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Scaling Greenpeace: From Local Activism to Global Governance

Frank Zelko*

Abstract: »Greenpeace skalieren. Vom lokalen Aktivismus zur globalen Steuerung«. Greenpeace was founded in Vancouver in the early 1970s. Initially, it was a small anti-nuclear protest group composed of Americans and Canadians, peaceniks and hippies, World War II veterans and people barely out of high school. Twenty years later, it was the world's largest environmental NGO, with headquarters in Amsterdam, branches in over forty nations, and a regular presence at international environmental meetings throughout the world. This article will chart Greenpeace's growth throughout its first two decades, in the process examining how the organization became influential at several levels: in local politics in places like Vancouver; at the national level in countries such as Canada, New Zealand, the USA, and Germany; and at global forums such as the International Whaling Commission and various UN-sponsored environmental meetings. It will analyze the combination of activist agency and political opportunity structures that enabled Greenpeace to gain political influence. I argue that Greenpeace's influence largely stemmed from its engagement with what political scientist Paul Wapner calls "world civic politics," which in this case involves the dissemination of an ecological sensibility that indirectly influences behavior at multiple scales, from individuals, to governments, to multilateral organizations. Only in this way could a group with relatively limited resources hope to influence millions of individuals and powerful governments.

Keywords: Greenpeace, environmentalism, scaling activism, world civic politics, multilateral institutions.

1. Introduction

In 1971, a group of environmental activists in Vancouver set out to protest US nuclear testing in the remote Aleutian Islands in the North Pacific. Greenpeace, as they would eventually call their movement, was composed of Americans and Canadians, peaceniks and hippies, World War II veterans and people barely out of high school. Within a little over a decade, Greenpeace would become the world's largest environmental NGO, with headquarters in Amsterdam, branches in dozens of nations, and a regular presence at international environmental

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meetings throughout the world. Greenpeace's influence largely stemmed from its engagement with what political scientist Paul Wapner (1996) calls "world civic politics," which in this case involves the dissemination of an ecological sensibility that indirectly shapes behavior at multiple scales. Greenpeace's tactics and the issues it chose to campaign against necessitated a multi-pronged, interlinked strategy that could influence opinion at different political levels, from small communities to multilateral governance bodies and powerful nation states. In the process of attempting to develop political scalability, Greenpeace itself became a multi-level NGO with local, regional, national, and international offices, each with different priorities, strategies, tactics, and degrees of authority.

This article examines Greenpeace's early years in the 1970s, focusing in particular on how the transnational nature of its campaigns shaped its political strategy and, by extension, scaled its institutional structure accordingly.

With regard to the approaches of multilevel governance and scaling, as developed by political scientists and critical geographers, the case of Greenpeace indicates the strong trend in the late 20th century towards new modes of governance and the co-operative state (Bernhardt 2017, 200-1, this HSR Forum). While political scientists have highlighted the role of economic liberalization and supra-national cooperation in the rise of globalization, the Greenpeace case shows the important role of civil society organizations as a trigger in the emergence of global governance (Zürn 2013; Bernhardt 2017, 208).

2. The Origins of Greenpeace

The founding of Greenpeace, which in its early years existed in a fluid state between a social movement and a non-governmental organization, is a complicated story, but the short version goes like this: In the late 1960s, numerous Americans found themselves living in Canada due, in one way or another, to various disagreements with their government's foreign policy. In addition to young draft evaders, there were older immigrants from the WWII generation who wanted to ensure that their sons would not get drafted into the US military once they came of age. Others left because they found US preparations for nuclear war to be unconscionable. Quite a few were Quakers. In Vancouver, a fertile center of the Canadian counterculture, these older Americans came into contact with numerous hippies and radical activists who shared their misgivings about issues such as nuclear warfare and the malign influence of the US military-industrial complex. Many were also concerned about issues such as

pollution, while some of the Americans were members of the Sierra Club, one of the most venerable environmental organizations in the United States.¹

This disparate array of anti-war activists, environmentalists, and the politically disaffected members of the counterculture were galvanized by US nuclear testing on Amchitka Island, a tiny speck of tundra in the faraway Aleutians. Apart from their general opposition to nuclear weapons and their concerns about fallout, many feared that the tests – conducted in a geologically unstable area – could set off earthquakes and a tsunami that would, in the words of journalist and Greenpeace founder, Bob Hunter, “slam the lips of the Pacific Rim like a series of karate chops” (*Vancouver Sun*, Sept. 24, 1969). Between 1969 and 1971, the tests inspired much opposition and numerous protests. In 1969, for example, thousands of protesters descended on the US-Canadian border, disrupting the smooth flow of people and goods for the day. It was at one such protest on the British Columbia-Washington border that the nucleus of the Greenpeace coalition was formed. It was here that two older American activists – Irving Stowe from Rhode Island and Jim Bohlen from Pennsylvania – met up with various student radicals and other young protest groups and decided to form an organization that would try to stop the next major nuclear test, codenamed *Cannikin*, scheduled for late 1971. They gave themselves the vivid, if somewhat clumsy appellation, the Don’t Make a Wave Committee (DMWC), and began meeting regularly at Stowe’s house in Vancouver. After many fruitless discussions, Bohlen and his wife, Marie, came up with a plan. In the 1950s, Quaker activists that were part of the American Friends Service Committee had attempted to sail into the nuclear test zones in the Marshall Islands, but were arrested before they could get there. The DMWC would attempt to succeed where the Quakers had failed. They would charter a boat and sail it into the nuclear test zone, thereby bearing witness to an ecological crime and pressuring the Canadian government to oppose the tests and the US government to abandon them (Bohlen 2001).

Both politically and logistically, this was an ambitious objective. From the beginning, however, Greenpeace had to negotiate the complex task of dealing with several layers of authority simultaneously, frequently trying to play one off against the other. The Canadian government, mindful of public opinion, was critical of the American tests on Amchitka and made its protests known within the constraints allowed by the close relationship between the two nations. In a note to the U.S. Department of State, the Canadian ambassador in Washington made “it clear that [the Canadian government] cannot be regarded as acquiescing in the holding of these nuclear tests [...] [and] would have to hold the United States government responsible for any damage or injury to Canadians, to Canadian property, or to Canadian interests resulting from the

¹ I tell the story of Greenpeace’s founding in greater detail elsewhere (Zelko 2013). For insider perspectives written by former Greenpeace activists, see Weyler (2004) and Hunter (1979).

tests” (d’Easum 1971, 4), a sentiment that the Prime Minister’s office repeated in its correspondence with the DMWC. Despite this stance, the Canadian government nonetheless tried on several occasions to hinder the DMWC’s campaign. The Department of National Revenue, for example, expressed skepticism toward the group’s application for charity status, arguing that it “fail[ed] to see the relationship between the acquiring of a boat and the publicizing of the adverse environmental effects of nuclear explosions on Amchitka Island” (Lawless to Stowe, June 10, 1969, *Greenpeace Fonds*, Vancouver [hereafter *GF*]).

