The Commune Movement during the 1960s and the 1970s in Britain, Denmark and the United States

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Abstract

The communal revival that began in the mid-1960s developed into a new mode of activism, ‘communal activism’ or the ‘commune movement’, forming its own politics, lifestyle and ideology. Communal activism spread and flourished until the mid-1970s in many parts of the world. To analyse this global phenomenon, this thesis explores the similarities and differences between the commune movements of Denmark, UK and the US. By examining the motivations for the communal revival, links with 1960s radicalism, communes’ praxis and outward-facing activities, and the crisis within the commune movement and responses to it, this thesis places communal activism within the context of wider social movements for social change. Challenging existing interpretations which have understood the communal revival as an alternative living experiment to the nuclear family, or as a smaller part of the counter-culture, this thesis argues that the commune participants created varied and new experiments for a total revolution against the prevailing social order and its dominant values and institutions, including the patriarchal family and capitalism. Communards embraced autonomy and solidarity based on individual communes’ situations and tended to reject charismatic leadership. Functioning as an independent entity, each commune engaged with their local communities designing various political and cultural projects. They interacted with other social movements groups through collective work for the women’s liberation and environmentalist movement. As a genuine grass root social movement communal activism became an essential part of Left politics bridging the 1960s and 1970s.

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List of Abbreviations

Britain

AHIMSA Agriculture and Hand-Industries Mutual Support

CN Communes Network

CND Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

CRAG Community Research and Action Group

SCRAM Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace

VSC Vietnam Solidarity Campaign

United States

BPP Black Panther Party

CCNV Community for Creative Non-Violence

ERAP Economic Research and Action Project

LNS Liberation News Service

MNS Movement for a New Society

NOFA Natural Organic Farmers' Association

NOPE Nuclear Objectors for a Pure Environment

SDS Students for a Democratic Society

SNCC Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

SMC Student Mobilization Committee

SWP Socialist Workers Party

YAF Young Americans for Freedom

YSA Young Socialist Alliance

Denmark

CANW *Kampagnen mod Atomvåben* (Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons)

DKP *Danmarks Kommunistiske Parti* (Denmark Communist Party)

Kokoo Kollektiv Koordineringen (Collective coordination)

SAK Socialistisk Arbejderkreds (Socialistic Working Group)

SF *Socialistisk Folkeparti* (Socialist People's Party)

SOKO Socialistisk Kollektivforening (Socialist Commune Association)

VS *Venstresocialisterne* (Left Socialists)

Introduction

When members of the Red Clover commune relocated from New York to a farm house in Putney, Vermont in 1969, they were, by their own admission, unaware of the region's rich tradition of communal living. During the early 1800s John Humphrey Noyes, who founded the religious Oneida community in New York in 1847, had experimented with communal living with The Putney Research Community.[1] In the twentieth century, the aftermath of the Great Depression saw a number of socialists move to Putney, where they built alternative institutions like the Putney Co-up and Credit Union.[2] Yet, a survey of over two hundred communards in the US conducted in 1974 by the sociologist Benjamin Zablocki revealed a startling lack of knowledge of the historical background of communes, with the exception of some ongoing communes such as Kibbutz, Walden Two, and Synanon.[3] There were, of course, some commune joiners in the 1960s and 1970s who recognised the long history through their personal experience of communal living. The two Danish communards Morten Thing and Vibeke Hemmel, for instance, spent some years on a kibbutz in Israel, before joining Brøndby Strand, a commune in Copenhagen in 1970.[4] Communal living was not new and had been seen before, indeed since its inception in the 17th century when 'the British Diggers', a group of peasants, started three rural communes.[5] For activists and hippies in the 1960s, shifting away

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[1] Yaacov Oved, *Two Hundred Years of American Communes* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1988), pp. 170-173.

[2] Steven Reiner, 'Discovering Putney', *The First Issue* (1971), p. 6.

[3] Benjamin David Zablocki, *Alienation and Charisma: A Study of Contemporary American Communes* (New York: The Free Press, 1980), pp. 43-44.

[4] Started in the early 1910s as a utopian community by young Jews who moved to Palestine from Russia, it was influenced by Zionism. Melford E. Spiro, 'Utopia and Its Discontents: The Kibbutz and Its Historical Vicissitudes', *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 106. 3 (Sep 2004), pp. 556-568 (p. 557). John Davis and Anette Warring, 'Living Utopia: communal living in Denmark and Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 8. 4 (2011), pp. 513-530 (p. 516).

[5] For British society, it has been assumed that communal experiments have not vanished for a thousand years.

from their traditional protest spheres and conventional family relations, setting up communes was a process of continuation from the older tradition of communal living.

Nevertheless, it is not clear to what extent previous communes galvanised the founders of 1960s communes. Indeed, the communal revival of the 1960s came as something of a surprise, given the moribund state of communal activism during the previous decade. Writing in 1959, the historian Everett Webber predicted no further emergence of communal life, concluding that "the song is done."[6] Meanwhile, historians focused on the communal life of previous eras such as cases from the nineteenth century by the Shakers, the Oneida Community, the Fourierists, and the Owenites, and some even claimed that communal experiments had ended around the time of the Civil War.[7] However, contrary to Webber's assumption, communal living attracted many thousands of young people in the 1960s and was eventually revived throughout the world.

Communes that emerged during the 1960s shared with their historical predecessors a number of features. They included various types ranging from religious and spiritual communes to political ones. What united most experiments of communal living, however, was that communards voluntarily chose poor living conditions with like-minded people and produced self-sufficient independent living communities, and their mostly brief existence. Despite these similarities, however, the communes of the 1960s and 1970s were new and unique. Given the number, age and class of communards involved, they represented more

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Clem Gorman, *People Together* (Frogmore, Herts: Paladin, 1975), p. 45. Philip Abrams and Andrew McCulloch, *Communes, Sociology and Society* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 1.

[6] Everett Webber, *Escape to Utopia: the Communal Movement in America* (New York: Hastings House, 1959) Quoted in Elinor Lander Horwitz, *Communes in America: The Place Just Right* (Philadelphia & NY: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1972), p. 146.

[7] For example, Arthur Bestor, Jr., *Backwoods Utopias:The Sectarian Origins and the Owenite Phase of Communitarian Socialism in America, 1663-1829* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press,1970), pp. 250-52. Quoted in Timothy Miller, 'The roots of the 1960s communal revival', *American Studies*, 33. 2 (fall, 1992), pp. 73-93 (p. 75).

diverse aims challenging all aspects of life such as gender inequality, ecological degradation, and racism while also extending geographically to include urban and rural areas. More importantly, the commune members of the 1960s and 1970s tried not to restrict their area of activity to life in the communes themselves but attempted to reach out through active political engagements with their local communities instead. Consequently, it is essential to place the commune movement within the history of 1960s activism. It is not possible to understand the communal movement of 1965-1975 without having some awareness of the underlying social unrest that existed at the time.[8] Why did the communes re-emerge during that period? Can these experiments be defined as a social movement with continuity from the Sixties movement?

Whether they were located in the countryside or in urban areas, communes were closely connected to social movements during the late 1960s and early 1970s, ameliorating the movements in terms of widening tactics for social change. This is one of the reasons to clarify the notion of the so-called New Left. The concept of the New Left fails to encompass other wider movements, for example, the Black Power, Chicano and Native American movements, not to mention feminist, gay and environmentalist movements, which particularly flourished in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Robert Thomas, the leader of the Native American movement called Red Power, conveys how they considered the New Left: "we don't use the language of the New Left, but that doesn't mean we're not militant."[9] Furthermore, the New Left has been regarded as something new and unique, though it was rooted in diverse tradition characterised by socialist, anarchist and Catholic social thought. Some researchers have noted similarities

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[8] William M. Kephart, *Extraordinary groups: An Examination of Unconventional Life-styles* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), p. 266, quoted in William L. Smith, *Families and Communes: An examination of Non-Traditional Lifestyles* (California: SAGE publications, 1979), p. 88.

[9] Terry Anderson, *The Movement and The Sixties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 335.

between the New Left and the movements of previous eras. Daniel Bell, the proclaimer of 'the end of ideology', argued that the New Left resembled how the "young middle-class rebels of the 1930s aped the Revolutionary Proletariat." and observed in particular the occupation of Columbia University.[10] Dominick Cavallo has shown how the values and experiments represented in the Sixties movements paralleled those of prior ones. He relates, for instance, SDS efforts towards decentralised power, localism and participatory democracy, from ordinary individuals, to the Antifederalists' challenge, to the proposal of the Constitution in 1787.[11] Should novelty be the most important factor for categorising the identity of social forces, one would have to name the late 1960s and 1970s activists, who wrought fresh activism with different social experiments, a 'new, new left'.[12]

The theories of the New Left regarding feminism were rather traditional and conservative compared to those of their Old Left counterparts. Given its narrow scope as a mainly white students' movement, the term 'New Left' could be attributed to isolation from the history of radicalism in the 1960s and 1970s – in the words of Andrew Hunt, "historical amnesia".[13] The combined effects on the activists during the years between 1960s and 1970s from Old Left theories and New Left values are also undermined within the boundary of New Left movements. As shown in American New Left student groups, their British counterparts were also challenged by mounting influences of modified Marxism, Maoism and anarchism with

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[10] Daniel Bell, 'Columbia and the New Left', *Public Interest*, 13 (1968), pp. 61-101 (p. 99).

[11] Dominick Cavallo, *A Fiction of the Past: The Sixties in American History* (New York: Palgrave, 1979), pp. 225-232.

[12] Andrew Jamison, Ron Eyerman, Jacqueline Cramer and Jeppe Laessøe, *The Making of the New Environmental Consciousness: A Comparative Study of the Environmental Movements in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), p. 78.

[13] Andrew Hunt, 'How New Was the New Left?', in *The New Left Revisited*, ed. by John McMillian and Paul Buhle (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), pp. 139-155 (p. 149).

thousands of students advocating and joining working-class industrial struggles.[14] In addition, the number of participants and the degree of confrontations with conventional society that American social movements produced could not be a compelling and applicable standard by which to assess other nations' experience of the 1960s. The relative lack of major protests does not necessarily mean an absence or a reduction in the value of the British and Danish Left movements. It is also fruitless to conclude that Britain, Denmark and even the US in the 1960s have an essential homogeneity without consideration of diverse changes and efforts from both the Left and Right and from both the young and their parents' generations.

Sociological and historical analyses of communal experiments in the 1960s and 1970s have provided substantial accounts of their functioning, including detailed stories and information about their origins and types. However, the existing literature has not explored in sufficient depth the motivations for the revival of the commune movement, the continuity from the 1960s movement, and the influences of new social movements of the 1970s like feminism and environmentalism. Rather, the predominant sociological approach in commune movement studies has concentrated on the possibility of communal living as an alternative to the nuclear family.[15] Despite the fact that commune participants characterised a type of family sometimes using 'families' as their names, one must examine the relationship between communes and the nuclear family during the 1960s and 1970s. With the effect of feminism and the continued desire of the generation of 1968 to build new forms of communal living or families,

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[14] Caroline Hoefferle, *A Comparative History of Student Activism in Britain and the United States, 1960-1975* (PhD thesis, Central Michigan University, 2000), p. 417.

[15] Rosabeth M. Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972) Thomas H. Shey, *Danish Communes: An Analysis of Collective Families in Contemporary Danish and American society* (Washington D.C: University Press of America, 1978).

communards began to reorganise the commune movement in the sphere of politics.[16] In other words, communes played a wider role as a base for political engagements through challenging the foundations of society including family-based patriarchy. For commune members, being political meant implementing social changes to overcome the predominant political, economic and cultural problems of the time.[17] Developing a different model of the family was only one of the aims that the communards advanced. Therefore, it is important to examine in more detail the internal and external political activities rather than narrowing their activity area into attempts towards issues of the nuclear family.

Another explanation for the re-emergence and growth of communes in the 1960s and 1970s highlights the sense of disillusionment with the lack of tangible achievements of the New Left and more fundamental changes in the existing social order. In this understanding, the move towards communes represented "a political detour".[18] While this implies that communal experiments were an expression of political activities related to the Sixties movement, little research has been done into how the development of communal living affected their political ideas regarding social change. This is important for three reasons. First, commune residents and other in the wider 60s movement continued to work together regularly on political projects of common interest. Secondly, communes often developed a variety of different tactics and strategies to engage politically and culturally within their local communities. Thirdly, the social movements of the 1970s had a profound effect on the politics of the commune movement. None

[16] Paul Ginsborg, 'Measuring the Distance: the Case of the Family, 1968-2001', *Thesis Eleven*, 68. 46 (2002), 46-63 (p. 47).

[17] Benjamin David Zablocki, *Alienation and Charisma: A study of Contemporary American Communes* (New York: The Free Press, 1980), p. 235.

[18] Philip Abrams and Andrew McCulloch, *Communes, Sociology and Society* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 6.

of these three aspects has received sufficient analysis so far. In relation to this, consideration of correlations with other social movements like feminism and environmentalism during the period is also necessary to assess the commune movement fully.[19]

In addition, as with the historiography of the Sixties Movement, transnational and comparative research is needed. Transnational and comparative studies in the non-American and non-New Left cases have shown that cross-border connections and global parallels during the 1960s and 1970s were far more intensive than previously assumed. Although Zablocki and Shey adopt comparative approaches, they fail to examine the solidarity or implications of the network developed among communes in the US, UK and Denmark as a worldwide phenomenon, only looking at differences of workings and dynamics within the commune itself.[20] In order to add a new perspective on how and to what extent 1960s international relationships between communes were related to different national cases and individual lives, one must explore the similarities and differences in the context of three international countries' commune movements through their outside activities like international gatherings and collective work.

The most distinctive and common academic tendency shown in initial findings for 1960s Britain and Denmark is that while the US New Left has been researched extensively, similar political movements in UK and Denmark have received much less scholarly attention. An example of this tendency is the treatment of the story of CND (the Campaign for Nuclear

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[19] Gretchen Lemke Santangelo examines the commune women's 'difference-based feminism' in her book, *Daughters of Aquarius: Women of the Sixties Counterculture* (University of Kansas, 2009).

[20] Benjamin David Zablocki, *Alienation and Charisma: A Study of Contemporary American Communes* (New York: The Free Press, 1980). Thomas H. Shey, *Danish Communes: An Analysis of Collective Families in Contemporary Danish and American society* (Washington D.C: University Press of America, 1978).

Disarmament) and VSC (the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign) in Britain and the story of the student movement in Denmark. The stories were used to examine the period as main sources in constant comparison with the American model. This has contributed to the formation of a flawed general understanding of the British and Danish youth revolt, according to which Britain and Denmark did not see any sudden and massive explosion from the Old and New Left groups and the minimal experience had no lasting effects on society.[21] As a result, British and Danish Sixties historiography has been less substantial in comparison with American historiography of the period. More significantly, much of the research has overlooked some important attempts and developments in Britain and Denmark during the 1960s and 1970s. Was 'swinging Britain' isolated from the boundless creativity of young people? The 'long 1960s' from 1958 to 1974 can only be fully grasped when placing it in the context of wider movements or new social movements (such as communal experiments, women's liberation and environmentalism), as Doug Rossinow underlines.[22]

In the historiography of British communal living, academics have disagreed over whether British communes had clear aims as was the case with social movements. Representing one side of the argument, Philip Abrams and Andrew McCulloch contend that the British commune movement, when compared to the CND, was not really a movement in terms of "leadership, structure, focus and even a clearly defined cause." Rather, it was an expression of petty-

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[21] Lin Chun, *The British New Left* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993) Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958- c.1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) Hans Righart, 'Moderate versions of the 'global sixties': A comparison of Great Britain and the Netherlands', *Journal of Area Studies*, 6. 13 (1998), 82-96. Erik Allardt & Richard Tomasson, 'Stability and Stains in Scandinavian Student Politics', *Daedalus,* 97. 1 (1968), pp. 156-165.

[22] Wilfreid Mausbach, 'Historicising 1968', *Contemporary European History*, 11. 2 (2002), 177-187 (p. 185). Doug Rossinow, 'The Revolution is about our lives: The New Left's Counterculture', in *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s*, ed. by Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 99-124 (pp. 107-118).

bourgeois individualism.[23] This account is confined to a traditional understanding of politics that highlights the importance of traditional factors such as leadership with charisma. This ignores the fact that communes sought to implement a different type of leadership. Secretaries of a federation of British communes called the Commune Movement like Sarah Eno, Patty Doman and Bob Matthews, who acted as links between communes, constituted a kind of leadership. However, the leadership embodied the role of coordination rather than that of control. Secretaries designed various projects based on each commune's situation supporting their autonomy. In addition, communes had (to varying degrees) their own and variegated *raison d'être*, such as seeking to achieve spiritual self-fulfilment, upholding religious values or upholding political commitments, as Abrams surveyed. To realise their ideas in a communal living setting needed much more effort and wisdom than doing so in conventional, familiar movements.

Andrew Rigby, meanwhile, has argued that British communal experiments revived and spread through the CND and the civil disobedience campaigns of the Committee of One Hundred in the early 1960s. He stresses the anarchistic strains which emerged in British communes even if "the members do not necessarily think of themselves as anarchists."[24] Focusing on the Open Projects commune in Liverpool, Rigby illustrates how communes made viable attempts at praxis similar to that of anarchism. This conclusion is supported in the recent study by Anette Warring and John Davis who accentuate the anarchist tendencies among communards and argue that they developed into the later radical environmentalism of the

[23] Philip Abrams and Andrew McCulloch, *Communes, Sociology and Society* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p.198.

[24] Andrew Rigby, *Alternative realities: A Study of Communes and the Members* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), p.82, 126.

1990s.[25] However, Rigby as well as Davis and Warring lacks further evidence as to how the experiments sharing anarchist perspectives affected British society beyond the communes.

Despite its remarkable numbers of communes per capita, there has been little scholarly interest in the Danish commune movement. While some Danish sociologists examined the 1960s and 1970s communal experiments, Thomas H. Shey, an American sociologist, conducted a comparative study exploring the differences of the communal revival between Denmark and the US.[26] He concluded that the Danish commune movement was more successful than that of the United States due to its "more practical demands as an extension of Danish society," not challenging the social order.[27] According to Shey, Danish communards adapted more easily to Danish society. However, the claim is problematic. Did the Danish commune movement benefit from the existing system in Danish society? In contrast to Shey's contention that Danish communards were not "departing too radically from the accepted norm," the history of Danish radicalism in the Sixties shows very active dissent from the existing society.[28] Whereas other neighbouring countries like Norway, Finland and Sweden blended easily into mainstream politics and culture, Denmark, using explicit confrontations as a means of mobilisation and awareness-raising, instigated "the most eventful history in Scandinavia sustaining student revolt."[29] Considering that Danish communes interacted substantially with the 1960s social

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[25] John Davis and Anette Warring, 'Living Utopia: communal living in Denmark and Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 8. 4 (2011), pp. 513-530.

[26] Flemming Andersen, Ole Stig Andersen & Anne van Deurs, *Bogen om Storfamilierne* (Copenhagen: Rhodos, 1970). Søren Kai Christensen and Tage Søndergaard Kristensen, *Kollektiver i Danmark* (Copenhagen: Borgens, 1972).

[27] Thomas H Shey, *Danish Communes: An analysis of collective families in contemporary Danish and American society* (Washington D.C: University Press of America, 1978).

[28] Shey, p. 173.

[29] Thomas Ekman Jørgensen, 'Scandinavia', in *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956-1977*, ed. by Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 239-252 (pp. 244-

movements, it seems that their relative strength in terms of economics and structure was not accrued through "more practical demands," but through arduous efforts including political activity.

For the American communes, Rosabeth Moss Kanter and Benjamin David Zablocki have extensively analysed how the Sixties communards were influenced by their predecessors.[30] Both argue that the commune movement of the 60s and 70s failed to put their ideas into practice because they remained committed to utopian ideals and lacked a greater sense of realism. Kanter's assessment is that American communes during the 1960s and 1970s did not go further to realise their utopian thoughts as political outreach; rather they focused on conveying the motto 'Doing your own thing', which "places the person's own growth above concern for social reform, political and economic change."[31] Zablocki produced a more comprehensive study of the ideological underpinnings of the movement. Conceding the rise of anarchist traits, he maintains, however, that it was "naïve anarchism and has little or nothing to do with the social anarchism of the nineteenth century."[32] Zablocki also stresses how commune members' initial agendas, including anarchist ones, changed towards preferring individual interests.[33] However, communards fully grasped the perception that the person's own growth could only be accomplished when the reciprocal help between members is matained throughout their

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[30] Above all, Zablocki's findings on the membership of communes are essential to reconstruct some conventional myths, for instance, like communards came almost exclusively from middle class backgrounds.

[31] Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopia's Sociological perspective* (Massachusetts: Havard University Press, 1972), p. 167.

[32] Benjamin David Zablocki, *The Joyful Community* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 306.

[33] Zablocki, *Alienation and Charisma: A study of Contemporary American Communes* (New York: The Free Press, 1980), p.48.

communal living. They began their communal experiments as a form of new activism, the seemingly romantic attitude to their futures being accompanied by practices in all areas of their lives. Through collective work and discussion, the joiners became more realistic, rather than remaining naïvely optimistic as communal living developed. Commune participants did not dream of becoming perfect human beings, despite their positive stance towards the nature of humanity. They tried to "be better human beings," with "the emphasis onto social relations and the day-to-day operations."[34]

More recent historical and sociological research has examined in detail how particular communes evolved. Barry Laffan and Blake Slonecker thoroughly investigate some New England communes, deemed in "many radical circles as an exemplary revolutionary undertaking."[35] Slonecker's study is particularly noteworthy for linking the "back to the land" movement to the environmental movement in the 1970s and 1980s. Based on his own involvement in a commune called Jackson's Meadows in Vermont, Laffan provides an empirically rich and original account. First of all, Laffan challenges the stereotypical image that the majority of commune members were from affluent middle-class backgrounds. He showed that instead a sizable number of communards were from the "blue collar classes or lower", though the survey was based on a case of a single commune.[36] In addition, while some researchers suggested that the move to countryside farms was an escape and withdrawal from the cities and the Sixties in an effort to embrace a more genuine form of communal living,

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[34] John W. Bennett, 'Communes and Communitarianism', *Theory and Society*, 2.1 (1975), pp. 63-94 (p. 66).

[35] Barry Laffan, *Communal Organization and Social Transition: A case study from the counterculture of the Sixties and Seventies* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), p. 25. Blake Slonecker, *Living the Movement: Liberation News Service, Montague Farm and the New Left, 1967-1981* (PhD thesis: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2009).

[36] Laffan, pp. 86, 275.

Laffan shows that participants in rural communes often endeavoured to bring about change by engaging with their local communities.[37] As Laffan's evidence demonstrates, the arrival in rural areas expanded the boundary of political activities for communal living through maintaining links with urban communes and other social movements groups.

Despite its insights and achievements, much of the literature has not situated the commune movement sufficiently within the wider context of 1960s radicalism together with other social movements in the Sixties. This thesis seeks to address this problem through examining the actions by communards in the name of 'communal activism' or 'commune movement'. It focuses on the post-1968 period when we witness the convergence between counter-cultural aspects and Left politics. Communal activism was one of those experiments alongside co-ops, the women's liberation and environmentalist movement which flourished in the 1970s. Far more than only an alternative to the nuclear family, each commune attempted to engage with their local societies with political, cultural and ecological agendas. The main research questions are: did the commune movement form its own politics with tactics and strategies for the future as a genuine social movement? Was there any particular ideology on which the communes were based? Could we define it as the return of previous communal experiments or the birth of a new commune movement? Was the commune movement a retreat from the 1960s' massive confrontations or a start of new activism for the 1970s? Did the British and Danish commune movement remain silent easily being co-opted onto the existing social order? Why did the movement undergo a crisis and how did it change in response to it?

[37] Bennett Berger, Bruce Hackett & R. Mervyn Millar, 'The Communal Family', *The Family Coordinator*, 21. 4 (1972), pp. 419-427. Dona Brown, *Back To the Land, The Enduring Dream of Self-Sufficiency in Modern America* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011).

Methodologically, case studies of three different national circumstances with a focus on various activities of communes can be used to analyse this global phenomenon. Through my comparative approach I will show how the commune members interacted with other countries' communards. This study attempts to demonstrate the similarities and differences of actions by three countries' communards when each other represented various activities and directly designed joint programmes through international gatherings. I am also using oral history including my interviews with 15 former commune members and activists from the three countries.

The project is based on a wide range of primary materials. There are some memoirs, manuscripts and letters of commune participants. For instance, Raymond Mungo portrayed daily activities of his Packer Corners commune in Vermont, and British communards exchanged letters with their American and Danish counterparts discussing international gatherings and various issues arisen from their communal living.[38] Many communes also published their own periodicals to communicate with other communes and to recruit new communards, for example *Kokoo* in Denmark, *Openings* by Open Projects, and *Free Vermont* of Red Clover.

The commune movement cannot be understood without contextualising it firmly within the social movements of the 1960s. By analysing the communes' values, structures and practices for organising life in the communes, and external activities for social change, this research challenges current interpretations of the communal revival in the 1960s by arguing that the commune movement developed into a genuine grass roots social movement. The commune

[38] Raymond Mungo, *Total Loss Farm, A Year in the Life* (New York, E. P. Dutton & Co, 1970).

movement constituted a solid, open and creative base for political, economic and cultural emancipation bringing the premise, 'the personal is political', to their daily life within communes. Therefore, communal activism led the post-1968 period in which the political and cultural values for a social revolution, redefined for the times, were promulgated.

Chapter 1 explores the causes of the revival of communal living in the 1960s. It situates the revival within its wider historical context and stresses the importance of three major developments: modified anarchism, the New Left, and the counterculture. Chapter 2 discusses the basic ideological positions which influenced the growth of communal activism. Three key concepts are identified: decentralisation from the existing authorities, solidarity with other communes and social movements and nomadism as an analytical tool for the characteristics of the commune movement. Chapter 3 is concerned with the diverse outward-facing activities that show how communes engaged in a variety of other movements. These include in particular the feminist movement, environmentalism, cultural and educational experiments, and local political activism. The fourth and last chapter examines the crisis within the commune movement that started in the mid-1970s. It explores the transformations of communes in response to internal and external crises. Through communes' reaction to the crisis, I will discuss the connection between the end of the 'Long Sixties' and the demise of 1960s communal activism.

Numerically, Denmark's commune movement peaked in 1973, producing over 1,000 communes – from less than ten in 1967.[39] Around 1970, the Danish commune movement had produced at least 50 communes in the countryside, and about 100 in Copenhagen.[40] Danes maintained a similar number of communes up to 1978, meaning that, per capita, Denmark had more communes than anywhere else in the world.[41] American communes also increased rapidly in number from around 1967. From a handful of communes in the mid-1960s, some 3,000 new groups were formed by February 1970.[42] As in Denmark and the US, British communal living also became viable in the late 1960s with 246 affiliated communes and groups who were connected to a federation of British communes called the Commune Movement.[43]

The quantitative changes of communal living came with developments in its theory and practice, most of which were inherited from the ever expanding Sixties movements. For example, Red Clover's agenda that summarised the commune's purposes was influenced by the Black Panther Party's (BPP) Ten Point Program of 1966, which had declared "We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our black community".[44] A 10-point

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[39] Interview with Henrik Okkels, 17 February 2014. According to Henrik Okkels who joined a commune called Kana in Slangerup, 40 kilometres north-west of Copenhagen, in 1969, there had been five or six Danish communes until 1968, most of them were distinct leftist ones with adherents of the New Left.

[40] Jørgen Jørgensen, 'Copenhagen Commune', *Communes* 34 (Sep 1970), pp. 12-13 (p. 13).

[41] Thomas H. Shey, *Danish Communes: An Analysis of Collective Families in Contemporary Danish and American Society* (Washington D.C: University Press of America, 1978), p. 8.

[42] Keith Melville, *Communes in the Counter Culture: Origins, Theories, Styles of Life* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1972), p. 23. A survey conducted by the New York Times (Dec 17th, 1970), showed the figure of 2,000 communes over 34 states. Benjamin D. Zablocki who had been researching communes counted 3,000 in an interview with the San Francisco Chronicle of February 17th, 1970. Quoted in Robert Houriet, *Getting Back Together* (London: Abacus, 1971), p. 10.

[43] *Commune Movement Newsletter*, 55 (27 Sep 1970).

[44] In fact the communards presented the statement with the Black Panthers' in its own newspaper. *Free*

agenda, which appeared alongside the BPP manifesto in the 1970 edition of *Free Vermont*, was shaped by a similar commitment to effecting revolutionary social change, but with a focus on environmentalism and feminism. It demanded that:

> (1) all basic human needs available to all the people equally and free. Free land, food, shelter, clothing, the best possible medical care, day care, child care, and schooling….(4) an understanding and implementation of the full liberation of women in all aspects of our lives. (5) a healthy, clean, unpolluted planetary environment, and an ecologically sound way of life. … (10) we want a free planet, based on communal principles of freedom from all needs, non-competition, sharing, equality, self-determination, collective struggle and peace.[45]

Red Clover wanted to set up a commune with political objectives as a base for regional, national and international social movements and solidarity. In this huge move to communal living, not being naïve hippies but using an active mode of political engagement, we can use the term, 'commune movement' or 'communal activism', instead of just calling it communal life or experiments.

What lay behind this extraordinary communal revival and communal activism? This chapter examines the reasons for the most explosive growth in the history of communal life, and links it to three major interpretative threads: modified anarchism, the New Left, and the counterculture. By reviewing commune manifestos and strategic documents, together with those of earlier protest movements and cultural experiments, I will discuss continuity from 1960s radicalism including these three aspects that laid the foundations of the commune movement. 1960s communal activism developed the effects of 1960s radicalism until the mid-1970s forming a genuine and heterogeneous social movement. Before that, it is important to deal briefly with the communal experiments of the early 1960s, which provided immediate

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Vermont, 1 (1970).

[45] *Free Vermont*, 1 (1970).

examples for would-be communards.

Early communal experiments

Prior to attracting considerable numbers of newcomers to the social movements around 1965, due to the growth of the anti-Vietnam War movement, there had been some effort at organising community living. With regard to the Danish commune movement, in 1963, ten young political activists purchased a house in Odense, Denmark's third largest city, to start their process of communal living.[46] With an aim of expanding their political activities, the commune, just called '*Huset*' (the House), publicly opened its ground-floor for regular meetings and discussions which led to wide-ranging political campaigns. The House acted as a centre for the activities of the youth movement in Odense, and attracted approximately 200 visitors a day during its first two or three years. This commune did not, in fact, conform to type since nine members paid a monthly rental fee to the other member, who was the owner of the house. They failed to reach a consensus to turn '*Huset*' into a commune during the Christmas of 1965. However, several of them continued their communal life up to 1970 in a loose type of family group.[47]

American commune participants had their earliest cases, which helped in shaping the rapid expansion of communes in the 1960s. Clarence Jordan, the Southern Baptist preacher, organised a commune in 1942, Koinonia Farm near Americus, Georgia in Ku Klux Klan territory, in an attempt to make it an interracial space "where blacks and whites could live and

[46] Flemming Andersen, Ole Stig Andersen & Anne van Deurs, *Bogen om Storfamilierne* (Copenhagen: Rhodos, 1970), p. 10.

[47] Andersen, Andersen & Deurs, p. 10.

work together".[48] Jordan expanded the connections with other religious communal groups such as the Hutterities and the Bruderhof. These transgression and co-relationship in races and beliefs by Koinonia Farm brought about many visits to the commune by a number of hippies and got sympathy from them.[49] Tolstoy Farm in Washington, renowned for its commitment to personal freedom, emerged in 1963, and a year later, following their famous bus trip, Ken Kesey and his Merry Pranksters, set up a commune in California.[50] In addition, some more stable communes which had survived into the 1960s inspired potential communards. For instance, Quarry Hill in Vermont – a community of artists that had been in existence since the 1940s – attracted people to the state who were searching for new communes.[51]

In Britain, some religious communes led an early stage of the 1960s revival. This included the Findhorn community, set up by Peter Caddy and his wife Eileen on a caravan site in Morayshire, Scotland in 1962. The experiences that occurred during the formative years of AHIMSA (the Agriculture and Hand-Industries Mutual Support) between 1963 and 1968 were integral to the British commune movement. Tony Kelly and Joseph Ledger worked for AHIMSA and changed the association into the Vegan Communities Movement in 1965 with aims of building "vegan and progressive vegetarian communities, supporting humanitarian experiments, and propagating the principle of non-exploitation of all sentient life forms."[52]

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[48] Elinor Lander Horwitz, *Communes in America: The Place Just Right* (Philadelphia & NY: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1972), p. 146.

[49] Timothy Miller, 'The roots of the 1960s communal revival', *American Studies*, 33. 2 (fall 1992), pp. 73-93 (p. 76).

[50] Miller, pp. 74-75.

[51] Timothy Miller, 'The Sixties-Era Communes', in *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and '70s*, ed. by Peter Braunstein & Michael William Doyle, pp. 325-351 (p. 330).

[52] Clem Gorman, *People Together* (Frogmore, Herts: Paladin, 1975), pp. 42-43.

Kelly also set up a commune called the 'Selene Community' in 1965 with Betty Kelly and Pat Blackmore in Wales. After abandoning their vegetarian preferences, this commune developed as a centre for the Commune Movement, changing from the Vegan Communities Movement, in 1968, as it envisaged a federation of British communes.[53]

Despite these developments, communal living was latent at least until the mid-1960s. Communal attempts earlier in the decade attracted fewer supporters than the civil rights and peace movements that protested against the nuclear arms race and the Vietnam War, which were both getting bigger. A nascent new wave of movements such as those focusing on civil rights actions in the American South, and peace marches against nuclear weapons in Britain and Denmark had not yet included living space as their area for social change.[54] Even these activists, most of them young, appeared largely unaware of the activities of earlier radicals, including previous communal experiments from the 1950s, when most households were still fascinated by a dream of becoming a comfortable middle-class family in the suburbs, in the repression associated with the Cold War and McCarthyism.[55] In terms of regional boundaries, the revival of communes during the first years was visible mainly in a small number of geographical locations, for example on the West Coast in the American case.[56]

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[53] Richard Fairfield, *The Modern Utopian Communes Europe* (San Francisco: Alternatives Foundation, 1972), pp. 14-15.

[54] Peace protests were also seen in the US. About fifty thousand housewives joined a demonstration against the arms race organised by Women Strike for Peace in November 1961. Adam Rome, 'Give Earth a Chance: The Environmental Movement and the Sixties', *The Journal of American History* (Sep 2003), pp. 525-554 (p. 536).

[55] Gretchen Lemke Santangelo, *Daughters of Aquarius: Women of the Sixties Counterculture* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2009), p. 38. Terence Cannon & Joseph A. Blum, 'Introduction', in *The Movement 1964-1970*, compiled by the staff of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Papers Project (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993), pp. ix-xi (p. ix).

[56] Elinor Lander Horwitz, *Communes in America: The Place Just Right* (Philadelphia & NY: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1972), p. 147. Even some East Coast hippies moved to West Coast areas which had been referred to an "amazing place" among them. Gretchen Lemke Santangelo, *Daughters of Aquarius: Women of the Sixties*

To sum up, the start of communes in the early 1960s had a limited possibility for huge growth in terms of numbers and areas. The number of communes was too small to call the re-emerged communal living a social phenomenon or movement. Few of the earlier communes remained active in the mid and late 1960s. Their aims and types varied but lacked constant plans and activities. These just seemed too scattered and there was only intermittent continuity from the ongoing presence of communal living. While the few existing communes remained isolated, the later 1960s saw the emergence of a veritable commune movement with solidarity among communes. The growth of the movement at this time was due to three main factors: modified anarchism, the New Left, and the counterculture.

Modified anarchism on communes

Until the late 1960s, the most American left-wing groups including the Old and New Left found it difficult to add more issues like racism or feminism to protests that were previously dominated with anti-Vietnam sentiment. The Student Mobilization Committee (SMC) that had led anti-war protests on campuses, for instance, struggled to embrace a so-called 'multi-issue' perspective (incorporating questions of racism, poverty, and gender equality into its programme), in spite of the urgings of some leading activists. Indeed, at a gathering of the SMC in June 1968, disapproval by members of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) contributed to making these policy adoptions unsuccessful. The orthodox leftists insisted that attempting to broaden the programme would create divergence among various factions, most of whom had organised joint demonstrations under a single issue.[57] European Marxists also maintained the same position evaluating new issues like

Counterculture (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2009), p. 49.

[57] Simon Hall, *Peace and Freedom: The Civil Rights and Antiwar Movements in the 1960s* (Philadelphia,

communes as "unwanted diversions from the political struggle."[58]

The continued debate, however, motivated the idea of moving central bases for all movement sectors including the Old Left. Instead of campuses and organizational headquarters, street and living neighbourhoods emerged as essential areas of political activities in the late 1960s. Viewed from contents of underground media, between 1968 and 1972 there was a remarkable turn from "the idea of a single Movement, toward single-issue movements" such as black and Puerto Rican nationalism, women's and gay liberation, and the ecology and American Indian movements.[59] Among other things, anarchism came to the fore as a viable strategy for activists. Young dissenters adapted anarchism when they searched for communal living and more expanded autonomy distancing themselves from existing political party politics.[60] The threads of anarchism, which revived in the late 1960s, have been used to elucidate the future directions of the 1960s social movements. The flexibility of anarchism, in contrast to rigid orthodox Marxism, presented a new framework to the New Left in the wake of its rapid development. Many activists were attracted to attempt a here-and-now revolution stimulated by Bakunin's declaration that "the form of revolutionary movement itself must fore-shadow the form of society after the revolution."[61] Anarchists had articulated their philosophies, agendas and tactics since the 1940s and 1950s. They not only dismissed some

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Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania, 2006), pp. 147-148.

[58] Sofia Serenelli-Messenger, '1968 in an Italian Province: Memory and the Everyday Life of a New Left Group in Macerata', in *Memories of 1968: international perspectives*, ed. By Ingo Cornils & Sarah Waters (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010), pp. 345- 375 (p. 355).

[59] Blake Slonecker, *Living the Movement: Liberation News Service, Montague Farm and the New Left, 1967-1981* (PhD thesis: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2009), p. 101.

[60] Terry M. Perlin, 'The Recurrence of Defiance', in *Contemporary Anarchism*, ed. by Terry M. Perlin (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1979), pp. 3-19 (p. 8).

[61] Quoted in James Joll, 'Anarchism - A Living Tradition', *Government and Opposition*, 5. 1 (1969-70), pp. 541-554 (pp. 545, 546).

conventional attitudes, but also added new values. For instance, Holley Cantine who edited an anarchist periodical, *Retort*, re-framed Bakunin's argument: "The new society must be lived out by its advocates: both as a way of influencing the masses by example, and in order to iron out weaknesses of theory by actual experiment."[62] The attitude of anarchists revisiting their values and strategies continued in the 1960s. Therefore, it seems relevant to explore the active modification of anarchism in relation to 1960s communal activism. This section is focused on the direct and indirect connections between them.

Although it was not commensurate with the massive move to communes in the late 1960s, earlier arrivals from New York had also attempted similar communal living prior to 1967. From around the mid-1960s, members of groups such as the "Motherfuckers", well-known for their armed patrols to protect hippies against violence, the "New York Federation of Anarchists", and the "East Side Anarchist Group" were struggling with the crowded city and increasing politicisation of their daily lives. Paul Goodman, the preferred anarchist writer among the young, encouraged 1960s radicals to "take seriously the Thirties' ideas" of Scott Nearing and Ralph Borsodi, the inventors of the so-called back to the land movement.[63] Murray Bookchin, the central protagonist of anarchism, and the poet, Alan Hoffman, also galvanised radicals who had already lived together in a loft in Manhattan, and encouraged them to instead head for the countryside.[64]

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[62] Holley Cantine, 'Mechanics of Class Development', *Retort* (June 1942), p. 13. Quoted in Andrew Cornell, 'A New Anarchism Emerges, 1940-1954', *Journal for the Study of Radicalism*, 5. 1 (2011), pp. 105-132 (p. 111).
[63] Paul Goodman, introduction, Helen and Scott Nearing, *Living the Good Life* (NY: Schocken, 1970), Quoted in Dona Brown, *Back to the Land, the Enduring Dream of Self-Sufficiency in Modern America* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), p. 215.

