

BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE

Tenant Organizing in Toronto's Regent Park

Housing Project in the 1960s and 1970s

Journal of Urban History vol.30; no.4, May 2004, pp.519-548

SEAN PURDY

Temple University

This article analyzes tenant political organizing in Canada's first and largest housing project, Toronto's Regent Park, in the 1960s and 1970s, detailing the course of tenant organizing on the questions of project maintenance, the rental scale, and tenant management. Tenants organized around economic and political issues as well as for recognition and dignity in the face of social exclusion. Stigmatization of Regent Park has obscured the extent to which its tenants have resisted, rejected, and organized against dominant ideologies and the oppressive practices of state housing authorities. The author locates tenant struggles within the larger oppositional climate of the era and situates successes and failures in the context of shifting government policies and internal obstacles to sustained tenant organization. The struggles of public housing tenants to confront the rigid structures and policies of project management and propose their own alternatives are highlighted.

Keywords: public housing administration; public housing tenants; social movements; Toronto

The 1960s and 1970s are aptly seen as years of sweeping change and revolt as a series of bitter social and economic upheavals burst out around the world. Discontent and rebellion never reached revolutionary proportions in Canada, yet it was not immune from the widespread winds of transformation blowing across the globe. In the mid-1960s, a "wildcat wave" of illegal and largely successful strikes by rank-and-file workers aimed at employers, the state, and their own union leaders dented the postwar system of industrial legality.¹ A thriving struggle against national oppression, which was often linked directly to labor and social struggles, flourished in the French-speaking province of Quebec.² Growing numbers of young people began to question established ideas on democracy, authority, sexuality, and education.³ Oppositional ideas and movements against sexism, racism, and homophobia also developed in these turbulent decades.⁴ Often eschewing formal politics, a wide range of people from various sectors of society raised critical issues about how society was organized. Even employers and governments at various levels in Canada

p.519

would adjust their policies in an attempt to appease the growing mood of dissatisfaction in the country.

The question of housing struggles is rarely mentioned in general accounts of the upheavals of the 1960s in North America. Yet housing and related socioeconomic issues were sometimes central in the growing spirit of questioning and revolt occurring in society at large. Urban renewal and housing, for instance, were key issues that produced the explosive rebellions of 1964 to 1968 in cities across the United States.⁵ Vibrant protest movements in public housing in Chicago, Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Newark, and St. Louis were inspired by and contributed to the larger thrust for social change among African Americans, the poor, and other oppressed groups in the 1960s and 1970s.⁶ In many cities, public housing tenants organized democratic tenants' councils to negotiate with management over a range of issues; in some projects, tenants were elected to the boards of local housing authorities. In St. Louis, a victorious rent strike by public housing tenants in 1968 led to a reconstituted St. Louis Housing Authority, which for the first time included a

tenant management scheme.⁷

In the larger framework of 1960s societal discontent and agitation, struggles around housing would also find a receptive audience north of the border. The ideas and practices of Canadian public housing, as in the economy and social policy in general, were heavily influenced by developments in the United States. American housing reformers were held in high esteem in Canada, and while there were differences of timing and emphasis as Richard Harris notes, affordable housing programs in Canada were often modeled on U.S. examples.⁸ By the late 1960s, American-based ideas and movements questioning government actions at home and abroad as well as power relations in society at large also created an environment propitious for Canadian tenant organizing. Motivated by concerns over the relative socioeconomic deterioration of their living environments, inspired by the campaigns of other oppressed groups for dignity and self-determination, and buoyed by an optimistic outlook of the potential for political reform, tenant, neighborhood, and anti-urban renewal organizations in Canada proliferated in these years.⁹ The few existing studies of public housing resident organizations in North America fall into two broad camps. Urban sociologists, political historians, and contemporary observers have focused more directly on the overall political and economic context and the strategies and tactics of tenant organizations. Peter Dreier, for instance, confirms that the 1960s wave of tenant activism among public housing and private market tenants raised political consciousness, won some concrete improvements in the built environment, and secured important legal victories. Nevertheless, he concludes that tenants failed to generalize their struggles and build on their successes. Most tenants' organizations were crisis oriented and tended to peter out after short-term objectives were met or failed. Moreover, since most organizations relied on funding by government and/or nonprofit advocacy organizations, they were subject to the

p.520

changing ideological whims of politicians and liberal reformers.¹⁰ Peter Marcuse makes similar arguments in the case of the demise of the National Tenants Organization in the 1970s. He argues that cuts to funding, turnover in leadership, and small concessions from local authorities and federal housing officials all undercut militancy and activity in the national organization and its local affiliates.¹¹ Moreover, he suggests that the shift in tenant movement strategy toward "self-help efforts to provide and maintain and manage housing are as likely to drain off energies that might go towards collective movements aimed at changing policies as they are to contribute directly to them."¹² Both authors conclude that the increasingly conservative political context of the late 1970s and 1980s, the decline of broader social movements, and the challenges of sustaining activism in the face of the grueling day-to-day responsibilities of survival set the backdrop for a precipitous decline in tenant political organization in the projects.

More recent project-level histories of public housing activism have shifted the focus toward rich description and analysis of the voices and activities of grassroots tenants themselves. Influenced by the theoretical concerns and research methods of ethnography and oral history, they have concentrated on the social processes as well as outcomes, struggles as well as victories and defeats, of public housing tenants. According to one advocate, they have "let the voices" of the tenants themselves guide their narratives.¹³ In one particularly

fine study, Rhonda Y. Williams explores the courageous battles of black women in Baltimore's public housing from the 1940s to the 1970s, showing that at various times they were able to gain a profound sense of dignity as well as win concrete benefits for their families.¹⁴ Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh has similarly detailed the empowering political activities of tenants involved in campaigns for improved maintenance and security among residents of Robert Taylor Homes in Chicago.¹⁵ In the Canadian context, an exhibition and catalogue on Toronto's Regent Park (RP) housing project by former resident, David Zapparoli, centers on how the thoroughly multicultural tenant body worked together to secure a modicum of dignity, self-respect, and progress in living conditions despite the residents' hardships and the brutalizing stigmatization of their neighborhood.¹⁶ By showing how public housing residents coped with material deprivation and discrimination and how they forged social and political spaces in their own right, these works have made an important contribution in highlighting what African American working-class historian Robin Kelley describes as "opposition and human agency on the part of the poor."¹⁷

In this article, I aim to bridge both the "hard" analyses of tenant political strategy and the social history approach that highlights the agency of public housing residents. I look at tenant political organizing in RP, Canada's first and largest housing project, in the 1960s and 1970s, detailing the formation of the Regent Park Community Improvement Association and the course of tenant organizing on the questions of project maintenance, rental scale, and tenant

p.521

management. RP tenants organized around economic and political issues as well as for recognition and dignity in the face of intense social exclusion and marginality. Ideological stigmatization of RP as an eye-catching site of poverty and deprivation has obscured the extent to which tenants in RP have resisted, rejected, and organized against dominant ideologies and the oppressive practices of state housing authorities. I locate these struggles within the larger oppositional climate of the era and situate successes and failures in the context of shifting government policies and internal obstacles to sustained tenant organization. Most important, I highlight the active struggles of public housing tenants to confront the rigid structures and policies of the "Housing"—the euphemism used by tenants to describe project management—and propose their own alternatives.