Another obstacle for the DMWC was the refusal by fisheries minister, Jack Davis, to provide their vessel, which they named *Greenpeace*, with government subsidized insurance. Davis justified this stance by pointing out that the crew clearly did not intend to go fishing (Davis to Coté, May 19, 1971, *GF*). This would effectively have put a halt to the protest, since purchasing private insurance would have been prohibitively expensive, perhaps \$50,000 or more. Fortunately for the DMWC’s plans, Davis’ electorate was West Vancouver, a district where support for the *Greenpeace* voyage was strong. The DMWC set about pressuring Davis to change his mind. Bob Hunter wrote a scathing column, castigating Davis for aiding the US Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) by attempting to scuttle “the only determined Canadian opposition to the test” (*Vancouver Sun*, June 3, 1971). Well-known CBC broadcaster and journalist, Ben Metcalfe, who by then had joined the campaign, made similar comments in his broadcast. Metcalfe, who lived in West Vancouver, and other DMWC members met with local residents, held meetings with them, and convinced many to join their cause. Before long, Davis’ office was inundated with letters and phone calls from his constituents, demanding that he reverse his decision. Caving in to pressure, Davis changed his mind, blaming his original decision on one of his underlings, and granted the *Greenpeace* crew the right to purchase the standard fishing insurance (Davis to Coté, June 24, 1971, *GF*).

A few days before the *Greenpeace* was due to set sail, federal customs officials revealed that they would not let the boat depart because it was not registered as a passenger ship. This forced the ship’s captain, John Cormack, to put fishing equipment on board and to register everyone as a crewmember of a professional fishing vessel. Hunter once again questioned the motives of the Canadian government, arguing that they must surely have known that this issue was going to arise and their decision to spring it on the *Greenpeace* crew a few days before they were due to embark was merely another attempt to halt or delay the voyage (*Vancouver Sun*, Sept. 18, 1971). Nevertheless, by mobilizing the local constituents of federal ministers, as well as organizing a media campaign at the provincial and national levels, *Greenpeace* was able to overcome the Canadian government’s low-level interference strategy.

In addition to Canada, opposition to the proposed nuclear test was also strong in Alaska, forcing the AEC to conduct a series of public hearings in Anchorage and Juneau in the last week of May 1971. Jim Bohlen and Patrick

Moore, a young ecology graduate student at the University of British Columbia, represented the DMWC, while various scientists, academics, journalists, politicians, and environmentalists also joined the mounting chorus of AEC critics. California senator, Alfred Alquist, recalled that a 1964 earthquake centered in the Aleutians had “generated a Tsunami that Californians will not soon forget” (Congressional Record-Senate 1971, 18093). The giant wave had caused considerable damage throughout California, particularly in coastal towns such as Crescent City, where a twelve foot wave had destroyed twenty-seven blocks of the downtown area, crushing three hundred buildings and causing five deaths and \$11 million worth of damage.² In support of this argument, Bohlen quoted James N. Brume, a scientist at the California Institute of Technology, who suggested that there was “no logical reason why a nuclear explosion couldn’t be the initiating event in a series of events causing a major earthquake. The larger the blast, the greater the possibility of its triggering such a series.” And there had never been an underground blast as big as Cannikin (ibid., 18091).

Although a tsunami was not impossible, a more realistic threat was that the blast’s immense power would fracture the rock between the blast chamber and Amchitka’s surface, creating a series of cracks and fissures through which radioactive material could escape. Scientists pointed out that of the 230 underground tests conducted in Nevada, at least 67 had leaked varying amounts of radioactivity. Bohlen cited evidence that some of the fallout had already been recorded in Canada, a fact that constituted a violation of the 1963 Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (Bazell 1971; Congressional Record – Senate 1971). He also questioned the AEC’s assumption, as outlined in its environmental impact statement, that there existed “safe” levels of radiation dosage. Bohlen expressed the DMWC’s hard line on this issue, insisting that “no conclusive evidence exists to suggest that there are any safe levels of radiation dosage beyond that of nature’s normal background radiation” (Congressional Record – Senate 1971, 18091).

In the lead up to the test, the DMWC developed a two-pronged political strategy that would become a mainstay of Greenpeace’s *modus operandi*. On the one hand, they employed a rhetoric of righteous moral anger intended largely for the general public’s consumption, a common enough tactic among social movement organizations. Appealing to popular ideas of ecology and to broadly held notions of peace, security, and human rights, the DMWC would use evocative slogans and pithy catchphrases that could be picked up by the media and which would resonate with the masses.³ For example, they charac-

² For dramatic video footage and photographs of the aftermath of the tsunami in Crescent City, see: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8pitAGlz5x0>> (accessed December 23, 2016).

³ The development of Greenpeace’s media strategy is a vital part of its history, although one which, for reasons of space, I will not fully explore in this article. For a useful overview, see Dale (1996).

terized the AEC as “ecological vandals” and argued that “Amchitka may be the link in the chain of events which will bring human history to an end” (Congressional Record – Senate 1971, 18091). Bohlen spoke of the U.S. defense umbrella as a “death canopy for Canada” (*Vancouver Sun*, Feb. 5, 1970), while Stowe claimed that the AEC was creating a “pocket of poison” on Amchitka that was “filled with the most lethal and terrible kinds of polluting radiation on the planet” (*Georgia Straight*, Nov. 11, 1971). The AEC, Stowe continued, demonstrated “that power pollutes and nuclear power pollutes absolutely.”⁴ Patrick Moore argued that if the U.S. wished to “indulge itself” and test a device that they claimed was safe, “why not explode it in the geographic center of the United States in central Kansas?” (*Wall Street Journal*, June 24, 1971).

The DMWC recognized, however, that if they wanted elite opinion – scientists, academics, policy makers – to take them seriously, they would have to go beyond pithy slogans and the rhetoric of moral outrage. Hence, they also put together a more “objective” report that took the form of a scientific review article. DMWC member and *Greenpeace* photographer, Bob Keziere, a chemistry graduate student, was the lead author. Eschewing apocalyptic rhetoric and moral rebukes, the report summarized both the AEC’s position and that of its opponents, buttressing its arguments by citing credible research and distinguished scientists (Keziere 1971). Such reports would become commonplace and increasingly sophisticated in future *Greenpeace* campaigns, enabling *Greenpeace* to appeal to the scientific and policy community while their spectacular direct actions captured tabloid headlines.

Attempting to influence national governments through the tactics discussed above was clearly a key aspect of the DMWC’s strategy, but it was not the only political level on which they operated. The *Greenpeace* was employed as a vehicle for both direct action and education. Although the boat, due to a combination of poor weather and AEC delays, was unable to make it to Amchitka, Bohlen felt that the crew could still perform the important, if less glamorous, task of stumping from town to town like eco-evangelists and raising people’s awareness of nuclear and environmental issues. Thus they stopped at numerous coastal towns in Alaska and British Columbia. In a three-day visit in Kodiak, for example, the crew held several meetings with various concerned organizations. Their conversations with locals demonstrated that the voyage was having an impact and that even Alaskans, traditionally among the most conservative and patriotic of Americans, could be opposed to U.S. nuclear testing and open to learning more about environmental issues. The local newspaper also gave them positive coverage, asking Alaskans to put aside their prejudices and embrace the *Greenpeace* message:

⁴ The *Georgia Straight* was Vancouver’s countercultural newspaper and a major early supporter of *Greenpeace*.