[64] Laurence Veysey, *The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Communities in Twentieth Century America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 178-190.

In his untitled article from '*Good Times*', a San Francisco based underground paper, Hoffman started with a brief manifesto declaring that communes would open a "new ecological era" or be the "last brave act of human life," which would create a future based on the long history of groups of people who "establish more profoundly human relations with each other and their environment those who return to the land and to communal forms of living together…"[65] At roughly the same time, a number of activists including New Leftists felt disillusionment with the rapidly expanding movement. Many of them decided to drop out of campuses and city life, and start a new approach to "both an alternative means of affecting social change and alternative lifestyles with a future."[66]

Joyce Gardner, who had been one of the key figures in the anarchist movement along with Alan Hoffman, was one of the commune dwellers, a group who were mostly in their 20s, with children under six and who moved to 'Cold Mountain Farm', a commune in Hobart, New York in 1967. Gardner's move to the countryside was based on a belief that "the problems of contemporary society cannot be alleviated by protests and social reforms; that our protest naturally flows over and into all areas of life."[67] According to Gardner's recordings, setting up a new rural commune needed time, knowledge and work: "All we had to do was go there when it got nice and warm, plough the land, plant our seed, and wait for the vegetables to come."[68] She joined the commune with the aim of making it a tribe, a family of "incestuous brothers and sisters". Her dream was deflected, however, by internal conflicts and isolation from outsiders,

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[65] Quoted in Veysey, p. 184.

[66] Keith Melville, *Communes in the Counter Culture: Origins, Theories, Styles of Life* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1972), p. 22.

[67] Joyce Gardner and Allan Hoffman, 'Introduction', *Good Soup* (1 November 1967).

[68] Quoted in Richard Fairfield, *The Modern Utopian: Alternative Communities of the '60s and '70s* (WA: Process Media, 2010), p. 33.

including neighbours and comrades from the New York circle. As Gardner confessed, "we didn't become new people…we didn't find a way of sharing our visions."[69] The number of residents at the commune continued to increase to 30, but dwindled the next summer as the communards were forced to be checked by the local police; this was due to articles in the mass media associating them with being users and growers of marijuana. In addition, their peers in urban areas judged the move to be less a commitment to living the revolution, and more about retreating to the tranquil countryside. Although a few of the commune people, including Gardner, moved to another commune called "Bryn Athyn" in South Strafford, Vermont to repeat the same experiment in 1968, they ended it with a sudden move to New Mexico at the end of the summer in the year the FBI began looking for draft violators.[70]

British communal experiments were also distilled from anarchism or libertarian ideas, which were revived and spread through the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and the civil disobedience campaigns of the Committee of One Hundred in the early 1960s.[71] Between 1960 and 1963 anarchists saw an increase in their membership. The Manchester anarchist group, for instance, was more successful in gaining newcomers from those peace protest organisations than those made up of Marxists and Trotskyists.[72] This greater influence by anarchism helped to found a national organisation called the Anarchist Federation of Britain,

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[69] Fairfield, p. 40.

[70] Timothy Miller, *The 60s communes: Hippies and Beyond* (NY: Syracuse Uni Press, 1999), p. 62. Laurence Veysey, *The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Communities in Twentieth Century America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 188-190.

[71] Andrew Rigby, *Alternative Realities: A Study of Communes and their Members* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 126.

[72] Elizabeth Nelson, *The British Counter-Culture, 1966-73: A Study of the Underground Press* (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 33-34.

which was set up in 1965 in order to coordinate broader activities.[73] In addition, the extent of the break with the so-called Old Left including anarchism in Britain was less intense when compared to the situation in the US.[74] Rather, particularly from the late 1960s onwards, British Old Left organizations increased their influence on the social movement groups, including on campuses.[75] Anarchism was transforming into a more practical strategy and fluid theory, and this change from the previous anarchist dogma resulted in engagement with diverse spheres which had been previously overlooked as non-revolutionary projects like communes. It was raised officially at the fourth Congress of the Anarchist Federation in 1967.[76]

As with the US commune movement, few British communes openly declared their anarchism partly due to a general desire to avoid publicity, but also out of a reluctance to insist on a specific ideological approach to communal living. Despite these circumstances, British anarchism was conducive to the era's new communal experiments. For example, before starting a commune in a farmhouse in Desoglin, Cumbria in 1967 and founding the Eel Pie Island commune on an island in the River Thames in 1969, Clifford Harper had been introduced to anarchist thinking in his school days by several anarchist women. Some academic literature on anarchism, which had been published from 1960 onwards – such as the anthologies of key libertarian texts, *The Anarchists* (1964) edited by Irving Horowitz, and James Joll's book with the same title, *The Anarchists* (1965) – also mesmerised him.[77] Recognising the international

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[73] Peter Shipley, *Revolutionaries in Modern Britain* (London: The Bodley Head, 1976), p. 179.

[74] Sheila Rowbotham, *The Past is Before US, Feminism in Action since the 1960s* (London: Pandora Press, 1989), P. 222.

[75] Caroline Hoefferle, *A comparative history of student activism in Britain and the United States, 1960-1975* (PhD thesis, Central Michigan University, 2000), p. 375.

[76] David Stafford, 'Anarchists in Britain Today', *Government and Opposition*, 5. 1 (1969-70), pp. 480-500.

[77] George Woodcock, "Anarchism Revisited." *Commentary*, 46 (August 1968), pp. 54-60 (p. 55).

mood of revived anarchism, Harper highlighted that anarchism "was not about ideas…it could not be anything unless you lived it."[78] Motivated by the continued modification of anarchism, five self-proclaimed anarchists focused their activity on communal living, regarding it as another area of the movement. 'Jean', 'Jeff', 'Tikka', 'Dick' and 'Ray' set up a commune in Havelock Square, Sheffield, in the late 1960s. This commune showed close relationships with other communes by affiliating with the Commune Movement, a federation of British communes, in 1970.[79] In its announcement to *Communes*, the periodical of the Commune Movement, the communards clarified their initiative: "As anarchists we are opposed to the principle that the majority may impose its will on the minority, however small. In effect each communard has an absolute veto, but one which will, we believe, only be exercised after discussion and with an awareness of individual and collective responsibility."[80] Similarly, the essence of anarchism, refusing any authority by others, but supporting loose solidarity between free individuals, was also found in the Constitution of the Commune Movement, which was ratified in 1965. The need for federalisation between communes based on decentralised individuals' freedom - one of the association's key objectives - was emphasised: "To create a federal society of communities wherein everyone shall be free to do whatever he wishes provided only that he doesn't transgress the freedom of another."[81]

Although it is hard to find examples of converts to communards among anarchists in Denmark, the assumption supporting autonomy of each commune can be understood as an

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[78] Interview with Clifford Harper by John Davis, 8 and 12 May 2009. Quoted in John Davis and Anette Warring, 'Living Utopia: Communal Living in Denmark and Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 8. 4 (2011), pp. 513-530 (p. 519).

[79] *Commune Movement Newsletter*, 55 (27 September 1970).

[80] Dave and Tikka, 'Sheffield Commune', *Communes* 38 (June, 1972), p. 14.

[81] *Commune Movement Constitution*, quoted in *Commune Movement Newsletter* (26 March 1970).

effect of anarchism. Above all, commune members reclaimed the strong demand for independence. For Britta Krogh-Lund, who was a member of Kana in Slangerup, north of Copenhagen, between 1969 and 1974, the most compelling reason to join the commune was that the inhabitants were able to organise their lives by themselves: "We didn't like authority very much. We have been working with anti-authorities all our lives."[82] As Lund's remark implies, the search for dissociation from any big institution like the state was a crucial motivation for communards who wished to set up and develop communes. This aim had been an essential value since communal experiments began in the Middle Ages. Peasants' attempts to maintain their own local communities had survived until the end of the 18th century, despite the control of established political representatives like kings and parliaments, who insisted on "No state within the State". Nevertheless, as Peter Kropotkin, the legendary anarchist intellectual, underlined, ordinary farmers gathered regularly to discuss their practical problems such as the distribution of agricultural produce, the assessment of taxes and their choice of executive.[83]

The indirect but persistent connection between anarchism and the communal desire of the 1960s era can be viewed via some of manifestos that communes issued. Setting up Packer Corners, a rural farmhouse commune in Vermont, Raymond Mungo elaborated on the departure from New York, where Mungo had been active in the Liberation News Service (LNS), a radical media collective. After pinpointing the importance of returning to the land as the "the next step in altering and radically changing the face of this nation", Mungo emphasized the idea of "independence.": "We cannot be radicals, revolutionaries, or whatever, so long as we depend

[82] Interview with Britta Krogh-Lund, 28 May 2013.

[83] Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (London: William Heinemann, 1908), pp. 227- 231.

on the government, the establishment, the system, for survival", and he explained, noting that "American cities have rapidly made such dependence commonplace in a nation once settled by strong and independent men."[84]

With regard to this departure from cities, it would be a narrow insight to view the communal life in rural areas directly as the so-called back-to-the-land movement. Bennett Berger, for instance, argued that rural communes were a "purer form of the "New Age" movement representing a relatively more advanced stage than urban communes do."[85] Dona Brown, a researcher into the history of communal living in Vermont, has framed the back-to-the-land movement as "the end of that era (the Sixties) or with the beginning of the next."[86] However, given the constant transfers and relationships between communes and their members, the rural and urban communes did have similar plans and practices in common, despite the different living patterns between both.[87] Members of Open Projects in Liverpool even planned to set up a parallel commune in a rural area. Being together with the rural commune, the Open Projects communards anticipated a food supply and free exchange between members.[88] In particular, most rural Danish communes maintained a close connection with other communes, as well as with employed friends in urban areas, and those studying for university degrees. The

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[84] Raymond Mungo, 'Why Move? The Politics of Rural America in Our Age', *Liberation News Service* (1968).

[85] Bennett Berger, Bruce Hackett & R. Mervyn Millar, 'The Communal Family', *The Family Coordinator*, 21. 4 (1972), pp. 419-427 (p. 420).

[86] Dona Brown, *Back To the Land, The Enduring Dream of Self-Sufficiency in Modern America* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), p. 206.

[87] For instance, in Vermont, Roz Payne and Jane Kramer returned to a central city to start a new commune called Green Mountain Red after a two-year stay at Red Clover, the countryside farm. Interview with Roz Payne, 14 July 2013.

[88] Andrew Rigby, *Alternative Realities: A Study of Communes and their Members* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 134.

geographic closeness between city and countryside also affected the nature of Danish communal life, meaning it became imbued with more characteristic features of modern city life. Rural Danish communes hardly ever called for voluntary poverty with no electricity and their living areas were not so isolated. In other words, the distinctions between urban and rural communes were less significant than those of the British and American cases. Whether rural or urban based, Danish communes marked an integrated movement arena, with the exchanging of tactics, and even members.

Commune joiners in the 1960s, had different reasons and aims. As Raymond Mungo at Packer Corners claimed, the countryside was not an "isolated jungle" but a more suitable milieu than the city for becoming "involved in community affairs"[89] Therefore, the perspective of the back-to-the-land movement was applicable within a limited group of communes where the most important focus of communal living was to return to small scale agriculture. Whereas the civil rights movement and black activism had been mainly focused on various projects in urban cities, this move to the countryside contributed to the expansion of activity areas in social movements.[90] Regarding the growth of capitalism, which had integrated public and personal life, the anarchist Paul Spencer claimed that the opposition to these "ever broader areas" of control had to be "ever more total if it is to be relevant."[91] Diverse engagements with politics, lifestyle and mental health reflected the expanded realm of the commune movement in the

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[89] Raymond Mungo, 'Why Move? The Politics of Rural America in Our Age', *Liberation News Service* (1968).

[90] For example, during a London meeting in 1965, Walter Lippmann, the American writer and journalist, addressed that "a great society is simply a big and complicated urban society." Quoted in Steven Conn, 'Back to the Garden: Communes, the Environment, and Antiurban Pastoralism at the End of the Sixties', *Journal of Urban History* 36. 6 (2010), pp. 831-848 (p.833).

[91] Paul Spencer, 'Towards an Anarchist Manifesto: The Legacy of Domination and Two contributions', *Good Soup* (1 November 1967).

1960s.

Just as anarchists had upheld, communal residents also tried to unify the aims and their methods for social change by living out their future in the present. As can be seen in communes' manifestos, it is possible to draw a parallel between revised anarchism and communal activism in the 1960s and 1970s. For instance, Open Projects, a commune in Liverpool, suggested an idea identifying it as a "third way" in which "the means and the end are morally indistinguishable, where change begins at the bottom and grows outwards, where what would normally be regarded as the objective we treat as a starting point."[92] And then, the Open Projects members proposed their goals in practice:

> It means making our own decision and not taking it easy while someone else decides for us. It means respecting an environment in which other people (as well as animals and plants) have to live. It means working freely, producing for a need instead of for an artificially created market. It means consuming freely, buying what we want instead of what someone else wants us to buy. It also means education, real education, not soaking up facts but learning to think and do things for ourselves. Creative revolution doesn't need votes or guns. It began to happen in India under Gandhi and it can happen anywhere. All it needs to begin is a few people who decide to make it happen.[93]

Differentiating major claims for a better society from those made in traditional politics including by radicals who were active in protest movements, communal activism emphasised the importance of solidarity between free and voluntary individuals undertaking collective work on various levels. Without violence, bureaucratic procedures, rigid ideology, and charismatic leaders, commune participants proposed a new age with a new mode of activism, some of which was also seen in activities by anarchists at the time. Mirroring a basic feature of anarchism, Vermont communes supported an open politics, meaning that they could not "give easy answers to tough questions" for people's "liberation, freedom, the right to control

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[92] Openings, *Openings* 2 (December 1970).

[93] Ibid.

all aspects of their lives", for "this kind of a movement is not run by hidden big shots, but by the people's daily decision."[94] They wanted their communal activism to be "the people's machine, designed to carry out the struggle for all our goals, designed to struggle in whatever ways are necessary to serve the people."[95]

Concerning the rise of anarchist traits, however, Benjamin David Zablocki – who analysed how the Sixties communards were influenced by their predecessors – maintained, that this was "naïve anarchism and has little or nothing to do with the classical anarchism of the nineteenth century or the political and philosophical anarchist thinking of today."[96] Basing his observation on visits to different communes, Zablocki presented his own concept of the predominant philosophy of 1960s communes as 'communitarian anarchism'. Elsewhere, Zablocki makes a distinction between communitarian anarchism and political anarchism. Whereas the latter is concerned with the "relationships between the individual and the state", communitarian anarchism is "defined in terms of interpersonal relationships."[97] Zablocki also added that commune members became more focused on individual interests as Rosabeth Moss Kanter pinpoints the internal changing mood. Kanter asserts that American communes during the 1960s and 1970s did not go further to realise their utopian thoughts as political outreach; rather they focused on conveying the motto 'Do your own thing', which "places the person's own growth above concern for social reform, political and economic change."[98]

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[94] *Free Vermont*, 2 (1970).

[95] Ibid.

[96] Benjamin David Zablocki, *The Joyful Community* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 306.

[97] Zablocki, *Alienation and Charisma: A Study of Contemporary American Communes* (New York: The Free Press, 1980), p. 292.

[98] Zablocki, p. 48. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopia's Sociological Perspective* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 167.

However, both Zablocki's and Kanter's arguments are problematic for two reasons. First, given the efforts made by anarchists since the 1940s, anarchism had moved towards combining the political and the personal rather than dividing them. If one can outline the ideology of communal living in the 1960s as communitarian anarchism, the notion cannot be differentiated from ideas of the political and philosophical anarchists. With the confusion caused by the myths equating anarchism with 'anarchy', the developments and implications of anarchism have been underestimated. Contrary to common expectations, the communalists' life was a sort of organised spontaneity – not simply an emotional and chaotic one. Their efforts and engagements with their local societies were marked in anarchistic ways with instances of voluntary participation rather than a disordered style. At least in political communes, there were also debates on tactics and strategies for social change against the state. As Zablocki's investigation shows, political communes designed minimal principles and ethics regarding the management of communes.[99] Bridging the 1960s and 1970s, modified anarchism garnered a firmer position for communards as a political philosophy and lifestyle.

Secondly, Zablocki's conviction that the rise of charismatic leaders and adaptation of tighter policies within communes reflected a change from anarchism to authoritarianism also exaggerates the attitude of communards towards authoritarianism and authoritativeness. After an initial period that could sometimes last for 2 or 3 years, communes began to seek solutions in order to make their experiments more stable by systemizing ways of living and activities. The division and rotation system of labour for internal and external activities was introduced with the help of other communes like Twin Oaks that had practiced it. Simultaneously, some

[99] "Curiously, none of the political communes with anarchist programs were attempting to order their own lives anarchistically at the time of the study." Zablocki, *Alienation and Charisma: A Study of Contemporary American Communes*, p. 292.

communes tried to reconstruct them into a bigger housing cooperative with looser policies, which would avoid a rapid decline. Whether it was a distinct adjustment of initial identity or just a change of living type, despite those transformations return to hierarchical order within communes was not as popular as Zablocki argues. Rather than a turn to authoritarianism the change communards adopted was a reaction against the crisis of communal activism from the mid-1970s.[100]

Taken together, the change of anarchism since the 1940s, in terms of both political values and a way of life, influenced the commune movement of the late 1960s and 1970s, with some direct conversion of activists of anarchism into commune participants. The discovery of new social forces who had started living, "according to one's own desires," such as African Americans, Chicanos, Puerto Rican-Americans, the poor, women, and homosexuals were driven by "the contributions of anarchists."[101] Commune members also regarded those diverse groups as their allies. In return, the attempts by communes to distance themselves from the most ever developed capitalism, by their establishment of small-scaled independent economy, non-hierarchical decision making and grass-roots politics, helped to demystify modified anarchism during the late 1960s and 1970s. As Joyce Gardner and Allan Hoffman highlighted, the most appropriate philosophical position with which we can illuminate 1960s and 1970s communal activism is "anarchism." The anarchists provided a path to "a broad concept of revolution – of transformation in ourselves, in our relations with one another, and in the world"

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[100] The transformations and crisis within communes will be discussed in detail in chapter 4.

[101] Terry M. Perlin, 'The Recurrence of Defiance', in *Contemporary Anarchism*, Ed. By Terry M. Perlin (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1979), pp. 3-19 (pp.11, 17).

seeking an alternative to the capitalist society through the commune movement.[102] Despite the fact that many commune participants rejected attempts to define them as Marxists, anarchists or Maoists, they nevertheless shared a number of basic principles with modified anarchism embracing decentralised organisation, individual freedom, solidarity and collective work for social change without violence and charismatic leaders.

The impact of the New Left on communes

Historically, participatory democracy appeared intermittently during revolutionary episodes, and can be seen through the examples of the Commune of the French Revolution or the Workers' Soviet Commune of the Russian Revolution. In general, it means that free individuals directly participate in the decision-making processes affecting their lives. While traditional left-wing perspectives mainly focused on building national leadership to replace the existing power structure with their new one after intensive confrontations between both, the 1960s New Left was more concerned with organising the community as a counter-institution, and with voluntary and spontaneous participation in that goal. It also required a psychosocial reshaping of one's mind as well political and economic relationships, as anarchists emphasised "psychological and temperamental attitudes to society as much as in a sociological analysis of the societies."[103] In this light, the New Leftists shared space with the modified anarchists, that is, regarding participatory democracy as a means and simultaneously an end for sustaining a period of revolutionary movement.[104] We can find constant efforts at community organisation

[102] Joyce Gardner and Allan Hoffman, 'Introduction', *Good Soup* (1 November 1967).

[103] James Joll, 'Anarchism- A Living Tradition', *The Anarchists* (London: Methuen, 1979), p. 260.

[104] C. George Benello and Dimitrios Roussopoulos, *The Case for Participatory Democracy* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1971), pp. 3-7, 297-79.

in the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) manifestos and their activities in relation to the American commune movement; there were also similar influences at work in both Denmark and Britain.

In 1962, Tom Hayden began preparing a draft for submission to the SDS national convention, which was a "manifesto of hope". However, what he had in his hands were not Marxist-Leninist documents, but the works of Albert Camus and C. Wright Mills. The articles of John Dewey, Fyodor Dostoyevsky and the Democratic Party platform of 1960 were also included in his reading list.[105] Hayden's draft, *The Port Huron Statement*, became a new blueprint clearly distinctive from that of the Old Left. According to *The Port Huron Statement*, in ideal capitalist societies, it is vital that isolated individuals need some forms of unity, and that a call for "power and personal uniqueness rooted in possession, privilege, or circumstance" is replaced by "power and uniqueness rooted in love, reflectiveness, reason and creativity."[106] In other words, through fraternity, honesty and human relationships, American society would be improved. What is more critical is that this view is imagined as being closely connected to participatory democracy. Nevertheless, in *The Port Huron Statement*, there was no detailed discussion of grass roots political mobilisation, or even the principle of community organising. Indeed, it took a long while before the concept of participatory democracy was fully accepted by SDS as a central value and integrated into their activities. The first detailed SDS proposal for participatory democracy was made at the annual convention in June 1963. In 'America and New Era', SDS pointed out the new grievances arising from many aspects of American society, and suggested the "new insurgency" as a community-based reform programme: "Local

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[105] Tom Hayden, *Rebel: A Personal History of the 1960s* (Los Angeles: Red Hen Press, 2003), pp. 68-9.

[106] *The Port Huron Statement* in SDS Web Page, p. 4.

insurgent actions include: mass direct action and voter registration campaigns among Negroes, political reform movements directed against entrenched Democratic machines, political action for peace, tutorials and other community-based attempts to reach underprivileged youth, discussion groups…"[107] This proposal meant that SDS started to "build a longer-term movement" placing their activities in "an urban text" not limiting them within campuses.[108]

In a similar vein, SNCC set its ultimate aim of the movement. In keeping with Martin Luther King's vision of "a community of love and justice", Charles Sherrod and Bob Moses advocated making "the movement itself a model of the beloved community," prefiguring the future of a better society.[109] In fact, some SNCC offices in the North and West became focal points for organising local people. For instance, when launching the San Francisco Friends of SNCC office in 1964, Mike Miller, the SNCC field secretary, along with Terry Cannon, a twenty-four-year-old writer, established a community-organising project in the Fillmore District.[110] In a note for local SNCC organisers in 1965, guidance as to how they interacted with their neighbours in terms of leadership was provided: "a SNCC worker should never take a leadership role in the community unless he is in his own community. A SNCC worker should give the responsibility of leadership to the community person or persons whom he has or is building."[111] Although this project did not create any communal living straight away, its

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[107] The document was drafted by Dick Flacks for submission at the 1963 SDS convention. 'America and New Era' in *The New Left: A Documentary History*, ed. By Massimo Teodori (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1969), p. 181.

[108] Steven Conn, 'Back to the Garden: Communes, the Environment, and Antiurban Pastoralism at the End of the Sixties', *Journal of Urban History* 36. 6 (2010), pp. 831-848 (p. 832).

[109] Bret Eynon, 'Community in Motion: The Free Speech Movement, Civil Rights, and the Roots of the New Left', *Oral History Review* 17.1(spring, 1989), pp.39-69 (p. 49).

[110] Terence Cannon & Joseph A. Blum, 'Introduction', in *The Movement 1964-1970*, compiled by the staff of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Papers Project (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993), pp. ix-xi (p. ix).

[111] Charles Mclaurin, 'Notes on rural organizing', *The Movement 1964-1970*, compiled by the staff of the

support of local activism led by the locals themselves contributed to creating organisational approach from below for communal activism of the late 1960s. Some local SNCC and SDS organisers continued their activities, living in local areas after the demise of their national leadership and other projects. These local activists also helped later commune participants to engage with local society when they met at local meetings. This direct interaction between the New Leftists and commune residents on a local level acted as a concrete cause for the continuity of the 1960s movements, as Doug McAdam, who researched the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer project, highlighted, in terms of the importance of relational contacts in exchanges of ideas and experiences among activists.[112]

Through the SDS' Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP), we can also find more detailed examples of local activism. There were millions of African American migrants who had recently arrived from the South searching for work as well as a proliferation of poor whites. To organise them, 125 members of SDS headed for ten northern cities including Boston, Chester, Chicago, and Cleveland. Their daily schedule was very busy and repetitive. Lee Webb, an organiser, recalled summer, 1964 in Chicago as such:

> Up in the morning at 8 o'clock, to the office at 9, try to make a whole bunch of calls, go to people's houses, the people who've come into the office, setting up meetings for the night....In a sense that summer was like the expression of a very significant quality of that generation – almost monk-like, or ascetic, or something like that.[113]

The summer of 1965 witnessed the height of ERAP expansion. More than four hundred

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Martin Luther King, Jr., Papers Project (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993), p. 81.

[112] Doug McAdam, *Freedom Summer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). Organized by SNCC, in June 1964, the summer campaign including 'freedom school' attracted over 1,000 participants to register black voters. Doug McAdam & Dieter Rucht, 'The Cross-National Diffusion of Movement Ideas', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 528 (1993), pp. 56-74 (p. 70).

[113] Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* (NewYork: Random House, 1973), p. 131.

volunteers headed to community projects, and ERAP areas were enlarged to cover additional nine cities, including New Haven, Oakland, San Francisco and Cairo, Illinois. This development can be attributed to the anti-war movement, as many newcomers joined the SDS after the April march on Washington against the war in Vietnam. However, this flow was temporary. By the late fall, only five ERAP projects had survived (Baltimore, Cleveland, Chicago, Newark and Oakland), and by the year's end only Chicago and Newark were left.[114] It appeared to fail through testing their new insurgency ideals on the periphery of American society. In reality, it was not easy for ERAPers, the students to coordinate the poor as Bob Ross, an organiser based in Chicago, explained: "how do students in SDS maintain a fruitful relation to these projects which is fraternal and not abrasive, supportive and not constraining?"[115] Robb Burlage echoed this concern when outlining plans for the June 1965 Convention. He also sought support for a resolution to attain a democratic internal structure, and at the same time to achieve political goals: "Difficulties of representing SDS "in field" – need for open-end diversity; ERAPers on field experience that democracy is "local" experience primarily – dilemma of "power" even in this setting; campus people on how to be open to broad group of people there – how to get "unity" and "division" of labour simultaneously?"[116]

Yet they provided a new direction that later movement tactics continually plundered. As was predicted at the start, ERAP essentially required a 'long march' approach, and that the dissolution of their head office came too soon. Even when community organising had showed it was moving forward, it still needed more external support and attention. Of course, that does

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[114] Ibid, pp. 139-42.

[115] *SDS Discussion Bulletin*, spring 1964.

[116] *SDS Bulletin* May 1965.

not mean direction and control by a central organisation. The advocates of ERAP tried to shape a national community union federation based on the ERAP community and to organise a demonstration throughout America that railed against the government's policy towards the poor. These plans were not realised, however. Richard Rothstein, the Chicago organiser, maintained that ERAP could no longer play the role as a base for new attempts by failing to overcome isolation within SDS: "Experiments produce new information for a movement and its organizers. Experiments do not necessarily produce mass movements. But in the absence of a broader structure, with the burden of movement building borne subjectively by each project, experiments could not be risked."[117]

In fact, he and Rennie Davis argued that the national ERAP office should reopen in order to provide financial assistance, and facilitate staff recruitment and morale building.[118] Nevertheless, ERAP did have the chance of experiencing a new organisational 'community' figure, and this turned out to be one of the most invaluable achievements of the SDS. It is a commonly held belief that the lessons of community organising helped to advance participants in their subsequent activities, whether established activists or newcomers. They began to set up their future anew. Then, their coverage expanded from neighbourhood net working to factory organising and from high schools to other poor areas. Certainly, the Vietnam War was central for most campus activists; however, through local organising efforts the centre of the movement, shifted from campuses to cities.[119]

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[117] Richard Rothstein, 'Evolution of the ERAP organizers', in *The New Left: A Collection of Essays*, ed. By Priscilla Long (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1969), p. 286.

[118] Wini Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left, 1962-68 The Great Refusal* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), pp. 81-2.

[119] By the late 1960s, black activists had begun their engagement in city politics, whereby they had to face various problems regarding "poor housing, discrimination, crime in the streets and a high job-migrations rate."

For some SDSers, the areas where they had attempted to organise communities under the auspices of ERAP were also considered for their post-1968 activism, but this time did not include block meetings in slum neighbourhoods but a focus on communal living projects.[120] The first phase of the SDS activists' migration, which took place around 1968, was devoted to retreating from the turbulent period and seeking shelter from FBI' attacks; in the words of Robert Houriet, "you can go to the Weatherman, or you can go to Vermont."[121] Casey Hayden, an activist for SNCC and SDS, stayed at Hugg's Family commune near Bennington in southern Vermont, and Patricia Swinton, a former member of Weather Underground, avoided FBI visits by living under a pseudonym at Packer Corners commune, until her arrest in 1975. The members of Packer Corners supported Swinton by posting bail.[122] As another case, a squad of armed Minutemen fired at commune members from a communal farm near Voluntown, Connecticut, in August 1968, as they had been resisting conscription.[123] Border crossings were also undertaken from Earth People's Park commune, founded in the wake of the Woodstock festival in 1969, in far northern Vermont.[124]

The development of communal experiments helped former SDS activists to become

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Floyd McKissick, 'The Free-Standing New Town: New Options?', in *Are New Towns for Lower Income Americans Too?* Ed. by John DeBoer & Alexander Greendale (New York: Praeger, 1974), p. 20. Quoted in Steven Conn, 'Back to the Garden: Communes, the Environment, and Antiurban Pastoralism at the End of the Sixties', *Journal of Urban History* 36. 6 (2010), pp. 831-848 (p. 833).

[120] Grace Elizabeth Hale, *A Nation of Outsiders: How the White Middle Class Fell in Love with Rebellion in Post-War America* (NY: Oxford Uni Press, 2011), p. 233.

[121] Quoted in David Van Deusen, 'Green Mountain Communes: The making of a Peoples' Vermont', *Catamount Tavern News*, 15 January 2008, in online http://www.anarkismo.net/newswire.php?story id=7248.

[122] Susan Green, 'Hippie Havens', Seven Days, 20 August 2008, online http://www.7dvt.com/2008 hippie-havens, p. 5.

[123] The commune of draft resisters was also active in association with the New England Committee for Nonviolent Action. Robert Houriet, *Getting Back Together* (London: Abacus, 1971), p. 16.

[124] Timothy Miller, *The 60s Communes: Hippies and Beyond* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1999), p. 131.

pioneers in starting new communes. In return, it made the adoption of New Left ideas viable for commune members. Robert Kramer, one of the founders of Red Clover commune in Vermont, had been working as a community activist in the poor, black ghettos of Newark, New Jersey, organised by ERAP, before joining the Newsreel. His experience culminated in a documentary film, "The Troublemakers", which sketched community activities taking place in Newark. This chequered past of SDS ERAPers also helped Kramer when Free Vermont opened a free auto shop, "Liberation Garage", which aimed at attracting lower working class youth and women into training in car repair. By the early summer of 1970, the garage was forming another activity place, welcoming a number of poor greasers, women and people from communes, including many children, as visitors. Accordingly, classes in reading, art and ecology for those young people followed.[125] Free Vermonters who tried to link Vermont communes knew well that a people's liberation movement should be "based on real grass-roots organization of the people." They wanted to be part of a permanent movement struggle in order to defend and strengthen people's lives at "every level and throughout every day" rather than simply replicating the efforts of "political parties that send their members to the polls to pull a lever every few years."[126] In an interview during the 1984 Free Vermont Recollective, Kramer contends that "we functioned at an enormous level of intensity. We thought the revolution was about to happen at any moment."[127]

Carl Oglesby, a former SDS president who moved to Red Clover commune in the late 1960s,

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[125] Barry Laffan, *Communal Organization and Social Transition: A Case Study from the Counterculture of the Sixties and Seventies* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), pp. 25-26.

[126] *Free Vermont*, 2 (1970).

[127] Susan Green, 'Hippie Havens', Seven Days, 20 August 2008, online http://www.7dvt.com/2008 hippie-havens, p.5.

recalled that "it (moving to the commune) was almost the best part of the struggle. The best part of the struggle was the surrender."[128] Although Oglesby had initially viewed communes as providing a safe escape from governmental repression, through his stay at the commune he sensed the possibility of a mixture of both countercultural forces and protest movements.[129] This tendency also recurred among the American leftists. Paul Potter, president of SDS between 1964 and 1965, anticipated that the Sixties' movement would transform the notions of politics, political issues, sources of political conflicts, and political commitments. Focusing on "what place" existed "for ordinary men in that system" and how they were "to control it, make it bend itself to their wills,"[130] Potter suggested a new approach to 1960s radicals, the so-called 'cultural politics', and then started his communal life at a commune in Santa Cruz.[131]

It is claimed in British Sixties historiography that violent confrontations with conventional society were much rarer and less intense than those of their American and Continental counterparts. As one scholar has put it, "British society was the only major industrialised society which did not generate a competitive militant student movement, nor a vigorous and coherent theory for such a movement."[132] This assumption has resulted in fewer studies on the importance of the British New Left movement in the 1960s within Britain and beyond. Instead, most historians have focused on its apolitical characteristics, and the personal and cultural

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[128] Quoted in Terry Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 290.

[129] David Farber, 'The Counterculture and the Antiwar Movement', in *Give Peace a Chance: Exploring the Vietnam Antiwar Movement*, ed. by Melvin Small and William D. Hoover (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1992), pp. 7-21 (pp. 11-12).

[130] Paul Potter, 'We must name the system', quoted in Sean McCann and Michael Szalay, 'Introduction: Paul Potter and the Cultural Turn', *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 18. 2 (Fall 2005), pp. 209-220 (p. 211).

[131] Sean McCann and Michael Szalay, 'Introduction: Paul Potter and the Cultural Turn', *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 18. 2 (Fall 2005), pp. 209-220 (pp. 212-214).

[132] Quoted in Lin Chun, *The British New Left* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), p. 88.

significance of 1960s Britain.[133] However, some political scientists, sociologists and historians have begun moving away from concentrating on this general understanding of 1960s Britain to examining the British New Left and Traditional Left, as well as underground press, and the post-1968 period.[134]

The student movement, together with feminism and the gay rights movement, reached their apogee in Britain in the years following 1968. At least in terms of size, the British student movement observed its heyday in the middle of the 1970s, with participants in student protests in Britain outnumbering their American counterparts in 1973.[135] Caroline Hoefferle's contribution to British Sixties historiography is to reveal the apparent growth of student activism, galvanised especially by the workers' strike against the newly introduced Industrial Relations Bill in the early 1970s, the transfer of political power to Edward Heath's Conservative government in 1970, and the turn towards the previous British Old Left strategies, which stressed the central role of the working class in revolution.[136] Likewise, Adam Lent's work focuses on the causes of this dramatic change and the emergence of new social movements including women's and gay and lesbian activities, which defined student radicalism as the most influential strand.[137] Taken together, a reframing of the contributions made by the

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[133] One of the most noticeable accounts is by Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958- c.1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[134] Michael Kenny, *The First New Left: British Intellectuals after Stalin* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1995). Elizabeth Nelson, *The British Counter-Culture, 1966-73: A Study of the Underground Press* (London: Macmillan, 1989). Celia Hughes, *The Socio-Cultural Milieu of the Left in Post-War Britain* (PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 2011).

[135] Caroline Hoefferle, *A Comparative History of Student Activism in Britain and the United States, 1960-1975* (PhD thesis, Central Michigan University, 2000), p. 469.

[136] Hoefferle, pp. 417-418.

[137] Adam Lent, *British Social Movements since 1945: Sex, Colour, Peace and Power* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001).

British New Left, which were previously understood by considering their theoretical influence, is needed.[138]

Although Denmark differed in some respects, with more influences coming from other European continental nations due to its geographical situation, general Scandinavian characteristics (support and compromise rather than repression from existing institutions; easy incorporation of radical protest agendas into the system) were arguably maintained.[139] However, this view does not recognise a number of new activities that appeared in the late 1960s and 1970s, and which transformed those experiments into stable social movements: environmentalism, counterculture and feminism. The large student demonstration carried out by those attending a meeting on conservative natural history in 1969, helped to establish a sustainable organisation to represent the environmental movement, NOAH.[140] The Danish New Left also presented a challenge to political power and created diverse extra-parliamentary activities, setting up the 1960s Danish New Left as "by far the largest and most multi-faceted" one in Scandinavia.[141]

When it comes to the Danish commune movement, *Studentersamfundet* (the Student Society)[142] had organised meetings and weekend seminars for communal living since the mid-

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[138] Much of the research has discussed writings and ideas from the most famous journal, *New Left Review*.

[139] Erik Allardt & Richard Tomasson, 'Stability and Stains in Scandinavian Student Politics', *Daedalus*, 97. 1 (1968), pp. 156-165.

[140] NOAH is not an abridgement. Christopher Rootes, 'The Environmental Movement', in *1968, in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1965-1977*, ed. by Martin Klimke & Joachim Scharloth (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 295-305 (p. 300).

[141] Andrew Jamisson, Ron Eyerman, Jacqueline Cramer & Jeppe Laessoe, *The Making of New Environmental Consciousness: A Comparative Study of the Environmental Involvements in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), pp. 77-78.

[142] This leftist association at the University of Copenhagen was founded in 1882.

1960s, which ultimately led to formation of a commune called *Svanemøllekollektivet* (Swan Mill commune) in August, 1968.[143] The Kana commune also originated in earlier attempts by students who met regularly to participate in a project involving the poor districts of Copenhagen. In order to make a better environment, they made gardens and playgrounds out of unused courtyards, and visited many city planning experts and politicians to show them how the project was improving the circumstances of the city, as ERAP activists also did. A new group was then created and named *København uge* (Copenhagen Week), which drew some of its membership from *Studentersamfundet*.[144]

The start of the environmental movement in the early 1960s signified a departure from the previous climate of political pessimism in Denmark, which was characterised by the attitude "it is useless anyway." With slogans such as "It is useful" and "Silence is an accomplice", the anti-nuclear movement was one that appealed to many young Danes.[145] It was inspired by the activities of CND (the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) in Britain. Carl Scharnberg, a member of the National Management committee for *Kampagnen mod Atomvåben* (the Campaign against Nuclear Weapons), and who had participated in the English Easter march in 1960, which was organised by CND, decided to implement something similar in Denmark. Subsequently, he managed to convince some Danish pacifist organisations that it might be possible to build a similar movement. On Good Friday, 18 April 1961, Danish radio news announced that a few thousand people, on a nuclear march had disappeared in a snowstorm

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[143] Flemming Andersen, Ole Stig Andersen & Anne van Deurs, *Bogen om Storfamilierne* (Copenhagen: Rhodos, 1970), pp. 12-13.

[144] Interview with Britta Krogh-Lund, 18 November 2013. Many members of the Copenhagen week moved to Kana in 1969.