RP AND POSTWAR SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

Public housing in Canada was originally cast within the broader interventionist impulse of governments at all levels during post-World War II social and economic reconstruction. Housing shortages were critical in most urban centers during the war and for several years afterward, and veterans, unions, and other social groups persistently demanded more action, putting intense pressure on the state to provide dwellings.¹⁸ In addition to the palpable fear of increased class conflict, there was a generalized belief in policy circles in Canada as in other Western countries that the postwar capitalist economy was likely to revert back into marked economic instability as experienced in the 1930s.¹⁹ While the vast majority of Canadian government assistance in the housing field after the war would be directed to homeowners, financial institutions,

and developers, there was a short political space in the late 1940s through the 1960s in which limited state investment in low-income housing was considered a viable option.

RP, the pioneer effort in Canadian slum clearance and urban renewal, was constructed in a longstanding Anglo-Celtic working-class neighborhood in downtown Toronto known as Cabbagetown that had long been singled out as a nefarious “slum” neighborhood by urban reformers, the media, state officials, and other “slumologists.”²⁰ Regent Park North (RPN)—composed largely of three-story walk-up apartments and row houses, similar to one of North America’s first public housing projects, Cedar-Central, in Cleveland²¹—began accepting low-income families and some senior citizens in 1949 and was completed by 1957.²² A series of imposing high-rise apartment buildings mark Regent Park South (RPS), completed in 1959 to exclusively house families. By 1960, the two sections of the development contained approximately 10,000 people. The City of Toronto created the Housing Authority of Toronto (HAT) in early 1947 to direct slum clearance and public housing construction. It would manage RPN until a new provincial body, the Ontario Housing

p.522

Corporation (OHC), took over in 1968. RPS was managed by the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority (MTHA) until 1968, when it too would join its northern partner under the aegis of OHC, which had swallowed up all the public housing in the province by this time.²³

Since RPN and RPS were slum clearance and redevelopment schemes, those on the top of the priority list for rehousing were low-income families living in the slum area at the time of clearance. HAT estimated in 1948 that 80 percent of residents in the area cleared for RPN would apply for rehousing in the new project, yet by the time the project was fully constructed, more than half of the apartments and houses were occupied by families who had not lived in the area before.²⁴ Only 23 percent of the original 638 families in the southern section of the redevelopment area relocated in RPS by the project completion date.²⁵ The majority of homeowners and some tenants refused to apply to the new project because they were opposed to the idea of state-assisted housing or their higher incomes rendered them ineligible; many other eligible families were confused or frustrated by the interminable wait for a vacancy and opted to find accommodation elsewhere. A sizable minority were refused access because they were thought to be morally unfit for the new scheme.²⁶ In later years, eligibility for public housing would be based on a complex formula measuring, among others, income, number of dependents, and conditions in applicants’ existing dwellings. From the mid-1960s onward, a whole host of social indicators would unmistakably reveal an increasingly marginalized population with disproportionate numbers of poor single mothers and families subsisting on welfare.²⁷

FIGHTING THE SLUM LABEL IN THE 1940S

Even before RP redevelopment began, the much-maligned “slum-dwellers” of the Cabbagetown area resisted the stereotyping efforts and urban renewal initiatives of the local state and the reform movement. The Regent Park Ratepayers’ Association (RPRA), formed by working-class homeowners in the slum clearance area, resented the slum label, were dissatisfied with the

compensation for their houses offered by the city,²⁸ and demanded a democratic say in the redevelopment process (Figure 1).²⁹ As Kevin Brushett shows, the RPRA “hounded City Hall throughout the planning, clearance and reconstruction stages.”³⁰ There was neither public consultation on the process nor community representation on the HAT. Both state officials and the middleclass reform movement pigeonholed all opposition as greedy property owners trying to thwart urban progress. The RPRA was supported by sections of the labor movement, but the bulk of the communist and social-democratic influenced left were supportive of the wider reconstruction efforts and, in practice if not in rhetoric, were unfavorable to rank-and-file resistance to liberal modernization plans.³¹

p.523

The RPRA was unable to turn the tide of slum clearance, yet they continued to organize even after the first tenants moved into the new project (Figure 2). In addition to the continuing issues of house prices, rental rates in the new project, and citizen participation, defiance of the slum designation stood out. At a small RPRA protest at Toronto city hall barely two weeks after the project was inaugurated, one woman said she resented “Mrs. Bessie Luffman [a prominent

p.524

member of the HAT] being paid to go around to teas and tell everyone what slum conditions there are in the area and what poor housekeepers we are.” A chorus of women roared its approval.³² In his many dealings with area residents in this period, RPN relocation officer Paul Ringer recalls that they despised being called slum-dwellers more than anything.³³

In 1951, the renamed Regent Park Ratepayers’ and Tenants’ Association (RPRTA) spearheaded a campaign against the HAT’s draconian policy of disallowing television in the project. Showing the early intentions to morally regulate residents, the HAT banned television, arguing that tenants in a publicly funded venture should not be able to afford such luxuries. The RPRTA vigorously opposed this move, seeing it as an attempt to create “second-class” citizens in the project with restricted rights. Rose Salson, secretary of the group, argued succinctly that “the right of a citizen in a democracy to a free choice in what he buys is fundamental. . . . To attempt to stamp ‘charity’ heavily upon all the residents of an area is to create a sort of ‘ghetto’ in which it would be difficult for a person to have any self-respect.”³⁴ A scant two years after the project’s opening, the very first family to move into the project, the Bluett’s, were active in the RPRTA. In open defiance of the authorities, Alf Bluett erected an aerial on his house to challenge the policy. He desisted after a stern threat of

p.525

eviction, but by 1954, an estimated 60 percent of the units had aerials erected in clear defiance of regulations, effectively forcing the HAT to provide a central antenna system for a nominal monthly charge.³⁵ Even at this early stage, tenants found ways of successfully fighting for their interests.

ORGANIZATION AND STRUGGLE IN THE 1960s: THE ORIGINS OF THE REGENT PARK COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Residents founded community clubs in the 1950s, but after the demise of the RPRTA, no political organizations existed in either section of the project.