Because their speech was spiced with the jargon of a generation yet to be recognized here and because beards and long hair were in abundant evidence, many locals found it easy to ignore the implications of the visit [...] [But] if the *Greenpeace* visit helped even a few people see Kodiak's own stake in the tests more clearly, then the delicate confrontation of ideologies will have been worth the negativism that the visit also spawned. (*Island Times*, Oct. 22, 1971)

After Kodiak, the *Greenpeace* continued down the west coast, repeating the same procedure in the southern Alaskan port of Ketchikan and at Prince Rupert in British Columbia, before arriving at the Kwakiutl fishing village of Alert Bay. Much to the crew's surprise, the Kwakiutl invited them to participate in a ritual ceremony that was normally reserved for weddings, funerals, and the election of chiefs. They were led into the village longhouse and asked to stand in front of a great cedar wood fire surrounded by giant totems. As old Indian men "with hands like roots pulled from wet clay" banged away on huge wooden drums and women in red-beaded robes danced to the pulsating rhythm, the Greenpeaceers were anointed with water and eagle feathers and made into blood brothers of the Kwakiutl people. "It was as though the Kwakiutl were somehow able to read our minds," Hunter later recalled, "or had somehow succeeded in understanding perfectly the experiences we had just been through" (Hunter 1979, 91). Members of the counterculture tended to revere Indians, who appeared to live in close harmony with nature, and the Kwakiutl experience helped convince Greenpeace that they had a special relationship with native peoples throughout the world (Deloria 1998; Krech III 1999). From a political perspective, tribes such as the Kwakiutl operated as quasi-independent units within the traditional nation state. By casting themselves as the champions of indigenous peoples, Greenpeace was able to exploit the complicated and fraught relationship between nation states and tribal governments, leveraging the moral authority and public sympathy accorded to indigenous peoples on matters of environmental concern. Thus governments frequently found themselves in an awkward position whereby their opposition to Greenpeace was conflated with a lack of concern for indigenous rights.

In early 1972, the DMWC officially changed its name to "Greenpeace." As a result of the Amchitka campaign, Greenpeace was now familiar to many Canadians, particularly in British Columbia, and to Americans who read the newspapers closely and were concerned about nuclear weapons testing. Beyond North America, however, few people would ever have heard of it. A noteworthy exception, and one which serves as an example of Greenpeace's nebulous status somewhere between a one-off campaign, an organization, and a social movement, was a group of anti-nuclear anarchists in the United Kingdom who were associated with the long-time pacifist publication, *Peace News*. The group had subscribed to Vancouver's alternative newspaper, the *Georgia Straight*, and was impressed with Irving Stowe's "Greenpeace is Beautiful" column. Borrowing from Stowe, they published a broadsheet supplement to *Peace News*, which they called *Greenpeace*. They used the term not to describe an

organization, but rather, as a general philosophy of life denoting a marriage of peace and ecology. By 1972, the group, which, in true anarchist fashion contained no “members” but only “people,” began to refer to itself as Greenpeace London and in effect became the first Greenpeace group outside Canada (*Peace News*, July 9, 1971).⁵

In some instructive ways, Greenpeace’s early history was similar to that of Friends of the Earth (FOE), the international environmental organization established in 1969 by long-time Sierra Club director, David Brower. By the early 1970s, FOE had become a loosely knit international environmental organization. With the aid of two young Americans, a physics student named Amory Lovins and a Paris-based lawyer, Edwin Matthews, Brower set up *Les Amis de la Terre* in France, choosing a radical young economist, Brice Lalonde, to lead the new organization (Lamb 1996).⁶ Similar events occurred in the UK and West Germany, so that by 1971, FOE was already providing a model for the establishment of more activist-oriented and internationally focused environmental organizations. Both Greenpeace and FOE concentrated primarily on anti-nuclear campaigns, with FOE focusing on the civilian uses of nuclear power and Greenpeace on nuclear weapons testing. Each of them, furthermore, had a desire to internationalize the environmental movement in order to gain greater influence with multi-lateral institutions like the United Nations. Unlike Greenpeace, however, FOE was largely the brainchild of one man and started life with a clearer vision of where it was heading and how it would be organized. Therefore, although Greenpeace quickly elevated direct action environmentalism to spectacular new levels, it would be several more years before it would develop the kind of coherent organizational structure that FOE already possessed by 1971. Nevertheless, the early histories of the two organizations frequently intertwine; throughout the 1970s, for example, FOE activists were often responsible for setting up new Greenpeace offices, particularly in Europe.⁷

⁵ The Greenpeace London group still exists as a separate entity from Greenpeace UK. In the early 1990s, two of its activists were involved in a high-profile libel suit with McDonalds, which became known as the “McLibel” affair. McDonalds tried to implicate Greenpeace International in the lawsuit, but there was no legal connection between the small group of anarchists and the international NGO. On Greenpeace London and the “McLibel” affair, see <http://www.mcspotlight.org/people/biogs/london_grnpeace.html> (accessed Dec. 23, 2016).

⁶ Lovins has become an internationally renowned environmental advocate who heads the Rocky Mountain Institute in Colorado. Lalonde became a leading green politician in France and was made environmental minister during the Mitterand presidency. He was also an important figure in the early history of Greenpeace in Europe.

⁷ For more on FOE’s early years, see Tom Turner’s (2015) biography of David Brower.

3. Mururoa, Mon Amour

By 1972, Jim Bohlen and Irving Stowe were exhausted from their work for the DMWC. They selected CBC journalist Ben Metcalfe, a man who belonged to the same WWII generation as themselves, to be Greenpeace's new leader. Metcalfe quickly turned the organization's attention to French atmospheric nuclear testing on Mururoa Atoll in the South Pacific (Danielsson & Danielsson 1986; Khan 2011). He felt that the Amchitka campaign had been "naïve bourgeois" because its organizers had announced its schedule and its limitations – the fact that they could only afford to stay on the boat for six weeks, for example – thereby providing the "enemy" with a huge tactical advantage. Furthermore, they had been very distant from the center of power in Washington D.C., which greatly reduced their visibility in the U.S. media and their commensurate influence on American public opinion (*Vancouver Sun*, April 1, 1972). To avoid a similar fate, the Mururoa campaign would need to be more cunning in order to keep the French guessing. Greenpeace, Metcalfe insisted, would also need to conduct a direct action in Paris in order to alert the French population to the impact the nuclear tests were having in the South Pacific and to demonstrate the strength of international opinion against French nuclear policy (Metcalfe interview).

