a university-educated community nurse who had chaired the seniors' workshop at the Conference, had strong activist credentials. She had led a group of parents pushing for better French-language education in the Protestant schools and subsequently had become a Commissioner of the Montreal Board of Protestant School Commissioners.[96] She had also been a volunteer nurse at the Saint-Jacques

[92] *Monitor*, "A 'must' conference."
[93] *Gazette*, "Better NDG Living Charted."
[94] Al Hatton, YMCA, quoted in Guardia and Schulze, "Community Activism in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce," p. 7.
[95] "Minutes of meeting of the N.D.G. Action Committee," 5 November 1973
[96] "Anne Usher Seeks Election to PSBGM," *Monitor,* 25 April 1973, p.1.

Citizens' Clinic.[97] The committee began meeting in September and soon adopted the title "Conference Action Committee."

At the start, the Conference Action Committee primarily consisted of people who had participated in the workshops. It included significant representation from the activist groups in the area, such as Judy Duncan of STOP, Jo Turner of VISA, and Mark Earley of Head & Hands, so it was able to draw energy and people from the groups that had been working independently of the Community Council over the previous few years. It was organized as a set of subcommittees that operated autonomously but met regularly to share information. Within a short time, the subcommittees started showing results. For example, the woman's action group quickly formed a cooperative day care centre for children aged six months to three years, which included adequate space for children whose parents were receiving welfare benefits. The senior citizen's group participated in starting a drop-in centre and in determining the selection of tenants for the new seniors' residence that the city was finally building. New subcommittees were formed to protect tenants' rights, to participate in urban planning, and to work with the provincial government towards establishing a local healthcare and social service centre (a CLSC). The Action Committee also established a permanent office, disseminated a directory of resources in NDG, and also supplied a weekly column in the *Monitor* to publicize the actions of its subcommittees.[98]

For a couple of years, the Conference Action Committee operated independently from the Community Council, although there was regular communication between the two. The chairman of the Action Committee, Anne Usher, regularly reported on the activities of the committee to

[97] Oral history interview, Anne Usher, October 14, 2021
[98] "Minutes of meeting of the Conference Action Committee," 1 October 1973 through 1 April 1974

the Council Executive. The presidents of the Community Council between 1973 and 1975, Stella Dziemian and Barbara Davis, participated as working members of the Action Committee. In September 1974, the Community Council delegated its responsibility to "discuss ways and means of tackling important community problems" to the Action Committee. Symbolic of the shift of power, the NDG Community Council moved into the offices of the Action Committee, which, as reported in the Council's annual report "facilitated communication and [gave] a sense of identity which was badly needed."[99] Naturally, this proved to be uncomfortable for the more forward-looking members of the Council, who recognized their irrelevance and bided their time until the Action Committee eventually took over.[100] In 1975, Anne Usher was elected president of the NDG Community Council and the duality was eliminated. It took a couple of years, but, by the mid 1970s, the NDG Community Council was an organization that was in the "vanguard [of] neighbourhood social development." [101]

[99] Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Community Council, Inc., "Thirty-Third Annual Report, 1974-1975," p. 1.
[100] Guardia and Schulze, "Community Activism in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce," p. 8.
[101] "N.D.G. Sets Priority List for Citizens at City Hall," *Gazette*, 4 January 1977, p. 3.

Conclusion

> *"The utopias articulated by the political movements of the 1960s and the 1970s have now long faded. But rather than disappearing, the political energies of the movements that envisioned them have been woven into the fabric of Quebec society, deeply altering its nature. The political and social world of today still carries within it their complex legacies."*[1] – Sean Mills, *The Empire Within*

In the November 1974 municipal election, NDG elected members of the upstart Montreal Citizen's Movement (MCM) to all three of its City Council seats. The MCM had just been formed earlier that year as "an alliance between the most progressive elements of very diverse and often conflicting political and social groups."[2] It grew out of the ruins of the FRAP. Its four founding groups were: the Progressive Urban Movement, a bilingual group of community organizers and intellectuals; the Montreal chapter of the Parti Québécois; the Montreal chapter of the New Democratic Party; and the *Comité régional intersyndical de Montréal* (CRIM), which was supported by the province's three major unions. The MCM "[brought] together English and French speaking activists to an extent that no group in Quebec had [previously] achieved."[3] The MCM's platform had significant commonality with the program of the NDG Action Committee. It included involving local citizens in decisions that affect them, securing affordable housing for low-income earners, caring for senior citizens, regulating pollution, and promoting gender