[145] Steen Bille Larsen, 'Atommarch', *Dengang I 60'erne,* ed. By Bente Hansen, J. HøM, G. Nielsen, R. Pay & J. Schytte (København: Informations Forlag ApS, 1979), pp. 36-41 (p. 36).

between Holbaek and Roskilde. The 15-year-old, Ke Møller Kristensen, who had failed to join the 1960 march as her parents would not allow it, and who later founded the Bellevue commune in Copenhagen, was among them.[146] Two days later, the Atom campaign distinguished itself as a political factor as the marchers were found well, with the march ending at Copenhagen Town Hall, with the support of 30,000 people.[147]

The Danish New Left also helped to form a new progressive party, *Venstresocialisterne* (the Left Socialists, VS). VS was founded in 1967 as a cross party among non-parliamentary left groups. In the beginning, the majority of the party was constituted by people under the age of 35, and VS tried new styles such as collective leadership.[148] Some communards continued the relationships during their communal living by maintaining their memberships and by engaging in local activities for the political party. According to a survey conducted in 1971, about 24% of 120 commune members answered that they were members of VS at that time.[149] For example, Bjørn Pedersen, who joined Felicia (a commune in Bornholm, a Danish island south of Sweden), was actively involved in creating a branch of VS. Pederson organised regular meetings in relation to the party in a local library, and to which many politicians and authors were invited to give public speeches on a wide range of themes including political developments in parliament, the high unemployment rate, and Marxism. Although these usually attracted just fifteen to twenty people, some of whom were from other communes on the island, Pederson remembers the energetic debates that took place during the gatherings,

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[146] Interview with Ke Møller Kristensen, 20 Feb 2014.

[147] Steen Bille Larsen, 'Atommarch', *Dengang I 60'erne,* ed. By Bente Hansen, J. HøM, G. Nielsen, R. Pay & J. Schytte (København: Informations Forlag ApS, 1979), pp. 36-41 (p. 36).

[148] Søren Kai Christensen and Tage Søndergaard Kristensen, *Kollektiver i Danmark* (Copenhagen: Borgens, 1972), p. 15.

[149] Christensen and Kristensen, p. 101.

specifically concerning the issue of joining EEC (the European Economic Community).[150]

In summary, New Left radicalism with its major efforts at "participatory democracy, a re-definition of the political, and an emphasis on community as an issue, a strategy, and a goal,"[151] provided a solid foundation on which commune participants could build a various type of alternative institutions and lifestyles. Many commune members had previously experienced New Left political activities and lifestyles, and sustained the effects of New Left politics combined with local politics and new social movements such as feminism and environmentalism during their communal existence. As anarchists had done, New Leftists reaffirmed the importance of activities from below through their commitments. Similarly, commune participants also prioritised this principle for their communal developments.

Countercultural implications for communes

The most symbolic 1960s event in the US to represent the gap between the traditional radicals' rhetoric and the inchoate countercultural ideas was Ken Kesey's address at an October 1965 anti-Vietnam War protest in Berkeley. Known for his 1964 bus tour across the US, accompanied by his band of Merry Pranksters, Kesey had been invited to the Berkeley campus by the organisers of Vietnam Day, the round-the-clock anti-war teach-in. He gave a short speech to the fifteen thousand participants and following a chorus of "Home on the Range" played on his harmonica, declared: "Look at the war, and turn your backs and say… Fuck it."[152] After this gathering, its organisers, both Old and New leftists, criticised Kesey and a number

[150] Interview with Bjørn Pedersen, 19 November 2013.

[151] Bret Eynon, 'Community in Motion: The Free Speech Movement, Civil Rights, and the Roots of the New Left', *Oral History Review* 17.1 (spring, 1989), pp.39-69 (p. 45).

[152] Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (NY: Bantam, 1987), p. 209.

of other counter-culturalists for not taking the fight for political issues including civil rights and the anti-war movement seriously.[153] In fact, conversely, the rank and file in the rally turned their backs to the stage according to Kesey's "gesture of refusal" as "its unique synthesis of politics and culture."[154] More fundamentally, those conventional activists had not fully understood the seemingly apolitical and ever-egoistic but fluid vocabularies of the counterculture. Paradoxically, the increasing popularity of the counterculture, amplified this lack of awareness in the realm of traditional protest movements which was deepening as the counterculture itself became rapidly commercialised.[155] In relation to this, it is true, as argued by Elissa Auther and Adam Lerner that the story of the counterculture has been isolated from both "the narrative of the New York avant-garde or the political histories of the 1960s."[156] However, considering the more frequent convergence between the counterculture and the anti-war movement that subsequently happened, it is fair to say that it was a circumstance that began to beget improvement during the late 1960s. The rise of new communes also became popular at this time, with varieties of experiences which benefited from the counterculture. This section is concerned with the beginning and subsequent development of the 1960s counterculture, and its implications for communes.

Although it is hard to define a single cause that lay behind the communal revival in the

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[153] David Farber, 'The Counterculture and the Antiwar Movement', in *Give Peace a Chance: Exploring the Vietnam Antiwar Movement*, ed. by Melvin Small and William D. Hoover (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1992), pp. 7-21 (p. 9).

[154] Elissa Auther & Adam Lerner, 'The Counterculture Experiment: Consciousness and Encounters at the Edge of Art', in *West of Center: Art and the Counterculture Experiment in America, 1965-1977*, ed. by Elissa Auther & Adam Lerner (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), pp. xvi-xxxvi (pp. xx-xxi).

[155] John Robert Howard, 'The Flowering of the Hippie Movement', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 382, Protest in the Sixties (Mar., 1969), pp. 43-55 (p. 50).

[156] Elissa Auther & Adam Lerner, 'The counterculture Experiment: Consciousness and Encounters at the Edge of Art', in *West of Center: Art and the Counterculture Experiment in America, 1965-1977*, ed. by Elissa Auther & Adam Lerner (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), pp. xvi-xxxvi (p. xviii).

1960s, counterculture clearly played a major role – indeed, many of the early commune participants were referred to as 'hippies'. The concept of 'hippies' has been used to explain a wide range of cultural phenomena in the Sixties and is associated with long-haired young people who enjoyed boundless freedom as they experimented with drugs, sex and music. However, it was not until 1966 or 1967 that the term 'hippies' began to percolate among young people and even researchers of the counterculture.[157] In fact, as seen in many cases in Britain, Denmark and the US, the so-called hippie youngsters did not actually create the communes of the Sixties. Indeed, the beginning of the 1960s communes had little to do with the hippie culture per se, despite numerous hippies joining communes later on. Rather, the developing communes helped the hippies to adopt communal living as a new lifestyle.[158]

It was the sociologist J. Milton Yinger who originally coined the term 'counterculture' in his 1960 work, 'Contraculture and Subculture'. Yinger theorised the characteristics of social unconventionality with his term *contraculture* indicating the central role played by conflict in the behaviour of certain groups, and arguing that their values were contradictory to those of the existing dominant culture.[159] Discussion of the counterculture was also frequently seen in the burgeoning underground press. In Britain, *the International Times*, founded in 1966, went further by discussing the creation of communities as an immediate goal of the counterculture.

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[157] Instead, by then, they were using the term 'hipster' indicating a personal attitude to the existing straight world, and which had been applied to 1950s beatniks. John Robert Howard, 'The Flowering of the Hippie Movement', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 382, Protest in the Sixties (Mar., 1969), pp. 43-55 (p. 44).

[158] William L. Smith, *Families and Communes: An Examination of Non-Traditional Lifestyles* (California: SAGE publications, 1979), p. 87. Timothy Miller, 'The roots of the 1960s communal revival', *American Studies*, 33. 2 (Fall 1992), pp. 73-93 (p. 74).

[159] J. Milton Yinger, 'Contraculture and Subculture', *American Sociological Review* 25. 5 (October 1960), pp. 625-35, quoted in Elissa Auther & Adam Lerner, 'The counterculture experiment: consciousness and encounters at the edge of art', in *West of Center: Art and the Counterculture Experiment in America, 1965-1977*, ed. by Elissa Auther & Adam Lerner (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), pp. xvi-xxxvi (p. xix).

In its editorial, the publishers compared the lack of "geographic community" in London with the emergence of "specific communities" in Los Angeles and San Francisco. They then underlined the need for the "interaction of active groups in London" in order to build communities.[160] However, London had been in a process of cultural expansion forming the so-called 'Swinging London' since 1965, with musicians such as The Rolling Stones, The Beatles, and The Small Faces, alternative publications (with underground periodicals including American underground newspapers such as the *East Village Other*, the *Los Angeles Free Press* and the *San Francisco Oracle*), along with other cultural experiments, for example, the London Free School, the Arts Lab, and the Sigma Project, founded by the Scottish-Italian Beat poet Alexander Trocchi.[161]

It is interesting to note Trocchi's manifesto for the Project aimed at suggesting an alternative mode of society to the existing one: "How to begin? At a chosen moment in a vacant country house (mill, abbey, church or castle) not too far from the City of London, we shall foment a kind of cultural jam session: out of this will evolve the prototype of our spontaneous university."[162] This plan led to the weekend conference in Braziers Park, Oxfordshire in 1965 where cultural events and political talks attracted diverse groups and individuals, which was similar to the 'Gathering of the Tribes for a Human be-in' in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park in 1967 that will be discussed later in this section.[163]

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[160] *IT*, 11 (21-28 April 1967), p. 3.

[161] Timothy Brown, *West Germany and the Global Sixties: The Antiauthoritarian Revolt, 1962-1978* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 136-138.

[162] Chris Coates, *Communes Britannica, A History of Communal Living in Britain 1939-2000* (London: Diggers & Dreamers Publications, 2012), p. 238.

[163] Coates, p. 239.

The explosive growth of Danish communes in the late 1960s was partly caused by earlier public attention on alternative group/family lifestyle living which featured in a debate in the Danish newspaper *Politiken* (the Politics). Between 1966 and 1968, Danish society had a chance to openly discuss communal living, with topics, for example the traditional nuclear family and its isolation, gender roles, and the oppression of children. While the prominent Danish radio journalist Bodil Graae deemed the group family an extended form of a traditional nuclear family, Ole Grünbaum, a leading figure in the youth movement and the son of the social democratic minister of finance, advocated a more radical or fundamental critique of nuclear families, speaking of the group family as an experiment which might lead to new ways of living together. In his 1968 book 'Emigrate', Grünbaum suggested that discontented groups should create their own institutions, culture and way of living.[164] Even the bourgeois tabloid *Billed Bladet* featured articles on their own experimental group family.[165]

With the influence of the German New Left, the Provo movement in the Netherlands, and the American counterculture, Denmark began to shape the most active and diverse underground culture in Scandinavia, alongside activities of the so-called APO (extra parliamentary opposition).[166] Bolette Christensen started her first communal living experience in 1968 at Commune 3 in Copenhagen, named after its German counterpart, Kommune 2, joining with

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[164] Flemming Andersen, Ole Stig Andersen & Anne van Deurs, *Bogen om Storfamilierne* (Copenhagen: Rhodos, 1970), pp. 11-13.

[165] Thomas Ekman Jørgensen, 'Utopia and Disillusion: Shattered Hopes of the Copenhagen Counterculture', in *Between Marx and Coca-cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960–1980*, ed. By Axel Schildt & Detlef Siegfried (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), pp. 333-352 (p. 342).

[166] The manifesto of the Prove movement by Duco van Weerlee, 'Wat de provo's willen' (What the Provo participants want), was translated into Danish in 1966. Jørgensen, 'Utopia and Disillusion: Shattered Hopes of the Copenhagen Counterculture', p. 335. Andrew Jamison, Ron Eyerman, Jacqueline Cramer and Jeppe Laessøe, *The Making of the New Environmental Consciousness: A Comparative Study of the Environmental Movements in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), p. 78.

other friends who had all met at a small theatre. The Commune 3 members collected 41 Danish Kroner (equivalent to 4.5 pounds) and delivered it to the American embassy in Copenhagen as a symbolic gesture to help the US poor, who, they claimed, were living under an imperialistic power. They also occupied a very small island on a lake near the city centre of Copenhagen and declared their independence from the Danish government and NATO.[167] For communards, participating in these experiments was part but not all of their lives. Indeed, their lives were not made up of constant agonising challenges, but were comprised of much fun, joy and authenticity. Leo Nielsen articulated this in his untitled poem which was introduced to Danish communards through *Kokoo*:

> life is not easy always for us strenuous demanding humiliating
> but we have to be here we must not escape for something
> we have for something we can build up for something
> we can change we can if we want to have fun together[168]

Although frequently associated with the decade's radicalism, until the late 1960s, the counterculture was in many ways divorced from the era's political and protest movements. According to a report in an underground newspaper, *The Movement*, there had been considerable difficulty in making both the hippies and local societies understood, particularly by black communities. In an interview with the media, Tom Ramsey, who had been working in the Haight-Ashbury District of San Francisco as an SNCC worker, asserted that black local people and even some activists themselves, did not trust hippies in that area. They assumed that hippies were white middle class kids who had maintained their racism, whether or not they

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[167] Interview with Bolette Christensen, 18 November 2013.

[168] From the poetry collection "*Kulilte-testet*" (Monoxide-tested) 1974, by Leo Nielsen, Quoted in *Kokoo*, n. 6 (1974), p. 20.

recognised it: "though they may have liberated themselves through LSD or something out of the status struggle, they have not gotten rid of a lot of those racial hang-ups they have." As a result, the hippies were not invited to a local meeting with the goal of starting an organising committee in the Town Hall of the Haight-Ashbury District.[169]

Efforts to overcome the deep credibility gap between the counterculture and the Leftist came from both sides. Change came with arrival of new types of organisations such as cells, affinity groups, and communes.[170] A group of people called the Diggers started free restaurants, stores and clinics in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco and Constitution Park in Berkeley.[171] Their attempts at building an alternative way of life, including free institutions flourished particularly during the so-called Summer of Love in 1967, as a protest against the illogic of capitalism.[172] The Diggers had been living together in Haight-Ashbury, and their shared house – which was open to newcomers – served as a sort of proto-commune. As one resident remembered it: "We had all kinds of people there at first and anybody could stay if there was room. Anybody could crash out there. Some of the motorcycle types began to congregate in the kitchen. That became their room."[173] These endeavours, living collectively and sharing cultural and political activities, impressed student activists including Tom Hayden. Observing the growth of communal living and the various projects, Hayden found there to be a changing

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[169] 'Who all lives in the yellow submarine?', *The Movement 1964-1970*, compiled by the staff of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Papers Project (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993), pp. 221, 223.

[170] Doug Norberg and Jack Gerson, 'Berkeley street action', *Liberation News Service* (9 September 1968), p. 7.

[171] The name originated in the term 'the British Diggers', a group of peasants, who started three rural communes in the 17th century. Clem Gorman, *People Together* (Frogmore, Herts: Paladin, 1975), p. 45.

[172] John Robert Howard, 'The Flowering of the Hippie Movement', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 382, Protest in the Sixties (Mar., 1969), pp. 43-55 (p. 46).

[173] Howard, 'The Flowering of the Hippie Movement', p. 47.

trend for young people, from dropping out "in their minds, or into tiny bohemian enclaves" to "territory".[174]

Likewise, there were also the British Diggers with more groups than their American counterpart such as the Hyde Park Diggers in London, the Hapt Diggers in Cambridge and the Coventry Diggers. The Hyde Park Diggers started in 1967, and ran a Digger centre at St Martin's Secondary School in Trafalgar Square where homeless people could live and get food. Besides this, the group squatted in abandoned houses in the Soho and Covent Garden areas, which eventually led to the founding of the Dorinish Island Commune to support young workers "to find fulfilment through communal activity and life."[175] The Hapt Diggers published their own magazine about communal living, and was issued regularly until early 1971, with a distribution list of about 250. Their project was more focused on the role of theoretical progress for communards rather than immediate activities.[176]

Before 'the Summer of Love' and following the 'Death of Hippie' ceremony, held in Haight-Ashbury during the summer and October of 1967, there was a symbolic event that would impact the two different forces in January 1967.[177] Anti-war activists and members of the counterculture met in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park at the so-called "Gathering of the Tribes for a Human be-in". Allen Cohen, editor of *Oracle*, the San Francisco based

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[174] Tom Hayden, *Trial* (London: Jonathon Cape, 1971) pp. 159-160. Quoted in Anthony Ashbolt, *A Cultural History of the Radical Sixties in the San Francisco Bay Area* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013), p. 160.

[175] It was John Lennon who provided them with the island of Dorinish. Clem Gorman, *People Together* (Frogmore, Herts: Paladin, 1975), pp. 46-47.

[176] Gorman, pp. 47-48.

[177] This parade on 6 October 1967 reflected that "hippies were no longer doing their own thing but rather responding to a media image." Anthony Ashbolt, *A Cultural History of the Radical Sixties in the San Francisco Bay Area* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013), p. 111. Daniel A. Foss & Ralph W. Larkin, 'From the Gates of Eden to Day of the Locust: An analysis of the Dissident Youth Movement of the 1960s and its Heirs of the Early 1970s-the Post-movement Groups', *Theory and Society* 3 (1976), pp. 45-64 (p. 63).

underground periodical, stated that "a revolution of form can be filled with a Renaissance of compassion, awareness and love" and that this described the gathering.[178] In fact, the coalescence of two forces had become more frequent since the late 1960s, in demonstrations about political issues, as well as in cultural events. Having seen various useful alliances take place, mostly at the local level, some key figures of the existing Leftist movement, like Dave Dellinger and Abbie Hoffman, supported this convergence, where a new possibility for co-existing with broader movement areas was being created.[179] Shifting away from established concepts of class struggle and armed forces for the revolution, Hoffman broached the subject of energies occurring from "a spontaneous anarchic explosion of individuals and emerging collectives" developing in all aspects of life "from school rules to parental authority, from the exchange of money for goods and services to pay toilets."[180] Hoffman's rediscovery of the countercultural potential for social change contributed to the establishment of the Youth International Party, known as the Yippies in 1967. In a *Liberation News Service* article from 1968, we can find the growing significance of the Yippies. Julius Lester, a self-proclaimed New Leftist, argued that the Yippies had politicised many young people who had maintained non-political attitudes in spite of the New Leftists' efforts at organising them politically "through

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[178] Charles Perry, *The Haight-Ashbury: A History* (New York: Vintage, 1984), p. 122. Quoted in David Farber, 'The Counterculture and the Antiwar Movement', in *Give Peace a Chance: Exploring the Vietnam Antiwar Movement*, ed. by Melvin Small and William D. Hoover (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1992), pp. 7-21 (p. 15).

[179] David Farber, 'The Counterculture and the Antiwar Movement', in *Give Peace a Chance: Exploring the Vietnam Antiwar Movement*, ed. by Melvin Small and William D. Hoover (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1992), pp. 7-21 (pp. 13-14).

[180] This idea was suggested through his book, "*Revolution for the Hell of it*," in 1968. Quoted in Daniel A. Foss & Ralph W. Larkin, 'From the Gates of Eden to Day of the Locust: An Analysis of the Dissident Youth Movement of the 1960s and its Heirs of the Early 1970s-the Post-movement Groups', *Theory and Society* 3 (1976), pp. 45-64 (p. 49).

facts, figures, or theories."[181] The Yippies' contribution to the activism of 1960s social movements helped to shift the distinction between the political and the anti-political and between culture and politics, as well as to amplify collective activities between the counterculture believers and the Leftists, blurring their seemingly obvious dissimilarities.[182]

Despite differences between both the counterculture players and political activists, they often came together in the street where political gatherings and local politics spilled out, as well as the spaces of the summer camp and the music festival. What they shared through this involvement was a propensity to oppose a society based on capitalism. For example, a commune in Berkeley ran a free bakery between 1970 and 1971, echoing the Diggers with their free restaurants. The commune members shared a notion that "working within the economy was corrupting and things should be shared."[183] This type of activity was not only seen in the West Coast communes. Red Clover communards in Vermont gathered in front of the Brattleboro Market on Mother's Day in order to give people free vegetables, which were grown at their garden, Free Farm. This was with the aim of breaking the class and money system. Its tactics, however, were non-violent and peaceful.[184]

To summarise, the aspects of the counterculture symbolically associated with the hippies did not create the beginning of communal living in the early 1960s. However, the hippies in the late 1960s did seek to build a community with "certain shared goals and values generating

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[181] Julius Lester, *Liberation News Service* (30 August 1968), p. a 14.

[182] Elissa Auther & Adam Lerner, 'The Counterculture Experiment: Consciousness and Encounters at the Edge of Art', in *West of Center: Art and the Counterculture Experiment in America, 1965-1977*, ed. by Elissa Auther & Adam Lerner (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), pp. xvi-xxxvi (p. xxii).

[183] Interview with Barry Kade, 13 July 2013.

[184] Interview with Roz Payne, 14 July 2013.

personal involvement for the common good," while the Beat generation of the 1950s revealed their limited activities in the sphere of community organising, in spite of their introduction of new ideas and alternative activities to the established social system in the middle of the Cold War.[185] It is clear that the development of the counterculture paralleled the growth of communal experiments in the correlation of social movements and countercultural energies since the late 1960s. Although the counterculture had only a vague theory for organising communities, it contributed to the commune movement by adopting a tactic to transform the existing social order, that is, through building alternatives with boundless imagination.

In conclusion, the explosive revival of communes benefited from Sixties radicalism. With an ongoing search for a community identity by modified anarchists, in reality, by the late 1960s, some New Leftists and rising counter-culture believers had fully grasped the opportunity to produce a newly emerging sense of communal living. Participants in communal living drew on the combined theories and activities of three major stimuli: modified anarchism, the New Left and the counterculture. Then, they began to add their own politics and strategies to the combined influences, as the manifestos of the communes represented. Opposing the style of traditional social movements, which had repeated the return to the ordinary lives that is deeply connected to capitalism after the participation in protests, communards designed a different lifestyle and philosophy. Supporting autonomy without leaders against the control of secret leadership, each commune tried to outline internal and external agendas varying in degrees through regular gatherings within communes and beyond. The commune-based activism, a new mode of social movement, also expanded its boundaries towards interacting with different

[185] John Robert Howard, 'The Flowering of the Hippie Movement', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 382, Protest in the Sixties (Mar., 1969), pp. 43-55 (p. 55).

groups, especially at a local level which led to some political achievements. In view of these, communal living became noticeable as a key arena for social movements to become involved in, alongside newly shaped feminism and environmentalism in the 1970s. The basic ideological concepts which each commune shared and converted into communal activism will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: Concepts for Communal Activism

Communal activism in the late 1960s and mid-1970s did not solely consist in sharing narrow living spaces. As an article written by two Californian communards, 'Venceremos' and 'Namaskar', underlined, participants in the commune movement aimed for social change as well as their individual progress: "Be armed with the tools of both the external revolution and the personal vision; diet, breath, one pointedness of mind …"[186] With this end in view, most activist communes functioned in dual arenas: movement spaces within communes, and spaces outside their communal life. Nonetheless, the relative absence of scholarly interest in the premise of 1960s communal living, especially for the history of political and activist communes, has resulted in some unexamined convictions being formed: that the commune movement was apolitical, or that a full examination of its underlying ideological background is unnecessary or even impossible since there were as many ideological tendencies within the movement as there were communes.[187]

There has been no ideal type of communal activism historically with which one can categorise communes' ideological backgrounds into a typology of ideas. As Carl Oglesby, a former president of SDS, pinpointed that "there had been no end of ideology at all" in the 1960s social movements.[188] The search for common ground by commune participants continued, whether commune participants recognised it or not, as the New Left had done. When the Danish

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[186] *Free Vermont*, 1 (1970).

[187] For analysis of the ideology of the 1960s commune movement, see David Pepper and Nickie Hallam, *Communes and the Green Vision: Counterculture, Lifestyle and the New Age* (London: Green Print, 1991). Laurence Veysey, *The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Communities in Twentieth Century America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978). Søren Kai Christensen and Tage Søndergaard Kristensen, *Kollektiver i Danmark* (Copenhagen: Borgens, 1972).

[188] Carl Oglesby, 'The Idea of the New Left', *Evergreen Review* (February, 1969), pp. 51-88 (p. 53).

left-wing magazine '*Politisk Revy*' (Political review), interviewed two organisers (Peter Duelund and Leif Varmark) of a summer camp called *Sommerfestival i Thy* (summer festival in Thy, a north-western region of Denmark) in 1970, the first question was about the political agenda of the camp.[189] Addressing their focus on "local conditions as a starting point," Duelund showed that they shared an ideological stance with other left-wing groups but had different strategies to achieve the same goal: "We believe that the tools we are using are good when it comes to engaging people. It is not to just get them to be just spectators or listeners."[190] The camp partakers, among whom were also communards, tried to find new methods which had been limited to strikes and protests. Through the two-month camp, existing commune members met potential newcomers for their communes and had a chance to discuss problems which had been arising from their communal experiments with other commune participants.

Danish sociologists Søren Kai Christensen and Tage Søndergaard Kristensen changed the term for the philosophy of communes in the 1960s from "General Commune Ideology" to "The Commune Dream", to "emphasise that it is not a firmly established and acknowledged ideology".[191] However, despite the absence of an official unified statement on their ideology, each commune organised internal and external meetings to discuss ideological questions, sometimes disseminating the outcomes through their own newspaper. Although this process was a "slow road to anywhere except more pluralism, and ambiguity is its toll", communards

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[189] According to Andrew Ritchie, a contributor to *Communes*, the camp was very free, even "anarchistic", with over 2,000 camp joiners occupying 55 acres. Andrew Ritchie, 'Acid and Collectivization', *Communes* 35 (Dec, 1970), pp. 6-9 (p. 8).

[190] *Politisk Revy*, 152 (10th July 1970).

[191] Søren Kai Christensen and Tage Søndergaard Kristensen, *Kollektiver i Danmark* (Copenhagen: Borgens, 1972), p. 34.

shared to some extent a certain type of basic principles and ideology.[192] By the late 1960s and early 1970s formulating ambiguous but coherent ideology became visible.

This chapter investigates those basic ideas as political pointers with which communes survived and developed. Communards consistently made efforts to dissociate themselves from centralised authorities in every aspects of life. They also showed solidarity with other communes and social movements in personal visits, gatherings for decision making, local politics, and massive protests. In order to demonstrate those two seminal attempts I am using two terms, decentralism and federalism as the most convincing concepts for 1960s communal activism. Although the co-existence of both concepts appears conflicting, the commune movement did not compartmentalise decentralism and federalism. After exploring these two concepts, the chapter goes on to discuss how nomadism – as presented by the French philosophers, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari – can be viewed as a useful analytical tool with which to interpret the nature and ideological backgrounds of the commune movement.

Decentralism

The conceptual boundary of decentralism has expanded in new directions, adding political, cultural and philosophical awareness from the legacies of past communal experiments. For example, the proposals, declared by Free Vermonters as their primary raison d'être of communal living, were aimed at rectifying social defects with other social movements in its search for decentralisation. They argued that "the creation of new forms of Community and Collectivity, including massive communal participation in 'governing', enriches our lives,

[192] John R. Hall, 'Marx and the Communards: Some Reflections on the Socialist Mode of Production and the Co11ective Economy at Twin Oaks', in the Twin Oaks archive at Communal Studies, David L. Rice Library, University of Southern Indiana (1978), pp. 1- 14 (pp.13-14).

allows us to explore what our changing needs are, and gives us the power to meet those real needs."[193] This libertarian impulse was shared across segments of the Left and Right. Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), an organisation of the American conservative youth movement, called for "an end to public education, to the draft, to the robbery of taxation, and to the repression of individual freedom" as their radical political objectives.[194] They, of course, differed from their progressive counterparts over the matter of who own property and the means of production. Additionally, while the New Right notion for the decentralised society concentrated on devolution and involvement of local leaders and organizations, the New Left pursued decentralization based on participation and decision making by ordinary people and community as Vermont commune members suggested.[195] An affinity with decentralism often went hand in hand with a commitment to individualism, face-to-face participatory democracy or small-scale communities when they all indicated "new ways of thinking and feeling, and new human interrelationships, including the ways we experience the natural world".[196] Yet those visions involve different accounts of the commune movement or a localist emphasis on community principles.

Politically, communes attempted to shape their own identities by distancing themselves from existing large organisations like states. Marty Jezer, one of the founding members of the Packer Corners commune in Vermont, claimed that: "Many of these people [commune

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[193] *Free Vermont*, 1 (1970).

[194] Terry M. Perlin, 'The Recurrence of Defiance', in *Contemporary Anarchism*, ed. By Terry M. Perlin (New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1979), pp. 3- 19 (p. 7).

[195] Leonard Williams, 'Ideological Parallels Between the New Left and the New Right', *The Social Science Journal*, 24. 3 (1987), pp. 317-327 (p. 321).

[196] For the conception of small-scale communities, see E. F. Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered* (1973). Murray Bookchin, 'The meaning of Confederalism', *The Anarchist Library* (1990), pp. 1-14 (p. 5).

members] are movement veterans. They have decided that it is more fruitful to live one's own revolution than to try and organise others for some future revolution. If they are political at all it is politics by example".[197] Many commune participants argued that it was no longer a priority to attack directly the repressive government and conservative straight society, which had proved to be an occasional tactic without having accumulation of social progress. Rather, they wanted to show a different model of political opposition. Decentralism embodied opposition to the rhetoric of a vanguard party associated with the concept of 'democratic centralism'. Communism that was guided by charismatic leaders or disciplined ideas increasingly lost its popularity because the well documented crimes of Stalinism, and the Soviet Union's brutal crushing of revolutions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, had helped to discredit Communism.[198]

In Denmark, we can find a more persistent role of communist' parties such as *Danmarks Kommunistiske Parti* (DKP) and *Socialistisk Folkeparti* (Socialist People's Party, SF) in advancing the social movements in the 1960s than was the case with its British and American counterparts.[199] Most – Danish commune participants I interviewed – had been involved in party politics, in particular new parties such as SF and *Venstresocialisterne* (the Left Socialists, VS) before joining communes. The difference was that the new parties were more anti-authoritarian. For example, in its first year 1967 VS adopted collective leadership without a chairman. The 1960s commune members witnessed the decline of secret leadership in big

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[197] Marty Jezer, 'New Age in the Back Country: Communes in the USA', *Communes* 31 (Feb 1970), p. 16.

[198] Ghita Lonescu, 'Lenin, the Commune and the State: Thoughts for a Centenary', *Government and Opposition* 5 (1969-70), pp. 131-165 (p. 141).

[199] Established in 1958, most of initial members of SF were excluded from DKP. Thomas Ekman Jørgensen, *Transformations and Crises: The Left and the nation in Denmark and Sweden, 1956-1980* (NY: Berghahn Books, 2008).

organisations of the movement, like SDS in the late 1960s. A changed tendency towards the bottom-up leadership was introduced in newly formed left groups at the same time. *Det Ny Samfund* (the New Society), the biggest Danish student organization which was founded in 1968, had meetings every month as the only way of making decisions by its members who were present at a given situation.[200] However, in general, Danish communards did not place a priority on political parties above their own politics:

> We do not need a political party. There are plenty of those already. What we need is to create solidarity towards the interests we have in common. We have to maintain the importance of the ideas we have about life after the revolution, and our attempts to practise them in our daily lives. It is in this exact area the communes and the experiment they symbolise, has such an immense importance.[201]

According to the historians John Davis and Anette Warring, British communards also had a visible tendency to "avoid the vanguardism of Leninist or Trotskyite groups."[202] *Open Projects* members in Liverpool proclaimed a clear anti-party politics attitude when they started the commune. Basically, the commune participants had found that important values like "freedom, equality and co-operation," cannot be realised through the way in which previous politics would impose. Although the conventional party system might bring some progress, it usually came later than expected and "often the change is no more than a change of leaders or a reshuffling of privileges."[203] As one commune member in Britain, who had dedicated his life to the Labour Party as a delegate and secretary for the local branch before 1964, recollected, the professional party had not maintained cooperation with ordinary people when the party

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[200] Flemming Andersen, Ole Stig Andersen and Anne van Deurs, *Bogen om Storfamilierne* (Copenhagen: Rhodos, 1970), p. 13.

[201] Kristian Riis, 'Communes: Some thoughts after a seminar on Risbjerggård', *Kokoo* 5 (1975), pp. 11-12 (p. 12).

[202] John Davis and Anette Warring, 'Living Utopia: Communal Living in Denmark and Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 8. 4 (2011), pp. 513-530 (p. 521).

[203] 'Openings', *Openings* 2 (December 1970).

came to power: “Once a person becomes a professional politician, he loses contact with the people completely. The idea of socialism died overnight when Labour got in.”[204]

This attitude to party politics did not necessarily mean isolation from the real world. The commune members sought to live out their own politics. Vermont communards, for example, argued that power should be returned to ordinary people, and to do this they would “build a movement with other brothers and sisters across the USA, and around the world.” [205] Interacting with other social movement groups including political parties, communards also engaged with local politics in relation to policy-making. Against control from the above and dogmatic approaches in political organisations, commune members tried to form alternative structures, looser but more authentic with greater autonomy. Instead, commune residents advocated a new type of order in individuals’ voluntary participation with no fixed leadership. This concept strengthened the existential status of communes: communal activism could continue, based on individual communes, even if it lacked any particular national leadership or guiding strategy. For this reason, the commune movement could start ‘here and now’, rather than “waiting for the revolution” to “decentralize and democratize the economics and state apparatus”.[206]

Within the commune itself, communal experiments with decentralism were applied to all aspects of life. The issues arising from internal and external problems were often discussed at daily or weekly meetings and were decided by consensus rather than by votes. To many

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[204] Andrew Rigby, *Alternative Realities: A Study of Communes and Their Members* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 32.

[205] *Free Vermont*, 2 (1970).

[206] Rick Margolies, ‘Building Communes’, *Alternatives* 3 (1972), pp. 2-6 (p. 2).

communards, formal vote-taking was "redundant". Chris Ross, a member of the Blackheath commune in London, stated: "Once you get people on a level together, it's not a question of collecting votes; it's taking the general feel. Abstract political matters can be dealt with in terms of the whole complexion of the relationships".[207] Another member of Blackheath, Maggie White, noted the diversity of their meetings in terms of members' priorities: "Each person brings his experiences back into the group to be discussed. We rather imagined ourselves as the Black heath commune will do this, the Black heath commune will do that."[208] Danish commune members also maintained the same way of decision making called *Ting*, a plenary meeting of all commune members, covering both emotional life and political activity. For example, in Christiania, a living complex on Christiania Island in Copenhagen, about a thousand residents gathered at a central building *Tinghuset* (*Ting* house) if a *Ting* was needed.[209] Christiania communards firstly debated issues within their individual communes, and then at a cluster of houses called provinces. Lastly, they discussed every matter of interest for Christiania as a whole in *Tinghuset*. Approximately half of all the residents in Christiania participated in these meetings.[210]

The communes rotated key roles based on members' situation. Some took up paid employment outside communes and others concentrated on child rearing at home or acted as delegates for their communes, taking part in any organisational work. In Kana, this model was

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[207] Richard Fairfield, *The Modern Utopian Communes Europe* (San Francisco: Alternatives Foundation, 1972), p. 56.

[208] Fairfield, p. 54.

[209] George Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of Politics: European Autonomous Movements and the Decolonization of Everyday Life* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2006), pp. 117-118.

[210] *Christiania Avisen*, 23 (1974), p.3

adopted and continued for nearly 5 years.[211] Communards did not spend a lot of time and energy dealing with internal conflicts by distributing the work in a sensible manner.[212] For economic independence from the capitalist system, a self-sufficient way of living (meaning the voluntary choice of poverty, common economy, division of labour, and the launch of farms and businesses) was increasingly espoused. Louise Andrews started her communal life at Earthworks, a commune in Franklin in Vermont, by learning everything from local farmers. This included skills such as preserving maple syrup and feeding animals since the founding members, including Louise, had no experience and knowledge of farming: "It was", she recalled, "an eye opening, exciting and interesting. We wanted to be able to be self-sufficient without depending on our government."[213] While the Earthworks residents in the rural area concentrated on farming, as an urban commune six of Open Project members in Liverpool including Dave Craig established a furniture making venture called 'Open Design' to make money for their communal living and to challenge the existing system of furniture industry. Each Open Design participants made furniture individually for his own purchaser with "total responsibility and with no authorities like boss, manager and foreman."[214] The initial aim and structure of the Open Design was heavily based on the commune's manifesto: "Working freely, producing for a need instead of for an artificially created market."[215] Although the Open Design project was active during a very short period due to its limited customers, mostly students, it laid an economic foundation for the commune's sustainable existence and provided

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[211] Interview with Ruth Plovgaard, 28 May 2013.

[212] *Kokoo*, 5 (1975), p. 5.

[213] Interview with Louise Andrews, 15 July 2013.

[214] Dave Craig, Arts Labs Newsletter (April, 1970), pp. 44-46. Quoted in Andrew Rigby, *Alternative Realities: A Study of Communes and Their Members* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), pp. 131-133.

[215] 'Openings', *Openings* 2 (December 1970).

a mechanism by which communards interacted with local people.[216]

In addition to establishing their own systems for communal living, communes traded produce like vegetables and crafts through various co-ops. For example, the Earthworks commune managed over 150 quarts of fine quality maple syrup in its first year (1970) and marketed the syrup to a Natural Foods outlet in New York City under the Earthworks label.[217] With an aim of living "outside the capitalist system as much as possible," Shrubb Family in Norfolk also provided most of their organic bread to food shops called Community Services in London and Cambridge where many goods from communes had been sold at cheaper prices than other commercial food shops.[218] The Shrubb communards even distanced themselves from the social security system which appeared too bureaucratic saying that "we would rather steer clear of it as much as possible."[219] Buying basic necessities for maintaining houses and farms was another possible option. Bjørn Pedersen designed a kind of group business after his commune Felicia moved to Bornholm, an island near Sweden, from Copenhagen on 1 May 1970. With other commune residents on the island they purchased necessities collectively at a relatively cheap cost, and then gathered once a month with 30 to 40 participants to distribute those goods and discuss their next activities.[220]

As a result, the communards could spend more time engaging in other activities rather than

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[216] Andrew Rigby, *Alternative Realities: A Study of Communes and Their Members* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 133.

[217] 'Letter from Bruce', online http://vtcommune.blogspot.com.

[218] Andrew Rigby, *Communes in Britain* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 61. John Davis and Anette Warring, 'Living Utopia: Communal Living in Denmark and Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 8. 4 (2011), pp. 513-530 (p. 518).

[219] 'Shrubb Family', BBC documentary 1973.

[220] Interview with Bjørn Pedersen, 19 Nov 2013.

producing living requisites. In the evenings, commune members studied together in order to expand their political consciousness, sustaining a common economy, according to an advertisement for new members.[221] While the effort to become an independent economic unit was common across all types of communes, the purpose differed according to a particular commune's original aims. For communalists in political communes, like Peter Larsen, creating an economic faction and making money would be used for purchasing houses or land or for creating printing facilities or shops: "it will all help to strengthen the political struggle".[222] It is interesting to find an attempt by Blackheath commune members in London to save money for a political fund; they would take 10% from their pooled income for paying fines for their involvement in any arrests at demonstrations, and for supporting other political groups.[223]

The 1960s and 1970s communes sustained internal attempts to build a new mode of lifestyles and institutions, moving away from the dominant culture. Some communes adopted different terminologies and calendars in order to symbolically distance themselves from the existing cultural systems. Twin Oaks commune members in Virginia used a word "co" instead of "he, she, hers and his," when they talked to each other and within some of their written articles. A group of feminists in New York inspired them to choose the neutral vocabulary for equality and justice between sexes and generations.[224] According to Owen Thompson, a founding member of Shrubb Family in Norfolk, the farmhouse that Thompson bought for the

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[221] *Kokoo,* 5 (1974), p. 17.

[222] Peter Larsen, 'Letter from Røjle Commune', *Kokoo* 3 (1974), p. 15.

[223] Richard Fairfield, *The Modern Utopian Communes Europe* (San Francisco: Alternatives Foundation, 1972), p. 56.