Metcalfe was keen to ensure that the campaign was truly international and he planned accordingly. He would try to organize at least two boats to sail into the test zone – one from New Zealand or Australia and one from South America. He also planned to organize protests in Paris and at the United Nations Environmental Forum in Stockholm, which he hoped would lead to spontaneous anti-nuclear protests in other European capitals. In order to influence Catholic opinion throughout the world, he would seek an audience with the Pope and try to persuade him to publicly endorse the Greenpeace campaign, as well as sending activists to New York to lobby the United Nations to condemn French nuclear testing. The whole campaign, he hoped, would be distilled into a simple message for the mass media: The arrogant French were ignoring world opinion and endangering people's lives and the environment in order to develop weapons of mass destruction (ibid.).

When they arrived in New Zealand to kick off the protest, Metcalfe and other Greenpeace activists were by no means entering an anti-nuclear vacuum. In 1965, Richard Northey, a University of Auckland student, formed the Committee for Resolute Action against French Tests, and throughout the late 1960s, he and other members forged contacts with leaders of Polynesian independence movements. In 1971 in Wellington, a group of Pacific nations, including New Zealand and Australia, founded the South Pacific Forum in order to gain a greater degree of cooperation in political and economic matters in the region. This event, combined with the French announcement in the same year that they were embarking on an expanded program of testing that would continue into

the foreseeable future, helped focus attention on nuclear testing in the South Pacific (Locke 1992).

In Auckland, Metcalfe found a Vancouver native named David McTaggart, a 40-year-old boom-and-bust developer who had recently left the high stress world of California ski resort development. After sailing around the western Pacific for a few months, McTaggart was ready for a new adventure, and Metcalfe convinced him to join Greenpeace and sail his yacht into the French testing zone at Mururoa Atoll. McTaggart had never heard of Greenpeace and did not have much interest in nuclear policy, or for that matter, politics in general. Nevertheless, with some helpful persuasion from his enthusiastic young girlfriend Ann-Marie Horne, he came to see the idea of such a voyage as a worthy challenge to his seamanship. He also grew increasingly irritated with the way the French were treating the South Pacific. So, in the southern winter of 1972, McTaggart led a small Greenpeace crew – including Metcalfe for part of the voyage – to Mururoa Atoll, where he annoyed the French navy until they got fed up and rammed his yacht. He repeated the voyage in 1973. By this time, the French were thoroughly sick of him, and a group of commandos boarded his yacht and beat him with their batons, almost blinding him in the process (McTaggart 1973).

While McTaggart was sailing across the South Pacific, Jim Bohlen and Patrick Moore were in New York, trying to raise awareness of Greenpeace's campaign at the UN headquarters. Other Greenpeace activists had flown to London and Paris to help organize marches and demonstrations. Without letting McTaggart or anyone else know, Metcalfe had arranged for a "decoy" boat to sail from Peru in order to keep the French navy on their toes (Metcalfe interview). He left McTaggart in Rarotonga, before flying on to Mexico City and then Rome, where he organized an audience with the Pope. The result was that Greenpeace became an increasing source of irritation to the French, particularly once photographs of McTaggart's beating and injuries appeared in newspapers throughout the world.

All of this exhausting and frenzied campaigning by a few Vancouver-based activists and a handful of allies around the world helped make Greenpeace an increasingly household name in activist circles throughout North America, Western Europe and Australasia. In Paris, for example, about 200 English and French Greenpeace supporters marched toward the Elysée Palace, leafleting along the way, before being rounded up by police and taken to the Opera police station (*Peace News*, June 8, 1973). In Bonn, a small band of West German peace activists and environmentalists gathered under a Greenpeace banner and marched through the capital's streets to the French Embassy (*Times*, June 2, 1973). Another group of people using the Greenpeace label presented an anti-nuclear petition to the French government. Several Australians and New Zealanders among them demanded sanctuary in France, claiming that their own countries were being poisoned by radiation from the French tests (*Vancouver*

Sun, July 11, 1973). In New Zealand, from where Greenpeace launched its protests against the French for three years in a row, a nascent Greenpeace group was formed.

Clearly, at this stage the term “Greenpeace” could be used by anyone who supported the cause, without needing to ask the original Vancouver Greenpeace for permission. As with the Amchitka protest, Greenpeace’s multi-scaled Mururoa campaign focused on both local communities and nation states, educating the former and pressuring the latter with a combination of media spectacles, street protests, and grassroots networking. In this instance, however, Greenpeace also made a concerted effort to influence the United Nations, both through direct lobbying at its headquarters in New York City and by staging a series of protests at the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. These protests were not aimed at the UN *per se*. In fact, Greenpeacers very much admired the institution and hoped that Greenpeace would one day help create a “green UN” of similar scope. Rather, they were designed to shame the French in front of their fellow nations, forcing them to justify their ongoing atmospheric testing when the USA, USSR, and Britain had agreed to stop the practice back in 1963. In addition, Greenpeace was able to take advantage of the global media that had descended on Stockholm for the event (McCormick 1989; Macekura 2015).

4. Saving the Whales

By 1974, Bob Hunter and a few others within Greenpeace’s countercultural circle were beginning to grow weary of the anti-nuclear voyages, feeling they had reached their plateau. Instead, they had become excited about a possible campaign against whaling. Over the previous year, Hunter had gotten to know Paul Spong, a scientist studying killer whales at the Vancouver Aquarium. Spong had come to the conclusion that whales were extraordinarily intelligent, complex, and wondrous animals, and was horrified by the fact that tens of thousands continued to be slaughtered each year. If any organization had the ability to challenge whalers on the high seas, Spong felt, it was Greenpeace. Hunter needed little convincing, and the two of them came up with a plan: Greenpeace activists would track down a whaling fleet in the Pacific Ocean, then maneuver small inflatable motor boats between the harpoon boat and the whales. They would do this while the International Whaling Commission (IWC), the multilateral institution in charge of regulating whaling, was having its annual meeting. The dramatic footage from their campaign would hopefully put immense public and governmental pressure on the IWC to pass a moratorium on commercial whaling (Weyler 1986).

Before they could enact their plan, Hunter and Spong had to convince the influential older Quaker members that it was worth redirecting hard-earned

funding from anti-nuclear protests to the anti-whaling campaign. The Quakers were wary of younger countercultural activists like Hunter, whom they viewed as unreliable hippies too easily drawn to mysticism and esoteric ideas. In late 1974, however, Irving Stowe died of cancer and Jim and Marie Bohlen moved to an isolated island to set up an experimental farm. With Greenpeace's elder statesmen out of the picture, Hunter wrote, "There was no one left to resist any further Greenpeace's transformation from nuclear vigilantism to whale saving. And there was no one left to prevent us from dropping the hard brick-by-brick logic of the normal political world completely, seizing our *I Chings* and allowing signs and visions to determine our course" (1979, 149).⁸

In late 1974, Hunter and Spong began to put together a plan. The first stage, as with earlier Greenpeace campaigns, was to raise consciousness among local people in Vancouver, both to attract volunteers and raise funds for what would be an expensive, transnational operation. They booked a medium-sized theater where Spong presented the First Annual Greenpeace Whale Show, a slide show accompanied by music and vivid stories about whales. They also organized a media event at the Vancouver Aquarium, Spong's former employer, where Spong could inform journalists about killer whales' complex intelligence. The Whale Show raised enough money to send Spong on a speaking tour in Japan, one of the world's major whaling nations. From there, he flew to Norway to try to dig up information about where in the vastness of the North Pacific Greenpeace was likely to find a whaling fleet. By portraying himself as a neutral scientist, he was able to talk his way into the records office of the Bureau of International Whaling Statistics, where he wrote down the coordinates of the Soviet whaling fleet's movements in previous years (Weyler 1986).