In the 1960s, however, a variety of state-initiated developments, a pent-up frustration around a range of concrete issues, and the rebellious climate of the era would once again spark political organizing.

The reluctance of the City of Toronto to be directly saddled with a large and expensive public housing portfolio led to discussions in the mid-1960s between the OHC and the City for an amalgamation of RPN and RPS under control of the larger provincial body. With the imminent takeover, tenants stepped onto the stage, organizing a community fight back against the outside control and bureaucratization threatened by the OHC. On April 17, 1968, eighty RPN residents and allies such as RP United Church minister Robert Lindsay marched to city hall to protest against the OHC.³⁶ Their placards read “Keep Sincerity Between Tenants and Administration” and “No Absentee Landlord.” They also organized a well-attended public meeting with city officials to voice their opposition. Toronto Mayor William Dennison declared his concern for the “people” and promised that OHC management of RPN would not bring significant changes.³⁷

Residents thought differently. Pat Barrett argued, “Let’s all think in terms of people, human beings, and not dollars and cents.” Gerald Hudson emphasized that the OHC was a vast and impersonal bureaucracy concerned solely with operating costs: “It is time we recalled the principles upon which our physical planning should operate. These are human values rather than economic values.”³⁸ The OHC did take over the HAT but not without hearing from the voices of those most directly affected (Figure 3). Public housing tenants were beginning to speak the spirited oppositional language of the times.

In 1968, the federal government set up a Federal Task Force on Housing and Urban Redevelopment under the tutelage of cabinet minister Paul Hellyer. He visited both public and private housing developments across the country and spoke at town-hall-style meetings with interested parties. His 1969 report blasted public housing, blaming it for creating ghettos and “a ‘what’s the use’ attitude to self and social improvement.”³⁹ The *Toronto Star*, Canada’s largest newspaper and traditionally a supporter of public housing, weighed in with six scathing articles by David Allen condemning public housing and stereotyping RPS and many of its tenants, especially young people, as rough, rowdy, and

p.526

dysfunctional.⁴⁰ He hinted that areas like RPS might also experience the wave of urban rebellions rocking the United States.⁴¹

The explosion of urban protest never came, but neither were RP tenants hapless bystanders. At Hellyer’s visit to the project, over one hundred tenants peppered him with questions ranging from the rental scale to maintenance and heckled him from the floor.⁴² Almost all the tenants interviewed in David

p.527

Allen’s series of articles in the *Toronto Star* pinpointed negative labeling by outsiders as a key problem. Several tenants explicitly questioned the role of the media itself in whipping up stigmatization.⁴³ And the leader of the incipient tenants’ organization, Jerome Murray, refused a second interview with the *Toronto Star* after its smear campaign began.⁴⁴ Regent Parkers were identifying and confronting some of the sources of their stigmatization.

While downplaying the small size of the group, the *Toronto Star* articles did refer to BLAST, Blevins Place Association of Some Tenants, a group of RPS

tenants, which first formed in November 1968 to circulate a petition demanding that OHC provide more play areas for children. The lack of recreation facilities for the almost 4,000 children in both sections of RP had been a sore spot for years. Despite many promises from the housing authorities, recreation facilities were minimal. In the summer of 1968, nine-year-old RP resident Jody Phillips was killed by a train on his way home from a distant swimming pool. Several tenants organized an impromptu protest demonstration in response. Hundreds of RP inhabitants marched through the project and the surrounding area, collecting \$2,700 for the establishment of a local swimming pool (Figure 4).⁴⁵

BLAST was a small group that met once a week in each other's apartments. In February 1969, it produced a one-page leaflet "Calling *All* Regent Park" to a general meeting at a local church and proposing a name change to the Regent Park Community Improvement Association (RPCIA).⁴⁶ Prominently displayed on the leaflet was the slogan "Help Regent Park to Help Itself," indicating a desire among tenant organizers to rely on self-initiative in their struggles. In general, the RPCIA aimed to improve life for "children in Regent Park with regard to all areas of human rights, education, recreation, culture and relaxation; for our Senior Citizens, dignity and pride in an age of materialism."⁴⁷ The group organized regular Friday night dances and bingos to raise money, held an art contest to design the group's logo, and began meeting regularly with OHC officials.⁴⁸ A newsletter was created, the *Regent Bell*, renamed the *Regent Park Community News* in 1972, which aimed to publicize the events of the RPCIA and RP in general.

Significantly, the majority of RPCIA activists were women, reflecting the longstanding role women have played in neighborhood politics.⁴⁹ Women on social assistance in particular, the very poorest of the poor, were most directly affected by rental policies and lack of tenant participation in RP. It is no surprise that they often took the lead, both organizationally, in terms of leadership and involvement, and ideologically, as the strategists and formulators of the policies around which activists rallied. They did not speak the language of the incipient feminist movement but did organize on issues that often affected women most overtly.

The many concrete issues of day-to-day life in RP motivated residents to act. They were also generally influenced by larger community empowerment ideas circulating in the late 1960s.⁵⁰ As the Hellyer Report stated, "[There] is a

p.528

growing anger of people who, amid the material plenty around them, refuse to wait that 'little bit longer' for their minimal share. In a world of rising need and increasing expectations, a bit more and a bit better are not good enough."⁵¹ Yet

p.529

there were no explicitly radical ideas. In fact, the tenants spoke the language of liberalism and felt betrayed that the "system" had let them down. The masthead of the *Regent Bell* argued, "It has not been without struggle that man has achieved his rights: freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of public meeting. To protect and preserve these rights is to exercise them justly, and it is on this premise that the *Regent Bell* is founded."⁵² The RPCIA stated, "We are a non-political organization dealing with people, various organizations

and specific problems. We are not second-class citizens. This label will be abolished by examples of good citizenship and democratic procedure. . . . It is not where you live but how you live that counts.”⁵³

The RPCIA believed that the OHC was simply not adhering to the democracy promised by the system. Jerome Murray rebuked housing authorities and their “ilk and breed, who prostitute the British parliamentary system . . . who are more interested in money than democracy, the same as your counterparts in the U.S.A.”⁵⁴ He explained that it is no wonder that people get angry and “in the end might get violent. But the system that treats people like that, like a caged animal, is just asking for trouble.”⁵⁵ While negotiating throughout 1969, Murray reminded OHC officials that the RPCIA was a moderate organization but could not be held responsible for more radically minded residents who were advocating a “burn, baby, burn” policy.⁵⁶ Speaking the liberal language of citizenship and democracy, the RPCIA nevertheless “infused those concepts with a meaning quite different from what the middle class had in mind”⁵⁷ and reflected more radical currents of upheaval occurring in society at large. The spirit of revolt reached the offices of government too. The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the federal government body responsible for housing affairs, began floating ideas of “community control” in the late 1960s. This reflected a temporary shift in state housing policies. For twenty years, the federal government and CMHC had undertaken relatively few affordable housing projects, focusing instead on aiding consumers to buy houses. Top CMHC officials and their political paymasters in the federal government deliberately attempted to maintain minimum standards of amenities, services, and construction in the few existing projects so as not to make public housing too attractive and competitive with private developers.⁵⁸ Yet in response to criticisms of public housing from all sides and a federal government concerned with the rising tide of antiauthoritarian attitudes, CMHC made considerable onetime investments in recreation, enhanced physical infrastructure in 1970, and undertook to promote a more responsive management structure.