[224] Rosabeth M Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 23

communal living was: "never his place, it was always our place."[225] Likewise, in order to avoid any possible discrimination all members of Maos Lyst commune in Copenhagen adopted the same surname, just 'the *Kløvedals* (the Rivendells)' which was taken from Tolkien's Lord of the Rings.[226] The Open Projects dwellers also directed their attention towards decentralisation of the education system, addressing debates and organising activities against the centralisation of rural schools. In an article entitled 'Dafydd and Goliath', the communards reported that some parents of the school in Bryncroes, a small Welsh community, on the Lleyn peninsula about 120 miles from Merseyside, had struggled for four years to avert Caernarvonshire Education Committee's proposal to merge the rural school with other ones.[227] Against the increasing spread of consumerism, several New England communes celebrated their own festivals on Solstice and May Day, instead of commercialised holidays like Christmas. Louise Andrews at Earthworks in Vermont tried to develop some new cultural celebrations. As a new ritual, the commune members organised Solstice gatherings that, being closely connected to the rhythms of the natural world, were appropriate for a farming commune.[228] When spring came to Green Mountains around Mayday each year, the communards of Tree Frog Farm, Wendell, and Montague Farm in Massachusetts visited Packer Corners to celebrate Mayday, plant maypole trees, and take a family trip.[229]

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[225] Interview with Owen Thompson by John Davis, 4 July 2009. Quoted in John Davis and Anette Warring, 'Living Utopia: Communal Living in Denmark and Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 8. 4 (2011), pp. 513-530 (p. 517).

[226] Interview with Henrik Okkels, 17 February 2014.

[227] Dafydd and Goliath, *Openings*, 2 (Dec 1970), pp. 3-5.

[228] Interview with Louise Andrews, 15 July 2013.

[229] Blake Slonecker, *Living the Movement: Liberation News Service, Montague Farm and the New Left, 1967-1981* (PhD thesis: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2009), p. 99.

Taken together, Decentralism consolidated the development of communal activism when each commune adopted it in every part of daily lives. As many commune participants contended, principles and beliefs for politics cannot be imposed from the top. Without charismatic leaders, individual commune formed a politically independent entity. Communards tried to re-construct the prevailing social order by setting up economic and cultural alternatives opposing the capitalist system. Through the persistent endeavour of decentralisation, commune residents aimed to transform themselves into the so-called 'political personal' and relationships with people in their local societies, a new prospect for a better life. Therefore, decentralism provided an internal basis for communal activism making their efforts easier to live the revolution by example.

Federalism, small is not necessarily beautiful

With the help of sharing historical moments over the 1960s, transcending all kinds of boundaries that had been confined to nationality, ethnicity, sex and age, the Sixties generation was more accessible than for those of previous eras – in the words of Simon Prince, "the imagined community of global revolt".[230] For instance, Iranian students who were studying in Germany joined a protest against the visit of the Shah of Iran to West Berlin, the focal point of Cold War, in 1967, with German students.[231] As a result, the establishment of international networks among activists, who came to know that they had been attempting similar tasks, was followed.[232] This generational esprit de corps contributed to producing diverse and new efforts

[230] Simon Prince, 'The Global Revolt of 1968 and Northern Ireland', *The Historical Journal*, 49. 3 (2006), pp. 851-875 (p. 867).

[231] Timothy Brown, '1968 East and West: Divided Germany as a Case Study in Transnational History', *The American Historical Review*, 114. 1(2009), pp. 69-96 (p. 83)

[232] For example, the International Union of Socialist Youth's and Congress on the Dialectics of Liberation in 1967, Simon Prince, 'The Global Revolt of 1968 and Northern Ireland', *The Historical Journal*, 49. 3 (2006),

in every aspects of life locally, nationally and globally. For the commune movement, the spirit of the times created frequent exchanges of ideas and experiences, directly traveling throughout the world and indirectly through the media including increasing underground newspapers.

Earlier commune members did not need much time to recognise that communes were not a "panacea for anything" but a "daily, often painful, collision between theory and practice," as Julia Langley who lived together with ten adults and eight children at the Laurieston Hall commune, Scotland in the mid-1970s, put it.[233] Therefore, the commune movement needed a concerted effort to share experiences of different communes. In other words, the early 1970s were the time to organise collective work by a federation of communes or several voluntary commune groups. In addition, as the editors of Kokoo underlined in 1975, it became nearly impossible for a single individual in modern society to "break through to a new progressive consciousness and any activity regarding a cultural alternative," without "constantly getting critiqued by his peers", since the repression exercised by society towards "alien influence on culture was so integrated in the mind of the individual."[234] Solidarity – collective work or federalism – had been one of key concepts and the internal basis for 1960s communal activism as Danish communards emphasised the importance of networks in a song about the need for solidarity, both internally and externally:

> You are weak when you are alone
> Better is a common cause
> You alone say no

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pp. 851-875 (p. 866).

[233] 'Bringing Up Kids in a Commune', *Spare Rib*, 35 (May 1975). Quoted in Sheila Rowbotham, *The Past is Before US, Feminism in Action since the 1960s* (London: Pandora Press, 1989), p. 29.

[234] *Kokoo*, 2 (1975), p. 5.

To your road
Towards a tomorrow
With us you say yes[235]

Many communes in Aarhus in northern Denmark had a rotation system called *arbejdsring* (labour ring) for renovating work among communes such as casting floors and putting up wallpaper.[236] This share of work helped to shape "a sense of commitment and trust" as Cracker Co-operative, a commune in the East End of London established in the early 1970s, experienced in its simple work schedules.[237]

On the second of August in 1970 some communes in Britain prepared a booth outside the Round House in London, where 400 people including commune members from over ten communes and also young people from neighbourhoods gathered for the communes' meeting.[238] They attracted passers-by and would-be newcomers to their communal living explaining the purpose of that open meeting: "As the groups quickly merged into a collective of happy, dancing people, that we were not only many but strong… people turning outward to each other and turning on to the earth in basic solidarity!"[239] Commune members had to consider their collective values and activities along with individual freedom and self-fulfilment, and to find a solution to balancing those conflicting ideals from the start. As Craig Scott, who had been active in building connections between British commune members, highlighted, the

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[235] Henrik Høgh and Ole Bundgaard, 'You are Weak When You are Alone', *Kokoo* 2 (1975), p. 29.

[236] *Kokoo*, 6 (1974), p. 24.

[237] Clem Gorman, *People Together* (Frogmore, Herts: Paladin, 1975), pp. 12-13.

[238] Andrew Rigby, *Alternative Realities: A Study of Communes and their Members* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 100.

[239] Richard Fairfield, *The Modern Utopian Communes Europe* (San Francisco: Alternatives Foundation, 1972), p. 6.

commune movement was not just a "cosy ego trip for intellectuality and romantic organic growers", but a dynamic and constant connection within each commune and beyond.[240] A federation of communes was needed to "fire the imagination of the apathetic political sheep" and to make the communes stable and stronger.[241] A "certain amount of organisation" played a key role in creating a decentralised and cooperative alternative society.[242] It included Free Vermont in Vermont, *Det Ny Samfund* (the New Society) and Kokoo in Denmark and the Commune Movement in Britain. It was important for the 1960s and 1970s commune participants to interact with various groups and people beyond their communes.

For the US commune movement, Free Vermonters who tried to form a network of Vermont communes often used a piece of inherited wisdom when they edited their magazine, *Free Vermont*: "If our people fight one tribe at a time, all will be killed. They can cut off our fingers one by one, but if we join together we will make a powerful fist" – Little Turtle, Miami Indians, 1791.[243] Free Vermonters did not remain focussed on mere localism. Not limiting themselves to Vermont as an area for political commitments, they planned "everything from implementing the rights of sexual self-determination and explaining the importance of this liberation, to rallying real support for the Black Panther Party and other forces of the black and third world people".[244] The events and initiatives designed by Free Vermonters were not always easy, and often resulted in little tangible success, but offered a useful forum for forging inter-communal

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[240] Craig Scott, 'Communes… A Peaceful Revolution', *Communes* 37 (March, 1971), p. 7.

[241] Scott, p. 7.

[242] 'Where do we go from here?', *Alternatives* 3 (1972), pp. 22-24 (p. 23).

[243] *Free Vermont*, 1 (1970).

[244] Ibid.

relationships and the exchange of ideas and experiences.

On the other side of the Atlantic, Sarah Eno was busy responding to letters and phone calls, publishing the bimonthly magazine *Communes*, and giving speeches about communal living at different schools as she served as a secretary of the Commune Movement in 1971: "There have been over 1400 letters, mostly from people wanting to join a commune: a few from people willing to start one. Most of the time I have been putting people in touch with one another as much as possible".[245] Organisers like Eno approached commune participants and seekers to establish connections, and attempted to assist the growth of communes by arranging regular meetings between communes at local, regional and national levels. In 1972 The Commune Movement had 453 affiliated groups including overseas supporters.[246] The association had also saved money under the name of 'Federation Fund' through commune members' donations in order to support forming new communes.[247] Based on these constant developments the Commune Movement raised the idea of establishing a federation of communes in Europe, Japan, and the US beyond their national frontiers.[248] Tony Kelly, the founding member of the organisation, articulated the reasons for the importance of federal association. After stating the inevitable weaknesses from staying just a single commune, Kelly firmly believed that a federation "can protest, if necessary, take effective action. Should any of us succumb to the

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[245] The organisation founded in 1968. Sarah Eno, 'Report on the Commune Scene in Britain, 1971', in *The Modern Utopian Communes Europe* by Richard Fairfield (San Francisco, CA: Alternatives Foundation, 1972), p. 25.

[246] *Communes*, 39 (Aug 1972).

[247] However, the British federal organisation could save just over 200 pounds for the Federation Fund by the end of 1970. Andrew Rigby, *Alternative Realities: A Study of Communes and Their Members* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 99.

[248] Richard Fairfield, *The Modern Utopian Communes Europe* (San Francisco: Alternatives Foundation, 1972), p. 7.

state coercive machinery or even common coercion, a federation has both the motivation and the means to mount a rescue operation."[249] Simultaneously, the Commune Movement already proclaimed the autonomy of each commune and members themselves with the utmost care in its constitution:

> No restriction will be imposed in the movements' literature, or in any other channel of expression, funds permitting, on discussion of sociological issues relevant to the objects of the movement." "Subject to payment of membership subscription, and the attainment of 16 years of age, no application for membership may be refused. No members may be expelled or suspended.[250]

In addition, the Commune Services Agency, established by Joan Harvey in February 1970, assisted British commune participants as an information centre.[251] Samanya, founded the same year by Richard Perkins, also coordinated regular meetings and various projects for communal living. Perkins regarded Samanya as a "loosely organised central body of information and fund-raising" to help British communes.[252] This formation of a centre between communes helped not only would-be communards but also researchers who would study the counter-cultural phenomenon by organising their visits to various communes most of which had been existing anonymously.[253]

When communes in Vermont needed to engage in policy-making, all commune dwellers met together in a gathering between different communes called a tribal council. Participating in the meeting (held at Earthworks commune in Franklin, northern Vermont), Barbara Nolfi,

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[249] Fairfield, p. 11.

[250] Rigby, pp. 93-94.

[251] Joan Harvey, 'Communes Services Report', *Communes* 37 (March 1971), pp. 26-27. Quoted in Rigby, p. 99.

[252] Clem Gorman, *People Together* (Frogmore, Herts: Paladin, 1975), p. 48.

[253] Philip Abrams & Andrew McCulloch, *Communes, Sociology and Society* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 4.

who moved to the commune in 1969 with her son Dylan Nolfi, started the first morning of the gathering by planting some oats. Nolfi was then involved in one of several discussion groups. Hundreds of men and women from ten communes participated, representing a broad spectrum from hippies to radicals, in an effort to set up new projects: "a cooperative system for buying food, a separate children's collective, a medical clinic which would circuit between communes; a travelling caravan of People's music and theatre".[254] It also helped to build an expanded sense of solidarity, transforming individual commune members "personally and collectively into a new people, new families".[255] Organisers of Free Vermont envisaged this kind of meeting on the national and regional level alongside town and city meetings with attendees being "representatives of all the communes around, high school kids, loners who are into the revolution, anybody welcome who wants to work for humane changes in our life here and across the nation".[256] For communards and local people Free Vermonters also designed a community centre called 'People's Information Center', in Brattleboro in which everything could be done in order to "make the community grow.": "bulletin board for rides, place to stay, meeting people, classes in anything people want and assistance with legal self-defence."[257]

However, there was a slight but steady gap between commune members and the organisers of communication centre like Kokoo in Denmark and the Commune Movement in Britain. According to Carl, who quitted working for Kokoo in November 1974, the level of interest from commune members in Kokoo was lower than previously assumed. Carl thought that

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[254] Dylan Nolfi, 'Earthworks – The Franklin Commune' in online http://vtcommune.blogspot.com.

[255] Nolfi's blog. Ibid.

[256] *Free Vermont*, 1 (1970).

[257] Ibid.

Kokoo organisers had done much work "for a small result in an association where the initiatives are supposed to come from the members."[258] Danish communes also had to remain without having *Kokoo* due to its short break in the early 1970s.[259] The temporary cessation can be viewed as demonstrating that solidarity among communes with a coordinating organisation was more demanding than maintaining relationships between individual members within communes themselves. First of all, given the loosest form of *Kokoo*, making collective efforts at extra external objectives needed much more time to stabilise those projects. Coordinators of *Kokoo*, for example, had no fixed editors for publishing their own magazine. According to residents of Vestergård, a commune in Jutland, it was made according to occasional editorship.[260] Sometimes, subscribers of the magazine had to wait until necessary articles had been prepared, skipping the due date. In addition, the most vital task for communes was survival in severe conditions, particularly in the winter, and dealing with personality clashes during the process of evolution. Although Danish communards talked about "the balance between communal living and direct political activity,"[261] the numbers of participants in regular *Kokoo* meetings and other political gatherings remained few compared with the increasing number of communes at the time.

Similarly, from the perspective of Sarah Eno, secretary of the Commune Movement, it appeared unlikely that commune members' awareness of social progress was authentic: "The

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[258] 'Reply from Carl', *Kokoo*, 2 (1974), p. 26.

[259] Doris Brammer & Jeanne Kempinski, *Kollektiv Familier I Danmark* (København: Institut for Organisation og Arbejdssociologi, 1972), p. 51.

[260] *Kokoo*, 4 (1974), p. 30. With regard to this, according to Richard Neville, founding editor of London Oz, although underground newspapers lacked "editorial policy or direction" it "fitted well into the free and easy, unstructured way of doing things, so valued within the counter-culture." Elizabeth Nelson, *The British Counter-Culture, 1966-73: A Study of the Underground Press* (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 47.

[261] John Davis and Anette Warring, 'Living Utopia: communal living in Denmark and Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 8. 4 (2011), pp. 513-530 (p. 515).

desire to effect a social or political change in society is not very apparent."[262] By contrast, after joining the *Commune Movement*'s gathering, members of Shrubb Family which had shown their support, became reluctant to be involved with the organisation.[263] They complained that the secretaries of the *Commune Movement* had concentrated on their contest for the leadership and the meeting was directed without sharing a spirit of 'get-together' by a handful of people who were not from communes.[264] It is understandable that this breach could arise in the rapid development of the commune movement during the early 1970s when communards had to concentrate on their own settlement and decentralization. All communes were at a different stage of development. The problem of balancing two opposite values, individual or group, needed much more time and effort than the organisers assumed.[265]

Despite these discrepancies, growing communal networks called "karass" were strengthened, with new groups being added. Communards of Johnson Pasture, founded in 1970 in Vermont, were being attacked by an adjacent commune called The Brotherhood of the Spirit which had been allowed to stay on Johnson Pasture's land, because the Brotherhood tried to expel the Johnson Pasture commune from the land.[266] After the commune had been visited by Free Vermont people as negotiators for the confrontation, Johnson Pasture organised a meeting

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[262] Sarah Eno, 'Report on the Commune Scene in Britain, 1971', in *The Modern Utopian Communes Europe* by Richard Fairfield (San Francisco, CA: Alternatives Foundation, 1972), p. 25.

[263] A commune member delivered his sympathies with the organisation saying that "It has been helpful in giving us contacts and ideas, but also in giving a kind of security, a feeling that we're not going it alone and that there are many others who feel the same as we do. Also it could become very useful as a source of information, financial aid and inter-communal activity." O. Thompson, 'Norfolk commune', *Communes*, 33 (June 1970), pp. 9-10.

[264] Andrew Rigby, *Communes in Britain* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 53.

[265] Elizabeth Nelson, *The British Counter-Culture, 1966-73: A Study of the Underground Press* (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 124.

[266] Reid R. Frazier, *1960s Communes in southern Vermont* (MA thesis: University of Vermont, 2002), pp. 43-45.

to decide whether they should be involved in community affairs. In the meeting, they also discussed whether "a more permanent federation of communes and freaks farms could be established".[267] Given its founders' backgrounds, mostly non-radicals, participation in the town meeting, such as conversations about the distribution of the newspaper "Free Vermont", was a meaningful change, although this did not result in a transformation of the commune's basic characterisation of mixing drugs with spiritualism.

A variety of local and regional group works were also made as an ad-hoc meeting without any organisational form. Blackheath commune attempted to make a centre of communes in south eastern parts of London with one or two other communes or small groups.[268] Whether communes were located in urban or rural areas, or even on isolated islands, this kind of connections appeared more natural than those of organisations on a national level. Expanding their spaces with connections which begin at their living areas and then move to region was a process of the "dialectic of feelings/thoughts/movement from city-country-city-country on into the future."[269] In order to support communes' economic and political progress there were groups travelling throughout Britain. The members of the *Mobile Voluntary Work Team* showed a model of being an alternative society. They offered their labour to local people and in return obtained food and services instead of money. This activity led to formation of St Ann's, a craft centre in Nottingham. As the Team's Jill Maguire and Mike Stroud noted, St Ann's Community Craft Centre would teach local people including commune members' skills like making

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[267] Barry Laffan, *Communal Organization and Social Transition: A Case Study from the Counterculture of the Sixties and Seventies* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), p. 139.

[268] Richard Fairfield, *The Modern Utopian Communes Europe* (San Francisco: Alternatives Foundation, 1972), p. 54.

[269] *Free Vermont*, 1 (1970).

furniture and repairing machinery.[270]

For international solidarity, there were connections between differing country's communes. Summer festivals in Denmark, particularly a 70-day tent city festival, the Thy camp (*Thylejren*) between July and September 1970, attracted a number of commune members and new comers who joined communes afterwards. Inspired by the Woodstock Festival of 1969 in New York, this event was designed by *Det Ny Samfund* (the New Society), which was one of ad hoc programmes of the organisation to make "non-hierarchical assemblies" among numerous groups and individuals.[271] Staying in a tent set up by the participants themselves, they trained and experienced how to manage and solve their problems with the existing society. Henning Prins, one of the instigators of the camp, highlighted the importance of practice: "When we get back to the other society we can argue from the experience we have gained here… You know you can get a lot of angels and a lot of gurus who are as clean as heaven, but they can't move a brick. What we want people to do here is to find a balance between their ideals and the old society".[272] The summer camp provided the opportunity for an open debate between the counter-culturalists or hippies and left wing activists. According to Peter Duelund and Kristian Riis, who were in the Thy camp, the differences between "the beat-culture and the political position" continued during the festival: the left-wing failed to consider "what was happening on the dance floor" and the believers in sub-culture distanced them from all political

[270] Andrew Rigby, *Alternative Realities: A Study of Communes and their Members* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), pp. 128-129.

[271] Thomas Ekman Jørgensen, 'Utopia and Disillusion: Shattered Hopes of the Copenhagen Counterculture', in *Between Marx and Coca-cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960–1980*, ed. By Axel Schildt & Detlef Siegfried (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), pp. 333-352 (p. 343).

[272] Andrew Ritchie, 'Acid and Collectivization', *Communes* 35 (Dec, 1970), pp. 6-9 (p. 8).

engagements.[273]

As a result, an international congress of communes was being arranged by Bodil Mobjerg in Copenhagen for the summer of 1970. Likewise, an "event of historical importance" would take place in the French Alps from 1 to 15 Sep 1971 at another international gathering of communes.[274] This transnational network of communes continued until the mid-1980s in a form of festival. Marianne Frandsen who had been involved in a project to create a large commune in Jutland, Denmark, sent a letter to an organiser of the International Communes Festival planned in August 1983 at Laurieston Hall in Scotland. In the letter Frandsen wanted to stay at different communes in Scotland and England during the festival to "see how they are organised".[275] In fact, the festival organisers arranged accommodation before, during and after the international meeting for participants from all over the world including Asian communes in Japan and India. The travellers could choose communes according to their interests, for example large communes, alternative technology, therapy, wholefood shops, and organic farms.[276] According to Andrew Rigby, the commune movement had "the potential of becoming one of the first genuine international movements for social change."[277]

In summary, federalism among communes was supported throughout the period along with decentralism. Commune members tried to link different communes which had attempted to

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[273] Camilla Skousen & Bente Hansen, 'Studentersamfund – nyt samfund', *Dengang I 60'erne,* ed. By Bente Hansen, J. HøM, G. Nielsen, R. Pay & J. Schytte (København: Informations Forlag ApS, 1979), pp. 185-186.

[274] Emmanuel Petrakis, 'International Gathering of Communes', *Communes* 37 (March, 1970), p. 26.

[275] *International Communes Network Newsletter* (May 1983), p. 24.

[276] 'Touring communes & alternative projects', *International Communes Network Newsletter* (May 1983), pp. 2-3.

[277] Andrew Rigby, *Alternative Realities: A Study of Communes and their Members* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 308.

build their own decentralised alternatives in order to make the commune movement stable and stronger. A federation of communes like the Commune Movement in Britain and *Free Vermont* in Vermont could be called a forefront in the sense of doing collective activities and providing information between communes. Although attempts at building a federation of communes were less successful than efforts at encouraging decentralism,[278] federalism was a basic principle of the 1960s commune movement (illustrated by the popular slogan, 'small is not necessarily beautiful'). Without balanced efforts of decentralisation and federalisation it was not easy for the commune movement to explore their problems and to find necessary tasks as solutions. What distinguishes the co-existence of decentralism and federalism is the difference between policymaking that affected people's lives and its operation. Supporting direct democracy, decentralists did not allow any authorities to decide significant issues.

Nomadism

Roslyn Johnson, a self-declared anarchist and Londoner who had been drifting around the world since the winter of 1966, sent a letter to *Kokoo* in 1974, in order to find a suitable place: "I've almost no money, very small talents and speak no Danish… Is there a commune willing to consider my application, preferably feminist?"[279] After two of the founding communards left Shrubb Family in Norfolk, the remaining four recruited a new member who had dropped out from an English university and returned from his journey to American communes. Elia Katz, an American writer, described commune dwellers as a group of "the world's largest, newest leisure class" who were "crawling and darting through the fur of the Big Ugly Bear, all

[278] 'Where do we go from here?', *Alternatives* 3 (1972), pp. 22-24 (p. 22).

[279] *Kokoo*, 6 (1974), p. 25.

aimlessly traveling like insects."[280] Despite Katz's cynical observation, moving from home and campus, hitchhiking all across the country and beyond, and experimenting with a new mode of lifestyle for "becoming oneself" was a concept "which the Sixties put much emphasis on."[281] Relentless attempts by most communards towards continuing communal life after leaving their previous commune resembled the way in which nomads have operated. In fact, *Ant Farm* commune members in San Francisco called themselves 'cybernetic nomads' as a video collective in their drawing.[282]

It seems relevant to use 'nomadism' to explain 1960s communal activism which represented frequent transfers in theory and practice between communes beyond national boundaries and the enlarged consciousness of daily and personal politics. As defined by two well-known French philosophers, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, the term of nomadism equates features of nomads with the wisdom of the plants, particularly highlighting their focus on the notions and values of the rhizome. A rhizome of any plants offers a point with "something else-with the wind, an animal, and human beings" where new links and dimensions started and developed.[283] While decentralism and federalism have been introduced to define the ideological backgrounds, nomadism is more directly connected to the nature of the commune movement, which was being formed as communards developed their identity during

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[280] Elia Katz, *Armed Love: Inside America's Communes* (1971), p. 19, quoted in Thomas H. Shey, 'Why Communes Fail: A Comparative Analysis of the Viability of Danish and American Communes', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 39. 3 (1977), pp. 605-613 (p. 606).

[281] Camilla Skousen & Bente Hansen, 'Sofiegården', *Dengang I 60'erne,* ed. By Bente Hansen, J. HøM, G. Nielsen, R. Pay & J. Schytte (København: Informations Forlag ApS, 1979), p. 110.

[282] Deanne Pytlinski, 'San Francisco video collectives and the counterculture', in *West of Center: Art and the Counterculture Experiment in America, 1965-1977*, ed. by Elissa Auther & Adam Lerner (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), pp. 56-73 (p. 66).

[283] Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: The Athlone Press, 1988), translated by Brian Massumi, pp. 7-11.

their communal living existence. The discursive style of communes shared a number of nomadic characteristics if not identical perceptions. In order better to understand the ideological framework of communal activism, this section is focused on linking nomadism to the various elements of the commune movement.

For starting and forming a basic agenda for communal life, commune participants did not restrict their initiatives to a specific philosophy and particular activities as Free Vermonters postulated: "We were thinking about putting down, pretty casually, some of the things that we think about, some of the things we really want, some of the things we are starting to move on Now. A list that can keep changing as we fill out our ideas."[284] Commune members repeated ceaselessly setting up something new, modifying it and becoming another new one like the typical characteristics of rhizomes. According to the concept of nomadism, communal developments were in the processes of "deterritorialization and reterritorialization".[285] When communards in Vermont devised their own flag with three colours, black, red and green, symbolising their thoughts and plans for anarchism, socialism and environmentalism, they as "revolutionary internationalists" wanted to see the flag flying over Vermont communes and also other areas in the world where people had made efforts for social change: "We certainly don't want to see the planet or any part of it divided up into squares. We should fly all our colors as long as we can, the colors of DRVN, the NLF, of China, of Cuba, of Berkeley, of Palestine and Quebec, of the Tupamaros and the Black Panthers, the Pathet Lao and every tribe that speaks of the world revolution."[286] For the participants of communes, locality was "not

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[284] *Free Vermont*, 1 (1970).

[285] Deleuze & Guattari, p. 10.

[286] The Tupamaros, the National Liberation Movement of Uruguay, famous for its kidnapping of the British ambassador Geoffrey Jackson, on 10th January, 1971, demanding the release of political prisoners. *IT*, 1. 96 (Jan, 1971), p. 5. The New Left and anarchism supported "the virtues of the primitive band, the tribe, and the village"

delimited" but shared among them around the world making the local issues "nonlimited locality", as the nomads did.[287]

This approach is similar to a cross-border perspective meaning that "borders create political, social, and cultural distinctions, but simultaneously imply the existence of (new) networks and systems of interaction across them." [288] With the developments of technology and communication, the boundaries of the world and most contemporary communes had been attenuated.[289] The spring and summer of 1968 saw large numbers of young people travelling to Paris.[290] During the 1960s a lot of young Danes began hitchhiking all over Europe, the Middle East, and in the USA and elsewhere:

> They stayed with people like themselves. In all big cities they could find flats where they were welcome and where they heard of some good addresses in the next town. These crossroads, where a lot of people met, said hello, stayed and left again, are characterized by collective living, and the experiences here were not forgotten when the hitchhikers eventually returned home. The Danish group families have thus been inspired by the new international youth milieus emerging all over the world in the sixties.[291]

When Kokoo, the coordinating centre among Danish communes, tried to publish a book about communes entitled '*Kollektiv Kogebogen*' (the Commune Cookbook) in 1969, the Danish word '*stamme*' meaning 'tribes' was used. The editors were referred to as a group of

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against manipulation of the industrialised society. Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and its Youthful Opposition* (London: Faber and Farber, 1970), pp. 264-265. *Free Vermont*, 1 (1970).

[287] Deleuze & Guattari, p. 383.

[288] Michiel Baud & Willem Van Schendel, 'Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands', *Journal of World History*, 8. 2 (1997), pp. 211-242 (p. 216).

[289] Rosabeth M. Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 171.

[290] Richard Ivan Jobs, 'Youth Movements: Travel, Protest and Europe in 1968', *The American Historical Review*, 114. 2 (2009), pp. 376-404 (pp. 378, 383).

[291] Flemming Andersen, Ole Stig Andersen & Anne van Deurs, *Bogen om Storfamilierne* (Copenhagen: Rhodos, 1970), p. 11.

representatives from the various tribes.[292] Reflecting their nomadic characteristics commune members thought that each commune, region or country could be a tribe with different own ideological backgrounds and organisational systems alongside occupied individual territories. Every commune or tribe recognised those dissimilarities between them. However, the acceptance of the dissimilarities did not prevent the commune participants' journey to every tribe as the early nomads travelled from place to place. When they needed collective activities and just having fun they joined together.[293] For commune residents the term 'tribe' not only signposted diversity but also the openness to possible co-existence and even transformation to a same one with others. The use of term 'tribe' by Vermont communes was also seen in British and Danish counterparts.[294] It was the Tribe of the Sun, a group of people who squatted at 144 Piccadilly in London in 1969 making a commune called London Street commune.[295] Started as an inner group of the Hyde Park Diggers in 1967, they published their own magazine with various action groups.[296]

The Deleuzian concept of 'nomadism' is also applicable to the communes' political evaluation and action. The political perspective based on their notion of 'micro-politics' parallels the symbolic perception that 'the personal is political' for the period in which

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[292] *Politisk Revy*, 119 (7th February 1969), P. 9.

[293] The term 'tribe' was also used when the anti-war activists and hippies came together at a meeting under the title "Gathering of the Tribes for a Human be-in" in 1967, as I examined it in chapter 1.

[294] It is interesting to note that Vermont activists including the commune members carried their own flag for the 1971 May Day massive civil disobedience in Washington which was organised by a new group called 'May Day Tribe'. George W. Hopkins, 'May Day 1971', in *Give Peace a Chance: Exploring the Vietnam Antiwar Movement*, ed. by Melvin Small and William D. Hoover (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1992), pp. 71-88 (p. 74).

[295] John Davis and Anette Warring, 'Living Utopia: communal living in Denmark and Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 8. 4 (2011), pp. 513-530 (p. 514).

[296] Clem Gorman, *People Together* (Frogmore, Herts: Paladin, 1975), p. 46.

communal activism flourished. The primary idea of micro-politics indicates that beyond the separation between "the private and public spheres, and limits to the local or personal phenomena of desire", it "obviates all of these, replacing them by a differentiation" and "sometimes leading element in social processes."[297] Paraphrasing the two distinctions, society and individual, as "the one molar, the other molecular", Deleuze also underpinned the co-existence between them: "They are inseparable … always in presupposition to one another."[298] In fact, with sympathetic and explicit concerns, Deleuze addressed the social movements since the early 1970s including "struggles around ecology, autonomy and the networks of alternative institutions."[299] For instance, before starting her communal living 'Jane' was a frequent participant in various demonstrations at such places as Holy Loch and Aldermaston. Although Jane acknowledged the ways in which traditional protest movements raised the consciousness of participants, she was less sure whether the demonstrations are "worthwhile as an end in themselves."[300] This was partly caused by the dichotomy between the personal daily life and the occasional protests. In their everyday existence, most protest activists were closely connected to the increasing consumerism and the existing living patterns of capitalism which they opposed. Living with other people, like-minded or not in flats in cities or farms in rural areas, moving away from conventional family life was a process of searching for both an end and a means for social change and personal growth. As the British sociologist Adam Lent claims, this new emphasis on the personal itself along with their society helped a number of

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[297] Paul Patton, 'Conceptual Politics and the War-Machine in Mille Plateaux', *Substance*, 13. 3/4 (1984), pp. 61-80 (p. 64).

[298] Deleuze & Guattari, p. 260.

[299] Patton, pp. 63-64.

[300] Andrew Rigby, *Alternative Realities: A Study of Communes and their Members* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 226.

activists in the streets and campuses to move to another new movements for women's, gay and lesbian rights, environmentalism and communal experiments.[301]

Personal politics was developing through nurturing solidarity even when communal residents prepared their meals, canned peaches and split wood. Laurie Dodge, a member of Packer Corners in Vermont, spent much of his time during his earlier days of the commune building a dining platform on which communards would eat their own vegetables and pork roast, and discuss concerns arising from their new communal life.[302] Ruth Plovgaard in Kana frequently recorded her instant feelings and thoughts nearly every minute for three or four hours when she stayed at the commune. Most of the notes were observations on how other communards reacted in their meetings. Although it appeared trivial, it seems that Ruth's interests in commune members' attitudes including their psychological status enabled a path to the personal emancipation in a process of assimilating herself.[303] In the words of Deleuze, these focuses on their daily personal spheres could be "a vector, an abstract war-machine or a line of flight" where "the struggle is changed or displaced in them and life reconstitutes its stakes, confronts new obstacles, invents new paces, and switches its adversaries."[304]

In this sense, the 'Eros effect', conceptualised by George N. Katsiaficas, shares some basic tenets. Katsiaficas draws on the significance of personal emotions alongside participants' ideology to "mobilize collective action."[305] Similar to such notions as Marx's 'historical role

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[301] Adam Lent, *British Social Movements since 1945: Sex, Colour, Peace and Power* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), p. 55.

[302] Blake Slonecker, *Living the Movement: Liberation News Service, Montague Farm and the New Left, 1967-1981* (PhD thesis: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2009), p. 94.

[303] Ruth Plovgaard, 'Det var en lørdag aften', *Mental*, 1-2 (1972), pp. 62-66.

[304] Deleuze & Guattari, p. 500.

[305] George N. Katsiaficas, 'The Eros Effect' (1989, www.eroseffect.com), pp. 1-14 (p. 8).

of labor' and Habermas' 'role of communication', the Eros effect gives a new view of understanding the process of social change as a "new tactic of revolutionary movements."[306] For the communards, the commune was "a microcosm of the society where the revolution starts. The communes teach people to live with one another, teach mutual aid not competition. This surely is the basis of our new society."[307] John Douglas, one of the founding members of Red Clover in Vermont, who had lived in a narrow upper-class world only with an aim of entering one of three prestigious universities (Harvard, Yale and Princeton), was among them. After graduating from Harvard, Douglas joined a film making group called Newsreel in New York where he covered the civil rights movement in Mississippi and anti-war demonstrations in Chicago. Operating 'Liberation Garage', a free auto shop aimed at attracting lower working class youth and women having lessons in car repair, and 'Common Ground', a restaurant provided a low-cost local food, he discovered himself in a broader society with a more expanded view of the era.[308]

Nomadism is also appropriate to clarify the validity of communes particularly regarding their period of existence more specifically that most communes lasted less than two years. The nature of communal activism was not well matched with the rigid organisational types with charismatic leaders for more stable and longer existence. In other words, assessing the communal activities requires contemplating what implications the longevity of communes had for the communards and the future of the commune movement. Although communal dwellers appeared "migrants, itinerants or transhumant," they sought to make their occupied spaces

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[306] Katsiaficas, p. 12.

[307] Pete Raymond, *Communes*, 38 (June, 1972), pp. 20-21 (p. 20).

[308] Interview with John Douglas, 17 July 2013.

grow before they moved to other areas.[309] Therefore, the relative steadiness of Danish communes did not necessarily mean better communal activism than those of their counterparts in Britain and the US. Given the nomadic characteristics of the commune participants, the short lifespan of a specific commune did nothing to diminish the highest level of authenticity they showed during their stay in communes. We need to analyse other elements to define each commune's achievements such as "its influence on society, its social cohesiveness, its ability to meet stated goals," as well as its period of survival.[310]

For instance, Fritz Hewitt had lived in three other different communes in Guildford, Vermont before founding Johnson Pasture.[311] Despite Hewitt's frequent move between communes he gained support and sympathy to some extent from local people through the process of his commitment to local societies, in spite of some persistent divisiveness. Johnson Pasture members, including Fritz Hewitt, were invited to join dinner at Dick Simonds', then Guildford's road commissioner. At the table for dinner, they broke the ice by talking about how they were finding out about their neighbours. Shortly after the visit, Hewitt decided to be an ambassador for the hippies to the straight society, a mediator between the mainstream and the counter-culture, in order to transcend barriers and paranoia between both. He recalls that "a lot of the people who were living with me hid in the house, literally hid there, because they didn't know how to relate to someone who was a real Yankee and not a hippie like them."[312] By

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[309] Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: The Athlone Press, 1988), translated by Brian Massumi, p. 382, 410.

[310] Christopher D. Bader, F. Carson Mencken and James Parker, 'Where Have All the Communes Gone? Religion's Effect on the Survival of Communes', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 45.1 (March 2006), pp. 73-85 (p. 73).

[311] Constance Cline, 'Commune was Lure for Talented People', *Brattleboro Reformer* (1 July 1993), pp. 11, 20 (p. 11).

[312] *Farm Notes* (winter, 1994), p. 19.

extending the relationship, Hewitt obtained a place to work at the local sawmill. He also became a candidate of Liberty Union, the progressive party active only in Vermont, for seats in the state House of Representatives in 1970.[313]

In addition, nomadism lends credence to the communes' wider openness to visitors and prospective newcomers. Catherine Blinder, who arrived at Tree Frog Farm in Vermont in the winter of 1970, and stayed for fourteen years, explained: "you never knew who would show up for dinner – farmers, Japanese and Franciscan monks, musicians, naked people, armed people, famous people, circus people, Indian gurus, Shamans, the FBI in cheap dark suits and people on the run from them".[314] The Birchwood Hall Community in Worcestershire, for example, held perhaps a dozen meetings in 1970 before they actually started moving in, and at each meeting the personnel was different and everything had to be explained over again, argued over again.[315] When setting up a commune or looking for new members, there had been a loose and wide-ranging membership policy and ideological basis. A farm commune just outside Aarhus in northern Denmark, for example, started its advertisement for newcomers by referring to a spare room in the commune. The things needed to join were not "great ideas" but "collective harmony"; "We think revolutionary, but do not limit ourselves to a narrow theoretical ideology. We wish to achieve all these things that are so difficult to put into words; we wish to find someone we can get along with."[316] Most communards and even organisers for a federation of communes like the Free Vermonters had no fixed programmes for their

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[313] Constance Cline, 'Commune was Lure for Talented People', *Brattleboro Reformer* (1 July 1993), pp. 11, 20 (p. 20).

[314] Catherine Blinder, 'Thirty Years Later, A Commune Mom Asks the Kids, Did We Get it Right?', *Hartford Courant*, 4 April 2004, online http://articles.courant.com/2004-04-04/news.

[315] Clem Gorman, *People Together* (Frogmore, Herts: Paladin, 1975), p. 52.

[316] *Kokoo*, 3 (1974), p. 18.

purposes. They were just thinking about some of the things to achieve, and just started some projects, but all things could be changed as they "fill out their ideas".[317]

Compared to their predecessors, 1960s communes had a more open membership policy with mutual trust as Laura Ross of The Newhaven Commune in Edinburgh anticipated;

> The attitudes of the people in the group towards the idea of living communally are not all the same. Some people see it mainly as a functional base for a lot of people to live their own lives according to their different commitments, whereas others see it as being something for its own sake as well, an attempt at a different life style which tries to overcome some of the destructive effects of the capitalist system on ourselves- e.g. private property instincts, individualism, cynicism, apathy, lack of creativity~ Living in a group of like-minded people will help us to retain our ideological integrity and sustain an ongoing educative process.[318]

This optimism appeared naïve depending heavily on each member's good behaviours. However, this openness and mutual respect for diversity between communards helped to form their inspired autonomy which would lead to an alternative society. The fluidity for the commune movement was "a source of richness and the basis for expanded awareness" while "a cause for concern" in established society.[319]

The migration from one commune to the next, sometimes crossing national borders, not only shaped an efficient communication network about "survival techniques", but also affected communes' external activities and basic principles.[320] According to Maggie White, a member of Blackheath Commune in London, her commune friends shared with those of Kommune 2 in

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[317] *Free Vermont*, 1 (1970).

[318] Laura Ross, 'The Newhaven Commune, Edinburgh', in *Eclectics*, quarterly newsletter of the Student Christian Movement in Scotland, 1. 2 (October 1971) p. 11, Quoted in Andrew Rigby, *Alternative Realities: A Study of Communes and their Members* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 19.