In mid-1975, against all odds, Hunter's motley crew of countercultural activists tracked down the Soviet whaling fleet around 100 miles off the coast of Northern California. The protestors leapt into their zodiacs and began harassing the whalers, while cameramen and photographers recorded the dramatic images. Two days later, they arrived in San Francisco to find a throng of reporters lined up along the Embarcadero to greet them. Immigration officials had to restrain the clamoring journalists, who leaned across the boat's gunwale with their cameras and microphones, impatient to talk to the heroic, if somewhat fanatical environmentalists who had risked their lives to save the whales from the Soviet killers. Hunter talked to virtually every TV and radio station in the Bay Area, and the story, complete with dramatic photos and film footage, was printed and broadcast throughout the United States and the world. According to one study, the first whale campaign garnered more media coverage in the United States than all of Greenpeace's previous four years of anti-nuclear actions combined (Cassidy 1992). Walter Cronkite, the doyen of American newsread-

⁸ The *I Ching* is an ancient Chinese divination text that was popular among members of the 1960s counterculture.

ers, introduced them to a massive TV audience, featuring them on his “That’s the Way It Is” evening broadcast. The *New York Times* published a lengthy and overwhelmingly positive feature on the organization. As well as describing the clash with the whalers, the *Times* cited Spong’s experiments with killer whales as proof of whales’ unique intelligence, thereby adding scientific credibility to Greenpeace’s list of virtues. As a media event, the campaign was successful beyond Hunter’s wildest dreams (Flowers 1975).

In London, meanwhile, the media had picked up Hunter’s report about the confrontation with the whalers and reported the story widely just as the IWC meeting was winding up. As the Greenpeace representative in London, Spong was suddenly besieged by reporters wanting to know more about the campaign. All the major British newspapers carried Hunter’s story, some on the front page, suddenly providing Greenpeace with newfound credibility among both the media and the anti-whaling protestors. The Soviet and Japanese delegates, irritated by the story, referred to Greenpeace as “pirates.” Although conservation forces within the IWC once again failed to muster the number of votes necessary for a moratorium, stories of activists willing to risk their lives in order to stop whaling sent alarm bells through the various pro-whaling delegations. The fact that several of those involved in the action had been Americans, and that the events had taken place off the California coast, was of particular concern due to the fact the United States was the strongest proponent of the moratorium. The Soviets could not help but have interpreted Greenpeace’s actions within the broader context of the Cold War, and Greenpeace was also not averse to taking advantage of Cold War tensions if it furthered their anti-whaling crusade. The Japanese, for their part, feared that increased scrutiny of their whaling industry could prompt the US to invoke the 1971 Pelly Amendment to the Fisherman’s Protective Act of 1967, a law which enabled the US government to ban the importation of seafood from nations whose practices threatened endangered species. It was obvious to all concerned that Greenpeace’s actions had succeeded in raising the struggle to a new level (Weyler 1986).

The media success of the anti-whaling campaign confronted Greenpeace with the classical dilemma that many successful activist groups face: should their progressive politics be reflected in their organizational structure or should ideology take a backseat to professionalization and efficiency? The anti-whaling campaign – which some of the older Quakers viewed as “soft” compared to the prospect of nuclear warfare – prompted numerous sympathetic environmentalists to set up Greenpeace groups throughout North America. In addition to this spontaneous growth, Hunter also embarked on a tour to foster the spread of the organization throughout Canada. In the fall of 1975, he and his wife Bobbi traveled across the country, visiting virtually every major university campus. Hunter would present a slide show and lecture about the Greenpeace whale campaign, while Bobbi would sit at the back selling T-shirts and buttons, and signing people up for membership. After each show, they

would be approached by at least a dozen volunteers interested in setting up a Greenpeace group. By Christmas of that year, there were approximately a dozen Greenpeace branches throughout Canada. Some of these were made up of merely a handful of people selling T-shirts, while others, such as those in Toronto and Montreal, were more substantial organizations that were soon contributing to Vancouver's campaigns, as well as mounting their own (Hunter 1979).

5. The Anti-Sealing Protests

In the winter of 1976, Greenpeace turned its attention to another benighted marine mammal. Each year in March, hundreds of thousands of harp seals give birth to pure white, doe-eyed pups on the ice floes of Newfoundland and Quebec. The pups' pelt is highly valued by the fur industry, and thousands of seasonally unemployed fishermen take advantage of seal whelping season to supplement their generally meager incomes. It is not a pretty sight. The swilers, as they are known in Newfoundland, simply walk up to a defenseless pup and smash it on the head with a spiked club known as a 'hakupik,' a Norwegian word that amply evokes the club's function in numerous languages. The pup is quickly skinned and the swiler moves on to the next one, often leaving behind a mother seal pathetically nudging the pup's bloody corpse. Various animal welfare groups had been protesting against the hunt since the mid-1960s, and although they had forced some improvement in its management, hundreds of thousands of seal pups were still being killed each winter. Greenpeace felt that a high profile direct action campaign would go a long way toward ending the annual slaughter (Zelko 2014).

During the whale campaign the previous summer, Greenpeace's arrival at various ports on the west coast had been greeted with great cheer and goodwill. None, of course, were expecting similar scenes in Newfoundland, but few were prepared for the genuine anger and sheer hatred that the locals directed toward the meddlesome mainlanders. And the federal and provincial governments, it was clear, were firmly on the sealers' side. In response to Greenpeace's appearance on the scene, the Canadian government passed a series of amendments to the Seal Protection Act. These included banning everyone, apart from those associated with the seal hunt, from flying lower than two thousand feet over a seal herd or landing a helicopter within half a mile of a seal. These regulations were transparently designed to prevent Greenpeace from protesting on the ice floes. The government argued that the amendments were necessary to prevent people from "disturbing" the seals during their breeding and nursing phase. However, as Hunter caustically observed, the law effectively stated, "you may not disturb a seal unless you are definitely going to kill it." George Orwell himself, he continued, "could not have invented a nicer title for a piece of legislation aimed at the destruction of an animal" (Hunter 1979, 286-7).

With the odds stacked firmly against Greenpeace, Hunter felt it was time for a quick change of tactics. Clearly, the federal and provincial governments were not going to alter their positions any time soon. However, the local landmen – the small-time swilers who were not crewmembers on the large sealing ships – might be persuaded to drop their opposition to Greenpeace and even support them on some issues. Hunter was well aware that the landmen took a relatively small number of seals compared to the predominantly Norwegian-owned ships, and it was clear that the landmen did not think particularly well of the Norwegian firms that dominated the fur trade. He therefore sensed an opportunity to build a coalition with the landmen against the wealthy and mostly foreign-owned sealing corporations. Thus Greenpeace left the landmen to themselves and took their campaign offshore to protest against the sealers working on the Norwegian icebreakers (Zelko 2014).