[1] Mills, *The Empire Within*, p. 216.
[2] Marc Raboy quoted in Timothy Lloyd Thomas, *A City with a Difference: The Rise and Fall of the Montreal Citizen's Movement* (Montreal: Véhicule, 1997), p. 28.
[3] Thomas, *A City with a Difference*. p. 28.

equality. The three counsellors elected in NDG had quite divergent backgrounds. Ginette Keroack was a woman's rights advocate in the labour movement. She was the first woman elected to any office in NDG. Arnold Bennett was a twenty-three-year-old master's student who had written for the *McGill Daily* and *Our Generation*, a New Left journal. Michael Fainstat was an engineer and a long-time NDG resident, who had gained his political experience in home and school associations.[4] The citywide election turnout was a meager 37.6 per cent, which was likely an expression of disapproval of Jean Drapeau's performance.[5] Regardless, it still signalled that the middle-class, or middling-class, voters of NDG were willing to support a party with a social democratic platform and links to Quebec nationalists.

This is a stark contrast from the political behaviour of NDG in the late 1950s. At that time, NDG was considered a safe seat for the federal Progressive Conservatives; provincially, the area had been represented since 1948 by Paul Earl, a veteran of two wars who had retired with the rank of commodore; and, municipally, NDG's representation was dominated by councillors coming from real estate and business, under the leadership of J.O Asselin. In the early 1960s, the politics in NDG began to shift, as seen with the growing effectiveness of C.G. Gifford's organizing in the district as a perennial candidate for the New Democratic Party, and the election in 1965 of Warren Allmand, a member of the Liberal Party with an interest in human rights, world peace, and eradicating poverty. Ironically, city councillor John Parker, who started his political life working with Gifford on behalf of the Westhaven-Elmhurst neighbourhood in 1962, went down to defeat in the 1974 municipal election. Parker had also been a constant supporter of Head & Hands from its initial formation and an early advocate for the Conference on the Quality

[4] "The People Behind Those New Faces," *Gazette*, 12 November 1974, p. 4.
[5] L. Ian MacDonald, "Councillor 'Oonder Moof' or Nick the Giant Killer," Montreal This Morning, *Gazette*, 12 November 1974, p. 3.

of Life.[6] When no action was being taken on the recommendations from the conference, it was he who invited Anne Usher to chair the Action Committee. Even though he had opposed Drapeau from within the Civic Party, his efforts were not recognized by the voters in 1974. Bennett, a young baby boomer, defeated Parker by seventy-nine votes, so the margin of victory may well have been attributable to radical young voters from the baby-boom generation.

At the end of the 1950s, as the first cohort of the baby boom were entering puberty, the NDG Community Council and its member organizations had established programs to develop and, perhaps, tame the youth. It is difficult to imagine anyone at that time predicting the emergence and success of Head & Hands a little more than a decade later. A product of Sixties counterculture, its staff articulated a clear vision of how to engage youth. From its low point when it was shut down and its director was fired, it rebounded and became a full player in local governance. Mark Earley was even named a vice president of the NDG Community Council in 1973 following the Conference on the Quality of Life, and he played an active role in the Conference Action Committee. The community's embrace of Head & Hands provides ample evidence of how the values of NDG had changed.

Head & Hands addressed the problem of youth alienation and the counterculture in ways that the NDG Community Council was unable to do. The Community Council was created and developed to build consensus in a community that was governed by associations and institutions such as churches, home and school associations, political riding associations, and social clubs. That model worked in the 1950s, when that social infrastructure held. The Council's meetings were attended by hundreds, and it was at the centre of the community. The programs it developed through the 1940s and 1950s, such as the children's libraries, the Arts and Letters festival, and the

[6] Guardia and Schulze, "Community Activism in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce," p. 7.

traffic safety programs sustained the illusion of strength through the 1960s. The Community Council's influence, however, was declining from early in the decade. The youth issues that surfaced around 1967 showed that the organization was ill-prepared to adapt. With increasing social activism in NDG at the end of the 1960s, other issues, such as poverty, care for senior citizens, pollution, gender equality, and racism, proved overwhelming to a much-weakened Community Council.