[319] Paul Willis, *Profane Culture* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 85. Quoted in Bernice Martin, *A Sociology of Contemporary Cultural Change* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), p. 147.

[320] Keith Melville, *Communes in the Counter Culture: Origins, Theories, Styles of Life* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1972), p. 136.

Berlin the notion that, "only people with a particular common political activity should live together."[321] It is rare, of course, to find a commune whose members all were involved in a same political group or party. However, the space of communal living forged "new belief systems" as communards exchanged "internal amplification, restricted external feedback, and constant honing" to their thoughts and behaviours.[322] The openness in terms of theoretical basis led to much easier co-existence of values from the Old and New Left within communes and more active participation in some new social movements such as feminism and environmentalism. Their shared political activism for local engagements, women's liberation and environmental concerns represented a loose consensus blurring the existing distinction among activists and counter-culture followers. A move from urban areas to rural ones, from local and regional issues to global ones, from a firm orthodox socialist to a longhaired new leftist, and their reverse was common in the trajectories of 1960s and 1970s communes. In so doing, commune residents broadened their ideological backgrounds in constant modification.

To sum up, with the characteristics of nomads, the number of participants and lifespan, the area whether in cities or countryside, and the backgrounds in terms of class, gender and ideology did not affect much the future of communes. What concerned communards was not of a precise form, process and aim, but the continuity of their "heterogeneities" seeing a "space-time consolidation of co-existence and succession."[323] Each commune formed a crucible in which a wide range of political and cultural agendas and beliefs rekindled. Communes were

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[321] Richard Fairfield, *The Modern Utopian Communes Europe* (San Francisco: Alternatives Foundation, 1972), p. 53.

[322] Barry Laffan, *Communal Organization and Social Transition: A Case Study from the Counterculture of the Sixties and Seventies* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), p. 172.

[323] Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: The Athlone Press, 1988), translated by Brian Massumi, p. 329.

constant “smooth places” for occupants where they experimented with an “infinite succession of local operations” to “grow in all directions”.[324]

This chapter has explored underlying basic ideas as political pointers of communal activism, inherited from the combined effects of Sixties radicalism: decentralism and federalism, and it has suggested nomadism as an approach to understand the nature and ideological backgrounds of the commune movement. The commune movement needed the key concepts for its development. All things considered, it is unhelpful to argue that commune participants lived and tried to achieve a common and single goal under one particular philosophy. Simultaneously, it would be remiss to discard the varying and sometimes even ambiguous arguments by commune participants when examining the communes’ ideological perspectives. Demonstrating the theoretical roots is useful, as it reveals that communal living can be viewed as a genuine social movement with its own philosophy affecting other social movements and the existing social systems rather than an unconventional cultural phenomenon in a very short period. Commune residents upheld the free and egalitarian society based on decentralism with a small scale of independent economic and political units. They sought to create new forms of community with greater participation of commune members. In this process, communards developed their visions of decentralised communities. Politically, commune members designed their own politics against control from above. Instead, they maintained individuals’ voluntary participation with no fixed leadership. For economic independence, communes established a self-sufficient way of living such as the launch of their own farms and businesses, and common economy. In order to develop the commune movement, however, it was also crucial to connect more people on various levels. Through a loose network of communes alongside personal

[324] Deleuze & Guattari, pp. 382-410.

interactions, commune members communicated with other commune participants and local activists. Federalism or a federal organisation contributed to minimising the dissimilarities and isolation of communes in favour of their diversities and autonomy.

The Deleuzian concept of ‘nomadism’ is important to understand the nature of the commune movement ranging from the wider openness in their membership policy and ideological backgrounds to the persistent attempts in every aspects of life in spite of frequent migration. Based on this, we can shift and extend the focus (which has been on internal developments) to the external evolution. A careful study of the outside communal objective is essential to highlight concepts of communal activism. More emphasis on the communes’ relationships with the surrounding local and regional societies will help to form a more complete perspective for the consideration of what initiatives made communes to survive and grow, and what factors affected the decline of communal activism, rather than tracing stories and identifying the weaknesses and strengths within the communes. The following chapter is about the outside activities to which communards applied the internal principles of decentralism and federalism.

Chapter 3: Activities for Communal Activism

One of the most significant developments in the social movements of the three countries in question in the late 1960s was the broadening of the definition of the political, associated with the rhetoric, 'the personal is political'. With the emergence of new social forces, such as students, women, and people of colour, and the greater attention to the politics of the 'everyday', activists adopted a new approach – characterised by Bret Eynon as "open and experimental" – which distanced them from the limited orthodox protest arenas and party politics.[325] The women's liberation movement (the so-called second wave of feminism), lesbian and gay movements, the environmentalist movement, founding of communes, and flourishing of local activism were the outcome of this modified notion of politics. Just as feminism expanded the scope of politics, communards, particularly female members, learned that in the words of Peggy Kornegger, politics is not "out there but in our minds and bodies and between individuals."[326] Nevertheless, the adoption of 'personal politics' did not mean that communards sought to shut themselves off from the world around them. Verandah Porche, a resident of Packer Corners, who is still a member of the commune today at a farm in Vermont, recalled her participation in the women's community in Brattleboro, Vermont, and other people's involvement in the gay rights movement during their stay at Packer Corners: "People wanted to make a contribution. It's a small state, and many of us really wanted to have an impact on our community, beyond the confines of the farm or the hill."[327]

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[325] Bret Eynon, 'Community in Motion: The Free Speech Movement, Civil Rights, and the Roots of the New Left', *Oral History Review* 17.1(spring, 1989), pp.39-69 (p. 46).

[326] Peggy Kornegger, Anarchism: The Feminist Connection, *The Anarchist Library* (1975), pp. 1-18 (p. 12).

[327] Interview with Verandah Porche, by Timothy Miller, 16 Dec 1995.

The desire to engage with their local societies with political, cultural and ecological agendas was central to communal activists during the 1960s and 1970s. This chapter considers those activities through which commune participants interacted with their neighbourhoods-including involvement in local councils, the establishment of their own educational institutions and media, and environmental activism. This thesis classifies communes' energetic commitments to their local societies into four areas of activity: the feminist movement, environmentalism, cultural and educational experiments, and local political activism. However, this division of their activities does not mean that they were mutually exclusive. When commune members engaged in local affairs, they tried to introduce more diverse perspectives from feminist, environmentalist and cultural standpoints. By demonstrating communes' actions in building a new mode of institutions in relation to the old ones, this chapter will explore how concepts for communal activism were evaluated in reality, and what effect these practices had on communes themselves and on the existing social system. In doing so, parallels and differences between the three countries' commune movements in terms of their concepts and practices will also be discussed.

Feminist movement

Feminists' efforts during the late 1960s and 1970s to challenge the gendered hierarchy that characterised the prevailing social structures were also mirrored within the broader radical movement.[328] For feminists, the so-called New Left organisations did not challenge sufficiently male supremacy, and sometimes even displayed "less progressive ideas about

[328] Sara M. Evans, 'Sons, Daughters, and Patriarchy: Gender and the 1968 Generation', *The American Historical Review,* 114. 2 (2009), pp. 331-347 (p. 332).

gender order than those of the Old Left."[329] For instance, the *Port Huron Statement*, the manifesto of SDS, did not explicitly discuss women's liberation, in spite of a high level of participation by women in its activities. Moreover, the role of women activists within SDS was not different from the conventional concept that women were generally subordinate in division of labour and in need of protection from men. For example, when Margery Tabankin, an anti-war activist, visited Madison, Wisconsin, with Tom Hayden, to organise demonstrations, she was expected to do his laundry.[330] Although SDS planned a workshop on 'Women in the movement' in December 1965, it had not yet expanded and reached the level to overcome gender inequality which had been common in American society. A few years later, while preparing to appeal his conviction for his role in the protests at the 1968 Democratic National Convention, Tom Hayden, one of the early leaders of SDS and drafter of the *Port Huron Statement*, stayed at the '*Red Family*' collective, a commune in Berkeley. Hayden had in fact placed communes or collectives at the centre of cultural radicalism for the late 1960s and early 1970s on which radical activities to alter "all traditional social relations" including gender roles were based.[331] Nonetheless, after a short stay Hayden was forced to leave the commune by its members due to his strong male chauvinism.[332] In addition, within the broader Old and New Left there was a fear that the feminist agenda would detract from efforts to challenge racial and

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[329] Nina S. Adams, 'Women who left them behind', in *Give Peace a Chance: Exploring the Vietnam Antiwar Movement*, ed. by Melvin Small and William D. Hoover (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1992), pp. 182-195 (p. 188).

[330] Barbara L, Tischler. 'The Refiner's Fire: Anti-war Activism and Emerging Feminism in the Late 1960s', in *Student Protest: The Sixties and After*, Ed. By Gerard J, DeGroot (London: Longman, 1998), pp. 186-200 (p. 189).

[331] Tom Hayden, *Trial* (London: Jonathon Cape, 1971), p. 161. Quoted in Anthony Ashbolt, *A Cultural History of the Radical Sixties in the San Francisco Bay Area* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013), pp. 160-161.

[332] Dominick Cavallo, *A Fiction of the Past: The Sixties in American History* (New York: Palgrave, 1979), pp. 247-249.

class-based inequalities, and instead promote female equality within the existing and flawed system.[333]

Nor was the persistence of sexism among male New Left activists restricted to the United States. Although Scandinavian nations introduced gender equality earlier than anywhere else in the world, the conventional division of labour between the sexes was not really changed among the so-called revolutionary men in Denmark.[334] As Henrik Okkels, a member of Kana commune, recalls, they thought women activists "made tea for the revolution", before starting communal living.[335] Conversely, for commune members, major themes of feminism such as the division of labour at home for child rearing and household tasks, and the role of women and men in their societies also had always been significant. Since the early decades of the 19th century, when a wide range of communes, from religious and spiritual communes to political ones, emerged in rapid industrial developments, each commune had tried to set up principles of relationships between the sexes.[336] Although secular communes in general did not have well-defined gender philosophies compared to those of religious communes, some communes made a collective effort in advancing feminists' values. For example, women's perspectives were one of the important themes at regular discussion meetings between British communes. Commune members in London organised their second gathering to talk about the value of

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[333] Sara M. Evans, 'Not My Mother's Path', *Time it was: American Stories from the Sixties*, ed. by Karen Manners Smith & Tim Koster (New Jersey: Pearson, 2008), pp. 135-147 (p. 137).

[334] Paul Ginsborg, 'The Politics of the Family in the 20th century Europe', *Contemporary European History*, 9. 3 (2000), pp. 411-444 (p. 438). In fact, it was in 1964 when Danish women began to design a forum for their 'equal rights hysteria', now called a *gender* debate. Lise Sørensen, 'The Spirit from – 64', *Dengang I 60'erne,* edited by Bente Hansen, J. HøM, G. Nielsen, R. Pay & J. Schytte (København: Informations Forlag ApS, 1979), pp. 92-94 **(**p. 94).

[335] Interview with Henrik Okkels, 17 February 2014.

[336] Angela A. Aidala, 'Social Change, Gender Roles, and New Religious Movements', *Sociological Analysis*, 46. 3 (1985), pp. 287-314 (p. 289).

communal living in 1970, with a special topic 'Have women a different point of view about communal living?'[337] The years between the late 1960s and early 1970s witnessed an ever more flexible atmosphere regarding communal living and feminism: Participants cohabiting between non-biological families increased over 700% in the decade between the 1960 and 1970. The attitude to premarital sex changed positively with higher numbers of supporters in opinion polls between the years 1969 and 1973 than those of the prior 30 years.[338]

The feminist resurgence of the late 1960s affected in part the formation and development of new communes in terms of their aims and activities. An article, which appeared in all Vermont papers in 1970, amplified a debate on abortion among both the local society and the communes. After attending the public hearing on the abortion bill (referred to as HB 199) in Montpelier, the state capital, one feminist delivered her strong views.[339] Firstly, she was disappointed by the mood of the two-hour session of speeches, which she likened to "the atmosphere of a medieval courtroom", repeating doubts about the results that would come from liberalizing abortion law: "women get away with something and escape punishment." She then stressed the importance of the future of children being cherished, properly fed, clothed, and educated as well as the right of children to be born. In the light of these, she argued for safe and free abortion "without stigma or guilt" noting that there were approximately 1.5 million illegal abortions yearly in the US.[340]

Ellen Powell was among those women who had an illegal abortion. After travelling to

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[337] 'London Meeting', *Communes*, 33 (June 1970), p. 21.

[338] Aidala, 'Social Change, Gender Roles, and New Religious Movements', p. 291.

[339] Quoted in 'Every Year 10,000 Women Die from Abortions', *Free Vermont*, 2 (1970).

[340] 'Every Year 10,000 Women Die from Abortions', *Free Vermont*, 2 (1970).

Montreal, Canada, for the procedure at the age of 19, Powell attended women's meetings at Red Clover commune in Vermont and eventually joined the commune as a new member in 1969.[341] Interacting with local, emergent feminist groups, female communards helped to mobilise local people, and commune participants themselves, in discussions about how women had been oppressed in the existing system of society. The launch of women's centres, the abortion issue, and questions surrounding child rearing were discussed in regular women's meetings with other ordinary women outside communes. A women's liberation group in south-eastern Vermont had organised meetings since November 1970. Drawing in people from diverse backgrounds, the group had been discussing various issues such as founding a commune, starting a day care centre, fighting around abortion issues, writing their own pamphlets, and building a strategy to stop the Vernon power plant.[342] Free Vermont organisers also toured communes teaching women's history and managed the first day care centre in Vermont with local women. According to one Vermont historian, Faith Pepe of Westminster West, they organised a demonstration to march into the *Brattleboro Reformer*, a local newspaper, to request a women's column.[343] This action was inspired by a group in New York who had demanded that the *Ladies' Home Journal* allow them to write and edit the newspaper's women's page. The New York group expected greater discussion of gender issues – such as "exploitation of women in media, employment and equal opportunity," – instead of "presenting recipes or fashion news."[344]

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[341] Interview with Ellen Powell by Reid R. Frazier, 8 February 2002 , Quoted in Reid R. Frazier, *1960s Communes in Southern Vermont* (MA thesis: University of Vermont, 2002), p. 52.

[342] *Free Vermont*, 2 (1970).

[343] Susan Green, 'Hippie Havens', Seven Days, 20 August 2008, online http://www.7dvt.com/2008 hippie-havens, pp. 4-5.

[344] *Brattleboro Reformer*, April 11, 1970, Quoted in Reid R. Frazier, *1960s Communes in Southern Vermont*

With an aim of building a People's Clinic which provided mobile van services to offer health care, they sought professional doctors who were sympathetic to their plan.[345] It soon developed into a free clinic to serve the low income residents as well as members of various communes. As a result, the Vermont Women's Health Center, the oldest health clinic of its kind in the country, was founded in 1971- shortly after the Vermont Supreme Court had reversed a 126-year-old abortion law.[346] At its height, the Center opened 4 evenings a week and served over 3,000 patients a year, utilizing a rotating staff of 25 paramedics, 4 lab technicians and over 20 local physicians. Until 1975, all staff worked without pay.[347] In addition, Vermont female commune members organised a 'Legal Advocacy Clinic' to deal with domestic and family problems (support, custody, wife/child abuse, and divorce) every Wednesday night.

Similarly, in October 1967, an advertisement in a Danish tabloid, *Ekstrabladet*, by *Dansk Kvindesamfunds Ungdomskreds* (the Youth Section of Danish Women's Association), asking for volunteers to join a group family project, created widespread debate among Danes. This idea was not fruitful since they could not find a suitable house to live in. However, in the process of radicalization of the organization's agenda, it resulted in a birth of a new organization, *Individ og Samfund* (Individual and Society) which played an important role in the ongoing debate about communes and group families.[348] A Danish feminist who had been active in the women's movement, with an organization called *Rødstrømpernes* (Redstockings),

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(MA thesis: University of Vermont, 2002), p. 53.

[345] *Free Vermont*, 1 (1970).

[346] *The First Issue* (1971).

[347] A leaflet, 'The Community Health Center- a 10 Year Perspective'.

[348] Flemming Andersen, Ole Stig Andersen & Anne van Deurs, *Bogen om Storfamilierne* (Copenhagen: Rhodos, 1970), p. 12.

championed communal activism by including communes as her additional activity area. She revealed her regret when she and her allies failed to help a new couple settle down at a commune. The feminists tried to involve a girl of the newcomers in working with gender roles. Although they had a long conversation with the girl, when it came to the matter of her partner, it was not successful: "He seemed very aggressive. The guy led the floor in discussions."[349] Nevertheless, this effort to inject a feminist perspective persisted throughout communes' existence and resulted in a common will between the sexes to improve opportunities for presenting another way of living concerning gender problems. What were benefits of communal living in relation to feminism? Feminists thought it would be difficult to solve problems about relationships between men and women in a conventional family-establishment; in a communal context, however, the problems could be discussed and commune members could take control of processes without ending with a battle. They also expected the creation of solidarity within the feminist movement by living in a commune while having the time to develop women's consciousness of different genders in society.

Rosabeth M. Kanter, who researched American communes in the 1970s, found that more communes called 'families' (the Family of the Mystic Arts, the Lyman Family, etc) emerged in the 1960s whereas more communes with names of 'societies' (the Society of Believers, the Harmony Society), existed in previous eras.[350] Kanter attributed the reason for this change to the 1960s communards' desire to provide an alternative to modern family types.[351] Clearly,

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[349] *Kokoo*, 4 (1974), p. 19.

[350] Rosabeth M. Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 165.

[351] Thomas H. Shey also saw the future of Danish commune with the similar stance: "will these collective families survive and prosper, and in so doing alter the life style and family formation trends of a substantial portion of the Danish youth population?", Thomas H. Shey, *Danish Communes: An Analysis of Collective Families in Contemporary Danish and American society* (Washington D.C: University Press of America, 1978),

communes formed a type of family sharing a number of living conditions. Nevertheless, it would be erroneous to interpret the commune movement customarily with terms such as 'new family' and 'extended family' as an alternative mode of nuclear families in modern society. Rather than being influenced by the young people or hippies' individual and personal wishes to depart from conventional nuclear families, the revival and development of the 1960s communes were more thoroughly linked to the benefit of the era's dynamic challenges to the established institutions throughout the society.[352] Viewed from the active adaptation of feminism by the 1960s and 1970s, communes' more frequent use of 'families' for their names indicates that issues around family became an area of politics to engage in. For the British and Danish commune movements it is not clear whether they shared similar data with more commune names of 'families' as presented by Kanter. However, Danish communards discussed the validity of traditional family relations thorough meetings organised by *Dansk Kvindesamfunds Ungdomskreds* (Danish Women's Society Youth Circle) and *Det ny Samfund* (the New Society) from the mid-1960s.[353] For many Danish commune participants the terms 'new family' and 'extended family' lacked sufficient explanation of the communes' critique of the existing family relations.[354] As Morten Thing who founded Brøndby Strand, a commune in a Copenhagen suburb, recalled, communal living survived in a family form, but it represented an anti-authoritarian attitude with "no mum and dad"; "everyone was equal and

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p. 145.

[352] Angela A. Aidala, 'Communes as Seeking Better Family? A Misleading Explanation', *Alternative Lifestyles*, 6. 2 (1983), pp. 115-139 (pp. 116-120).

[353] John Davis and Anette Warring, 'Living Utopia: Communal Living in Denmark and Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 8. 4 (2011), pp. 513-530 (p. 515).

[354] Davis and Warring, p. 517.

everyone should participate."[355]

In addition, family structure became fluid particularly as female members founded separatist, women-only communes. A commune, *Sundbyvestervej*, in Amager, Denmark, tried to recruit more new women introducing its members: "We are now: Birgitte (26 years old, recreational therapist student), Lisbeth (29 years old, sociology student), Dorrit (29 years old, teacher) and two children Jes 7 years and Rami 5 years."[356] For the American cases, they included Woman Share, Cabbage Lane, Dragonwagon, Rootworks, and A woman's place.[357] Whereas the Thy summer camp in Denmark was devoted to countercultural activists of both genders, the Femø camp for five days in 1971 only allowed for women and was designed to celebrate and promote women's solidarity. Some female commune members were there. According to Kristian Riis, during the Femø camp where his two female communards Else Merete and Iben joined, male commune members sat in the commune's dining room discussing what was going on the camp.[358] Although all-women communes were relatively rare, this illustrates how the commune participants in the 1960s and 1970s used the existing type of families in a different way.[359]

According to the American researcher Gretchen Lemke Santangelo, there was an important divergence between radical left-wing feminists and female commune members. Santangelo

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[355] Interview with Morten Thing by Anette Warring, 12 February 2009. Quoted in Davis and Warring, p. 516.

[356] *Kokoo*, 5 (1974), p. 17.

[357] Gretchen Lemke Santangelo, *Daughters of Aquarius: Women of the Sixties Counterculture* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2009), p. 164.

[358] Camilla Skousen & Bente Hansen, 'Studentersamfund – nyt samfund', *Dengang I 60'erne,* ed. By Bente Hansen, J. HøM, G. Nielsen, R. Pay & J. Schytte (København: Informations Forlag ApS, 1979), p. 190.

[359] Adam Lent, *British Social Movements since 1945: Sex, Colour, Peace and Power* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), p. 138.

emphasises that whereas radical feminism categorised women's work at home as "mere drudgery, sexual exploitation, and domestic slavery," women in communes regarded their work as an expression of the "affectionate feminine, the very values that would create a more nurturing, compassionate, generous, peaceful world."[360] It is not easy to find how the distinction between both the commune-based feminism and traditional families-based feminism developed in the late 1970s and 1980s. It is also far from clear if commune-based feminism was more successful and elaborate in discovering the nature and roles of women within families and societies than traditional families-based feminism. Nonetheless, this interpretation offers further prospects for hypothesising the persistent role of women commune members. Female communards became involved in all aspects of life maintaining a continuous and high degree of contribution in contrast to men's often transitory one. As discussed earlier, communards continued efforts to develop feminism within communes and beyond. Communal living is more likely to blur the familiar gender role than that of the existing family-type. When commune members distributed their work such as child rearing, washing dishes and participation in outside programmes, the primary consideration was not about the sexes but the rotation of roles between members. After visiting communes, the prominent journalist Andrew Kopkind asserted that "the commune is very much like a successful nuclear family, in which members accept certain well-defined roles, don't argue about them, and concentrate on external work."[361] Commune participants recognised the connection between the political and the cultural, and also the public and the private put on by the capitalist society. With this sense,

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[360] Santangelo, *Daughters of Aquarius*, pp. 160-161.

[361] Andrew Kopkind, 'Up the Country: Five Communes in Vermont', *Working Papers for a New Society*, 1 (Spring 1973), p. 46. Quoted in Blake Slonecker, *Living the Movement: Liberation News Service, Montague Farm and the New Left, 1967-1981* (PhD thesis: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2009), p. 96.

they tried to remain critical about all middle class traditions in order to bring "the revolution to the kitchen table," since "the communal does not grow out of the sky."[362] Although the commune members hardly had their own strategies and tactics for feminist agendas, they integrated feminism more easily within the internal daily lives and outward activities sharing the basic ideas and collective work with other family-based activists.

To sum up, the so-called second wave of feminism between the late 1960s and early 1970s coalesced into the commune movement and shared much of its agenda. Feminists and female commune participants gathered at local meetings for women's rights and organised a wide range of cooperative work, move to a commune or join a feminist group. Their achievements such as women's centres, health clinics and farmer's markets were the benefits of those efforts. Beyond the deep-rooted chauvinism within the left groups, communards, especially female members played sustainable roles in all activities. Living in a commune provided a more comfortable environment to discuss and develop feminism.

Environmental movement

In an article on 'Communes or the State', Tony Kelly, a founding member of The Commune Movement, an organisation for communicating among British communes, presented the organisation as a "radical solution to overcrowding and pollution."[363] Two members of the Shrubb Family, Richard Ludbrook and Owen Thompson, also echoed Kelly's concern about environmental degradation. Ludbrook argued that, in order for people to live together, it was necessary to make "a smaller footprint on the planet," while Thompson recognised the need

[362] Kokoo, 4 (1976), pp. 4-5.

[363] *Communes*, 35 (December, 1970), pp. 1-4. Quoted in Elizabeth Nelson, *The British Counter-Culture, 1966-73: A Study of the Underground Press* (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 128.

for alternative energy (and even installed a wind turbine at their commune).[364] Similarly, a libertarian group called the Dwarfs focused on the simplicity of communal living when they set up their commune, 'Harmony Village' in 1972. Harmony Village members maintained a simple way of life during their brief existence to 1973, proclaiming that "The earth's natural resources would be left untouched – the only source of energy would be the power of water mills – and industrial production would be confined to basic manual crafts."[365] British communes also demonstrated their environmental action, particularly as they engaged with local societies. Open Project in Liverpool, for example, organised a gathering against a new project for Aquarius City. Under the scheme, drawn up by the developers, Harry Hyams, the Albert, Canning and Salthouse Docks would have been filled in, and the iconic warehouses demolished.[366] Sending a petition to the council that called for a withdrawal of the plan, they declared that: "The people of Liverpool should rise up to stop this insane scheme and set a precedent for real democratic participation."[367] In its own newspaper, *Openings*, articles by biologists, focusing on environmental issues of increasing concerns about the future of the earth, appeared frequently.[368]

On April 23, 1970 about 200 people – many of them youngsters from the Putney School

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[364] John Davis and Anette Warring, 'Living Utopia: Communal Living in Denmark and Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 8. 4 (2011), pp. 513-530 (p. 526). Interview with Richard Ludbrook by John Davis, 4 July 2009. Interview with Owen Thompson by John Davis, 4 July 2009.

[365] *Dwarf News*, 8 (Jan/Feb 1972), Quoted in Peter Shipley, *Revolutionaries in Modern Britain* (London: The Bodley Head, 1976), p. 204.

[366] In 1970, the project was to build an "Aquarius City" office complex by shutting Albert, Canning and Salthouse Docks. 'In pictures: Liverpool that never was - the schemes that didn't make it beyond the drawing board', *ECHO*, 15 Feb 2014.

[367] Dave Craig, 'On the Waterfront', *Openings* 2, Dec 1970, pp. 16-17.

[368] For instance, Paul R. Ehrlich, the American biologist well known for his study about the environmental concern of population growth, contributed his negative attitude under a title 'The Earth ~ an Obituary' expecting the end of the ocean in the summer of 1979. *Openings* 2, Dec 1970, pp. 6-7, 26-27.

and the Grammar School in Putney, Vermont – gathered to celebrate for the first "Earth Day".[369] One of the speakers was Raymond Mungo, who had moved to the Packer Corners commune after leaving the *Liberation News Service* in New York in 1968. Mungo had been showing his concern about environmentalism writing books and articles associated with Henry David Thoreau and his experimental naturalism.[370] Raising his arms, Mungo ended his speech saying, "I love you all, and I hope you all love the earth."[371] The 1960s and 1970s saw growing environmental awareness, and a new emphasis on the importance of natural environment for human beings in a highly developed modern society – concerns that were only enhanced by the energy crisis and the oil shock in 1973. It led to a new scope for 1960s anti-war activism in which environmental issues had been overlooked. Selling buttons newly designed with a motto "Give Earth a Chance" instead of "Give Peace a Chance", participants in the Environmental Action for Survival Committee at the University of Michigan encouraged left groups to embrace the issue of environmental emergency. As a result, the first "Earth Day" in 1970, when Vermont communards joined the local celebration, attracted approximately 20 million Americans and fifteen hundred colleges' organised Earth Day teach-ins.[372]

Environmentalism was a relatively new agenda for 1960s activism and communal living. As Henrik Okkels, a member of Kana, recalled, in the early 1970s the environmental fear of modern capitalism was being shaped among commune participants.[373] Activists just began to

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[369] It was launched in 1970 by Gaylord Nelson, then a Senator from Wisconsin, after the disaster of 1969 oil spill in Santa Barbara. Online Earth Day Network www.earthday.org/earth-day

[370] Mungo wrote a lead article for *the Atlantic*, Magazine, entitled "If Mr. Thoreau Calls, Tell Him I've Left the Country." 'View From a Commune: The Good Earth in Guilford', *The Reformer* (24 April 1970).

[371] 'View From a Commune: The Good Earth in Guilford', *The Reformer* (24 April 1970).

[372] Adam Rome, 'Give Earth a Chance: The Environmental Movement and the Sixties', *The Journal of American History* (Sep, 2003), pp. 525-554 (p. 536, 550).

[373] Interview with Henrik Okkels, 17 February 2014.

consider environmentalism as a "driving force of change in the period."[374] In articles about 'ecology and society' in 1970 for *Information*, an independent newspaper which had played a key role for the debate of the Danish political culture, authors, most of them New Left intellectuals, raised an issue about the correlation between environmentalism and socialist perspectives: "which potentials and risks did it imply for the anti-capitalists struggle?"[375] Observing spontaneous tactics in the streets in the late 1960s, Theodore Roszak who had been optimistic about the counter culture's potential, noted the lack of systematic analysis of the existing highly technocratic society. Based on this, Roszak expected that ad hoc organisations like communes would have only occasional and limited achievements.[376]

However, the introduction of scientific studies of the environmental crisis offered a possibility for activism to leftists in the 1960s and 1970s. The examination of American society through the environmentalist viewpoint by Vermont commune members enabled a deep engagement with environmental problems. In an article entitled 'Ecology', Vermont communards revealed their approach to the cause and solution of the growing environmental problems: "today nature is often a product of manipulation by man and to create a human environment we must eliminate the attackers. Not symbolically."[377] Although a holistic approach to ecological life was not always present from the start of communes, it was apparent that communards added their growing interests in environmentalism.

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[374] Rome, p. 527.

[375] Andrew Jamison, Ron Eyerman, Jacqueline Cramer and Jeppe Laessøe, *The Making of the New Environmental Consciousness: A Comparative Study of the Environmental Movements in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), p. 79.

[376] Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counterculture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and its Youthful Opposition* (London: Faber & Farber, 1970), p. 293.

[377] 'Ecology', *Free Vermont*, 2 (1970).

The growing degeneration of land and air due to the exploitation of chemicals had caused the deaths of many farmers. Indeed, Sam Lovejoy, the anti-nuclear activist, encountered an unexpected situation at the age of ten when an apple and peach farmer who was very close to Lovejoy's parents died while spraying trees with pesticides.[378] In the late 1960s Lovejoy, who had been acting as the New England regional coordinator of SDS, and joined the Massachusetts commune Montague Farm, declared that "If you can't talk to your neighbours about political issues, then how are you going to ever change national policies?"[379] Lovejoy thought that communal living would give commune members as "much political work as possible" whilst the commune got used to its countryside surroundings and became a "stable agricultural and financial unit."[380] Early on the morning of February 22, 1974, Lovejoy broke into the Northeast Utilities (NU) Company's fenced property for a nuclear power plant on the Montague Plains.[381] There had already been anti-nuclear activism in the region even before the formal proposals were announced. Montague Farm and other local communes formed an umbrella antinuclear organization called Nuclear Objectors for a Pure Environment (NOPE) which led to the formation of the Nuclear Objectors Party in 1974.[382]

Given the organisational structures for environmentalism, there were similar tendencies between the three countries' loose networks of contact groups and individuals. The anti- nuclear

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[378] Samuel Lovejoy, 'Somebody's Got to Do it', in *Time it was: American Stories from the Sixties*, ed. by Karen Manners Smith & Tim Koster (New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2008), pp. 415-433 (pp. 415-416).

[379] Robert Surbrug Jr, *Beyond Vietnam: The Politics of protest in Massachusetts, 1974-1990* (Boston: Uni of Massachusetts Press, 2009), p. 26.

[380] Interview with Sam Lovejoy by Blake Slonecker, 22 June 2008, *Living the Movement: Liberation News Service, Montague Farm and the New Left, 1967-1981* (PhD thesis: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2009), p. 159.

[381] Slonecker, p. 160.

[382] Slonecker, p. 168.

power movement was, in fact, characterised largely by grassroots organising and participatory politics, rather than hierarchical politics.[383] For instance, the *Kampagnen mod Atomvåben* (the Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons, CANW) which organized anti-nuclear marches in the early 1960s was not an ordinary association with the power concentrated around a president, board members and strict statutes. Particularly at a local level, the most important decisions were taken at meetings which anybody could join.[384] Leading sustainable Danish environmental movements in the late 1960s and mid-1970s, NOAH also maintained a flexible structure.[385] The first issue of its magazine in 1969, for instance, showed clearly NOAH's more open and wider spectrum with "maximal communication" against hierarchy and exclusivity: "in order to avoid supporting any special interest, all results of NOAH's work will be made public."[386] NOAH's summer camp worked in close collaboration with organisers of the 'Alternative Festival' in Christiania, Copenhagen, where communards from all over Scandinavia could meet. One of the events in the Alternative Festival was to test windmills in different surroundings.[387]

Overall, organic farming, renewable energy, campaigns against pollution, and the anti-nuclear movement were quintessential features of communal activism. Some communes in

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[383] Robert Surbrug jr, *Beyond Vietnam: The Politics of protest in Massachusetts, 1974-1990* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009), p. 4.

[384] Flemming Andersen, Ole Stig Andersen & Anne van Deurs, *Bogen om Storfamilierne* (Copenhagen: Rhodos, 1970), p. 9.

[385] NOAH is not an abridgement. Christopher Rootes, 'The Environmental Movement', in *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1965-1977,* ed. by Martin Klimke & Joachim Scharloth (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 295-305 (p. 300).

[386] Andrew Jamison, Ron Eyerman, Jacqueline Cramer and Jeppe Laessøe, *The Making of the New Environmental Consciousness: A Comparative Study of the Environmental Movements in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), p. 83.

[387] *Kokoo*, 2 (1975), p. 5.

Denmark and the US tried alternative energy systems such as solar power and windmills instead of fossil fuel which had been exploited by human beings.[388] Moreover, local environmental concerns were framed as part of a wider movement at political transformation as communards questioned "how important communes are in leading the way to a socially more just and ecologically more harmonious society?".[389]

Cultural and educational experiments

As discussed in chapter 1, the countercultural living style, forms of protest and basic approaches to social movements helped grow communal experiments. The major principle of a group called Viva Maria, which played a key role in reshaping the ideology of the *Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund* (SDS) in West Germany in the late 1960s, was "Revolution must be fun." Taking its origin from those who saw the film Viva Maria, which recorded performances of a traveling circus fighting in the Mexican Revolution in the 1910s, the group's leaders, including Rudi Dutschke and Dieter Kunzelmann, supported the foundation of urban communes, Kommune 1 and 2 in Berlin, as part of its attempt to discover an "effective revolutionary praxis."[390] Similarly, the editorial of the *International Times* (IT) in its first issue underlined the combination of fun and revolution for change: "IT is just for fun. Even when we're blasting off or being subversive, remember we're just in it because we like playing games… don't rush to work – only work at what you enjoy – movement… Change

[388] Chris Jones, 'Shelter from the Storm: Under the Green Umbrella', *Articles of Peace: Celebrating fifty years of Peace News*, ed. By Gail Chester & Andrew Rigby (Dorset: Prism Press, 1986), pp. 106-126 (p. 115, 118).

[389] David Pepper and Nickie Hallam, *Communes and the Green Vision: Counterculture, Lifestyle and the New Age* (London: Green Print, 1991), p. 1.

[390] Timothy Brown, '1968 East and West: Divided Germany as a Case Study in Transnational History', *The American Historical Review*, 114. 1 (2009), 69-96 (pp. 78-79).

begins with you."[391]

It is clear that this shift in the radical movements towards placing more emphasis on cultural tactics and identity politics inspired other activists across the borders. For instance, a Dutch commune, Morannon, began to take part in more political activities maintaining their origin as a music group after they discussed the successes and failures of the German communes especially Kommune 1 and 2 in Berlin. There were also project circles to study the commune movement at almost every high school and university in the Netherlands.[392] In addition, the influence of the Provo movement in the Netherlands was crucial for European radicals to develop their methodological approach to the post-1968 era. With more enhanced creativity and imagination, the Provo believers tried to add broader issues such as feminism, environmentalism and cultural experiments alongside traditional workers' concerns. In this section, various cultural activities by communes with international links and similarities including music festival, their own holidays and media, and alternative schools will be discussed.

Before coming to Vermont, the Red Clover members acquired firearms as a means of self-defence, and to aid a potential urban guerrilla war.[393] Yet their acceptance of violence was modified after the first gathering among communes on the winter solstice of 1970. Participating in the meeting held at Earthworks commune in Franklin, northern Vermont, Barbara Nolfi, a member of Earthworks, heard the news that the Red Clover communards had decided to

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[391] Elizabeth Nelson, *The British Counter-Culture, 1966-73: A Study of the Underground Press* (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 47. IT 1 (14-27 October 1966), pp. 2, 8.

[392] Peter Van Mensch, 'The Hundred Faces of Morannon', *Communes*, 33 (June 1970), p. 14.

[393] David Van Deusen, 'Green Mountain Communes: The Making of a Peoples' Vermont', Catamount Tavern News, 15 January 2008, in online http://www.anarkismo.net/newswire.php?story id=7248.

abandon their pro-violence attitude and to adopt the local famers' dress and customs. In reality, this turn to a more fluid and loose position helped to make the commune network stronger.[394] Adding creative activities to the previous movement spheres offered more expanded areas with diverse programmes where activists and common people could communicate. Equally, realising the authentic values of popular and traditional culture which had been preserved by ordinary people created a change from control and arrangements from above to grassroots efforts from below. It is also applicable that the Scandinavian notion of people and the adjective *folklig/folkelig* (like the people) indicate "anti-elitism and authenticity."[395]

What helped the counterculture to share the energy of social movements including the commune movement in the late 1960s and 1970s was its emphasis on peripheral factors. Rather than centring on the major cultural themes of white middle-class which had been popular, the counter-culturalists became interested in the neglected traditions of ethnic minorities and the working class. Increasing rediscovery of American Indian rituals was among them. Earthworks commune members had a rain ceremony for their agricultural produce resembling that of American Indians. According to Martha Hanna Towle, a local historian, after the ceremony during the suffering dry summer evening "a whacking old Vermont thundershower" came near the commune.[396] New Buffalo commune residents in New Mexico also learned a proper corn dance from Taos Pueblo neighbours. American Indian idealism provided a cultural base for commune participants to relate their voluntary poverty or "primitivism" with close relationship

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[394] Dylan Nolfi, 'Earthworks – The Franklin Commune', online http://vtcommune.blogspot.com.

[395] Thomas Ekman Jørgensen, *Transformations and Crises: The Left and the Nation in Denmark and Sweden, 1956-1980* (NY: Berghahn Books, 2008), p. 132.

[396] Martha Hanna Towle, A History of Franklin: Past and Present, Fact or Fancy, Legend or Folksay, 1789-1989 (Vermont: Franklin Historical Society, 1989), p. 167. Quoted in Timothy Miller, *The 60s Communes: Hippies and Beyond* (NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999), p. 216.

with the natural world physically and mentally.[397]

The role of rock concerts and music festivals in the 1960s as a medium through which huge crowds exchanged cultural inspirations and enhanced solidarity continued in the 1970s. Svend Anderson, organiser of Roskilde Festival which was started in 1971, and is still active today, sent a notice for the 1974 concert to Kokoo in order to attract more communards: "Hello all communes! We hope, like last year, that you will be on the spot with your own products. I hope we hear from you if you want to come, and also what you think about the fee for selling your products."[398] A number of video collectives emerged in the United States during the late 1960s, mostly on the West Coast near San Francisco. They included Ant Farm, Media Access Center, Optic Nerve, Video Free America, and TVTV.[399] Thanks to the cheaper portable video cameras, the alternative media communes could record local events including political gatherings. Ant Farm in San Francisco, for example, used their own mobile television studio in order to challenge broadcast television's one-way flow of information with their own counter-images. Showing their documentary films, sometimes touring communes, offered Red Clover members opportunities to meet local people and discuss wider issues such as abortion rights and environmental degradation in Vermont and its environs, as well as the anti-Vietnam War protest. Its list for the film nights included 'Columba University Revolt', 'Trouble makers', 'Pig power', 'Vermont Free Farm', and 'Strike city'.[400] This project was closely related to the nature of

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[397] Ryan H. Edgington, 'Be Receptive to the Good Earth: Health, Nature, and Labor in Countercultural Back-to-the Land Settlements', *Agricultural History*, 82. 3 (summer, 2008), pp. 279-308 (p. 289).