In addition to mobilizing local support against the sealing industry and the government, Greenpeace directed its media campaign toward the US and Europe in the hope that outraged Americans and Europeans would pressure the Canadian government to end the hunt. They also lobbied individual European governments and the European Economic Community (EEC) to ban the importation of harp seal fur. The campaign was successful in drawing global media attention to the annual slaughter and culminated with the 1983 EEC ban on the importation of harp seal products (ibid.).⁹ Once again, Greenpeace demonstrated the necessity of operating at multiple political scales, building alliances with local communities while simultaneously engaged in big-picture media campaigns at the national and international levels.

6. From Greenpeace Tribes to Greenpeace International

By 1976, according to Hunter, the hippies running Greenpeace in Vancouver could best be described as a “tribe”: “there were a couple of dozen of us whose lives had become so intertwined [...]. We shared each other’s clothes, we shared our food, we pooled our resources for parties, and like an extended family network, we squabbled amongst ourselves, bitched about each other, counseled one another, and came to think of each other as brothers and sisters” (Hunter 1979, 246-7). The “tribe” analogy was also appropriate for many of the other Greenpeace groups. In Seattle, for example, the dozen or so hard-core Greenpeace members shared a large house together, while those in Paris and London were also living, sleeping, traveling and campaigning together on a virtually constant basis (Treacle and Parmentier interviews). By 1978, Green-

⁹ While the major market for seal products may have been suddenly eliminated, the slaughtering of seals was never outlawed. Therefore, the sealing industry, with the help of substantial government subsidies, was able to gradually establish new markets for its products.

peace resembled nothing so much as a loose confederation of tribes, each with its own elders, its own internal culture, and its own idea of what Greenpeace was or should become. Among those in Vancouver, there was never any doubt that their group constituted the leading tribe. But as the power and confidence of the other tribes grew, they became less willing to see themselves as subordinates of the elders in British Columbia.

As the nominal umbrella organization representing all the Greenpeace groups in the United States, the San Francisco-based Greenpeace Foundation of America quickly became the largest and most complex of all the tribes. Unlike the other Greenpeace groups in the US and Canada, the Vancouver group had specifically established the San Francisco office as a subsidiary branch that would remain under their control. In contrast to most other Greenpeace tribes, which regularly mounted local environmental campaigns in their own regions, the San Francisco group concentrated almost exclusively on raising funds and awareness for the whaling and sealing campaigns. And they did this far more successfully than any other Greenpeace group in North America. Apart from the various walkathons, raffles, and canvasses that tapped into the Bay Area donor market, the San Francisco office also established a remarkably successful nationwide direct mail program with the firm of Parker & Dodd, a fundraising agency that specialized in progressive causes. The Greenpeace San Francisco mailing list was extensive and extremely well targeted, a fact that prompted the campaign managers of California's Governor, Jerry Brown, to offer to purchase it from them (Macy 1980). Given their financial clout, it was virtually inevitable that at some point, the San Francisco office would tire of taking orders from their cash-strapped masters in Vancouver.

Along with San Francisco, one of the most significant Greenpeace groups in the US was in Seattle. Unlike San Francisco, the Seattle tribe quickly developed a reputation for being a classic consensus-oriented, Birkenstock-wearing, granola-eating band of grass roots activists. They mounted many campaigns in the Seattle area, including protest actions against polluting factories in Tacoma and pesticide spraying around local waterways. They also formed alliances with other organizations in order to protest against the Trident nuclear submarine facility in Bangor, Washington. Though eager to cooperate with Greenpeace offices throughout North America, the Seattle tribe was highly sensitive to any requests that sounded like "orders," regardless of whether they came from Vancouver or San Francisco. As one of their members explained to the San Francisco group: "we strive to maximize the feeling of participation for every member and volunteer that we have. Dictating terms of any sort without sufficient consultation can only deprive Greenpeace of possible valuable human resources" (Janus Masi to Gary Zimmerman, May 26, 1977, *Greenpeace History*). Such was their commitment to a grass roots structure that literally anybody was allowed to walk in off the street, join one of their meetings, and have a voice in the decision-making process (Boe interview).

The other thirty or so Greenpeace tribes in North America tended to fall somewhere in between the elite executives from San Francisco and the grass roots activists from Seattle. The Boston group developed a reputation for tough pragmatism. The Toronto outfit conducted some of the most daring and spectacular campaigns, such as parachuting into various nuclear facilities. The Hawaiian tribe prided itself on having made their island “the most thoroughly Greenpeace-indoctrinated place in the world today.” According to its leader, Don White, the Hawaiian group had “written curricula for local schools, testified on important issues, earned seats on scientific commissions, launched demonstrations, influenced legislation, and filled the media with Greenpeace deeds and goals.” In the process, they paid themselves “virtually nothing in the way of salaries” and even used their own personal savings to help fund various campaigns. Such sacrifices, White believed, made Hawaii “a *real* Greenpeace group” (Don White to various Greenpeace Groups, March 27, 1979, *General Overview*). The Hawaiian tribe was under the impression that abstemiousness and asceticism were necessary characteristics if one were to become a true Greenpeace activist. For the professionals in San Francisco, however, such an attitude was seen as sanctimonious nonsense. One did not have to completely sacrifice one’s middle class life in order to be an effective environmental campaigner.

In Europe, meanwhile, David McTaggart had helped set up Greenpeace offices in Paris and London. McTaggart had moved to France in 1974 in order to sue the French military for ramming his boat and physically attacking him during the Mururoa protests. Although he was miffed at what he felt was the lack of support from Greenpeace during the lengthy French court case, McTaggart was gradually coming around to the view that the core idea of Greenpeace – an international organization that relied on nonviolent action and was not attached to any political party or ideology – had considerable potential if it could be run by hard-nosed professionals rather than hippies. In other words, if *he* were at the helm, it might be possible to create a genuinely international organization that could effectively influence world opinion. Although he would not have shared the same terminology, McTaggart was clearly aiming to create an organization that could engage in what Wapner refers to as “world civic politics.” With the help of Remi Parmentier, a student radical who was barely out of his teens, McTaggart started a Greenpeace office in Paris, recruiting various *Les Amis de la Terre* activists who were disaffected by that organization’s growing ties to left wing political parties in France. It was not long before McTaggart had convinced most of the new recruits that he had founded Greenpeace and that the Vancouver hippies were a bunch of incompetent fools who were destroying the organization he had fought so hard to establish (McTaggart 2002).