The NDG Community Council's trajectory from 1970 to 1975 partially answers Harold Bérubé's question about how communities without an autonomous government maintain and renew the institutional tools necessary to influence and/or substitute for the central city. Between 1970 and 1973, it required humility for the Community Council to recognize that its influence was declining. It then had to be willing to seek and act on advice, such as the study led by the YMCA and carried out by social work students under Sheila Goldbloom. It needed to involve the public in understanding the problems and to come up with solutions. It then required leadership, like that provided by Anne Usher, to rally people with talent and good will, empower them to work, find resources to support them, and then collectively to communicate the results. The final element was to marshal the lobbying skill to obtain funds to support the projects. This succeeded in reinvigorating the Community Council for the time that this largely volunteer organization could sustain a high level of energy and enthusiasm.

When the NDG Community Council merged with the Action Committee in 1975, it was likely accomplishing more than any previous Council had. Following the 1973 conference, it had launched more than a dozen action groups and established a cooperative daycare, a service to visit the shut-in elderly, expanded legal advice services, a tenants' association, an urban planning committee, and a women's action program. It was involved in planning a CLSC and the extension

of the Metro (subway) to NDG. It operated a resource centre and reported its activities weekly in the *Monitor*. Arguably, the pinnacle for this era of the Community Council was the second Quality of Life Conference. Held during a snowstorm in January 1977, it was animated by journalist and broadcaster Patrick Watson. Despite the weather, over 450 attended the conference. Participants laid the groundwork for establishing "neighbourhood councils," a concept advocated by the newly elected Parti Québécois government that would increase citizen involvement in urban planning and delegate some control over topics such as recreation and demolition. A variation of this decentralized model would be implemented in Montreal about a decade later after the MCM defeated Jean Drapeau in the 1986 municipal election. The changes brought about by the 1973 Conference on the Quality of Life allowed the NDG Community Council to regain a leadership role in a much-changed district.

This thesis demonstrated how Notre-Dame-de Grâce was irreversibly transformed over the course of the long Sixties. The rapid growth following the Second World War came to an end in the late 1950s. NDG's gung ho participation in civil defence provides an example of how the momentum of the war continued in NDG until the end of the 1950s and then, seemingly suddenly, lost support as the next decade began. The NDG Community Council followed the change in attitude, but may have lost some lustre in so doing. In the early sixties, the community no longer fell in line with the Council's quixotic battles against liquor licenses. Concurrently, it showed an openness to the anti-war and social welfare policies presented by Gifford and a curiosity about the social changes taking place in Quebec. A minor scandal involving the MP Edmund Asselin opened the door to more progressive representation in Parliament. This marked a political turning point for the area, as the elected representatives at all three levels were open to addressing disparities and inequalities in society. This set the stage for the changes that came when social

activism, including that coming from the youth, challenged the status quo in NDG. Head & Hands had leadership from the youth, but it also received support from Parker and Allmand. Those two representatives from the municipal and federal government also were active supporters of the Conference on the Quality of Life. A combination of community activism and support from elected officials allowed NDG to renew the district's institutions to meet the new social reality.

Just after the period considered here, NDG underwent yet another transformation. Following the implementation of language laws that made French the official language of Quebec and the election of the sovereigntist Parti Québécois government, there was a mass outflow of anglophones from the province. NDG's population dropped by over 7000 people between 1976 and 1981 and the population whose mother tongue is English dropped by 16,000.[7] This caused considerable turmoil and change, but by the 1980s the district had rebounded and began to gentrify.[8] That trend towards gentrification has continued, particularly since the McGill University Health Centre was built in the former Canadian Pacific railyards. Nonetheless, Head & Hands celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2020. To this day, it retains the non-hierarchical organization and collective decision-making that is a hallmark of New Left-style participatory democracy and a true legacy of the Sixties. The NDG Community Council has also survived to this day and celebrated its eightieth anniversary in 2022. With its support for children in less-privileged neighbourhoods, recent immigrants, the food and housing-insecure, senior citizens, and racialized communities, it has continued to carry out the social justice mandate that grew out of the 1973 Conference on the Quality of Life.

[7] 1976 Census of Canada, *Census Tracts: Population and Housing Characteristics Montréal*, Bulletin 6.12; and 1981 Census of Canada, *Census Tracts: Population, Occupied Private Dwellings, Private Households, Census Families in Private Households: Montréal*, Vol.3 Ser. A.

[8] Beverly Mitchell, "N.D.G.: a 'good place to taste the two cultures'," *Gazette*, 6 June 1987, p. J-4.

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