[398] Svend Anderson, 'Roskilde Festival 1974', *Kokoo*, 3 (1974), p. 13.

[399] Deanne Pytlinski, 'San Francisco Video Collectives and the Counterculture', in *West of Center: Art and the Counterculture Experiment in America, 1965-1977*, ed. by Elissa Auther & Adam Lerner (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), pp. 56-73 (p. 57).

[400] Interview with Roz Payne, 14 July 2013.

nomads. With their documentary films, the communards at Red Clover had a consistent approach to the task of settling into the new area and making it smoother for new local activities.

Likewise, Verandah Porche, a poet at Packer Corners, managed writing workshops in the region, and helped the establishment of the Monteverdi Artists' Collaborative. These cooperative activities between local artists led to opportunities to give a more systematic culture training for people in southern Vermont. Packer Corners also created the Monteverdi Players for performing plays like A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Tempest, and Alice in Wonderland on the farm of the Packer Corners.[401]

We can find attempts at alternative education in the cases of Liverpool Free School, Red Paint collective school in Vermont and a nursery in Copenhagen. Liverpool Free School, originally designed by school teacher Arnall Richards, started with 20-30 children, most of whom were in their teens. The Liverpool school took place on Saturday mornings, and subjects studied included horticulture, history, drama, English and maths. Geoff Sproson, who was completing an extra year at Liverpool University to get an honours degree in computational and statistical science, joined this educational experiment as a teacher. Sproson was also a member of Open Projects commune in Liverpool. He advocated 'real' education, as the commune declared through their underground magazine, *Openings*, "… not soaking up facts but learning to think and do things for ourselves."[402] Central to the alternative and real education was to raise young people's critical views on social phenomena and systems that affect their lives as well as teaching practical skills for becoming independent adults. According

[401] Blake Slonecker, *Living the Movement: Liberation News Service, Montague Farm and the New Left, 1967-1981* (PhD thesis: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2009), p. 156.

[402] *Openings*, 1 (June/July 1970), pp. 4, 20.

to John Ord (who founded another alternative school in Liverpool, the Scotland Road Free School), Monkton Wylde commune in Lyme Regis in the South of England also ran its own school. At the request of Monkton Wylde communards, Ord visited the school to discuss the Scotland Road Free School's approach and activities, and to share his experiences.[403]

When her eight-year-old child was sent to a local school in Franklin, Vermont, Earthworks's Louise Andrews decided to take her daughter out of the school: "We did not like that education, a lot of the education system."[404] Andrews started a collective for children within the commune Earthworks and other communes in Vermont and other states. Red Paint, the commune's own school founded in February 1970, had a less traditional curriculum than existing public schools, with more classes for art, music, yoga and gardening based on values that the commune was holding as important: "We felt it was important to give them all these other things that were missing, you know, different ways to be living that was not so much focused on capitalism more on creating being away from the culture we disagree with."[405] Rather than simply distributing child care between communes, communards challenged the mainstream educational systems by establishing the Red Paint school based on an anti-capitalist stance. Nearly twenty children, including students from New York and other cities, lived in another farm called Mount Philo near Earthworks. Their parents visited Red Paint on weekends, as they would visit a boarding school. The school was free since everybody, commune members and parents of Red Paint attendees, contributed food, services, and facilities for managing it. It lasted one-and-a half years until November 1971, when the

[403] Interview with John Ord, 09 April 2015.

[404] Interview with Louise Andrews, 15 July 2013.

[405] Interview with Louise Andrews, 15 July 2013.

Earthworks members began to scatter after their farm-house burned out.[406] Vermont communards also attempted to build another alternative educational institution for grown-ups called 'Liberation school'. According to a report of *Free Vermont*, members of Glover commune in West Glover, discussed their launch of a revolutionary school in which "first aid, practical mechanics and electronics, communications-printing, silk screen, film and photography, the use of the mimeo, a useful political/historical ideology, radio, self-defence, legal procedures, and survival information would be learned."[407] Through these counter-institutions communards improved skills for their liberated living pattern against the existing order and continued a regular network with collective works for education.

Many British communards used the same name for their new babies. Sue Finch, who stayed at a commune in Hackney, London in the early 1970s, gave her daughter a new family name 'Wild' instead of using parents' surnames: "I wanted her to be wild and free…so Wild just seemed like a good name."[408] Finch's idea galvanised other communes including in Leeds and Sheffield, which led to 50 children being called Wild. Between them it was common to visit each other for shared child care. One goal was to diminish the divide between biological parents and other adults, to help share the responsibility amongst everyone within the group.[409] Communards thought that collective child care would be more helpful for the development of communal living as well as children. In fact, some communards had to leave their communes when they suffered from the low participation of other peers in child rearing.[410] In addition,

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[406] Interview with Louise Andrews, 15 July 2013.

[407] *Free Vermont*, 1 (1970).

[408] Gerry Kennedy, 'Wild side of life', *The Guardian* (27 April 2005).

[409] Kennedy, ibid.

[410] Interview with Sarah Eno, 29 May 2015.

some communes communicated with high school students as potential commune members. Sylvia Lerner, a sixteen year old in Manchester, dropped out from a local secondary school due to the conflict with the authorities of the school. They did not accept the way Lerner dressed and behaved. Learner contacted existing communes by sending a letter showing her preference: "I would like to live in a commune where there are young people and kids. If it is a farming commune, I would help with manual work."[411]

Compared to its British and American counterparts, Danish communes were marked by a relative lack of educational activities, with no establishments of their own schools in Denmark except that a nursery was started in the Bellevue commune with four children; one from outside. The commune ran the nursery until midday and rotated the work of taking care of the children, in the commune. According to Ke Møller Kristensen, one of the commune members, it was not a nursery but a child-minding centre in order to earn some money from the municipality.[412] After travelling to Danish communes and interviewing the communards, the journalist and author Richard Fairfield pointed out that the Danish commune movement might have been more flourishing if communards had been more active in shaping an alternative education system.[413] However, the absence of educational experiments was largely due to the fact that Denmark already had a flourishing alternative/ 'free' school system, thanks in part to the efforts of the 19th century poet and philosopher, Nikolaj Grundtvig. Danish society had maintained an exemplary school system named *freskoler* since the 19th century when Grundtvig promoted the

[411] *Communes*, 38 (June 1972), p. 24.

[412] Interview with Ke Møller Kristensen, 20 February 2014.

[413] Richard Fairfield, *The Modern Utopian Communes Europe* (San Francisco, CA: Alternative Foundation, 1972), p. 239.

alternative education institution.[414] Danish communards benefited from the free school system and felt little need for a new type of educational institution. Instead, they focused on how to get children integrated into the commune in order to avoid creating an awkward relationship between adults and children. To do this, Danish communards tried to include children in communes in the decision-making processes and practical work as much as possible.[415]

Daniel and Gabriel Cohn-Bendit, the well-known French activists in the 1960s, stated that one major mistake in Paris 1968 was the failure to take control of the media, especially the radio and TV.[416] However, participants in the 1960s underground movement had been familiar with publishing their own media as a tactic for delivering their news. By 1970, alternative publications were very popular, and it was easy to find various newspapers at most 'head shops' (establishments, popular with hippies that sold clothes, drugs, jewellery, and records) in London.[417] For international coverage and distribution, underground media activists launched a news agency such as Underground Press Syndicate and the Liberation News Service.[418] There were also various publications by communards themselves. These included magazines called *Workforce*, *Communes*, *the Commune Movement* journal, and *Openings*, issued by Open Projects.[419] *Communes* which originated from *AHIMSA Communities* (journal of the Vegan

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[414] In Denmark, students between 16 and 18 can stay one or two years at these free schools that do not give any qualification and test results according to their interests including music, performance and sports as well as general academic subjects. For younger children, there are also a union of free elementary schools called Lilleskole that are based on reform pedagogy.

[415] *Kokoo*, 5 (1975), p. 6.

[416] Peggy Kornegger, Anarchism: The Feminist Connection, *The Anarchist Library* (1975), pp. 1-18 (p. 15).

[417] Andrew Rigby, *Alternative Realities: A Study of Communes and their Members* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 98.

[418] Elizabeth Nelson, *The British Counter-Culture, 1966-73: A Study of the Underground Press* (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 46.

[419] Produced by a commune in the US, *Workforce* contributed to "the spread of communalism." Judson Jerome, *Families of Eden: Communes and the New Anarchism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), pp. 123-124.

Communities Movement) in August 1968 attracted more readers with the membership of the Commune Movement (including communes and individual participants) increased from 246 in 1970 to 453 in 1972, and the sales from 700 at the end of 1969 to 2500 by the middle of 1970.[420] Nicholas Albery, the first secretary of the Commune Movement in 1970, assisted this growth with his experience of publishing an underground newspaper, 'BIT' (*British International Times*).[421] Although the magazine experienced a one-year cessation of publishing between March 1971 and February 1972, due to disputes with a typewriter company for *Communes*, it continued its regular bimonthly appearance until the mid-1970s.[422]

A group of squatters in Copenhagen in the late 1960s operated a pirate radio station, for which they made mix-tapes including speeches and songs and other material.[423] Some commune members also tried to transmit their activities through alternative methods. In the Danish case, a series of articles about communal experiments first appeared in the autumn of 1968 in a periodical, *Hvedekorn*, which had issued new poetry. Shortly after, in order to cover Danish communes comprehensively, *Kokoo* (*Kollektiv Koordineringen*-collective coordination) was founded in 1969. *Kokoo* sent their representatives to public meetings and discussions and provided a counselling and information service for individuals and groups. For this purpose *Kokoo* made a questionnaire facilitating the forming of new groups by individuals who had not previously known each other.[424] The balance between communal living and direct political

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[420] *Commune Movement Newsletter*, 55 (27 Sep 1970), *Communes*, 39 (Aug 1972). Rigby, *Alternative Realities*, pp. 97-98.

[421] Rigby, ibid.

[422] Sarah Eno, 'Report on the Commune Scene in Britain, 1971', in *The Modern Utopian Communes Europe* by Richard Fairfield (San Francisco, CA: Alternatives Foundation, 1972), p. 25.

[423] Britta Horn Petersen, 'Squatters', *Dengang I 60'erne,* ed. By Bente Hansen, J. HøM, G. Nielsen, R. Pay & J. Schytte (København: Informations Forlag ApS, 1979), pp. 118-125 (p. 120).

[424] Flemming Andersen, Ole Stig Andersen & Anne van Deurs, *Bogen om Storfamilierne* (Copenhagen:

activity was regularly discussed in *Kokoo*.[425] Besides working in those underground media, commune members also engaged with left-wing magazines. Morten Thing and Niels Frölich were involved in editing *Politisk Revy* (Political Review) during their stay at Brøndby Strand, a commune in Copenhagen between 1970 and 1973.[426]

Based on its criticism of the existing media that had produced articles, mostly focused on communes' sex and drugs, Red Clover communards encouraged other peers in Vermont communes not to give resources to the institutions of 'straight society', arguing that "One doesn't create an alternative society by using, and thereby strengthening, Straight Society institutions such as newspapers."[427] In addition to their own newspaper, '*Free Vermont*', Free Vermonters regularly contributed their writings to the University of Vermont paper '*the Cynic*' in an effort to "try and speak with people." They also broadcast Radio Free Vermont every Saturday night at 7:30 pm on 90.1 FM. The members of Green Mountain Red Collective in Burlington, the biggest city of Vermont, put together all relevant sources for the radio program each week and planned to open the show to all "families".[428]

Considering quite how many communes existed in isolation, the role of underground newspapers and radio broadcasting was important as a method of connecting communes and

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Rhodos, 1970), p. 14.

[425] John Davis and Anette Warring, 'Living Utopia: Communal Living in Denmark and Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 8. 4 (2011), pp. 513-530 (p. 515).

[426] Davis and Warring, p. 516.

[427] Barry Laffan, *Communal Organization and Social Transition: A Case Study from the Counterculture of the Sixties and Seventies* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), p. 143. Similarly, members of a Danish commune called Trørød also rejected visits to the commune by lots of journalists from the big newspapers and magazines. Flemming Andersen, Ole Stig Andersen & Anne van Deurs, *Bogen om Storfamilierne* (Copenhagen: Rhodos, 1970), pp. 57-58.

[428] *Free Vermont*, 1 (1970).

newcomers across long distances. The publisher of *Openings* noted that its aim was "… to get some communication going at the most practical level to show there is a real alternative other than the fuzzy world of freaks, acid, and potted revolution and getting involved with it will not be burning your boats for an ephemeral and impractical pipe-dream, but finding your own relationship with the new world."[429] The alternative media also reflected communards' broad interests in other single issue movements over the world which led to coverage of women's and gay liberation, the rights of ethnic minorities, struggles for national emancipation in the Third world, and the ecology movement.[430]

The daily life of leftists had been similar to repeated participation in mass protests and then returning to the existing social structure which they opposed. However, the discovery of possibilities of traditional and sub-culture, "small and incomplete, but nascent," helped open a new terrain and force of social change, as Joyce Gardner, who founded a commune called Cold Mountain Farm in 1967 at a suburb of New York with other friends who had been living together at a loft in Manhattan, underlined.[431] By establishing their own media, schools and culture, commune members distanced themselves from the 'straight' institutions and system, and interacted more easily with local people instead of being isolated like in a ghetto. It formed a new type of typical leftist for the late 1960s and 1970s, living in a commune with long hair, dressing like farmers, adopting traditional customs and wisdom, and interacting with local people. According to Charles A Reich, who observed the 1960s and 1970s culture in an optimistic vein, it is "the first real choice made by any Western people since the end of the

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[429] Editorial, *Openings*, 2 (Dec 1970), p. 2.

[430] Blake Slonecker, *Living the Movement: Liberation News Service, Montague Farm and the New Left, 1967-1981* (PhD thesis: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2009), p. 101.

[431] Joyce Gardner and Allan Hoffman, 'Introduction', *Good Soup* (1 November 1967).

Middle Ages," with "new emphasis on imagination, the senses, community and the self."[432]

Interpreting the various commitments (comprising co-operative markets, free schools, health clinics, and communes) in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a homogenous cultural revolt and experiment requires careful analysis.[433] It is hard to distil shared basic tenets of those movements for building alternative institutions since most of them had their unique themes, features and paths interacting with different political groups from the Old Left to the New Left.[434] The aims and techniques of the counterculture were radical and new, but simultaneously traditional deploying the old visions of personal independence and self-sufficiency based on farming and the small-scale family unit.[435] Nevertheless, the cultural and educational experiments by communes and other alternative organisations affected the nature of the commune movement being a unit for a ''total revolution'' – or, in the words of Open Project members, "creative revolution" – of political, economic and cultural emancipation.[436] As the message of Free Farm, filmed by Red Clover communards in 1971, visibly demonstrated, communal efforts at cultural and educational challenges helped to demystify communards' political assumptions, which were underlying and diverse.[437] Through their own farms, media,

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[432] Charles A Reich, *The Greening of America* (London: Allen Lane The Penguin, 1971), p. 224.

[433] For instance, Jeremi Suri underpins the more direct connections with cultural rebellion and experimentation rather than political engagements. Jeremi Suri, 'The Rise and Fall of an International Counterculture, 1960-1975', *The American Historical Review*, 14. 1 (Feb, 2009), pp. 45-68 (p. 46).

[434] From the New Left viewpoint, it was called "libertarian socialism", which "combines collective enterprise with personal liberation." Doug Rossinow, 'The Revolution is about Our Lives: The New Left's Counterculture', in *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and '70s*, eds. By Peter Braunstein & Michael William Doyle (NY: Routledge, 2002), pp. 99-124 (p. 119).

[435] Dona Brown, *Back to the Land, the Enduring Dream of Self-Sufficiency in Modern America* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), p. 210.

[436] *Openings*, 2 (December 1970).

[437] The documentary starts with a narration of declaring a departure from the cruel capitalism: "We will make Vermont a free territory. ~ We will build a society that loves life." Susan Green, 'Hippie Havens', Seven Days, 20 August 2008, online http://www.7dvt.com/2008 hippie-havens, p. 2.

schools and language, counter-culturists, including commune members, challenged the existing social system and sustained their own political agendas. As a total revolution, communal experiments in cultural spheres themselves represented communes' political agendas challenging established authority, and encouraging local decision-making and participatory democracy. Framing communal activism as simply cultural would, though, create a misleading impression by blurring the important connections that existed between the counterculture and more traditional protest movements.

Engagement with their local societies as political outreach

The 1966 SDS convention in Clear Lake, Iowa, resolved that each chapter or region should have the right to determine the focus of its activism, fund raising, and general management. Moreover, much of the National Office was downgraded.[438] Before this decision was taken, some chapters were already experimenting with this new approach to structure. The University of Oregon chapter, for example, had elected officers for SDS every semester, with nobody in office for fixed or longer periods. The leadership was also divided into two parts – a president and a chairman.[439] This so-called 'prairie power era' of the student movement in the mid-1960s formed a turning point from activists drawn largely from elite universities to newcomers with more diverse backgrounds, adding further national and regional issues to the previous globally-focused ones like the Vietnam War. After 1968, the year in which the movement peaked in view of international solidarity among various groups and people across the globe, the characteristic turn for social movement participants towards concentrating on local problems became commonplace. These increasing 'glocal' phenomena, in the words of R. Robertson,

[438] Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* (NewYork: Random House, 1973), pp. 279-84.

[439] *SDS San Francisco Regional Office Newsletter*, March 1966.

who argues that there are close links between "the construction of local identities and …globalization", impacted greatly on the various social movements during the following decade.[440] Growing demands for independence from central governments based on activists' national and ethnic origins could be observed, for example in Scotland and Catalonia.[441] Although this regionalism tended towards "narrow provincialism", it offered a space where new cultural and political experiments could be introduced with "a high degree of local or regional consciousness."[442] As an example, Vermont leftists and hippies in the early 1970s carried their own flag representing the Vermont nation when they participated in national protests like the 1971 May Day anti-war demonstrations in Washington. They imagined autonomy from "the Union (the federal government), pollution and big corporations."[443]

In addition, greater attention was directed towards the circumstances of the national labour market. In Britain, this led to the working-class movement against the Conservative government; the miners' industrial struggles of 1972 and 1974, the Shrewsbury Pickets, the dockers' strike in 1972, and the development of workers' co-operatives.[444] The British student movement responded to workers' actions by participating in the series of sympathy strikes and organising protests. Numerically, the figure of student demonstrations outnumbered its

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[440] R. Robertson, 'Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity', in *Global Modernities*, ed. by M. Featherstone, L. Scott and R. Robertson (London: Sage, 1995), pp. 25-44. Quoted in Kirsty Lohman, 'Dutch Punk with Eastern Connections: Mapping Cultural Flows between East and West Europe', *Punk & Post-Punk* 2. 2 (2013), pp. 147-163.

[441] George Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968* (Boston: South End Press, 1987), pp. 184-185.

[442] Anthony Ashbolt, *A Cultural History of the Radical Sixties in the San Francisco Bay Area* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013), p. 8.

[443] Michael Parenti, 'A Third Party Emerges in Vermont', *The Massachusetts Review*, 16. 3 (summer, 1975), pp. 490-504 (p. 492).

[444] Peter Shipley, *Revolutionaries in Modern Britain* (London: The Bodley Head, 1976), p. 23.

American counterpart in 1973.[445] Participants in the labour movements began to conceive their international counterparts as "potential models for their own actions" consisting of numerous groups such as students, feminists and environmentalists as well as labourers.[446] Denmark also witnessed an increasing number of strikes between 1969-1970, compared to the earlier years of the 1960s, raising issues around tax reform, the system of labour relations and the trade union leaders' appeasing approach.[447] Before co-founding the Bellevue commune in Copenhagen in 1970, Ke Møller Kristensen had helped workers by analysing the condition of labourers and their surrounding environments, which had exposed them to danger from various kinds of chemical poisons and pollution. Kristensen and other students visited people from Labour unions who wanted to do something about their working conditions and made some leaflets and posters based on their meetings.[448] Kristensen continued her involvement in research into the poor circumstances of Danish workers with her husband during their stay at Bellevue.[449]

Moreover, with increased time for extra collective work outside communes, active programmes by communards for social change on a local and regional level involved, over the years, more diverse aspects of life (including both the public and personal sectors) than previous communal attempts and traditional protest movements had done. As commune

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[445] Caroline Hoefferle, *A Comparative History of Student Activism in Britain and the United States, 1960-1975* (PhD thesis, Central Michigan University, 2000), p. 469.

[446] Doug McAdam & Dieter Rucht, 'The Cross-National Diffusion of Movement Ideas', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 528 (1993), pp. 56-74 (p. 64)

[447] Thomas Ekman Jørgensen, *Transformations and Crises: The Left and the Nation in Denmark and Sweden, 1956-1980* (NY: Berghahn Books, 2008), p. 134.

[448] It started from a contact between two students and the foreman of a workers union (*Lager og Pak*), Anker Jørgensen, who later became the Prime minister of Denmark (Anker Jørgensen) in 1972.

[449] Interview with Ke Møller Kristensen, 20 Feb 2014.

members' relationship with local people and institutions progressed, communes and other local groups' engagements were sometimes facilitated by existing authorities. For example, the Birmingham Arts Laboratory, the alternative group with various cultural experiments between 1968 and 1990s, was given a government grant in 1969 despite lots of antagonism. According to Bryan Brown, one of six directors of the Lab, it was surprising that the local Arts Council offered funding to help their activities such as showing films, making posters and workshops for kinetic art and theatre.[450]

This relationship between communards and prisoners, or communes and the authorities, suggests that Danish society had a positive stance regarding the existence of communes. The Danish Ministry of Culture also submitted a report to parliament in January 1969 which contained a proposal about a large centre of activity in central Copenhagen – house project (*Projekt Hus*) – made by a commune called Swan Mill (*Svanemøllekollektivet*). In cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, this plan was realised by repairing and modernizing an old building, and the authority which had paid for it announced its non-involvement in the management of the newly built youth centre. The Project House was run by a member of council with the authority to elect an administrative board which would function for one year until the next election.[451] In addition, when the Prison and Probation Service [*Kriminalforsogen, KRIM*] in Denmark arranged suitable places for prisoners who were granted weekend leave, it was sometimes difficult for prisoners to meet the scheme requirement that they must stay with family or friends. Danish communards were open to working with

[450] Interview with Bryan Brown, 19 May 2015.

[451] Flemming Andersen, Ole Stig Andersen & Anne van Deurs, *Bogen om Storfamilierne* (Copenhagen: Rhodos, 1970), p. 15.

state authorities, since they regarded prisoners as a minority group needing solidarity. So communes were one of the possible solutions considered; *KRIM* looked for a suitable room by advertising through *Kokoo*:

> Who has time and space for a young man (26) being released from prison on 19-12 (not a dangerous criminal.) He has previously worked with ceramics and batik, so it should preferably be a place where there are opportunities to work with these things.[452]

The message from the Ministry of Social Affairs, namely No. 1 1974 Item 11, delivered well the increased child benefit for communes.[453] It is also relevant to consider a legitimation proposal by a political party, the Socialist People's Party (*Socialistisk Folkeparti*).[454] In October 1968, the party presented a new bill for legalising fixed cohabitation, which would provide communes and homosexual relationships with the same rights as in traditional marriage. Danish communes continued with more positive reactions from the existing social structures. Several communes organized public meetings in spring 1969 to discuss their group family experiments. Shortly afterwards those communes were visited by various groups including students, researchers and members of a Housewives Association (*husmoderforening*).[455] Although these projects were not successful, they illustrate the growing attention given to communal experiments by Danes.

Nonetheless, the history of the Danish commune movement also represented a number of

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[452] *Kokoo*, 4 (1974), p. 29. *Kokoo*, 6 (1974), p. 23.

[453] It admitted increased family allowances for the financial support from the local councils being provided when only one of a child's parents lives with the child in the commune and is not in a marriage-like relationship with any particular other person. *Kokoo*, n. 5 (1974), p. 14.

[454] The party was founded in 1958 with moderate, non-communist and Soviet-critical position.

[455] Flemming Andersen, Ole Stig Andersen & Anne van Deurs, *Bogen om Storfamilierne* (Copenhagen: Rhodos, 1970), p. 15.

confrontations between commune participants and the existing system, as well as some advances in policy-making regarding communal living. Sofiegården in Copenhagen, established in spring 1965 as a town commune with over 30 flats, was being barricaded by its young residents over demolition threats from the police in 1968 due to a legal issue regarding the building. The Sofiegården members had been planning some renovations. They also arranged teach-ins and some cultural events such as folk festivals, performances and a parade through the city to overcome certain scepticism from the local people, which attracted the majority of the neighbourhood. The winter of 1968 went by peacefully. However, the police approached in February 1969 and destroyed the houses. It was a violent demolition, according to Dorrit Kampmann, one of the barricaders: "They did not check, if there were still people inside – the plan was that you should remain seated and you should have to be carried out, but you could barely get out before they came with those bulldozers."[456] According to their manifesto presented on the 21st February 1969, the Sofiegården occupants had shaped "an alternative society within the barricades, a society where no decision is being made without the consent of all the members, where there is only one forum and everyone, regardless of age and gender, has full access."[457] Despite the brutal eviction the values and experiences of Sofiegården, especially in terms of how to structure of an alternative institution, were shared with other communes and the second Sofiegården members themselves (53 former Sofiegården residents continued rebuilding work for a new commune and obtained 43 small flats in the old part of Copenhagen under a plan for a new Sofiegården to be finished by December 1971).[458]

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[456] Camilla Skousen & Bente Hansen, 'Sofiegården', *Dengang I 60'erne,* ed. By Bente Hansen, J. HøM, G. Nielsen, R. Pay & J. Schytte (København: Informations Forlag ApS, 1979), pp. 110-116 (p. 113).

[457] *Politisk Revy*, 119 (7 February 1969), p. 2.

[458] *Communes*, 33 (August 1970), p. 38.

Sofiegården had organised some work-groups such as an external group for external coordination, an internal group for newspapers and radio production, and meetings, a practical group for the barricades, the printing of flyers, cleaning, and a food group who organised communal meals and the finances regarding this.[459] Through the division of labour the Sofiegården residents increased solidarity with minimal internal pressure and conflicts, and faced the external repression with hardly any confusion as in other communes later.

Shrubb Family in Norfolk had a shared aim when the original four members set up the commune from London, where they had lived together. The commune members wanted to be "part of the local community" and to show the local people what they were doing in the commune.[460] The links with local people were started by drinking at a pub in Norfolk and attending local church meetings. Two children in the commune registered with a village school and Shrubb commune members participated in a local festival with their own booth. They also helped local farmers, particularly during the harvest, picking produce. This resulted in the cheap borrowing of a tractor for commune members' winter use.[461] Members of Birchwood Hall Community in Gloucester, which was established in 1971, invited local people to their house, making it into a community centre. They also provided the house for the first conference of the Commune Movement and a national feminists' meeting in early 1974.[462]

In urban communes such as Blackheath in London, bringing commune members and local residents together required different tactics. As Maggie White mentioned, the local situation as

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[459] *Politisk Revy*, 119 (7th February 1969), p. 2.

[460] Andrew Rigby, *Communes in Britain* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 41.

[461] Rigby, p. 51.

[462] Clem Gorman, *People Together* (Frogmore, Herts: Paladin, 1975), pp. 14-15.

a middle class area had relatively few problems to improve, which made communal activism in that area more challenging. Blackheath communards started their political activity by organising a campaign against South Africa since the issue of apartheid appeared to be a common theme for discussion between people, whether they were rich or not. They then expanded their boundaries, from interacting with a housing action group who had helped squatters, to involving themselves in a community drug addiction project. Blackheath offered a living space for former drug users. Two or three members of Blackheath would live there together for a while to see how the drug users managed their attitude to the drug addiction from which they had just escaped.[463] However, whether rural or urban based, the neighbourhood response was not always positive, but rather antagonistic. As a member of Newhaven commune in Edinburgh described, while local clergy showed great attention of the newcomers on their Sunday sermon praising that "the group of young people who are trying to live a new and alternative way of life," in general, it was rare to get the same attitude from other locals.[464] In fact, the Newhaven commune did not develop its further advance in terms of political engagements in the region except that four members of the commune continued their personal involvement in a political group, the International Socialists.[465]

In order to overcome this difficulty in starting communal living in new areas, commune residents needed to contact other activists who had communicated with different organisations such as secondary school students' unions, parents' and teachers' groups, tenants' groups and gypsy liaison groups. Open Projects in Liverpool invited David Graham, director of the

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[463] Richard Fairfield, *The Modern Utopian Communes Europe* (San Francisco: Alternatives Foundation, 1972), p. 54.

[464] Andrew Rigby, *Communes in Britain* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), pp. 29-30.

[465] Rigby, p. 29.

Community Research and Action Group (CRAG), as a speaker for its regular meeting. CRAG had continued its solidarity with other cities' community groups since it was founded in September 1968 in Manchester. In his speech on the future of communities, Graham envisioned communes as "centres of social action", providing spaces for activists to exchange information, train urban and rural new activists, and use as shelter. He added that this prospect could be made a reality through perpetual efforts by communards not to be "simply introverted and exist for themselves."[466] Open Projects tried to help gypsies in Smith Street, Everton, when they were forced to leave by the local authority. In an open letter to the police, Dave Craig, a member of Open Projects, criticised the eviction of some gypsies from the area, as well as the police brutality which occurred during the arrest and subsequent treatment of participants (including Craig) in the protests against the repression in July 1970.[467]

In a similar vein, American communes also had some local and regional groups and alliances. These included Community for Creative Nonviolence (CCNV), and Movement for a New Society (MNS).[468] The Philadelphia-based MNS was established in 1971. It had developed from a Quaker action group that provided medical necessities to the North Vietnamese in the 1960s, and formulated its innovative agenda of 'Simple Living' in the mid-1970s. Simple Living specified similar values to those communards had sought. The MNS members advocated independence from material goods and added a range of other plans: "nonviolent social change, community, children, and above all, the need for proximity and

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[466] David Graham, 'Community, conformity and revolution', *Openings*, 2 (Dec, 1970), pp. 13-14 (p. 13).

[467] Dave Craig, 'Evening' all', *Openings*, 2 (Dec 1970), p. 8.

[468] CCNV is well known for its opening of a soup kitchen nearby the White House in 1972. Timothy Miller, *The 60s communes: Hippies and Beyond* (NY: Syracuse Uni Press, 1999), pp. 130-131.

structure and ways to translate feelings into action."[469] Their earlier communal living from 1971 facilitated more explicit programmes of action for the proposals. Supporting different levels of activities such as communes and co-operative business, MNS itself produced twenty-two communes including Feminist Collective and the Simple Living Group, mostly in West Philadelphia around January 1976.[470]

An interview with members of a Danish commune illustrates the evolution of their communal life succinctly from the perspective of their local engagements.[471] The six members were: 'Finn': Architect, 'Hans': biologist, 'Asger': Warehouse worker, 'Lise': Substitute teacher, 'Henrik': Architecture, 'Anette': Substitute teacher. They worked in a local group which had been active in opposing the plans by its local authorities in Lyngby, north of Copenhagen, such as the closures of a shopping centre and stores, home demolitions and road projects. They met local people to explain what was happening and to encourage the residents to become organised. Four of the commune members also joined a tenant association group in cooperation with left political parties such as *Danmarks Kommunistiske Parti* (DKP), *Venstresocialisterne* (VS), and *Socialistisk Folkeparti* (SF) in order to create a local council covering more issues like food, waste and recycling. Their activities in the region integrated members discussing the local engagements and concretized initial agendas in reality. They firmly believed it was through their political work that they could develop as a larger commune with more new members and learn to function in society as one of the interviewees addressed:

> Practice has proved that to move in together does not give any knowledge of each other,

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[469] 'Building the Good Life', *Doing It! Practical Alternatives for Humanizing City Life*, 3 (October, 1976), pp. 9-14 (pp. 9-10).

[470] Andrew Cornell, 'Anarchism and the Movement for a New Society: Direct Action and Prefigurative Community in the 1990s and 80s', *Institute for Anarchist Studies*, 2009, pp. 1-4.

[471] *Kokoo*, 6 (1974), pp. 9-10.

> but it is through the political work we have learned to know each other. To work together and discuss together, and especially to apply it in practice, is giving something back to us. The contact with the population also something back to us and make our discussion more concrete than when it is just theoretical policy discussions.[472]

Communal activists in the 1960s and 1970s often had personal involvements in branches of political parties, regularly organised political speeches at communes and their environs, and participated in local councils as members of boards. Roz Payne at Red Clover in Vermont attended the annual Vermont Town meeting and helped to establish the Liberty Union party, active in Vermont as a progressive political party.[473] The party differentiated itself from the two existing parties by campaigning for "ending nuclear power plants and withdrawal from Indochina," and organising activities for "legalized abortion, ecology, utility rates, and the needs of low income people."[474] Similarly, Kana members in Slangerup, 40 kilometres north-west of Copenhagen, helped to create a political organisation called Liste T, which was launched on the 17th March 1974 under a slogan 'It makes a difference! (*Det kan nytte*!)'. Liste T, an alliance among various left-wing groups, ran candidates for election to the local council.[475] Ruth Plovgaard in Kana sometimes attended a council board meeting in place of a representative of the party. As Plovgaard recounts, "We were too much for them. They were not very satisfied with many ideas we had at that time,"[476] the attitudes of other people in the board towards a new member from a commune were generally not positive. Despite the fact that there had been apathy and even hostility among its populace, Liste T continued their efforts

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[472] *Kokoo*, 6 (1974), p. 10.

[473] A group of activists who had worked in Eugene McCarthy's 1968 presidential campaign, formed the party in 1970. Interview with Roz Payne, 14 July 2013.

[474] Michael Parenti, 'A Third Party Emerges in Vermont', *The Massachusetts Review*, 16. 3 (summer 1975), pp. 490-504 (p. 490).

[475] *Folk I slangerup*, Anniversary edition 1974-1984.

[476] Interview with Ruth Plovgaard, 28 May 2013.

at developing new local politics until the late 1980s.

As viewed in three countries' cases in question, communes with political agendas had more extra communal activities mostly by engaging in their local societies than any other types of communes.[477] Peter Larsen, a member of Røjle Commune in Denmark, reported the possible weakness of communes when they remained isolated: "It has been found that the commune movement as a single motion is anaemic. I think that being a resident of a commune is a political act itself, and many of the commune members, the whole commune, or support groups for individual members, work at a local level or in other political associations."[478] In other words, the lack of political commitments by collective participation of communards would affect the future directions of their organisational form, identity and even survival.

While the early attempts to engender communal living more strongly mostly happened in urban areas, communes still had to maintain a relationship with the existing system due to their dependence on city life. Moving to the countryside to establish a new commune required slightly different tactics. There had been controversy about what the purpose of communal life was and why some activists changed their activity base to rural areas. A group called Vocations for Social Change in the US criticised an apolitical type of communalism lacking active social involvement, especially in isolated areas: "Being good to yourself and your family is fine and important, but does not necessarily have an impact for change. Passively not hurting anyone, and getting your head together also have merits, but actively working for a new society is what

[477] Benjamin David Zablocki, *Alienation and Charisma: A Study of Contemporary American Communes* (New York: The Free Press, 1980), p. 245.

[478] Peter Larsen, 'Letter from Røjle Commune', *Kokoo*, 3 (1974), p. 15.

we are interested in."[479] As this argument from the participants of Vocations for Social Change shows, the strategies of the commune movement in its early days in the late 1960s and at least until the early 1970s lay in active discussion of social movement groups. In most cases, however, the connections between activists and commune joiners became attenuated over time, even in city communes. Above all, commune members had to focus on their individual attempts within communes and their environs, with the exception of occasional meetings with the leftists at some national protests venues. Similarly, peers who had communicated with the communards also isolated them from the realm of activism, judging the move to be a lack of commitment to living the revolution, and in fact, retreatism to the tranquil countryside.[480] This gap caused a discontinuity of assistance and contributed to the failure of the commune movement. In reality, the plan of urban communes as political forces had less influence on communalists than the advocates of the plan expected. In its expansion through increasing new communes, it was challenging to coordinate commune participants staying within those diverse forms of communal living. Even in urban areas, once communards started their communal life, they had to settle down in unexpected situations and needed to deal with economic difficulties, internal conflicts and the directions of communes. By this reasoning, maintaining constant relationships between the commune movement and a group of activists or organisers who supported the communards was quite difficult.

In the early phase of the commune movement, however, there were some prominent

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[479] 'Criticism: Why are you going to the country?', *Alternatives*, 3 (1972), p. 48.

[480] Carl Oglesby, SDS president between 1965 and 1966, who had moved to a Vermont commune called "Red Clover" in 1969, took a similar position, viewing communal living in the 1960s as the best shelter for avoiding FBI attacks. Dominick Cavallo, *A Fiction of the Past: The Sixties in American History* (New York: Palgrave, 1979), pp. 247-249. For the Danish commune movement with predominantly urban communes, there was also criticism of agricultural produce and crafts by rural communards as an "accommodation with capitalism." John Davis and Anette Warring, 'Living Utopia: Communal Living in Denmark and Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 8. 4 (2011), pp. 513-530 (p. 526).

collaborations between leftist activists and communards. For the commune participants, the space of communal living and its environs seemed like an area where a total and creative revolution in every aspect of life experimented in convergence of 1960s radicalism. Viewed by the activists in the late 1960s and early 1970s, whose values were under revision with both the traditional orthodox leftism and the newly added and modified one, communes could be spaces for social and political change, playing as a basic unit with a greater focus on individual autonomy. One of those groups submitted a proposal to seek an appropriate model of communal activism. Dimitrios Roussopoulos, who had been participating in grassroots radicalism in Canada, observed that communes had endured their early survival phase and had begun to make "a positive contribution to radical change."[481] Roussopoulos's organisational approach to the emerging new form of experiment was an urban commune. He aimed for a loose collective as an organisational form, consisting of people who had the same vocations, living together or closely. This was projected to advance more politically, through self-management of their working spaces, companies and institutions. Whether or not it was labelled 'soulful socialism' as another advocate suggested, the essence of this proposal was its close links with the traditional left wing ideologies concentrating on the issues of who owns means of production and who should lead the revolution.[482]

Former anti-Vietnam War activists, and key figures from left-wing organisations joined the revival of communal living in an attempt to rekindle the hope of 1960s radicalism with strategies and tactics based on the perspective of the whole movement. For example, Marty

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[481] Dimitrios Roussopoulos, 'The Organizational Question and the Urban Commune', in *The Case for Participatory Democracy: Some Prospects for a Radical Society*, ed. by C. George Benello and Dimitrios Roussopoulos (NY: Grossman Publishers, 1971), pp. 317-327 (p. 322).

[482] Rick Margolies, 'Building Communes', *Alternatives*, 3 (1972), pp. 2-6 (p. 4).