In London, at roughly the same time, a group of FOE activists, fed up with what they perceived to be that organization’s increasingly mainstream style, decided to set up a Greenpeace office in the UK. By chance, Alan Thornton, a

Vancouverite who had been involved in the seal campaign, arrived in London at this time, also with the intention of establishing a Greenpeace office. Thornton answered a “flatmate wanted” ad that had been placed in the newspaper by Susi Newborn, one of the aforementioned FOE activists (Thornton to Frizell, Dec. 21, 1976, File 12, Box 5, *Greenpeace Fonds*, Archives Canada). They proceeded to invite McTaggart and Parmentier to London, and the group officially set up a Greenpeace UK office. Much to their surprise, however, they soon found that there was another Greenpeace group that had been active (although barely so) in London since 1971. This was the group of anarchists associated with *Peace News*. This outfit, which called itself Greenpeace London, had links to various Marxist and anarchist organizations and represented precisely the kind of marginalized, utopian radicalism that McTaggart could not stomach.¹⁰ Newborn, who was more sympathetic toward the group, felt uncomfortable about McTaggart’s rather imperialistic approach. Again, he claimed to be the true founder of Greenpeace and insisted that the Greenpeace London group were frauds who were simply trying to gain publicity by adopting the Greenpeace name. Before there was any time to debate the issue, McTaggart swiftly went ahead and incorporated Greenpeace UK. Even had they been so inclined, the anarchists were in no financial position to mount a legal challenge, and the two groups continue to co-exist to this day (Newborn 2003).¹¹

By late 1977, the UK group had purchased the ship that would soon become the *Rainbow Warrior*, while McTaggart, Thornton, and Parmentier were discussing the idea of forming Greenpeace Europe, which would be a loose confederation of autonomous Greenpeace groups throughout the continent. Soon thereafter, a Dutch Greenpeace office was set up, also with McTaggart’s help, and campaigns against Icelandic whaling, Orkney sealing, and Atlantic nuclear waste dumping began. Within a year, Greenpeace became a recognizable name

¹⁰ Thornton described the London anarchists as incompetent and inefficient: “I doubt anyone would even know if they disappeared, if they ceased to function” (Thornton to Frizell, Dec. 15, 1976, File 12, Box 5, *Greenpeace Fonds*, Archives Canada).

¹¹ A letter from the Greenpeace London group to Greenpeace New Zealand conveys a sense of the growing schism between the advocates of a more organized and hierarchical organization, such as McTaggart and the Vancouver group, and the grassroots anarchists. “We are getting an increasing number of people confused about which GP is which [...] we have tried hard to work out our problems with the people at GP LTD, but have had very little come-back from them. The way that they work is very hierarchical, as opposed to our structure of collective working, so it does make trying to talk to them difficult. While traditionally we have had small autonomous GP groups in various parts of the country (& world), it is now a situation in which the Vancouver Foundation & GP Ltd are setting up ‘branches’ of their own in the UK and around the world. According to what we have heard, one of the people at GP LTD thinks that our group is ‘too democratic’ because of our way of working. That should give you some idea of what we are up against. Another thing that we have noted of late, while looking through some documents put out by the Greenpeace Foundation in Vancouver, is a claim that they are ‘Apolitical’. This is in contrast to our own libertarian viewpoint” (Martin Howe to Greenpeace New Zealand, May 13, 1978, *London Greenpeace*).

in much of Western Europe, and fledgling groups began to appear in West Germany and Scandinavia. Most of the Europeans were in their twenties and unlike their counterparts in Vancouver, had little time for the beliefs and rituals associated with the counterculture, a fact that contributed to McTaggart's admiration for the European activists at the expense of his fellow Canadians. Nevertheless, from an organizational perspective, there was a great deal of similarity between the groups, and Parmentier's description of the Europeans closely resembles Hunter's depiction of the Vancouver group: "We were like a small tribe, spending all the time together, working together, traveling together on the cheapest night trains, sharing each other's sofas, music, beer cans and joints. Like an emerging rock band on a tour. Tribal life includes tribal wars; they can be bloody, sharp arguments – we did not fuck around with political correctness. We were faster and freer than others in the environmental movement; but it had also one basic cost: we were sectarians, and not very transparent and very competitive" (Parmentier interview with Weyler).

McTaggart, however, was not the only one who had visions of a more organized, professional international outfit. By late 1977, Bob Hunter, Patrick Moore, and others within the Vancouver group were beginning to see the need to establish a more formal set of ties between the various affiliates, as well as developing a chain of command that would facilitate a greater degree of efficiency in the decision-making process. With this in mind, Moore, who by then had succeeded Hunter as president, sent a letter headed "Greenpeace: Where Are We Going?" to the various groups scattered throughout North America. "We are faced with a problem," Moore began,

that has baffled the best philosophers and politicians since the first federation of cave-people communities. Simply stated the problem is how can we achieve unity and cohesiveness as one organization and yet provide the individual and group autonomy necessary for creativity and initiative? Somehow we must be both centralized and decentralized at the same time [...]. Under the present structure, further growth is not possible without further confusion. There is a pressing and demanding need for organization. (n.d. Moore to various Greenpeace Offices, Moore's personal papers)

Moore suggested several organizational models, including General Motors, the United Nations, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and the Sierra Club. However, he was particularly taken with the idea of a structure that was based on an ecosystem model. Diversity in ecosystems, he noted, "tends to result in stability." While this was an argument for a decentralized structure, it was also important to remember that "each species has a well-defined niche or function that it must keep to in order to maintain that stability [...]. We must stick to those functions and we must demonstrate the capacity to carry them out" (ibid.).

There was no doubt in Moore's mind that, hippie ideals aside, some degree of centralization and hierarchy would be necessary in order to ensure the smooth running of the organization, as well as preventing people from conducting unauthorized actions under the Greenpeace banner. To accomplish this, he drafted a

document he called the “Declaration and Charter.” It was a contract that carefully outlined the responsibilities that all the branches had to the Vancouver office in exchange for the use of the Greenpeace trademark. From mid-1978 onward, all new Greenpeace branches would have to sign this document. Moore also tried, with varying degrees of success, to force all the existing North American groups to sign the contract. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most obstreperous affiliate was also the richest: Greenpeace San Francisco, a well-oiled fund-raising machine, was not too keen to surrender its autonomy. In the process, it emboldened some of the smaller groups in the US to take a similar stand.

Moore, Hunter, and others within the original Vancouver group spent over a year trying to convince the San Francisco group to sign the Declaration and Charter, but without success. So, in May 1979, with all other options exhausted, they filed a lawsuit. When word of this reached David McTaggart in Europe, he immediately boarded a plane and headed to San Francisco. If Vancouver won the suit, as they probably would, then McTaggart had no doubt that they would turn their attentions to the budding Greenpeace groups in Europe. Given McTaggart’s fractious relationship with Vancouver, he was not about to sit quietly by while they tried to gain control of the promising European offices. The Americans and Europeans, he told the San Francisco board, “must come out unanimously to fight, and must work towards a democratic Greenpeace US.” He suggested that the Americans offer Vancouver a settlement: in exchange for San Francisco paying off Vancouver’s considerable debts, Vancouver would relinquish the rights to the name “Greenpeace” outside Canada. Prior to McTaggart’s visit, the San Francisco board, pessimistic about its chances of winning, had been prepared to bow to Vancouver’s demands. However, McTaggart managed to stiffen their resolve, and they decided they would fight Vancouver to the bitter end (Greenpeace San Francisco, Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, July 25, 1979. Tussman papers).