The RPCIA capitalized on this favorable environment. Unbeknownst to higher OHC or local RP management,⁵⁹ Brenda Gorman, an OHC tenant relations officer in RP, and Michael Audain, in charge of community relations at OHC, encouraged the RPCIA to apply for a new federal government grant for community organizations. The grant application emphasized enabling people

p.530

to identify “the nature of their economic and social problems, the plans for the approaches to solving these problems and to organize a way which would enable them to make maximum use of available community resources including their own inner resources.”⁶⁰ It requested \$70,000 over three years to help pay for offices, a full-time organizer, and campaigns. Anticipating the grant, the RPCIA hired Brenda Gorman as coordinator in October. By this time, the RPCIA had 180 registered members and was managed by monthly general membership meetings and an executive committee.⁶¹ RPCIA members visited tenants throughout the project to canvass tenant concerns as well as to collect RPCIA dues and encourage participation.⁶² The financial stability promised by the grant would allow the RPCIA to initiate more comprehensive tenant organizing.

Nevertheless, the liberalizing ideas from Ottawa were coolly received in the Ontario government. OHC officials were only reluctant supporters of the push for more community control. They had a paternalistic view of management-tenant relations and despised militant actions such as demonstrations. In response to an RPCIA request for leadership training for its activists, for example, an OHC official cautioned those responsible that “the type of training to be provided is rather important as we do not wish to breed future dissension and destructive confrontation, but rather to help the tenants help themselves in a democratic and constructive manner.”⁶³ Many OHC officials had real estate and business backgrounds; their chief purpose was to maintain the value of their physical assets and control operating costs.⁶⁴ The OHC had established tenant relations workers (TRW) in 1964 and by 1970 had established a community relations branch. However, TRW focused mostly on the individual problems of tenants and purely social event organizing. They followed the rules of the OHC tenant handbook, which recognized only “garden clubs” and then would inappropriately use this paternalistic “club” attitude toward serious political tenants’ organizations.⁶⁵

GARBAGE, LAUNDRY ROOMS, AND INTERNAL CONFLICT: THE RPCIA TAKES TO THE STREETS

One of the key demands since the formation of the RPCIA was project maintenance improvement. In meetings throughout 1969, RP tenants raised questions of broken incinerators creating backlogs in garbage collection, rundown washing machines and driers, and insufficient cleaning in elevators and hallways. A tenant management committee was established to oversee these problems. In October, the RPCIA presented the OHC with a list of demands, including the hiring of four to five more full-time maintenance workers. RPCIA stressed that they realized that changes did not always happen quickly, but there was “frustration, bitterness, and ill will” among the tenants.⁶⁶ Cer-

p.531

tainly part of this “ill will” was caused by lack of action on OHC’s part. Similar demands on maintenance problems had been made by the RPCIA since the summer, yet project officials refused to undertake improvements. Cost cutting by management on maintenance was not uncommon.⁶⁷ In May and October 1969, Jerome Murray sent letters to OHC official H. W. Suters warning him that patience was wearing thin; more militant members wanted to organize public demonstrations to win their demands.⁶⁸

After months of OHC stalling, the RPCIA decided to take to the streets to back up their demands (Figure 5). On January 28, 1970, seventy-five RP tenants, many of them women, along with supporters such as reform Aldermen Karl Jaffary and John Sewell, marched to the OHC headquarters and symbolically dumped a bag of garbage on the desk of OHC officials. The action made the front page of the *Toronto Star*. Suters at first refused to meet with the protestors but eventually relented since protestors were determined to stay until their demands were met.⁶⁹ Murray read a letter, arguing that RP tenants had negotiated in good faith with no results for eight months and that the OHC had made a mockery of democracy.⁷⁰

Militant action brought immediate results. Suters actually telephoned CMHC officials during the meeting with the protestors, securing authority and resources to hire seven new maintenance workers, replace antiquated laundry

machines, and hire attendants for the laundry rooms. From February to March, the OHC responded favorably to RPCIA complaints about project wide and individual problems.⁷¹ With these successes, the RPCIA was becoming a pole of attraction. By March 1970, RPCIA membership had tripled from October 1969 to 530 members, approximately 20 percent of the adult population.⁷² Despite its clear success, the march on OHC headquarters polarized opinion in RP. One group of tenants led by Bud McCormick was embarrassed to be associated with militant demonstrations. McCormick worried that the demonstration painted Regent Parkers as troublemakers. *Regent Bell* editor Ruth Zimmerman seconded these concerns, claiming that many problems originated with tenants themselves. Other residents were impressed with the results of the demonstration, arguing that it was the only way to make headway with the OHC. RPCIA activist Dick Boundy argued that you could not argue with the results and tried to assuage critics by adding that “we do not want revolutions but resolutions to help us all.” Mike Carson, Chairman of the Porter Avenue Tenants Association, praised the RPCIA as a model of “courage and militancy.”⁷³

However, McCormick defeated Murray in the March 1970 elections by a sizable margin and was reelected the following year. The factionalism between “radical” and conservative groups continued even after the elections. Murray established a short-lived opposition group, and he and his supporters harshly criticized the new executive at public meetings. Brenda Gorman, who shared Murray’s activist orientation, was critical of the new conservative

p.532

approach to tenant politics, believing that the OHC was using McCormick as a tool to maintain effective control and impede “meaningful change.”⁷⁴ In May, the new executive fired her without notice or reason.⁷⁵ YWCA organizer Norma Penner was then chosen by a general membership meeting to become the new coordinator on the recommendation of the executive. Penner (53 years old at the time) believed that she was hired by the RPCIA because McCormick and his executive wanted somebody a little older that was not characterized by the youthful radicalism of the time.⁷⁶