Jezer, a draft resister and member of the Packer Corners commune, regarded communal living as an opportunity to experience what the communards would never have dreamed possible by experimenting with diverse ways of living and developing their lives. After moving to Vermont to be a co-founder of Packer Corners, well known as "Total Loss Farm" with Verandah Porche, Richard Wizansky and Raymond Mungo, he continued to contribute to *WIN* (Workshop In Nonviolence) magazine, an underground newspaper called *Green Mountain Post* which was produced by members of the Montague Farm commune in Massachusetts, and the NOFA (the Natural Organic Farmers' Association) newsletter. Jezer was also involved in the Liberty Union Party which was the electoral manifestation of the commune movement. Having spoken on how best to create social change, he argued that communards need much more political commitment in order to revolutionise American life: "It is not enough to say that we are living normally or decently or even that we are living in a way that we hope all people will live after the revolution…"[483] According to Jezer, who also met local people as a member of Packer Corners, the hippies helped to make Brattleboro a centre of countercultural experimentation. Unlike their counterparts elsewhere, Brattleboroeans (including the town authorities) waited patiently until the long-haired newcomers had settled into their neighbourhoods.[484] As a result, New England's oldest worker-owned natural foods restaurant (*Common Ground*) was established by the efforts of Guilford communes and the town could start a farmers' co-op supermarket in the early 1970s.[485] Jezer served on the board of directors of the Common

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[483] Quoted in Blake Slonecker, *Living the Movement: Liberation News Service, Montague Farm and the New Left, 1967-1981* (PhD thesis: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2009), p. 208.

[484] Marty Jezer, 'A Tradition of Tolerance', *Vermont Magazine* (Nov/Dec 1997), pp. 52-55 (p. 53).

[485] Through the non-profit 'Good Food Restaurant', commune members in Vermont had regular gatherings where they could make healthy food and educate around eating habits. Different groups prepared food on different days and held a monthly party for a rent raising. *Free Vermont*, v. 1 (1970).

Ground restaurant and was active in the formation of the Brattleboro Farmers' Market and the Northeast Organic Farming Association.[486]

Communards and activists cooperated in organising conferences, workshops and protests at national or international levels as part of a deliberate effort to work together, share ideas and strategies, and foster greater solidarity. For example, the New Society of Denmark (*Det Ny Samfund*, the biggest Danish student organization established in 1968) had provided the theoretical debate with some practical initiatives to create an alternative to the bourgeois way of life. One of the most famous events it organised was the annual Thy summer festival which was held for five years from 1970.[487] In addition, Mike Reid, a member of Laurieston Hall, a commune in Scotland established in 1972, arranged a free university, namely the Alternative University in which communards and activists from outside came together. The seven-week programme during the summer of 1974 included various workshops such as social and political week discussing "forces of repression, new forms of action and non-violence", towns/community/environment week and Glasgow week for holidays.[488]

In conclusion, we have seen the various types of external activities by communards in virtually all aspects of life. Engaging with local society commune participants experimented with new politics, namely more direct democracy from below, both individually and collectively. Considering the relatively small scale of these activities, it is difficult to claim that commune members strengthened their relationship with local people to the extent that they

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[486] Randy Holhut, 'Marty Jezer, graceful writer and ardent activist, dies at ~', *Brattleboro Reformer* (13 June 2005), p. 6.

[487] *Kokoo*, 2 (1975), p. 6.

[488] *WOW, A Celebration of Laurieston Hall*, ed. By Tiffy George (London: Treanor Books, 2013), pp. 21, 39.

replaced the existing societies with alternative ones. Nevertheless, communal activism gave the communards more creativity and a longer legacy as a genuine social movement for the 1960s and 1970s. Communal efforts with cultural, political, and environmental goals continued until the mid-1970s alongside other social movements. All these processes were attempted in voluntary participation in order to sustain their communal activism.

All things considered, it is possible to draw a parallel between the three countries' communal activism. Bringing the premise, 'the personal is political', to their daily life within communes, British and Danish communards shared the goal and tactics of various action programmes varying in degrees with their American counterpart. The commune movement in three countries mirrored a multiple spectrum of ideological backgrounds which led to diverse commitments from anti-capitalistic decentralisation and pre-figurative politics to personal politics with feminism, environmentalism and cultural experiments on local, national and international levels.

Chapter 4: Crisis and Transformation

In 1977, Peter Johansen, one of Kokoo's organisers, wrote to an American communard at Twin Oaks, a Virginian commune founded in 1968, outlining how the Danish commune movement had developed. According to Johansen, communes had evolved into three major types: a group of commune members who had increasingly been co-opted into the established capitalist system using their initial alternative ideas in a commercial way; Marxists who had sought to build revolutionary units for a better society; and countercultural groups who had practiced various projects such as farming, craft-works or herb-medicine.[489] Likewise, many researchers have focused on exploring the difference between communes of the 1960s and 1970s and those of the 1980s and the 1990s. For the American commune movement, Brian Berry has argued that communards in the 1990s differed significantly from their predecessors of the 1960s and 1970s. Rather than challenging capitalism and racism, championing gay rights and feminism, and prompting effective methods for healthy, environmental and personal development, the later communes adopted those values from existing mainstream society.[490] Benjamin Zablocki adds that, since the mid-1970s, 1960s communal experiments had been co-opted into a personal life-style movement similar to that of the communards of the late 19th century and the years between 1946 and 1964.[491] Furthermore, Timothy Miller has explored the emergence of extreme right-wing activities in post-1975 communes that were influenced

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[489] Peter Johansen, a letter to Vince at Twin Oaks (20 April 1977), in the Twin Oaks archive at Communal Studies, David L. Rice Library, University of Southern Indiana.

[490] Brian Berry, *America's Utopian Experiments: Communal Havens from Long Wave Crises* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1992), p. 243. Quoted in William L. Smith, *Families and Communes: An Examination of Non-Traditional Lifestyles* (California: SAGE publications, 1999), p. 107.

[491] Benjamin David Zablocki, *Alienation and Charisma: A Study of Contemporary American Communes* (New York: The Free Press, 1980), p. 49.

by the Christian Identity and white supremacy movements. For example, violent actions of several communes in Missouri, Arkansas and Oklahoma based on their ultra-rightist convictions like the bombing of the federal courthouse in Oklahoma City in 1995 were widely reported in the media.[492]

Some communes in the 1970s combined all three aspects that Johansen classified. Communards of Sunrise Communal Farm in Michigan, for instance, experienced all three characteristics during their seven-year stay at the commune from 1971.[493] Sunrise started its own business for financial survival making candles, hats and teakwood backgammon tables which was run by residents' participation according to a systematically allocated work schedule that, at its highest, involved some 40 people.[494] In 1975, Sunrise established the Sunrise Trading Company, a corporation which was separate from the commune, in order to make the craft business more viable. In response, a number of communards left the commune sensing that their communal living was becoming closer to mainstream America, which led to the decline in 1978. For instance, Pat Tobin who abandoned using drugs in order to work for the business recalled that the turn to an economic unit and decreasing members brought some communards including himself to consider a move from the commune.[495]

The disagreement that convulsed Sunrise Farm was no isolated event, but was illustrative of a wider phase of crisis, starting around the mid-1970s, that would eventually lead to the transformation of 1960s communal activism. During this period, the first trend identified by

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[492] Timothy Miller, *The 60s communes: Hippies and Beyond* (NY: Syracuse Uni Press, 1999), p. 244.

[493] Caroline Hoefferle, 'Just at Sunrise: The Sunrise Communal Farm in Rural Mid-Michigan, 1971-1978', *Michigan Historical Review*, 23. 1 (1997), pp. 70-104.

[494] Hoefferle, p. 89.

[495] Ibid, pp. 93, 102-3.

Johansen – alignment with the existing social order – appeared to be growing within the commune movement. Paradoxically, the crisis of 1960s communal activism – itself motivated by a desire to carve out alternatives to the existing, consumer-dominated society – became apparent at a moment when, amidst the oil price shock, stagflation, and growing labour unrest, capitalism itself appeared to be tottering and thus at a moment when one might have assumed that the prospects for 'alternative' forms of living would have been particularly attractive. Contrary to classic notions of social movements, rather than making the commune movement more appealing and widespread, external circumstances did little to boost the numbers of potential and existing communards. In fact, a substantial number of commune residents abandoned communal living altogether in order to return to their previous living spaces and relations during roughly the same period of economic downturn. In Denmark, the commune movement had declined precipitously by 1980, with commune participants falling by about 20% compared to that of the mid-1970s.[496] Danish communards themselves recognised the waning of communal living as a crisis:

> The commune crisis manifested itself in this void, where society norms have undermined the polarisation of the communes, and have thereby made it impossible to experience any form of real identity within a greater community. Very few communes today have roots and traditions going back to a shared past from the barricades of the Youth Uproar, and thereby have the experience of which of the visions back then, have been firmly established and which ones could not even stand on their own even if they had crutches.[497]

The decline of American communes had begun a little earlier around 1972 when the number of communards setting up rural communes diminished. Although urban communes were still prevalent until 1976, their stability had more to do with the growing number of religious

[496] John Davis and Anette Warring, 'Living Utopia: communal living in Denmark and Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 8. 4 (2011), pp. 513-530 (p. 526).

[497] Søren Thiesen, 'Crisis within the commune movement', *Kokoo*, 2 (1975), pp. 16-21 (p. 17).

communes like the Hutterian Society of Brothers (the Bruderhof) alongside the steadiness of the kibbutz movement.[498] Political and activist communes appear to have encountered real difficulties in recruiting new members from the mid-1970s.[499] For Keith Bailey, who had edited newsletters for British communes since 1975, the changing mood seemed to signify that communards would no longer embrace their "all-out pursuit of community", instead they would "make compromises" rather than "nurse idle dreams."[500] In reality, this crisis within the communes over all three countries studied here led to criticism, continued conflicts and, as a result, transformations.

Did the change that occurred in the mid-1970s mark an end of 1960s communal activism or an arrival of a new wave in broader social movements as with the rise of communal living groups in the 1960s? Did the commune movement take a different path to other social movements at the time of general decline by finding its own ways and tactics to overcome the crisis? This chapter is concerned with the crisis within the commune movement, the increasingly fraught arguments within communes concerning their future direction, as well as external influences like the gradual drift in the movement that resulted from the end of the Vietnam War – the linkage between the end of 'Long Sixties' and the demise of 1960s communal activism. This chapter also explores the transformations of communes after the internal and external crises. Although communal living has continued today maintaining its

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[498] Bruderhof communes already experienced difficult years called 'The Great Crisis' between 1959 and 1961 when over 500 members of those ten communes in Paraguay, England, Germany, Uruguay and the U.S were forced to leave due to internal conflicts. Chris Coates, *Communes Britannica, A History of Communal Living in Britain 1939-2000* (London: Diggers & Dreamers Publications, 2012), p. 212.

[499] Benjamin David Zablocki, *Alienation and Charisma: A Study of Contemporary American Communes* (New York: The Free Press, 1980), pp. 55-56. Yaacov Oved, *Two Hundred Years of American Communes* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1988), p. 482.

[500] Keith Bailey, 'For the record', *The Collective Experience: Articles and Poems about Communal Living*, edited by Keith Bailey and Bob Matthews (Leicester: Communes Network, 1984), pp. 49-51(p. 49).

scale, it is rare to see a similar level of political activism compared to how communes in the 1960s and 1970s engaged with their societies. Based on communes' letters, gatherings and activities through which they reacted to the crisis and re-designed their identity, I will discuss the nature of these transformations. Was this a turn to different goals or just a change of living styles?

Crisis

As discussed in Chapter 3, at least until the early 1970s the interaction between activists in traditional protest movements and participants in the commune movement was quite dynamic in discussing how communal living could be revived and how it might bring about social change. Yet this general mood of the commune movement did not continue, especially when the frequent connections and cooperation between other social movements and communal activism itself began to ebb away. Due to the weakened link, most national and international gatherings of communes in the mid-1970s attracted fewer activists who had been organising other forms of political and cultural activism, like feminists, urban squatters, workers, gay rights activists and anti-racism militants than in earlier years of 1960s communal activism. Recruiting newcomers from leftist groups through those collective meetings became more and more difficult accordingly. As a sign of this trend, Jørgen Mikkelsen and Nils Kløvedal, two organisers of Kokoo, travelled around Denmark for seven months in 1973, meeting communards to explore the increasingly diminished enthusiasm within communes. Afterwards, they concluded that the original ideas, goals and programmes on which communes founded were still active and not so different from those that earlier communes had maintained since the early 1960s. As a result of this, they organised a seminar in mid-August that year arguing that a discussion between commune participants was necessary to solve the lessening energy

of communes.[501] Why did the political and countercultural communes or communal activism become more fragile around the mid-1970s? The crisis within the commune movement can be roughly categorised into three major causes: the lessening engagement with politics, the generation gap and conflict concerning the future direction of communal activism.

First, the generally beneficial climate of 1960s activism had begun to dissipate. The umbrella social movements associated with progressive and radical social change including the New Left were becoming less dynamic "with the modest success of the civil rights movement and the winding down of the Vietnam War," if not with the tendency towards apathy.[502] As John D'Emilio, who specialises in the gay history of the U.S, portrays, the hope for a better society within the radical Left groups also became lessened in the 1970s: "The belief that a revolution was imminent and that gays and lesbians should get on board was fast losing whatever momentary plausibility it had."[503] Despite the Old and New Left's continued active engagement with the wider aspects of life such as gay rights, environmental and feminist activism, the early 1970s saw social movements face considerable difficulties. In Britain, apart from the disabled, other social movements – including the commune movement – were on the defensive, and fragmented. British anarchists had been roughly divided into two groups since 1971: while one concentrated on local activities, the other called for a nation-wide headquarters to engage more effectively with social change.[504] By the late 1970s, British social movements shifted their focus to party politics for legal change with a number of activists moving to the

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[501] *Kokoo*, 1 (1974), pp. 3-4.

[502] Leonard Williams, 'Ideological Parallels Between the New Left and the New Right', *The Social Science Journal*, 24. 3 (1987), pp. 317-327 (p. 319).

[503] Quoted in Elizabeth A. Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities: Organizing Sexuality in San Francisco, 1950-1994* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 90-91.

[504] Peter Shipley, *Revolutionaries in Modern Britain* (London: The Bodley Head, 1976), p. 179.

Labour Party from local grassroots politics.[505]

Danish society in the mid-1970s encountered not only economic decline but also a powerful counter-response by wage earners and leftist intellectuals. In May 1974, a series of strikes occurred which involved more people than the wildcat strikes of 1969-1970. About 100,000 people across various sectors participated in the strikes against austerity measures like tax rises by the government. Reflecting this resurgence of the labour movement, Danish groups on the left attempted a full examination of "the state of capitalism and the possible strategies of the left," as an "immediate task."[506] The organisers of Kokoo in 1975 also believed that communes and their members were subject to the same forms of exploitation and oppression as other employees in society. They argued that the "ailing capitalism in the wealthy sixties is starting to peel off and exploitation and oppression now appears obvious and…vulnerable." [507] However, the fact that commune members believed that, like workers, they were the victims of capitalist exploitation does not appear to have translated into any concrete basis for collective and political activities between them. Similar positions on the condition of capitalism did not spawn the substantial solidarity that they anticipated. In other words, the overall dynamic of social movements in the mid-1970s was not so high to take the economic downturn to their turning point for explosive developments as Sixties witnessed.

This trend of weakening leftists' forces had become more marked by the late 1970s and

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[505] Adam Lent, *British Social Movements since 1945: Sex, Colour, Peace and Power* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 145-165.

[506] *Politisik Revy*, the Danish left-wing journal analysed the situation in its 1974 and 1975 overview. Thomas Ekman Jørgensen, *Transformations and Crises: The Left and the Nation in Denmark and Sweden, 1956-1980* (NY: Berghahn Books, 2008), pp. 154-155.

[507] *Kokoo*, 2 (1975), p. 4.

early 1980s.[508] According to the historian Blake Slonecker, the scale of communards' engagement with various political and cultural projects which had begun in the late 1960s and early 1970s gradually shrank after communes had spent two or three years accustoming themselves to their local environment.[509] While 1960s communal activism had more time to concentrate on activities beyond the commune (as discussed in chapter 2), the communities still had to endure periods when survival was uncertain, as they faced severe weather conditions, discord and friction between members, and the problems involved in the daily issues of communal living including child care, income distribution and rotation of work. The internal difficulties that those involved in communal living faced were, of course, not unique to the 1960s and 1970s, but it seems rather common to enter a phase of slow progress in terms of communes' commitments to external objectives like participating in local politics. As communal experiments are based upon a principle of presenting an example for a better society by living out directly in all aspects of life, commune participants could not focus only on outside political engagements. Communal life remained constantly challenging. In fact, despite the earlier years of development, many political communes which had embarked on a range of various activities with well-defined agendas, such as Red Clover in Vermont and Open Project in Liverpool, proved unable to sustain their activism and ended up dissolving themselves. For the viability of communal activism it was necessary to maintain the tension and mutual influences between the subjective everyday communal living and the objective goal of the commune movement as time passed.

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[508] Adam Lent, *British Social Movements since 1945: Sex, Colour, Peace and Power* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 134-136.

[509] Blake Slonecker, *Living the Movement: Liberation News Service, Montague Farm and the New Left, 1967-1981* (PhD thesis: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2009), p. 82.

The decline, the lessening degree of political activism in communes and left groups, has often been explained as a result of a return to the personal. For example, Anthony Ashbolt argued that cultural radicalism including communal activism quickly shifted its focus "from utopian dreams of promise", to centre instead around "music, drugs, personal appearance or even household living arrangements."[510] Such a statement is problematic, however, because a greater emphasis on personal or cultural politics does not necessarily mean sudden decline with vague tactics and loose organisations compared to the traditional protest movements. Rather, although left wing groups declined rapidly in the circumstances of the 1980s based on so-called neo-liberalism associated with the reactionary governments of Thatcher in Britain and Reagan in the U.S, communal activism was minor but steady. Although the overall level of communal engagements with local politics and social change became reduced, individual communes and communards continued their communal experiments in their local societies right up until today.

Generational conflict was one of the reasons for internal tensions and a second major factor for the crisis of the commune movement which led to the restructuring of initial goals by transforming into a looser type of communal living like a business cooperative, women-only communes or a more agricultural based commune. Here, the term 'generation' does not designate a common definition of generation dividing age groups by 30 years but indicates the difference in experiences of protest movements, counter-culture and communal living over roughly ten years from the mid-1960s within the same generation mostly in their 20s or 30s. In general, while the first generation of communal living who entered communes in the late 1960s and early 1970s was more focused on external activities to grow as political communes, the

[510] Anthony Ashbolt, *A cultural history of the radical sixties in the San Francisco Bay Area* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013), p. 167.

second generation who started in the mid-1970s was not keen to assist the gradual drift of communal activism. The dissimilarity in experiences, ideas and in degree of commitment, in fact, lingered in many communes. In some communes that experienced generational conflict and failed to reach agreement about their future direction, there were splits between the first and second generations.

Ellen Powell, for instance, who stayed at Red Clover in Vermont, felt that the older people of the commune were different from more recent members like herself. According to Powell, the younger generation struggled to share the political attitudes and experiences of the older people who had been involved in 1960s radicalism. She regarded them as "political heavies."[511] As a result, Powell set up a new commune called 'Free Vermont', which consisted of younger people. Sarah Eno also observed a dissimilarity between her mother, Joan Harvey, and three American newcomers as a member of a commune, Parsonage Farm in Burwell, Cambridgeshire. Having committed to politics and anarchism, Harvey set up the commune in 1971 running a whole food shop called Arjuna in Cambridge. She also arranged meetings for political groups giving lectures and talks about communal living. After four Americans (3 adults and one child) who had worked at the shop joined the commune, frequent clashes happened since Harvey disliked the newcomers' use of recreational drugs: "It was a whole different style. My mother did not approve that."[512] While the founding members and early joiners, in general like-minded people based on personal contacts, shared similar experiences and backgrounds, the new participants in the commune movement came for different reasons.

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[511] Interview with Ellen Powell by Reid R. Frazier, 8 February 2002 , Quoted in Reid R. Frazier, *1960s Communes in southern Vermont* (MA thesis: University of Vermont, 2002), p. 53.

[512] Interview with Sarah Eno, 29 May 2015.

As a Danish commune participant, 'Kristian', recalled, the older generation had difficulties in discussing political issues during regular meetings with the newcomers just sometimes joining seminars on gender roles.[513] It was not easy for the second generation to debate fully about issues, for example how one might practically connect the commune movement and the political.

Growing generational dissonance can be partly explained by how quickly youth culture changes. In the mid-1970s new cultural elements like punk in music and graphics for magazines were already replacing older ones, thereby confirming the cliché that "Five years is a millennium in youth culture."[514] The political strength of 1960s radicalism particularly associated with personal politics was that participants did not only seek their overall objectives for social change, but also tried to improve themselves by witnessing and discussing other members' personal progress. For instance, consensus in decision making for survival, change and development of communes relied on individual members' involvement. In order to develop communal living on a personal, regional and national level, interaction between members beyond their differences was necessary. Although one cannot estimate how many communes dissolved as a result of personality clashes that stemmed from the generation gap, the lack of communication that arose from communards' different backgrounds undoubtedly contributed to the crisis of communal living. In the absence of detailed, specific and focused discussions around the future of the commune movement, collisions between the different generations became deeper and eventually caused transformations and splits.

Thirdly, commune residents in the mid and late 1970s struggled against continued

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[513] *Kokoo*, 3 (1976), p. 6.

[514] Nigel Fountain, *Underground: The London Alternative Press 1966-74* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 198.

disagreements and disappointments when they discussed their next step especially the organisational roadmap such as turning to an organic farm from a political commune and developing into a looser and larger co-operative. In relation to this, individual communards also presented different assessments of the validity of earlier proposals and activities. The commune movement had survived nearly 10 years, but it was entering a critical phase having fewer new joiners, weakening networks and support from outside, and a widening generational conflict within. This condition produced considerable debate between commune members. For instance, between 30 June and 13 July 1975, Danish communards organised the Commune Congress in Thy, where they discussed extensively how they might further advance their communal identity, ideology and activity.[515] The questions for the Congress were proposed as follows:

> What has happened to the dreams from the happy days of 68-70? Has the commune movement grown a bit stale? Have the communes lost their say in any potential political impact, due to the more internal problems in the living room and kitchen garden? How do we move forward?[516]

An important working group that was established during the congress was Holger Study Group. Its task was to look into what had gone wrong since the 1967 London Congress, the International Union of Socialist Youth and Congress on the Dialectics of Liberation. The Holger Study Group re-evaluated the purpose of the 1967 international meeting in which important intellectual figures of that time from Herbert Marcuse to R. D. Laing to Carmichael participated: as *Kokoo* reminisced in 1975 "the participants as well as the intellectuals wanted to forge the theoretical tools for the youth Uproar."[517] This starting point of the study group

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[515] It was a two-week gathering during the summer festival, *Sommerfestival i Thy*, which had been organised over the previous five years.

[516] *Kokoo*, 2 (1975), p. 6.

[517] The idea of R. D. Laing, in fact, helped to set up communes in Britain. In 1966 a group of people joined a

indicated that the Congress of 1975 for Danish communes was also attempting to find ways to translate thinking into the kind of action that can change the world.

The major issues presented for discussion at the Thy Congress reflected those faced by social movements in the 1970s: the relationship between alternative culture and political struggle, gender roles, the roles of children and adults and the psychological roots of oppression. On the first day, for instance, participants discussed the involvement of left-wing organisations in relation to the commune movement. As far as the Danish commune residents were concerned, those commune members who "stepped out" of their communes to join any other organisations including left groups, had to convert their commune consciousness into another, since their most important and concrete experiences in communes such as consensus decision making and open policy to new members were not accepted in leftist associations. Conversely, some members who stayed within the communes had not embraced the communal consciousness and were still arguing over what *Kokoo* characterised as "reproduction, the nuclear-family on a bigger scale, arguments over dirty dishes, relationships".[518] Communards had learned that it was possible to live together within a commune when individual members maintained membership of different political parties and groups. Therefore, in order to join any external organisations, commune members did not need to abandon the commune. Whether they joined other left groups or not, the most important need for the commune members was to build communal awareness and unity. Communal awareness, it was argued, "should be the foundation functioning within the various left-wing organisations," meaning that with the

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communal project living together at a house in London that Laing's wife bought. Interview with Dave Treanor, 8 July 2015. *Kokoo*, 2 (1975), p. 10.

[518] 'Commune Bulletin for the week 7th-12th of July', *Kokoo*, 2 (1975), p. 12.

communal awareness any possible separation between the left groups and communes could be prevented and "solidarity can emerge from below so that any paranoia in the left-wing is substituted by trusting and warm relationships between people."[519] They concentrated on their internal basis, 'communal awareness', to use the terms of the Danish communards, again, with which the commune movement developed, when facing the crisis.

They started to discuss all the ways that they had adopted, from business for economic survival to their original ideals as political communes. To share their experience of communal awareness, Hønsegruppen contributed an article exploring all facets of communal life, to the issue of *Kokoo* which covered the Commune Congress. The group placed first a respect for diversity in terms of the variety of qualities and different futures of communes as one of its advantages admitting that "even if there is an agreement upon the goals, there will still be various interpretations and expectations of those goals."[520] An ongoing discussion between members, with critique and self-critique, would then be necessary, or the group would slowly break up. After stressing a concern about isolation from the world, they strongly advised commune residents to take part actively and voluntarily in various projects, moving from "the subjective to the objective, from the personal to the public', which would help communes to become a living and creative entity.[521] The crucial elements of the crisis was that communal living or activism had not produced more new communes and supporters as Peter Johansen who acted for Kokoo explained earlier. Additionally, the frequency of face-to-face interactions and other communications between urban and rural communes had dwindled. A letter from

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[519] *Kokoo*, 2 (1975), p. 12.

[520] Ibid, p. 23.

[521] Ibid, p. 25.

Peter Larsen who joined a rural commune called Røjle Commune in Stubdrupvej, Brønderslev, reflected the need of strong solidarity and energetic discussion for the commune movement's future goals and structure: "it can quickly become a negative action if you do not ensure that we, who are living in the province, have the opportunity to consider proposals or the operation of Kokoo."[522] As viewed from these series of discussions about the need of a more improved relationship between the commune movement and left-wing groups, a more expanded area of activities and solutions to the internal conflicts, Danish communards entered a phase evaluating the characteristics of the crisis and ways to transcend it.

While the Danish debate occurred in the mid-1970s, British commune members had started to discuss their future earlier, and the debate eventually resulted in the creation of a group of communes searching for a new organisational direction. This tendency appeared mostly through arguments between the Commune Movement and individual communes. Chris Pyke, a commune member, pinpointed the lack of mutual trust between individual communes and the Commune Movement- a federation of British communes- that resulted from its use of formal and allegedly alienating bureaucratic mechanisms: "Things like ballots or a quorum or the handling of funds surplus to immediate needs are all traps which distance us."[523] According to Sarah Eno who worked as one of secretaries for the Commune Movement in 1971, internal conflict within the organisation became obvious in the early 1970s: "There's a row with Tony Kelly (who led the federation)… Kelly stopped the bank account, I couldn't write any cheque in 1971."[524] Dave Treanor, a member of Laurieston Hall, adds more specific reasons for the

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[522] Peter Larsen, 'Letter from Røjle Commune', *Kokoo*, 3 (1974), p. 15.

[523] Keith Bailey, 'For the record', *The Collective Experience: Articles and Poems about Communal living*, edited by Keith Bailey and Bob Matthews (Leicester: Communes Network, 1984), pp. 49-51 (p. 49).

[524] Interview with Sarah Eno, 29 May 2015.

row which led to a formation of new organisation in 1975, the Communes Network: "Communes' fund has never been used. Tony Kelly is more and more getting interested in something else. It's hard to change the organisation, the Commune Movement. So, we launched a new organisation." [525] David Howard, a secretary of the New Village Association/Community Land Trust in Leeds, also discussed the problem with the Commune Movement in a letter to Twin Oaks: "Things are a bit polarised into economic viability before anything else, due to the deep rooted system, and many small groups have recently foundered."[526] Reflecting the mood of crisis, British communards began to consider changing their organisational structure.

What caused the fragmentation of the Commune Movement was Kelly's reformist position towards the existing social order as well as his tendency to pursue personal objectives. In a response to a letter written by Simon Fairlie in *Communes* in 1972, for instance, Kelly raised concerns about whether communards could "happily coexist" with an economic downturn".[527] The point of Fairlie's argument was that a potential economic slump in the near future, caused by the "deficiencies of the capitalist system", would encourage people to find alternative ways of living like communes, which would "intensify the slump", and finally would cause the emergent reaction of the existing social order and a revolutionary condition.[528] Concerning this, Kelly clarified that communes could not replace the capitalist system and did not need the

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[525] Interview with Dave Treanor, 8 July 2015.

[526] A letter to Will at Twin Oaks, in the Twin Oaks archive at Communal Studies, David L. Rice Library, University of Southern Indiana (13 January 1975).

[527] Tony Kelly, *Communes*, 38 (June, 1972), p. 20.

[528] Simon Fairlie, *Communes*, 38 (June, 1972), pp. 18-19 (p. 19).

end of it as a "prerequisite for building cooperation and togetherness".[529] Given the dependence on Tony Kelly's leadership, the Commune Movement suffered gradual decline as the leader became vulnerable concentrating more and more on his own commune for paganism. This lack of unity created arguments and a gap between commune members and the organisers of the Commune Movement as well as a distancing of some communes from the federal organisation with which they had been affiliated. Finally, with the Commune Movement no longer acting as a coordination centre, it was replaced by a new organisation, Communes Network, in 1975. In fact, Communes Network (CN) sought to make decisions through meetings of members including would-be joiners as well as existing commune members instead of postal ballots.[530]

Taken as a whole, the intense experiences of the massive protests of the 1960s were a fillip to the commune movement that produced an explosion in communal living. Earlier communal experiments had been supplemented with a steady flow of newcomers from the whole movement at least until the early 1970s. However, the incipient communal activism was diminished when the direct and indirect networks between the leftists and communards began to weaken during the period of declining dynamic of political activism in the mid-1970s. The lack of support from many other social movements at a time of ever-increasing communal living affected the external activities by communards in particular. Very few people who had participated in other leftist groups newly joined communes, and joint actions between them such as summer festivals, national gatherings for protests and regular visits became occasional. In addition, after attempting to rescue communal experiments, many communards who had

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[529] Tony Kelly, *Communes* 38 (June, 1972), p. 18.

[530] Pam Dawling, 'What is the Communes Network?', *Diggers and Dreamers* (April 1992), pp. 7-14 (p. 13).

organised varied activities to engage with local politics left their communes due to mainly internal conflicts. One major reason for the conflicts was the generation gap caused by differences in experiences and the different degree of commitment to protest movements, counter-culture and communal living within the same generation. Although new commune joiners and founding members tried to minimise the gap in every aspects of communal living, in many political communes like Red Clover and Kana, their lack of unity eventually led to splits. Communards began to identify the lessening mood of social movements and internal conflicts with the generation gap as the two main issues that signified the crisis of the movement. The examination of the crisis and responses to it, of course, continued within the commune movement as well as other social movements. They organised national and regional conferences to discuss what caused the crisis and to seek a solution. Commune members examined the 10 year experiments of communal living, and found that its values and experiences had not spread as they had expected. However, it is hard to claim that the debate and continued work succeeded in addressing or even overcoming the general drift of contemporaneous social movements and the generation gap.

Transformation

The reaction to the crisis did not prove strong enough to counteract declining numbers, lack of collective work within the commune movement and diminished solidarity with other social movements. Rather than maintaining their various political and cultural engagements by adding new political communes, communal activism was forced to change its initial agenda and internal basis with which communal living had developed as a genuine social movement. Generally speaking, the transformations over the three countries had similar tendencies forming new regional, national and international organisations, creating bigger communes and

changing their initial agendas and types. This section examines the restructuring in terms of its implications for the commune movement itself and other social movements.

Three British communes, Postlip, Burwell and Birchwood Hall, led an association called the Human Potential Movement. Although this group acted in a relatively limited area, mostly among rural communes, it helped to found a new and bigger affiliation, the Communes Network (CN) to replace the Commune Movement when that organisation started to disintegrate.[531] In early 1975, around thirty commune members from different communes like Laurieston Hall and Trogwell established CN (other communes such as Crabapple, Birchwood, Lifespan, People in Common, Wheatstone and Glaneirw joined later). CN issued newsletters to communicate between communes with a looser organisational relationship than that of the previous Commune Movement.[532] The style of producing the newsletters demonstrated well not just the organisational but also the ideological differences. Each year, editorial responsibilities rotated between communes. Sales and other administrative work was allocated to other commune members. Other groups organised regional and national gatherings. In other words, the new federal association was open to a number of "possibilities" in order to "make change easy."[533] This indicated a shift towards freer and looser connections between communes compared to what the Commune Movement sought.

Danish communes embarked on a project to publish the 'Communes' Phonebook' in 1975 with the aim of coordinating political work locally and improving the overall strength of

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[531] Clem Gorman, *People Together* (Frogmore, Herts: Paladin, 1975), p. 49.

[532] Keith Bailey, 'For the record', *The Collective Experience: Articles and Poems about Communal Living*, edited by Keith Bailey and Bob Matthews (Leicester: Communes Network, 1984), pp. 49-51.

[533] Pam Dawling, 'What is the Communes Network?', *Diggers and Dreamers* (April 1992), pp. 7-14 (p. 8).

individual communes. Previously, a working group had held weekend seminars to discuss local politics and the low levels of collective work among communes. In order to develop more meaningful and sustained collaboration between the different communes, the study group suggested bingo nights, meetings at leisure centres, lectures, parent meetings in institutions, and parties at the village hall, alongside the compilation of the Communes' phonebook. When it came to engagement with local societies, the active involvement in local council meetings, the contribution of articles exposing local issues to the editor of the local papers and protests were considered.[534] Kana communards adopted these proposals fully into their local area by launching a political alliance among leftist groups called Liste T, which led to representatives being sent to its council board meetings, as I discussed in Chapter 3. Kana's case showed that a commune could provide an effective base for engaging in local politics. Based on this realisation of communal activism, Danish communards attempted more frequent exchanges of each other's experiences, "specialised knowledge, spare workforce, products and tools," between nearby communes, which "would make it possible to "quickly mobilise a large group of people."[535] Although the 'Communes' Phonebook' project did not result in the creation of a new organisation structure directly, it united Danish communes in response to the crisis.

Danish commune residents also established contacts with other organisations such as the Rødovre/Brøndby Strike Committee and Socialistisk Arbejderkreds (Socialistic Working Group, SAK). The representative from the Rødovre/Brøndby strike committee presented the benefits of having a similar permanent support committee at the meetings between

[534] *Kokoo*, 5 (1975), pp. 13-14.

[535] Ibid, p. 5.

communes.[536] This solidarity work led to the formation of a new organisation for commune members and on 4 October 1976 Socialistisk Kollektivforening (the Socialist Commune Association, SOKO) was launched at a meeting with 200 people in Stakladen, Aarhus. In the notice issued before the meeting, they declared a fight against the bourgeois lifestyle along with the creation of collaborative tasks such as shopping co-ops, instructions for communes and the distribution of experience:

> We need a connection between ourselves as individuals and the type of politics we want to promote. Our private issues are part of the type of politics we engage with. When we organise our lives in a middle-class fashion, we influence politics in the direction of the middleclass and we have to work against that by organising ourselves differently.[537]

It looked feasible to help different communes in the area with various joint programmes as Kokoo and the New Society had done nationally. To broaden the activities of the commune movement, the Kokoo organisers hoped that this idea would be taken up in other social movement forces like the Strike Committee and socialist groups, and in a more expanded area beyond Aarhus and Copenhagen – in some form or another.[538] However, concerns about the lack of solidarity between communes continued. According to an article published by SOKO in 1978, local communes still lamented that they remained unconnected and isolated. Although SOKO members suggested a new form of action – theatre, music and posters – its vision had little impact on individual communes. It seemed that SOKO no longer acted for coordinating communal work from the late 1978: "It will of course be possible for the association to continue as it has been doing, if anyone is interested in taking over the functions of the coordination

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536 *Kokoo*, 5 (1975), p. 6.

537 *Kokoo*, 4 (1976), p. 21.

538 *Kokoo*, 4, Ibid.

group, we just do not want to do that anymore."[539] As SOKO assessed their actions since its start in 1976, the results were judged to be disappointingly incoherent. In fact, only few communes in Aarhus appeared to think that SOKO's activities had been helpful in creating more contact between communes. SOKO provided limited practical service functions such as office hours, magazine and taking care of all the inquiries they received. The matter was not how strong its initial agenda was, but actual and continuous achievements involving more different communes to advance the commune movement as a local communication centre.[540]

Despite these weaknesses, the very short existence and unsuccessful results of boosting local political activities, the case of SOKO opened an organisational alternative to overcome the crisis. Given the small size of Denmark, SOKO had a possibility of developing as a bigger group covering the whole country rather than staying as a local one. In relation to this, it appears there were two different views concerning the formation of a new national organisation in the Danish commune movement. One group committed to creating collaboration at first on a local level. As 'Peter' discussed with 'Kristian' after they joined the 1976 Commune Congress, the group regarded the need for a national association as the "second priority" and highlighted instead the necessity to organise locally first.[541] The other group to which 'Kristian' belonged sought to use existing organisations like Kokoo and Christiania as a "platform" for a new institutional framework planning a future meeting on a national level: "We could arrange for a delegate meeting where each commune only brings one person. Then these individuals would have the responsibility for everyone back home and this way I think that something more would

539 'Summary from the Coordination Group's weekend', *SOKO*, 9 (1978), pp. 4-5 (p.5).

540 Ibid, p. 4.

541 *Kokoo*, 3 (1976), pp. 7-8.

come out of it."[542] This position did not spread further as Kokoo, Christiania and the New Society began to drift. Kokoo's Peter Johansen explained that Kokoo had not been working very well in arranging collective works and gatherings to strengthen the commune movement and to improve solidarity between communards: "We have a very bad communication on the national plan."[543]

In addition, the establishment of SOKO was anchored in closer examination of the identity of communal living. In the late 1970s and early 1980s there was no group like SOKO that embodied distinct goals under socialism as the association's name represented. SOKO participants highlighted that re-emphasis on their original ideology was essential in order to overcome the crisis. Although the plan for socialism was relinquished due to poor achievements, SOKO's effort to spread its belief reflected that the crisis was, fundamentally, a problem of identity. This implies that a wide range of transformations, started in the mid-1970s, needed re-evaluation of their raison d'être in a process of changing types and goals.

Whereas coordinating centres in Britain and Denmark mostly consisted of individual communes, the New England Community Network expanded its membership. After participating in Twin Oaks Community's conference, Jim Lehrman and Doug Malcolm, two graduates of Goddard College in Vermont, made a plan of a gathering among people who were interested in building communities in 1975, which developed into the annual New England Communities Conference:

> We had a good idea of how many people were coming, who would be on what crews (such as cooking, clean up, childcare, and various land and house projects) and even what their

[542] *Kokoo*, 3 (1976), p. 8.

[543] Peter Johansen, a letter to Vince at Twin Oaks (20 April 1977), in the Twin Oaks archive at Communal Studies, David L. Rice Library, University of Southern Indiana.

> interests were and what talks or workshops they wanted to give. About 200 people attended, camping in a section of the woods and fields we prepared….it was a very successful grass-roots event. It lasted the weekend and by the end of Saturday the talking stick circles had evolved into a discussion of creating an intentional community right there at the farm. By the end of the weekend a community was formed.[544]

At a commune called Another Place Farm in southern New Hampshire the conference continued for several years. A diverse range of alternative groups in New England like the Abnaki Land Trust in Southern Vermont and the whole foods distributing business group, LLAMA, TOUCAN & CROW, joined the meetings. With those wide-ranging contributors the New England Community Network supported various activities. According to its own bulletin, *Common Unity*, urban renewal, women's awareness group and newsletter workshop for a community business, a benefit concert and play weekend programmes were among them.[545]

Taken together, there was no single direction for the newly formed associations. Although SOKO drew attention to the re-orientation towards the purpose of communal living, it revealed its weakness in providing tailored programmes to the needs of local groups. As looser coordinating centres the Communes Network and the New England Community Network approached individual communes with much more open attitudes to diverse possibilities that seemed better to face the crisis. They just came together with an aim of finding a steady development of communes through collective work. The activities of those associations were dedicated to re-building local and regional basis enlarging connections with other various groups. Yet it is hard to estimate how many communes and people joined the external organisations. Many communes still survived anonymously and each commune continued to evolve without affiliating themselves with the organisations. Despite a certain plausibility,

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[544] Interview with Jim Lehrman by email, 8 April 2016.