Having accomplished his goal in San Francisco, McTaggart then flew to Vancouver. He immediately organized a meeting with Hunter, the only person on the Vancouver board whom he respected. Patrick Moore, McTaggart insisted, was leading Greenpeace down the path to ruin. He also reported that the wealthy San Francisco office would fight Vancouver for as long as it took them to win their independence, though he failed to mention that he himself had played a large part in this decision. Couldn’t Hunter convince Moore and the rest of the Vancouver board to drop the lawsuit? Hunter replied that, although he was in general agreement with Moore’s position, he might be able to talk him into toning down some of his inflammatory rhetoric, thereby creating a better environment for any potential compromise. Moore, however, was in no mood for compromise. When Hunter tried to talk him into examining possible settlement options, Moore felt he was being lectured by Greenpeace’s elder statesman. In a fit of alcohol-induced pique, he told Hunter that he was a

“washed up” environmentalist whose days of leading Greenpeace were well and truly over. He should butt out of the matter and allow Moore to run things as he saw fit. Deeply wounded by his old comrade’s outburst, Hunter began to think that perhaps McTaggart was right. Maybe Moore was power-hungry and out of control (McTaggart interview).

A few days later, McTaggart organized a meeting with the Vancouver board and their lawyers. With Hunter backing him up, McTaggart described his vision for the future of Greenpeace. Vancouver, he insisted, would have to drop the lawsuit and relinquish its rights to the Greenpeace name outside Canada. In exchange, a newly-formed Greenpeace International would pay off Vancouver’s debts. Once Moore realized that Hunter and several other board members were supporting McTaggart’s plan, he eventually gave in. McTaggart’s proposal, it was clear to Moore, was not so different from what he himself had had in mind. The main difference was that Moore would clearly not be at the helm of McTaggart’s new organization. Remarkably, in just a few short days, McTaggart had not only solved what had seemed an intractable problem, but had succeeded in convincing Greenpeace’s founders to effectively turn the organization over to him (McTaggart, 2002).

With Vancouver’s surrender notice in his hand, McTaggart flew triumphantly back to San Francisco, where he received a hero’s welcome. The various American branches were so relieved and grateful that the lawsuit had been avoided, that it became, in McTaggart’s words, “an easy day’s work to pull the twenty or so American offices together into Greenpeace USA. Somebody produces a map, and I draw nine different regions onto it. That’s about it” (McTaggart 2002, 149). For McTaggart, the entire business was reminiscent of the kind of wheeling and dealing he would do on a weekly basis during his years in the building industry.

Several months later, McTaggart convened a meeting of Greenpeace delegates from around the world. At that meeting – held in Amsterdam – Greenpeace Europe agreed to change its name to “Greenpeace Council,” and invited others to join the new organization. Greenpeace USA and Greenpeace Canada were immediately accepted as members, but in the process, had to accept the bylaws of Greenpeace Europe. All the national groups signed the Greenpeace Council accord, ceding their rights to the name “Greenpeace” in exchange for voting membership on the Council. Virtually overnight, the various Greenpeace tribes were merged together to create a European-dominated international organization with a large bureaucracy, a hierarchical, centralized structure, and with its headquarters based in Amsterdam. Not surprisingly, David McTaggart was voted in as the first chairman of the new international Greenpeace organization (Minutes of the Greenpeace Council International Meeting, Nov. 16-20, 1979, Amsterdam. Moore’s personal papers).

Within a few months of the Amsterdam meeting, McTaggart’s Greenpeace International developed a sophisticated management structure, with various

legal, administrative, financial, and communications arms scattered throughout the world. It was not long before these offices were staffed by professionals with degrees in human resources, marketing, and accounting. Such success, however, did come at a cost. Greenpeace never became the leading apostle of a secular religion based on ecology as Hunter and other founders hoped it would. It also did not develop into the kind of grass roots, participatory movement that Irving Stowe had hoped to build. Various aspects of Greenpeace's style and tactics – such as its inability to combine spectacular direct action protest with mass participation – compromised the development of such a movement. In contrast, we can look at groups such as the Clamshell Alliance and its West Coast counterpart, the Abalone Alliance, as examples of 1970s movements that engaged in direct action environmentalism, such as protesting outside nuclear power plants and engaging in peaceful “invasions” of nuclear facilities, while also embodying their intensely progressive politics in their organizational structure. The Clamshell Alliance, unlike Greenpeace, remained decentralized, unhierarchical, participatory, and consensus-driven. It engaged in what Barbara Epstein calls “prefigurative politics”: an attempt to convey its vision of an ecologically sustainable and egalitarian society not just through its rhetoric and protests, but also in its structure and day-to-day operations (Epstein 1991).

7. Conclusion

Naturally, Greenpeace, like any organization, was not entirely responsible for its own rapid growth. Opportunity structures are constantly shifting, often in unpredictable ways, and success always entails an element of good fortune. Another structural factor that frequently affects organizational development is path dependency. The fact that Greenpeace's early campaigns involved sailing to difficult-to-reach areas in order to protest nuclear testing meant that it had the expertise and experience to protest against whaling, nuclear waste dumping, and other questionable activities on the high seas. Thus, in a sense, Greenpeace, if it was going to succeed, had to professionalize and become a transnational environmental empire. Compare this to the Society for Pollution and Environmental Control (SPEC), an organization that sprung up in Vancouver at almost exactly the same time as Greenpeace and with overlapping membership. SPEC was created in order to tackle local – and to a lesser extent regional – environmental problems, particularly urban pollution in Vancouver. Its self-conscious “localism” contrasts starkly with Greenpeace's “globalism.” For SPEC, therefore, success could be measured by the degree of name recognition and policy influence the organization was able to achieve in Vancouver (Keeling 2004). Given the terms that Greenpeace set for itself, however, success required achieving such recognition and influence on a global scale, thereby engaging in

Wapner's "world civic politics." Expansion and professionalization were therefore organizational and existential imperatives.

Although they obviously did not speak the language of current political science, it is clear that Greenpeace's most committed activists had an instinctive understanding of the necessity of affecting communities, institutions and politics at multiple levels. In particular, they realized that the various levels were linked, and that the linkage points – between national politicians and their local constituents, or the IWC and Cold War tensions, for instance – were pressure points to be exploited. This is not to say, however, that scalability of this sort is easy. There has been an almost constant tension, for example, between a desire among local activists to maintain their autonomy and operate according to the principles of grass roots, consensus-based democracy, and the staff at Greenpeace International who view environmental campaigns from a transnational or global perspective, and for whom professionalism and hierarchy are a given.¹² Nonetheless, on the whole, Greenpeace provides us with an excellent example of how an understanding of scalar politics is important both to global environmental NGOs and to those who study them.

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¹² Such tensions were abundantly evident during the early years of the West German Greenpeace in the 1980s, tensions that were never entirely overcome (Zelko 2015). Also during the 1980s, tension developed between Greenpeace activists conducting local environmental justice campaigns throughout the United States and the mostly European leaders of Greenpeace International in Amsterdam, who felt that Greenpeace should concentrate on highly visible global campaigns rather than local issues (Zelko 2013).

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