McCormick’s tenure would inaugurate a more conservative approach to tenant organizing in the next two years. However, the basic democratic structures of the organization had been decided upon, a newspaper had been established, various initiatives on services, rents and tenant management had been discussed and debated and begun to be implemented, and both management and tenants as a whole recognized the RCIA as the bona fide tenants’ organization in the project. Moreover, the RPCIA and its determined organizing had inspired others to organize. By the end of 1970, thirty tenants’ organizations had sprouted up in OHC housing in Toronto.⁷⁷ In 1971, an umbrella group of tenants’ associations in OHC housing was formed, the Ontario Tenants’ Association.⁷⁸ Related groups such as the Just Society Movement and the Mother-Led Union, both of which included RP residents, were established to advocate on behalf of social welfare recipients.⁷⁹

p.533

FIGHTING FOR FAIR RENTS, 1969-1973

In its strictest sense, public housing in Canada is defined as “rent geared to income,” that is, tenants pay a rent that is based on their incomes. Exactly how

income was to be defined, however, was a thorny question for tenants and managers that would become a site of struggle itself in public housing. The rental scale for RPN was originally designed in 1947.⁸⁰ It was based principally on the ability of families to pay with variations for different family sizes and income. Originally, rents were supposed to be approximately 20 percent of total monthly family income.⁸¹ However, the notion of what was a fair percentage changed in government circles in the 1960s to 1980s, reaching 30 percent by the 1980s, quite possibly to increase public housing tenants' rent and therefore reduce government subsidies and/or to make it appear that there was less housing need.⁸² For families receiving social assistance, rents were calculated on a fixed scale according to the shelter allowance portion of social assistance payments.⁸³ Homer Borland, a top CMHC manager, described this rental scheme as "to each according to his need, and from each according to his ability" with no intended humor or apparent knowledge of the source of the quote.⁸⁴

There is little doubt that the rent-to-income scale assisted many families to cope with the pressing difficulties of housing affordability. Still, there was a built-in problem. Any extra income earned through overtime, part-time work by one spouse or child, or year-end bonuses was always subject to a rental increase. Most contentious among tenants was the levy on overtime and the income of wives, extra income that tenants felt they deserved. In addition, every time there was an increase in income, regardless of the source or amount, tenants had to sign a new lease; income slips were routinely checked and employers were often consulted to verify incomes. Tenants resented laying their "life open bare" to OHC.⁸⁵ If public housing residents failed to properly report their incomes, they could and often were evicted for "misrepresentation."⁸⁶ The rental scale made it difficult to save money to move into better accommodations, to buy a house or other things, effectively locking tenants into a vicious circle of dependency.

Frustration with the rental scale was a major issue for the RPCIA from its initiation. "Initiative," the RPCIA argued, "is killed to earn extra money or improve standard of living." In May 1969, it formally questioned the levy on extra income and recommended that rent be based on the take-home pay for a forty-hour workweek excluding overtime.⁸⁷ The next month, one hundred tenants organized by the RPCIA met with the OHC to discuss changes to the rental scale.⁸⁸ In November, the RPCIA expressed their concerns over rents to federal Minister of Housing Robert Andras. They pointed out that the charge on extra income was a disincentive and, for the first time, noted that those on social assistance were particularly discriminated against since the proportion of income consumed by rent was often much higher than the 25 percent average that CMHC considered a fair rate at the time.⁸⁹

p.534

After the persistent lobbying of the RPCIA and other tenants' associations as well as a growing barrage of criticism from social workers, academics, and some reform politicians,⁹⁰ CMHC and OHC conceded some changes in April 1970. For those families who earned very little, minimum rent was reduced from \$32 to \$28 a month; for families with higher incomes at the other end of the scale, 25 percent rather than 30 percent of income as rent was established as a maximum. To allay criticism of the levy on extra income, a \$900 annual income exemption was introduced for single working parents. This meant that

if a single working mother earned \$3,500 a year, her rent would be based only on a figure of \$2,600. Wives of main breadwinners also received a \$750 increase to their existing exemption of \$250. Working tenants also won the right to a one-year lease; before this, RP tenants had only thirty-day leases. Everything else remained unchanged, including the practice of income-verification forms and the negligible \$2 reduction for each dependent. Most important, those on fixed incomes, a growing proportion of tenants, remained in the same situation: saddled with a temporary thirty-day lease and a high proportion of their social assistance income going toward shelter costs.⁹¹ Nevertheless, from the perspective of the RPCIA, it showed that organization and activism produced results.

Little action was taken on the question of rents until a new activist-oriented leadership was elected to the RPCIA in 1972. Soon after the election, the new executive organized a public meeting with OHC and CMHC officials to discuss the rental scale. More than 250 tenants attended, raising many of the same concerns as the RPCIA did two years earlier. The meeting resolved that the RPCIA would prepare a formal analysis and criticism of OHC rents as well as a proposal for changes.

A New Deal for Ontario Housing Tenants was released by the Rent Brief Committee of the RPCIA in October 1972. Once again, it raised the question of the extra levy on income and, in particular, the difficulties of large families, single parents, and those on social assistance. It found that those on fixed incomes paid as high as 51.6 percent of their income for rent with an average of 30 to 35 percent, far higher than the standard.⁹² *A New Deal* put forward a number of proposals intended to lessen the financial burdens of rent in a time of rising cost of living, to cut against the stigmatization of tenants and to allow tenants to save money. The document made a succinct argument for the unfairness of the system: "Tenants do suffer indignities. It is almost impossible for a family to save. Families in arrears are harassed and threatened with eviction. Most people with low income are grateful when they move into Ontario Housing, but in time they feel they are trapped. Once you are in, it is almost impossible to get out."⁹³

The Rent Brief created quite a stir among other OHC projects and supporters of public housing. Endorsements came from various municipal politicians and agencies. Numerous Toronto OHC tenants' associations and the province-wide organization, the Federation of Ontario Housing Residents'

p.535

Associations (FOHRA), not only endorsed the brief but also modified it for use in their own campaigns.⁹⁴ Whenever they had a chance, the RPCIA publicized its views on the rental scale and demonstrated solidarity for other tenants' associations. Under mounting criticism from tenants' associations led by the RPCIA, Ontario Housing Minister Robert Welch promised a formal review of the rental scale in November 1973.⁹⁵ After a series of biennial reviews in the 1970s, however, the rental scale for tenants not on fixed incomes remained the same. In 1974, a rental scale for seniors was developed, which capped the shelter to income ratio at 25 percent.⁹⁶

The struggles around the rental question yielded limited gains. Small improvements were won for seniors and employed tenants. If the RPCIA gained the respect of the broad activist community, it also proved to the OHC that it was a force to be reckoned with. The process of tenants precisely identifying

biases in the rental scale, analyzing how they affected residents, and putting forward alternatives galvanized tenant politics for a time and showed the larger community that organization and change were realistic objectives. The RPCIA brought new members into activism around the rental scale and raised the self-confidence of the activists.⁹⁷ If not completely on the question of *redistribution*, then at least on *recognition*, the RPCIA looked on the struggles around rent with some satisfaction.⁹⁸

PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY? TENANT MANAGEMENT AT RP, 1970-1978

The concept of public housing tenant management emanated from notions of participatory democracy on college campuses in the 1960s.⁹⁹ The first Canadian Conference on Housing, organized by the Canadian Welfare Council in late 1968 and composed of representatives from all three levels of government, business, labor, and various nonprofit and social welfare organizations, strongly recommended tenant participation in public housing.¹⁰⁰ In the April 1970 policy shift, CMHC would eventually recommend assisting tenants to “develop leadership outlets so as to participate with management and voice concerns about their environment.”¹⁰¹

OHC officials reluctantly accepted the novel ideas coming from Ottawa but were never enthusiastic supporters. A taste of the OHC’s paternalistic attitude is provided by Marion Waterson, a recently retired community relations worker in RPN who alleged, “I have noticed that people on limited incomes don’t understand complicated, technical plans, nor do they comprehend huge expenditures of money. They need somebody to translate the technical aspects of the plans in lay terms or they will get hung up on the trivialities that they do understand. The result will be that they will pass items that cost millions of dollars because these things are beyond their comprehension.”¹⁰² Simon Mielniczuk, RPCIA Coordinator from 1973 to 1976, noted that “resistance

p.536

came from upper echelons. In every negotiation with OHC, their opposition was clear. Simple changes and modest budgets for better support were denied. . . . OHC never wanted the program and did everything possible to see its demise.”¹⁰³ A CMHC representative duly commented that “if it hadn’t been for the RPCIA, OHC would have been much slower to become *enlightened*.”¹⁰⁴ Throughout the 1970s, it would pursue a tightly restricted form of tenant management, always contingent on responsible tenant participation and resisting broader tenant concerns about improved services.

The RPCIA had a different conception of tenant management. It looked on tenant participation in project-level policies as a concrete means of improving day-to-day conditions in the project. As one tenant remarked, “Tenants know where the problems are—an outsider doesn’t know what improvements are needed.”¹⁰⁵ For RP residents, maintenance, sanitation, and vandalism were central issues in the construction of a habitable environment. The desire to live in a clean, safe, and respectable dwelling was especially important given the stigmatization of RP as dirty and disreputable. The RPCIA believed that tenant involvement in management would resolve these vital issues. Community building and a sense of controlling their own futures were also prominent objectives of RP tenants. In the 1973 RPCIA proposal for tenant participation in management, the RPCIA said they were guided by the following

principles: “that tenants can and should make decisions that affect their own lives; that it is desirable that tenants move from a position of powerlessness to having some control over events and decisions affecting them; that it is in keeping with the democratic process that tenants have this opportunity to participate in management of their project.”¹⁰⁶ Harold Jackman, a recent tenant from the West Indies and a key advocate of tenant management among RP tenants, judged this endeavor “as a challenge we must accept. . . . Let us prove to the critics, that ordinary people when given an opportunity can rise to great heights. Let us unite and go forward together. For in unity, lies our greatest strength.”¹⁰⁷

The RPCIA decided that they had to learn to organize themselves before attempting a full-blown tenant management scheme. They began by establishing an elected unit-representative system to supervise and help in the management of housing units. The unit reps were responsible for liaising with tenants and the OHC about problems in particular buildings, explaining the various options available with respect to social services in RP, and building the RPCIA by distributing their newspaper and advertising meetings and events.¹⁰⁸ The *Regent Park Community News* had a regular column called “Unit Rep of the Month,” which introduced unit reps to the larger community and publicized the scheme.

The federal grant for the RPCIA would end during 1973, and in response to a request for further funding from the tenants, the OHC offered in May to work out a tenant management scheme. There was basic agreement that RP tenants who participated as unit reps would be remunerated and that a Joint Tenant-

p.537

OHC Management Board would be convened to discuss rent arrears, evictions, and lease terminations.¹⁰⁹ Among the larger group of tenants, the tenant management proposal provoked controversy. Paid jobs for RP tenants—intended to allow tenants more time to devote to tenant management functions—were openly distrusted by some tenants. They believed that the OHC intended to co-opt tenants, creating a divisive atmosphere of snitching and recrimination.¹¹⁰ Only one year earlier, tenant resistance forced Al Bilan, a tenant who had worked as a community relations officer for the OHC, to transfer out of RP.¹¹¹ OHC officials insisted, “The tenant-employees will have every right and liberty to express their opinions without fear or favour. RPCIA will keep its prerogative to question OHC.”¹¹² Some tenants would continue to distrust their own working for the Housing.

However, a majority of RPCIA activists and tenants favored the scheme, believing that tenants deserved to be paid for various duties around the project and hoped that this initial endeavor would gradually enlarge tenant participation in management. After ironing out the details, the OHC and the RPCIA signed a one-year experimental contract in June 1973, the first in Canada, stipulating the various rights and responsibilities of both parties. The Tenant Management Board, composed of four tenants and four OHC supervisors, would review and make recommendations on district budget proposals relating to maintenance and project improvement and discuss all cases of rent default, antisocial behavior, certain transfers between units and projects, and general complaints about maintenance and security that could not be resolved by unit reps. Twenty-four part-time unit reps, a unit-rep manager, and a secretary would be hired among tenants to anchor the unit-representative system.¹¹³

According to both parties, the pilot project had a good first year. The unit rep system and the Joint Board were working smoothly. OHC believed that there was “more community involvement, higher morale, less vandalism and a greater overall sense of responsibility.”¹¹⁴ RPCIA President Janet Ross believed that it was a good first step that could lead in the future to tenant representatives on the public tender board (dealing with the developers that undertook capital projects for the OHC) and the OHC Board of Directors. Harold Jackman, now Manager of the Tenant Management Program, listed a series of accomplishments with regard to the unit-rep system: common entrances to the buildings were being locked to provide more security, vandalism had been reduced on a major scale, and maintenance problems were being dealt with quickly and efficiently.¹¹⁵ He argued that the ultimate goal was complete tenant management, as in Boston and St. Louis, with meaningful input on all aspects of the project.¹¹⁶

Despite visible public support for the program on OHC’s side, negotiations for a new tenant management contract in 1976 were exacting. But when agreement was reached in May, the scope of tenant responsibilities was dramatically increased. Over \$200,000 was provided to the RPCIA to provide for a tenant manager, assistant manager, secretarial staff, a full-time bookkeeper,

p.538

seventeen full-time and seventeen part-time laundry attendants (paid slightly above minimum wage), twenty-eight unit reps working twenty-eight hours a week, and two full-time resident visitors to assist community relations staff. Significantly, tenants would now have a representative on the district’s tender evaluation committee and internal transfer committee.¹¹⁷ The RPCIA leadership appeared happy with the results. As Janet Ross said, “It makes sense that the people who live in this community on a 24-hour, day-to-day basis, have more knowledge and expertise about the problems here than OHC staff members who go to their own homes outside the project at night.” The OHC too was pleased that tenants would continue to be involved in “constructive involvement”¹¹⁸ in the community.