[545] Susan Hoch, 'The Struggle and the Celebration', *Common Unity*, 4 (April 1976). p. 4.

maintaining and improving the networks to be a strengthening force for the commune movement during the transformation years was not easy.

One of the most notable changes was the ever-increasing diversification in terms of commune membership. Roughly it developed in two directions, large communes with 100-200 residents and small communes with only one or two couples. As the decline of communal living became apparent around the mid-1970s, communards who wanted to continue their experiments in spite of the demise of their previous commune got together to look for an alternative. A generally accepted definition of communal living was five or six like-minded people living together.[546] However, during this transitory period, a number of smaller communes existed for a while due to original members who left not being replaced.

For example, Barry Kade who had joined a commune called Dreamers in Montgomery, Vermont in 1974, found himself and a woman with her baby as the only members of Dreamers two years later. Many original members of the commune had moved out together to form a new bigger commune in West Virginia. Others gradually left one by one to return to their ordinary family life. Kade continued his communal experiment with the remaining two just like a normal couple for about 10 years with no running water, electricity and telephone.[547] As communes failed to continue communal living in the period of crisis, some individual commune members set up a new one with other like-minded people, in general with 2 or 3 people. Roz Payne and Jane Kramer at Red Clover relocated to Burlington, the biggest town of Vermont, to start a new commune called Green Mountain Red in the early 1970s. Green Mountain Red participated in

[546] Benjamin David Zablocki, for example, terms that at least three families or five adult members are needed to form an intentional community. Benjamin Zablocki, *The Joyful Community* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 19.

[547] Interview with Barry Kade, 13 July 2013.

women's meetings and invited various music bands, but the scale of communal experiments became smaller and limited compared to their earlier one.[548]

On the other hand, bigger communes – or the idea of living in close proximity to other communes – emerged with the suggestion of other leftist groups as well as individual communes' decision. The New Society that had supported Danish communards through summer festivals published a special edition as part of Kokoo's 5th anniversary in 1974 discussing the crisis of the commune movement. They concluded that communards would have to consider setting up bigger communes (70-120 adults), otherwise it was "all going to hell."[549] With regards to this issue, Jørgen Lundbye, a Danish communard, proposed a different solution. Criticizing the answer of the New Society, which argued that larger communes should be established as an external solution, Lundbye designed an internal way out of the crisis. He maintained that the inside problem would not be solved by changing the outer framework like the bigger commune. Instead, his conclusion focused on using therapy within communes. In order to become "the revolutionary alternative to the nuclear-family, and thus become the backbone of a free community," he believed that communes had to be therapeutic upholding that they were "a hotbed for both the internal and external revolution," without which any commune would exist only in limbo:

> exactly because you are so close to a solution, exactly because the external micro-social framework is nearly perfect, exactly because there is a shared basis for political opinion and awareness, exactly because everyone is so close to each other, exactly because it is more difficult to play the needy and repressed couple-game in a commune, exactly because it is harder to get away with playing one's own neurotic games in a commune.[550]

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548 Interview with Roz Payne, 14 July 2013.

549 *Kokoo*, 2 (1975), p. 19.

550 Ibid, pp. 19-20.

This therapeutic method was discussed at a meeting of the Commune Congress, a two-week gathering by communards and other social movement groups including the New Society in 1975.[551] The interest in therapeutic method also appeared in the American commune movement. According to Jim Lehrman who created the New England Communities Conference, he opened a workshop at the first gathering in 1975 about therapeutic communes.[552] Despite this effort, the dilemma between internal developments with individual healing and engagements in outward-facing activities remained as it had been ongoing. It seems that communes with a larger membership could plan various projects and businesses, but it would not be easy to manage internal problems for such a big commune particularly when participants need consensus.

The tendency of increasing their numbers and living areas came together with cooperative programmes to build solidarity among communes. Communards on Djursland, a peninsula in Northern Denmark, launched a co-op in December 1974 after nearly a year of groundwork. The co-op was like a group business in which all essential goods from bio-dynamics to motor oil and hand-crafted candles could be purchased collectively and distributed according to individual participants' needs. They had to get a trade license, visit the customs office, the health authorities and police assistants for the VAT benefit, and contact other co-ops in order to make use of their experience.[553] As more communes and residents joined, about 50 settlements with 150 adult members, the co-op developed other communal activities such as a summer camp, and regular gatherings to enjoy music and theatre, to play games, and to discuss

[551] *Kokoo*, 2 (1975), p. 13.

[552] Interview with Jim Lehrman by email, 8 April 2016.

[553] *Kokoo*, 5 (1975), p. 23.

old and new projects.[554]

This attempt was not only a survival tactic, in a particularly remote area, it also laid the basis for the transformation into a big commune where practical issues like the cost of living would be more easily manageable. With the benefit of an increased sense of community, communards could form a new commune or housing co-operative with quite a few members in a big house. As the size of a commune increased, Danish communards faced similar problems to those of the New England Community Network: whether to manage the big organisation, via collective decision-making, or through leadership with an essentially hierarchical structure. In connection with this, an article in a 1975 edition of *Kokoo* suggested a solution: "If all our basic values are the same and we trust each other, the decisions should be made based on a natural authority. If people continuously share as much of their knowledge as possible and teach others, we can avoid the hierarchical structure."[555] British communes even produced a debate about reorganising some principles on which they established communes. 'Linda', a member of Laurieston Hall, suggested the commune's division into small units "abandoning two things: consensus decision making and income sharing."[556] Fellow communard Dave Treanor shared her idea of "the need for explicit structures": "there is a lot of interest in these ideas here. So what do we do? Which direction do we move in?"[557] The housing cooperative members and designers wanted a more structured type of organisation for their business and simultaneously freer daily lives by discarding some previously essential

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[554] *Kokoo*, 5 (1975), pp. 24-25.

[555] Ibid, p. 7.

[556] Laurieston Hall had 34 people including a dozen children at the time. Dave Treanor, 'The end of the commune at Laurieston Hall', *International Communes Network Newsletter* (May 1983), pp. 9-10 (p. 9).

[557] Treanor, p. 10.

ethics like consensus decision making and income sharing as 'Linda' projected.

Stable communes, some of which survived until the 1980s and beyond, witnessed modifications from a commune of activists to communes for more diverse purposes like for farmers, renewable energy alternatives and squatters. Before the distinct turn from its original identity, each commune had to enter a transitory period transforming living styles and structure. Housing, business co-operatives and the case of Twin Oaks were among them. This type of communal living had existed, but in the mid-1970s it became apparent that more communards began to transform their communes into housing or business co-ops. While communes had meant sharing all parts of life including living area and income, housing co-operative participants designed a more flexible type of living: detached small family living closely linked in terraced houses sharing practical tools like cars and washing machines. Red Star Express, an agricultural collective in Vermont, for example, emphasised their particular style of communal living clearly when looking to recruit new people: "Collective will feature individual ownership of home, collective ownership/responsibility of working land, stock, buildings and equipment."[558]

Transnational connections among three countries' communes had been intermittent and indirect until the early 1970s. Disappointed by other members' views and attitudes to, for instance, child care, some British communards launched their second commune based on the styles and principles of Twin Oaks in West Virginia that had maintained its earlier agenda with rigid and well-structured programmes. Sarah Eno explains that the link with Twin Oaks was quite important when she designed a new commune, Crabapple, in mid-Wales, after departing

[558] *Common Unity*, 4 (April 1976), p. 12.

Parsonage Farm in Cambridgeshire in 1972: "When we came across these ideas of Twin Oaks, it's income sharing. So it contributed to the whole community. Work was decided explicitly for the community work."[559] Indeed, Twin Oaks had a well organised system by which commune members would work their allocated jobs. It also had an elected board of planners to manage its vegetable garden and hammock making, and prohibited recreational drugs. However, the example of Twin Oaks was not so popular for earlier communards who expected the highest level of personal freedom and autonomy as a style of communal living in the 1960s and early 1970s. In addition to affecting types of activities carried out by the commune movement, the countercultural aspects were also in evidence when commune seekers chose their communes. Having been influenced by the hippies' spirit, preferring free and loose organisations, most commune participants were unfamiliar with communes like Twin Oaks, which had rigid principles with preselected programmes and goals.[560]

Nevertheless, the Twin Oaks type, so-called Walden Two communes, had enjoyed better outcomes in terms of steadiness.[561] As a result, British and Danish communes tried more often to interact with stable communes like Twin Oaks in the mid and late 1970s when they faced crisis. They attempted to adopt a more controlled structure like the labour credit system that would help to transform their communes smoothly. According to 'Pam', a member of Crabapple commune, the commune dwellers had written several letters to Twin Oaks including one to a labour manager of the American commune, 'Cecile', to receive more information

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[559] Interview with Sarah Eno, 29 May 2015.

[560] Keith Melville, *Communes in the Counter Culture: Origins, Theories, Styles of Life* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1972), pp. 116-118.

[561] Some of ideas and structures like the theories of behavioral engineering were originally presented in a book *Walden Two* by B.F. Skinner, the American psychologist. B.F. Skinner, *Walden Two* (New York: McMillan, 1948).

about Twin Oaks' labour credit system, which functioned as such:

> Every member excluding the ill and children had to sign up to share jobs for the commune otherwise they could not keep their membership. Credits of individual work were given according to the degree of preference; "the more attractive a job proves to be then the lower the credits per hour for that job. Likewise, the more undesirable jobs are increased in value.[562]

'Pam' explained how they had managed a natural food shop called Arjuna concerning the division of work: 3 people work at Arjuna each day, the remaining one takes care of kids and chickens. In fact, Crabapple also got the labour manager structure. In another letter to Twin Oaks, 'Sally' as the labour manager at Crabapple raised growing concern about improving their labour credit system:

> probably the most efficient way of going about it would be if someone could summarise the essential points of your system (i.e how you operate, in outline, at the moment - can't find any hard info in any of your recent blurb - problems like time weightings, emergency work, manager monopolies, inflation, deflation etc), and then I could pick out the bits that could be used by us - very difficult circumstances etc. Trouble is I've run out of new ways of doing things!![563]

In response, Tamar, a labour manager at Twin Oaks, advised her to make two lists of jobs, occasional jobs and frequent ones. Then Tamar added a detailed way of managing the lists, attaching an example of work allocation:

> On the 1st list we let people put any preferences they liked, in other words they didn't have any restrictions on that list because it was pretty shortened the jobs didn't take too much time. On the 2nd list people had to have a certain number of 9's, 10's, 1's etc. There are lots of ways to balance that second list, another is to assign points to each preference and insist people use up those points. Both of these systems need to be juggled for the group you're dealing with. You basically have to experiment with different ways of balancing and keep readjusting as the group grows and changes.[564]

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[562] A letter to 'Cecile' from 'Pam' (18 December 1975). Rudy Nesmith, 'The revolution is over: we won, the radical commune approach to revolution', Twin Oaks Press, 1969, pp. 1-7 (p. 5).

[563] A letter to labour manager from 'Sally' (22 January 1976), in the Twin Oaks archive at Communal Studies, David L. Rice Library, University of Southern Indiana.

[564] A letter to Sally from Tamar (1976), in the Twin Oaks archive at Communal Studies, David L. Rice Library, University of Southern Indiana.

Despite this regular contact with Twin Oaks, its impact on the British, Danish and other American communes that had made an effort into transformations was not firm enough to metamorphose totally including those communes' identity.[565] The assumption contained in such a change was that the looser type would help their communal living continue without facing a period of great difficulty like a rapid decline. However, it is hard to assess whether this reorientation to housing cooperatives or the type of Twin Oaks happened in response to an identity crisis. The communards just understood the seemingly weakening circumstances of social movements including the commune movement and reduced confusion from the situation by just transforming their type, not identity. There was also a different evaluation of the adopted living styles and structures. For example, Sue Bower, a member of Crabapple, raised her concerns about the communal work ethic of her commune. According to Bower, the division and rotation of labour for internal and external activities became "hollow" and strict rather than sustainable, with frequent and anarchic meetings between members.[566] In fact, the labour credit system of Twin Oaks was supported by only a few other communes like East Wind in Missouri.[567] Bigger communes with over fifty members (seventy-five at Twin Oaks and fifty people at East Wind) needed a more structured system to distribute work as a practical matter than smaller ones experienced during the development of communal living. The defined system did not work well especially for small communes where communards had managed their work through daily meetings.

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[565] Until the mid-1980s, some Danish communes like Felicity and Svantevit exchanged letters with Twin Oaks.

[566] Keith Bailey, 'For the record', *The Collective Experience: Articles and Poems about Communal living*, edited by Keith Bailey and Bob Matthews (Leicester: Communes Network, 1984), pp. 49-51(p. 49).

[567] Allen Butcher, 'The Labor Credit System in Egalitarian Community', prepared for presentation at the Third International Communal Societies Conference (July 18-21, 1988, Edinburgh, Scotland), pp. 1-21 (p. 9).

Although the form of Twin Oaks, a big and stable co-operative with a well-managed system, was not so widespread in the three countries' commune movement the consistent communications helped British and Danish counterparts overcome the crisis. Crabapple and Laurieston Hall and Kana all of which contacted Twin Oaks are still active and continued communal experiments until the mid-1990s. More importantly, Twin Oaks members sensed the experimental system, planners and labour credit had direct effects on developing their goals as well as living styles.[568] They needed to be persistent in their dealings with an ultimate end of communal living. Whether communes adopted Twin Oak's labour credit system simply in order to overcome a specific crisis, or as part of a wider effort to transform their original identity, in the process communards had to debate appropriate ways of structure, design a new type of communal living and consequently change what they aimed initially. Some continued their communal living in the re-formatted situation, but others left the commune movement having become disenchanted with the new purposes, programmes and activities.

The model of communal living changed, a move from dotted small communes to larger housing co-ops, from political communes to organic farms and business co-ops. The changes in the types and goals of communes contributed to a more sustainable existence. On the surface at least, communal living maintained its growth after the ten-year revival of communal activism that began in the mid-1960s. In the 1980s, American communes still led the world of communal experiments in terms of absolute numbers. Geographically, we can also find the same or even wider regions for communes expanding to most Western countries alongside Japan and India. However, what caused the steady development was not the communal activism of the 1960s,

[568] A letter to John Bennett (Anthropologist at Washington University) from David Ruth (Twin Oaks, 18 April 1977), in the Twin Oaks archive at Communal Studies, David L. Rice Library, University of Southern Indiana.

but two large communal traditions, the religious Bruderhof movement from 1920 and the kibbutz in Israel since 1909.[569] If we take account of cooperatives and co-housing as communes, researchers like Donald Pitzer have estimated that there were about 4,000 American communes in the 1990s with over 400 Bruderhof communities.[570] Danish communes revived during the early 1980s and even today produce different types of communal living such as communes, for the elderly, the disabled and ecological/agricultural communes, as Birgitte Mazanti has demonstrated.[571] In Britain, the number of rural communes also began to rise again in the early 1980s after having endured several years of decline.[572]

Individual communards lingered on the purpose of communal living as a base for social change. After attending the 1983 International Communes Festival Patrick Upton, a member of Laurieston Hall, declared that:

> I suppose what I am asking is that we continue to set up communes and to organise and aim them at making changes in society. ~ not just by being members of C.N.D, not just by waiting for society to challenge us, as maybe at Coral (a commune in the South of France where deprived children can stay and enjoy freedom. The commune has been under pressure from the authorities and their founder imprisoned for three months.), but to go out and disturb, excite, create in the very way we make our revolutionary lifestyles. ~ Communes should never be just a home.[573]

Twin Oaks, Laurieston Hall and Christiania are all still active today, but it is rare to find

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[569] Yaacov Oved, *Two Hundred Years of American Communes* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1988), p. 482.

[570] Donald Pitzer in the video, *Follow the Dirt Road: An Introduction to Intentional Communities in the 1990s* (1992), quoted in William L. Smith, *Families and Communes: An examination of Non-Traditional Lifestyles* (California: SAGE publications, 1999), pp. 106-107.

[571] Birgitte Mazanti, 'Choosing Residence, Community and Neighbours – Theorizing Families' Motives for Moving', *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography*, 89. 1 (2007), pp. 53-68 (p. 67).

[572] Brian John, 'The Rural Society', *Resurgence*, 88. 12/4 (Sep/October 1981), pp. 30-33 (p. 33).

[573] Patrick, 'Why? Why? Why?: Thoughts following the 1983 International Communes Festival at Laurieston Hall', in *The Collective Experience: Articles and Poems about Communal Living*, edited by Keith Bailey and Bob Matthews (Leicester: Communes Network, 1984).

examples from them to which the spirits, principles, actions of the 1960s and 1970s were linked. For instance, after considerable discussion about their vision, the second generation of Kana commune in Denmark who had joined the commune in the early 1970s, started a new communal life as an organic farm in the mid-1970s while the founding members left Kana.[574] Kana continued its engagement with local politics supporting leftist groups and interactions with other communes including Twin Oaks.[575] Nevertheless, it was the beginning of a different plan of action. As Britta Krogh-Lund, one of the original members, recalls the split and turn to an organic farm meant a departure from the earlier focus on social change: "I would join political discussions in the country. I wanted to go into the society. They had other interests."[576] In other words, 1960s communal activism up to the mid-1970s dissolved along with the 'long sixties' despite the ongoing communal living experiments. I use Christiania's trajectory of development in order to explore how the last stage of communal activism evolved.

Christiania, also called '*fristaden*' (free town), was an example of the ways in which Danish communards transformed the types, aims and membership of communes in the mid-1970s.[577] Christiania started as a living complex in September 1971, when fifty activists moved to an unused former German army base on Christiania Island in Copenhagen. Since then it has developed to over 150 homes and communities where a thousand people have experimented with alternative living up to now.[578] For this stable status Christiania, above all, had to survive

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[574] Interview with Ruth Plovgaard, 28 May 2013.

[575] Laura P Skardhamar, 'Real Revolution in Kana commune', *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 33.4 (2008), pp. 441-463 (pp. 454-455).

[576] Interview with Britta Krogh-Lund, 28 May 2013.

[577] As other cases, there were production communes and municipalities such as Thoustrup Mark, the "socialistic" municipality in mid-Jutland and the liberal cooperative society-project in Krejbjerg. *Kokoo*, 2 (1975), p. 13.

[578] George Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of Politics: European Autonomous Movements and the Decolonization*

the government's repeated threats to close it down. About 200 Christiania women formed a Christiania's Women Army in 1975 by gathering at the *Tulipanhuset* (Tulip House) to oppose the potential demolition by the authorities and law enforcement. Contrary to its name, the Women's Army embraced non-violence, explaining that "Violence breeds violence, which does not get us anywhere".[579] Instead, the women sent 150 letters to officers in the government and leaflets to police headquarters. Although political parties on the left such as VS and SF did not maintain a positive position in this struggle, several neighbourhood associations from Copenhagen showed their support by declaring that they would stand as a human wall around Christiania when the bulldozers arrived.[580] For example, a group of farmers called *Bondehæren* (the Peasant Army) travelled from Jutland to Copenhagen to take part in a march with Christiania residents on 19th December 1975.[581] According to their own magazine, *Christiania Avisen* (Christianias Alternative), in 1976, Christiania had 14,000 sympathisers who joined a Support Christiania Campaign which had started from December 1975.[582]

Tensions between Christiania and the Copenhagen government continued until 1978 when the Danish Parliament supported the government's decision to take time, two or three years, for the termination of Christiania.[583] Christiania formed a new group to communicate with the government regarding everything about Christiania's future. The Christianites also engaged in the Copenhagen municipal elections with ten slogans such as 'Autonomous neighbourhoods,

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of Everyday Life (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2006), pp. 117-118.

579 *Kokoo*, 5 (1975), p. 17.

580 *Kokoo*, 5 (1975), p. 18-19.

581 Ibid, p. 30.

582 'Dear Friends', *Christiania Avisen*, 1 (1976).

583 'Christiania Got a New Respite of 2 or 3 Years', a newsletter to Twin Oaks in March 1978, in the Twin Oaks archive at Communal Studies, David L. Rice Library, University of Southern Indiana.

Green and harmonic town planning and Cars out of the city.' One of their candidates, 'Thorkild', was even voted onto the city council.[584] Christiania got substantial support and attention globally in the process of legalisation. However, this legalisation necessarily produced an unwanted change of direction as Christiania became co-opted into the bureaucratic system. The area of Christiania became rapidly a popular tourist site of Copenhagen, but, in the process, lost a part of its initial agenda as an experimental big community. Christiania meant for the occupants a "construction playground for grown-ups, an environmental experiment, a therapeutic society, a series of lessons, a lunatic reservation and the joker of Copenhagen".[585] Nevertheless, the government who made the Christiania rules wanted to permit limited autonomy by eliminating the extremes for more tourists as a kind of "hippie Disneyworld" in a capitalist economy.[586] Nigel Bankford who designed a dome community project in Wales in the mid-1970s previously warned this normalisation, the possibility of critical alteration in the identity of communities, when alternative movements came closer to the existing social order:

> I would attempt to avoid the Government services as far as possible. I think that an island would be most useful as it can be isolated while the experiment is on. I would ask people who understand Nature to come and help in this project, and I would try not to expose it to harmful influences in the form of sightseeing tourists.[587]

Christiania has offered wider social movement groups and individuals a transnational network in which they could get inspiration to do new experiments with social change. At the same time, it has been hard to produce creative, total and diverse perspectives of living without restrictions

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584 'Christiania Got a New Respite of 2 or 3 Years', a newsletter to Twin Oaks in March 1978.

585 'Christiania, a social experiment, and much more than just that', *Christiania Avisen*, 30 (1975).

586 Alberto Vanolo, 'Normalising autonomous spaces: Ongoing transformations in Christiania, Copenhagen', *Urban Studies*, 52. 6 (2015), pp. 1152–1168 (p. 1154).

587 Nigel Bankford, 'Self-Sufficient Community in a 100' Dome', *A Book of Visions, A Directory of Alternative Society Projects 1973* (London: The Ideas Pool, 1973), pp. 45-46 (p. 46).

in a continued process of negotiations with the Copenhagen policy makers. The autonomous status has been tested by the government according to the level of solidarity and shared desire among Christiania groups.

Political activities in which communards participated in the late 1970s and early 1980s were mostly associated with anti-nuclear protests and campaigns. 'Catriona', who had lived in a housing cooperative called People In Common in Lancashire, England, invited some foreign communards to her commune when they joined the international communes' festival scheduled in August 1983 for ten days at Laurieston Hall in Scotland.[588] In the letter, 'Catriona' introduced the commune's daily life that had earned their living by building work and political interests: "Before Easter we took local action against A.T.S. – one of the suppliers of the United States Airforce Base at Greenham Common (where they plan to site Cruise missiles), and got them to stop supplying the base."[589] Laurieston Hall's Dave Treanor also remembers that anti-nuclear activities gained a certain level of support from local people. When the government announced plans to bury nuclear waste in nearby Mullwharchar Hill, near Loch Doon, Treanor organised a campaign of opposition with other communards: "People who are friends of Margaret Thatcher wrote letters to her. We also had public meetings with MPs. That was very effective."[590] There was already an umbrella organisation of diverse groups including communes, the Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace (SCRAM). SCRAM planned a demonstration over the weekend between May 6 and 7 of 1978 marching to Torness, 30 miles from Edinburgh, where the government was going to build the first nuclear power reactor in

[588] *International Communes Network Newsletter* (May 1983), p. 26.

[589] Ibid.

[590] Interview with Dave Treanor, 8 July 2015.

Britain over seven years.[591]

A member of Packer Corners, Marty Jezer, formed a local chapter of the Clamshell Alliance, an anti-nuclear group. Jezer was arrested with other 1,413 people who took part in the protest of April 1977 at the Seabrook Nuclear Plant in New Hampshire.[592] Some activists had communicated organising meetings before PSCo (the Public Service Corporation) started the plant construction in June 1976. Sam Lovejoy, Anna Gyorgy and Harvey Wasserman of Montague Farm had also joined the meetings and participated as members of the Clamshell steering committee.[593] The approaches to the struggle, philosophy and life of the Clamshell Alliance and SCRAM in Scotland are a good example of how social movements developed. With no hierarchy the self-directed style of small "affinity groups" forged a new tactic for other social movements in the late 1970s and beyond.[594] This type, loose but demanding arduous efforts, of solidarity from organisations and individuals directly and indirectly rooted in the legacy of the commune movement.

All in all, the commune movement that had revived in the mid-1960s faced a crisis of identity and existence after a decade of rapid growth. Among other things, three major factors caused the crisis: the lessening engagement with politics, the generation gap, and conflict concerning the future direction of communal activism. The extent of political activities diminished as the communes endured earlier years adjusting themselves to the local

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591 'Stop the nukes march', *Whole Earth*, 12 (March 1978), p. 4.

592 Randy Holhut, 'Marty Jezer, graceful writer and ardent activist, dies at ~', *Brattleboro Reformer* (13 June 2005), p. 6.

593 Barbara Epstein, *Political Protest and Cultural Revolution: Nonviolent Direct Action in the 1970s and 1980s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 63.

594 Dona Brown, *Back to the Land, the Enduring Dream of Self-sufficiency in Modern America* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), PP. 216-217.

circumstances. Although ongoing internal debate over the ultimate end was necessary to develop communal activism further, the debate that had provided mutual progress often resulted in splits and regroupings. It was challenging for founding members to share the energy and experiences of 1960s radical activism with a new generation of communards. Furthermore, the links with broader social movements in the shifting landscape of radicalism began to drift. In order to seek solutions to those conditions communes organised regional, national and international conferences. Individual commune members also adopted diverse policies and programmes transforming their living styles and structures with the help of stable communes like Twin Oaks. New networks and communication centres emerged alongside growing housing co-ops. However, the rebuilding efforts were accompanied by significant changes to the original aims, ideological commitments and future directions of communal activism.

Despite the continued regular gatherings between communes locally and globally, and the recovery of communal living in the 1980s in terms of the scale after the decline, most political and activist communes failed to sustain their communal activism. Although some communards started a new commune, political activities and diverse experiments by communes had lesser impacts on social change excluding the ecological efforts than what they committed and achieved until the mid-1970s. Therefore, communal activism associated with Sixties' radicalism gradually began to diminish during the crisis and transformation years that led to the distinct turn of identity.

Conclusion

Although living together with like-minded people might appear to be just a period of sojourn, with participants able to return to their families at any time, shaping communes was not a simple alternative to the established nuclear family. The communal revival of the 1960s witnessed more political activities maintaining links with other social movement groups. As argued in chapter 1, this revival cannot be understood without linking it to three wider historical processes and developments of the 1960s, modified anarchism, the New Left, and the counterculture. The commune movement flourished until the mid-1970s, and sought a significant basis for social change with other social movements like the feminist movement and environmentalism. Feminists and female commune participants gathered at local meetings for women's rights and organised a wide range of cooperative work which galvanised transfers between them, move to a commune or join a feminist group. Growing interests in environmentalism such as organic farming, renewable energy, campaigns against pollution, and the anti-nuclear movement were quintessential factors for communards. Central to communal activism in practice were involvements in local affairs as political outreach, both individually and collectively. Whether rural or urban, earlier responses from the surrounding neighbourhood were not always positive and sometimes even turned antagonistic. In order to overcome this difficulty in starting communal living in new living areas, commune residents needed to contact other activists in their areas who had communicated with different organisations such as secondary school students' unions, parents' and teachers' groups, tenants' groups and gypsy liaison groups. Through collective work with other local groups, commune participants experimented with a new politics meaning more direct democracy from below.

Each commune functioned as an independent space in which a wide range of political and

cultural perspectives rekindled. Each commune maintained loose but constant communication with local people including members of other communes and leftists. They did not serve as a shelter for retreaters, but had the flexibility to establish new environments and creative activities in tune with many other groups. If one equate an individual commune with an organisation or local branch of any national association for social change, it would be rare to find another case of a social movement group that had over 1,000 branches. Without strict discipline, secret central leadership and a formal headquarters, the commune movement continued for 10 years presenting a new mode of activism.

All things considered, as a genuine grass roots movement communal activism helped to extend the boundary of social movements with multiple issues including environmental problems. Despite the small scale of those activities, it made 1960s and 1970s communal activism distinct from previous communal experiments in terms of impact including a variety of local commitments and greater achievements. It also prefigured a better way of living and working as a revolutionary movement opposing the existing order with a constant search for a new mode of society. 1960s communal activism implies the attitude and belief of communards, 'being political', towards a total revolution acting in many ways: by experimenting their own politics engaging with local societies through individualist or common political activities, by creating different consumption and work patterns through their own institutions, and by continually supporting and influencing each other within communes. Rather than placing communal activism within a smaller part of the counter-culture or the New Left, we need to categorise it as another arena of social movements.

Communards of the Sixties formed their own politics, cultural style and ideological concepts differentiating themselves from the existing countercultural and left groups. Although

the daily life of communes appeared routine, commune members continued to build new activities through which they challenged the social order that was based on capitalism, consumerism and patriarchy. Despite the difficulty generalizing the nature, role, and legacy of the commune movement, what united communes to some extent was the wide range of their programmes and actions. The direct and indirect networks for the activities contributed to pursing a similar identity of communal living between different communes. Similarly, it is possible to draw a parallel between the three countries' communal activism. British and Danish communards shared the goal and tactics of various action programmes varying in degrees with their American counterpart.

Communards identified the lessening general social movements and internal conflicts with the generation gap as the two main issues that signified the crisis of the movement from the mid-1970s. They examined the 10 year experiments of communal living, and found that its values and experiences had not spread as they expected. In this process, many communes transformed their structure, initial plans and identity from dotted small communes to larger housing co-ops, from political communes to organic farms and business co-ops. Communal activism associated with Sixties' radicalism gradually began to diminish limiting its political engagements to the anti-nuclear movement during the crisis and transformation years. The environmental opposition based on a pacifists' agenda shared similar principles with communal experiments such as voluntary participation, cultural tactics and high degree of freedom and daily collective work. While many other left-wing groups declined rapidly when faced with the neoliberal environment of the 1980s, communal activism survived maintaining minor but steady political contributions to the wider alternative society. It helped various political and cultural groups in other social movements in the late 1970s and early 1980s to shape their

lifestyle, philosophy and activities. As the 10 agendas and flag of Red Clover signify, the commune movement positioned itself beyond the notions of class, sex, race, political party and nation. Communards lived the revolution opposing the existing social order that had been taken for granted.

Based on the evidence and findings presented throughout the chapters, this thesis challenges the existing historiography on communal living in five main ways. Firstly, the familiar distinction between rural communes and urban ones, having said that rural communes mostly concentrated on simple life with voluntary poverty whereas communes in cities represented more political tendencies, needs careful re-evaluation.[595] Through constant transfers and relationships between communes, moves to the countryside did not mean a return to small-scale agriculture as discussed in chapter 1. Rather, rural commune residents expanded the activity areas of social movements. The massive arrival of rural communes did not represent a start of a new era ending the Sixties. It was not the decline but the continuity of Sixties radicalism in a process of what Vermont communards characterised as the "dialectic of feelings/thoughts/movement from city-country-city-country on into the future."[596] Danish communes integrated the arena of communal activism easily blurring the dissimilarities with the geographic closeness between city and countryside, and exchanging tactics and even members. As seen in the case of Open Projects, British communards also planned to set up a parallel commune in a rural area expecting a food supply and free move between members.

In addition, considering the lack of any direct link between communes in rural areas and

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[595] Bennett Berger, Bruce Hackett & R. Mervyn Millar, 'The Communal Family', *The Family Coordinator*, 21. 4 (1972), pp. 419-427. Dona Brown, *Back To the Land, The Enduring Dream of Self-Sufficiency in Modern America* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), p. 206.

[596] *Free Vermont*, 1 (1970).

the rise of the environmental movement, it is also debatable whether the countryside was more conducive to communal living and environmentalism. Environmental degradation was not a problem that only affected the green life of rural communes. Viewed from the ways in which communards contributed to ecological issues in chapter 3, urban communes also sought ways to an ecologically more sustainable society. Thus, categorising rural communes as a typical or purer type of green communes for environmentalism requires a broader consideration of the influences by urban communes in the environmental movement.

Secondly, in connection with the effect of modified anarchism, the implications of anarchism have been underestimated with the confusion caused by the myths equating anarchism with violence, and such unclear terms as 'anarchy', 'anarchistic' or 'anti-authoritarian'. Seen in communes' manifestos, by living out their future in the present communes tried to present a new model of society and a new mode of activism. Although, with the exception of some cases in New York and Sheffield, it is hard to find examples of communes established by anarchists, the assumption that lay behind the communal revival resembled the principles of anarchists who had articulated their philosophies and methods for social change like the position to violence. Commune participants supported dissociation from any big institution, and rejected bureaucratic procedures, rigid ideology and charismatic leaders. When communards formed their political philosophy and life style for communal activism it benefited from modified anarchism as Andrew Rigby, John Davis and Anette Warring have argued.[597]

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[597] Andrew Rigby, *Alternative realities: a study of communes and the members* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974); John Davis and Anette Warring, 'Living Utopia: communal living in Denmark and Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 8. 4 (2011), pp. 513-530.

Thirdly, as we have found in chapters 1 and 3, the extent and intensity of activism or social movement in Britain and Denmark was not as low as has been assumed. Danes played a key role as a centre for the European commune movement producing more communes than anywhere else in the world per capita and offering an exemplary space, free and open, like 'Christiania' to the would-be communards across the world. British communards also rekindled the British social movements organising more 'Diggers' groups than their American counterparts in the late 1960s, who boosted communal living, and supported homeless people and workers. It is not helpful to view the commune movement in the US as a 'template', against which to assess other nations' communal living experiences. The ever more diverse American communes marked dissimilarities in terms of their aims and types rather than a compelling single model. Likewise, concluding that the Danish commune movement was more successful than that of the United States is exaggerating the stability of the Danish commune movement.

The Danish commune movement was hardly exceptional as a counter-institution challenging existing structures and values as the confrontation of Sofiegården implies. Danish communards shared similar stages of developments with their American and British counterparts. They not only had some achievements in better relationships with external institutions but also experienced antagonistic responses from local people and the government seen in the brutal eviction of Sofiegården. The relative steadiness of Danish communes does not necessarily mean better communal activism than those of their counterparts in Britain and the US. Given the nomadic characteristics of commune participants, the short survival of many communes did nothing to diminish the high level of authenticity they showed during their stay in communes. Thus, it is reasonable to argue that 1960s and 1970s Danish social movements including communal activism made a steadier impact on later reformative years when society

adopted a wide range of progressive policies peacefully in many aspects of life than in Britain and the US. Although Denmark differed in some respects, with more influences from European continental nations due to its geographical proximity and cultural connections, general Scandinavian characteristics (support and compromise rather than repression from existing institutions; easy incorporation of radical protest agendas into the system) were arguably maintained. The history of Denmark since the 1980s demonstrates that the values upheld by leftists in the Sixties morphed more easily into its society, politically and culturally.

Fourthly, the view that communal activism was simply another cultural attempt would be misleading because it ignores the significant links between the cultural experiments and traditional protest movements. Although the gap between communards and political activists continued since the early 1960s in the sphere of left-wing groups, this difference narrowed particularly in communal living in which two different groups interacted with each other on a daily basis. Forming a new outlook of activists in hippie lifestyles with a disenchanted attitude towards consumerism, communards produced their own cultural code such as a new celebration day instead of Christmas and turned to the traditional wisdom and life style rooted in nature. Communal efforts at cultural and educational challenges helped to demystify communards' political assumptions. A greater focus on personal or cultural politics with vague tactics and loose organisations did not lead to sudden decline compared to the traditional protest movements. Communards did not need to return to the daily lives of a capitalist system after participating in protests against the government and capitalism. Rather, they blurred the difference between culture and politics uniting them as well as individual and society in a daily communal living experiment under a total revolution.

Finally, this thesis contributes to the study of communal living by highlighting the basic

principles and core beliefs of the commune movement. The Sixties galvanised young activists and traditional leftists alike, but the seismic shifts in their philosophies and lifestyles were not homogeneous at all. Despite the difficulty of disentangling the basic ideas from the diversity of ideological backgrounds, in general, communards shared similar values. They consistently made efforts to dissociate themselves from centralised authorities in every aspects of life. They also showed solidarity with other communes and social movements in personal visits, gatherings for decision making, local politics, and massive protests. Decentralism and federalism were embraced in communards' constant search for theories and tactics, though commune members did not recognise both concepts as firmly established and acknowledged ideologies. As communards formed their own politics and strategies that were anchored in these key concepts, communal activism began to spread. Making each commune a crucible in which the joiners created varied and new experiments for a total revolution, the commune movement became an essential part of Left politics. By examining and theorising communes' philosophy for survival and development, this research embeds communal activism in a landscape of social movements.

Nonetheless, there are still some gaps in our understanding of the commune movement. First of all, there is an inclination to separate communal living during the 1960s and 1970s from the long history of communal experiments. To corroborate the distinctiveness of 1960s communal activism I have pinpointed: the lack of knowledge about the previous communards' activities and more dynamic engagements with local politics in the most intensive period. However, if one explores comprehensively the longer tradition of communal living in terms of its political efforts as a social movement, the unique and new characteristics that marked the 1960s communes might appear in a different light. Did previous joiners share the same reasons

for their communal living as those of the 1960s, 1970s and beyond? Otherwise, it is likely to isolate 1960s communal activism from the history of radicalism and communal living. As we have seen the term 'New Left' limited the wider spectrum of social movements in the 1960s. This thesis attempts to place the commune movement within the history of 1960s activism since it has remained marginalised in the Sixties not having much attention as one of tactics and strategies for the revolutionary era. Linking it to the longer history of communal living under the theme of communal activism needs more empirical study.

Although this research covers the Danish commune movement on an empirical basis, it is not satisfactory to explain the turbulent era of communal living in Denmark. It is obvious that much more substantial cases and findings about Danish communes have been produced in Danish without their English versions. Therefore, as suggested in the introduction, the comparative history of communal living or communal activism can be enhanced when it is based on more cases in non-English speaking countries including Denmark, Germany, Japan and Paraguay. Although this thesis has argued that communards shared a number of similar characteristics among three countries' communes, there seems not sufficient consideration to find the particularity of each commune for lesser-known commune experiments as well as the international links between those different national communes.

Lastly, the connection between other social movement groups and communes deserves more scholarly attention. Former anti-Vietnam War activists and key figures from left-wing organisations joined the revival of communal living in an attempt to rekindle the hope of 1960s radicalism with strategies and tactics based on the perspective of the whole movement. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, proposals seeking an appropriate model of communal activism were presented by those former leftists. As examined in chapter 4, the relationship between

communards and left activists became weakened in a general drift of social movements in the mid-1970s. For example, I deal with the communards' approach to political parties, existing or new, for example participation in the Liberty Union party, active only in Vermont as a progressive political party as a personal involvement of a member of Red Clover commune in chapter 3. The activities of Liberty Union as a third party focusing on ecology, feminism, utility rates, the needs of low income people and withdrawal from Indochina was much more radical beyond the two existing parties. However, it is not clear whether the party had a coherent view on how to interact with communards in Vermont and in return, commune members organised regular meetings with the Liberty Union party. Similarly, although Danish communards supported *Venstresocialisterne* (VS, the Left Socialists), further research is needed to understand the inter-relationships between the progressive party and the Danish commune movement.

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