Yet a major conflict among tenants soon arose. Numerous RPCIA activists found themselves in the position of being employer and employee at the same time. Barely two months after the new program was enacted, the whole RPCIA executive and numerous RPCIA activists took a principled position and resigned en masse, opting to keep their jobs in the project rather than continue as compromised political representatives.¹¹⁹ Yet this did not quell the bitter infighting around the question of “co-optation” and “power grabs” that continued among tenants and within the RPCIA. Many of the longtime activists, including Janet Ross and Ozzie Smith, pulled themselves out of politics. According to ordinary tenants and RPCIA activists, the atmosphere was acrimonious.

¹²⁰
The OHC took advantage of the infighting among tenants to scale down the program. The next contract, signed on October 1, 1977, reduced the number of unit reps from twenty-eight to sixteen and added three area coordinators responsible for RPS and two areas of RPN.¹²¹ The *Regent Park Community News* constantly urged tenants to become involved, citing a lack of interest among tenants in community politics.¹²² The newspaper itself, lacking funds, gradually reduced its number of pages and its coverage of substantive issues. Tenant management would go out with a bang in 1978.¹²³ When the contract

expired on June 30, the OHC and the RPCIA were at an impasse in negotiations over a 6 percent cost-of-living increase for unit reps and laundry attendants and an increase in unit reps from sixteen to twenty-four. As the RPCIA pointed out, tenant workers had received a 26 percent increase in wages over four years, while the cost of living had increased by more than 40 percent. OHC refused a pay increase, arguing that any new agreement would have to be cost-effective and also involve “hard-management” functions such as security, evictions, and rent collections. The workers struck and picketed laundry rooms to prevent high school students, hired unknowingly as replacement workers by OHC, from doing their work. Unit reps and laundry attendants later voted to return to work at the old salaries, but OHC flatly refused. At summer’s end, the pioneering tenant management program in Canada would be unceremoniously abolished by OHC.¹²⁴

p.539

Postmortem analyses by tenants highlighted internal conflicts, tenant distrust of housing officials, and intransigence by OHC to grant more responsibilities. Sandra Langille, a former area coordinator with the RPCIA, blamed a lack of unity among tenants. While agreeing that OHC was to blame as well, she emphasized the power struggles among RPCIA activists for positions of influence in the association. She argued that perhaps it was good that the project ended when it did: “When tenants of Regent Park organize as we once did; when we stand together for the good of the community and not the individual or the power attached to helping your community, perhaps then we will be ready for the responsibilities of tenant management.”¹²⁵ Simon Mielniczuk remembers a constant battle between what he believes were the “shared responsibilities and joint negotiations underpinning tenant management” and the “confrontation tactics” advocated by some tenant activists.¹²⁶ Myrna Marsden, a member of the tenant management committee, pointed the finger at OHC’s co-optation agenda. In retrospect, she believed it was a mistake for a tenant’s association to tie itself up to its effective “boss.” In fact, she added, many tenants “tended to see the unit reps and the RPCIA as OHC’s agents in their midst, rather than their own representatives.”¹²⁷

CONCLUSION

As Drier and Marcuse have emphasized in the U.S. case, maintaining interest in tenant activism was an uphill struggle from the beginning. Public housing tenants were not organized workers who could potentially rally around a set of collective interests and exercise a decisive social and political force in the workplace and society as a whole. Marcuse aptly comments that low income housing activism can be “a tremendous drain on individual energies, and precisely of those that have the least material resources and the greatest range of other pressing needs.”¹²⁸ The fact that many RPCIA activists understandably chose to forfeit their political positions for jobs is a clear demonstration of this. Maintaining the necessary level of enthusiasm and militancy would be doubly difficult in an atmosphere of personal conflicts and disunity among activists as in the case of the RPCIA.

On their own, RP tenants could not mount an effective challenge to the powerful welfare state bureaucracy. They lacked strong allies outside of RP to assist in their struggles. At the local level, RP activists found support among

the minority of left-leaning aldermen and board of education trustees such as John Sewell, Gordon Cressy, and George Martell. It appears there was no organized intervention around RP issues by the social democratic New Democratic Party or by the many radical left organizations in Toronto at this time even if individual members of the Left were sometimes active in this or that campaign. The RPCIA did participate in some larger fight backs around welfare rights, education cuts, and antiracist initiatives. It also linked up with public housing

p.540

tenants' associations outside of RP to lobby around housing issues. It supported union maintenance workers in the project and education unionists in local schools over the years but rarely generalized its own activities or tied the success of its own initiatives to wider struggles. For instance, the RPCIA never attempted to build an alliance with the large and powerful organized labor movement in Toronto, the one constituency with a large membership, progressive policies, significant financial resources, and the ability to engage in effective mobilization.¹²⁹ Nor did the unions, which once played a key role in local politics in the 1940s, reciprocate by broadening their role in community struggles. Public housing residents therefore had far fewer political resources compared with the rich and powerful real-estate lobby and developers that most directly shaped housing policy in Canada.

Tenant management endeavors also deflected tenants away from larger movements that aimed to change broader government policies. Participatory initiatives could certainly be empowering and boosted tenants' confidence in their ability to determine some aspects of their own futures. But it also inhibited, as Marcuse notes, "their abilities to act independently or to seek dramatic change in governmental or social policies."¹³⁰ It is salient that the tenant management program took off just at the moment that the struggles around the bread-and-butter issue of rent subsided. When the RPCIA effectively shifted from political advocacy to service management, it moved "from internal to external dependency"¹³¹ and was ultimately subject to the ideological and financial control of the government housing bureaucracy. The evidence suggests that CMHC and an initially reluctant OHC regarded participatory schemes as a means to offload their responsibilities in a conscious management strategy akin to the "responsible autonomy" granted by some employers to unions as a means to weaken shop-floor control and dampen struggle.¹³² OHC attempts to expand tenant management prerogatives to include "hard" aspects of administration, and its refusal to grant minimal wage increases to its low-wage tenant workers demonstrate that control of costs and the regulation of tenants were the crucial objectives.

The end result was that the tenant management program ended up associating the RPCIA in the eyes of many tenants with the hated, authoritarian aspects of OHC, as Myrna Marsden noted after the program was abolished. RP tenants were intensely distrustful of efforts by outsiders (even those sympathetic) to help them, and for many years, a culture of distrust of management had developed. In an evaluation of the pilot program of tenant management, John Darcy, OHC District Manager and Chair of the Joint Board, trumpeted that "the tenant side of the management advisory committee usually upholds the original decision taken by the corporation and they support us in the largest percentage of our actions."¹³³ Bev Stewart and Ozzie Smith, tenant members of the Joint Management Board, stressed that tenants needed to be held responsible for

their actions and that the Joint Board was successful in ensuring this. When RP tenant activists enforced coercive OHC policy on antisocial behavior, rent

p.541

arrears, and evictions, they became identified in the eyes of tenants as just another arm of the Housing.

External problems added to the RPCIA's difficulties. Both senior levels of government were faced with general economic instability in the mid-1970s, prompting them to start belt tightening. Since the 1950s, CMHC had been concerned about the economic viability of public housing and eventually expected a full retrieval of expenditures through rent revenue.¹³⁴ In the 1970s, OHC, which relied on transfers from CMHC, shifted its discourse of fairness in rents, for example, to an economic defense based on amortization and operating costs, municipal taxes, and maintenance charges.¹³⁵ Always stingy, halfhearted supporters of community activism and taken aback by the autonomous organizing of tenants, OHC were not willing to concede crucial improvements in wealth redistribution of public housing tenants at the same time as they were effectively beginning to financially, ideologically, and politically question their welfare state commitments.¹³⁶

The growing conservative political context that led to cuts to external funding, internal conflicts, and a cooptation strategy by public housing management reduced both membership and militancy and led to the demise of the RPCIA. Yet the history of tenant activism in RP also confirms the findings of recent social histories of public housing projects in large American cities that highlight the agency of public housing tenants. RP tenants developed a coherent political association during the late 1960s and 1970s that significantly raised the self-confidence and political knowledge of a group of people hitherto treated as social failures. The RPCIA successfully promoted community engagement in a broad range of activities and valiantly countered the intensely negative images of RP and its tenants.¹³⁷ Like other social movement activists in the heady days of the era, RP tenants had had enough of mistreatment and resolved to change their situation from the bottom up. Despite contradictions and daunting obstacles, they were able to demand a voice and role in their own futures and influence other groups in similarly marginalized positions. At certain important moments, they effectively promoted, defended, and even won their preferred conception of an acceptable residential environment against the pressures of an uncaring state structure wedded to a profit-oriented economic system.

Notes

1. Bryan Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour*, 2nd ed. (Toronto, Canada: McClelland and Stewart, 1992), 314-16. For a kaleidoscopic analysis of struggles around the world in the 1960s, see Chris Harman, *The Fire Last Time: 1968 and After* (London: Bookmarks, 1998).
2. William Coleman, *The Independence Movement in Quebec, 1945-1980* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1984).
3. Doug Owsram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby-Boom Generation* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Patricia Jasen, "In Pursuit of Human Values (or Laugh When You Say

p.542

That): The Student Critique of the Arts Curriculum in the 1960s,” in Paul Axelrod and John Reid, eds., *Youth, Universities and Canadian Society: Essays in the Social History of Higher Education* (Montreal and Kingston, Canada: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989), 247-74.

4. Naomi Black, “The Canadian Women’s Movement: The Second Wave,” in Sandra Burt, Lorraine Code, and Lindsay Dorney, eds., *Changing Patterns: Women in Canada* (Toronto, Canada: McClelland and Stewart, 1988), 45-61.

5. Peter Marcuse, “Housing Movements in the United States,” *Housing, Theory and Society* 6, no. 2 (1999): 67-86. The author would like to thank Peter Marcuse for providing a copy of this article.

6. Rhonda Y. Williams, “Living Just Enough in the City: Change and Activism in Baltimore’s Public Housing, 1940-1980” (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1998); Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh, *American Project: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Ghetto* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); and Jane

Roessner, *A Decent Place to Live, From Columbia Point to Harbor Point, A Community History* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000); Peter Marcuse, “Housing Movements,” 67-86.

7. Peter Marcuse, “The Rise of Tenant Organizations,” in John Pynoos, Robert Schafer, and Chester M. Hartman, eds., *Housing Urban America* (Chicago: Aldine, 1981), 53.

8. Richard Harris, “More American than the United States: Housing in Urban Canada in the Twentieth Century,” *Journal of Urban History* 26 (2001): 457. On the influence of American public housing, see the memoirs by Canadian public houser Humphrey Carver, *Compassionate Landscape* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1978).

9. See Graham Fraser with photographs by Michael Mitchell, *Fighting Back: Urban Renewal in Trefann Court* (Toronto, Canada: Hakkert, 1972); Jon Caulfield, *City Form and Everyday Life* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1994), chap. 3; Kevin Brushett, “Blots on the Face of the City: The Politics

of Slum Housing and Urban Renewal in Toronto, 1940-1970,” (Ph.D. thesis, Queen’s University, 2001), chap. 6; and Richard Harris, *Democracy in Kingston: A Social Movement in Local Politics, 1965-1970* (Montreal and Kingston, Canada: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1988).

10. Peter Dreir, “The Tenants’ Movement in the United States,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 8 (1984): 255-79. There are no historical studies of public housing tenant political organizations

in Canada. For related movements against urban renewal in the 1950s and 1960s, note especially Brushett, “Blots on the Face of the City.”

11. Marcuse, “Housing Movements,” 80-82.

12. Marcuse, “Housing Movements,” 81.

13. Venkatesh, *American Project*, 11.

14. Williams, “Living Just Enough in the City.”

15. Venkatesh, *American Project*.

16. David Zapparoli, *Regent Park: The Public Experiment in Housing, A Photographic Exhibit at The Market Gallery*, March 13 to July 11, 1999 (Toronto, Canada: Author, 1998).

17. Robin Kelley, “The Black Poor and the Politics of Opposition in a New South City,” in Michael Katz, ed., *The “Underclass” Debate* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 293-94. See also Loïc Wacquant, “Red Belt, Black Belt: Racial Division, Class Inequality and the State in the French Urban Periphery and the American Ghetto,” in Enzo Mingione, ed., *Urban Poverty and the Underclass: A Reader* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1996), 234-74.

18. On the general situation, note John Bacher, *Keeping to the Marketplace: The Evolution of Canadian Housing Policy* (Kingston and Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993), 174-75; and more particularly on veterans’ housing, see Richard Harris and Tricia Shulist, “Canada’s Reluctant Housing Program: The Veterans’ Land Act, 1942-75,” *Canadian Historical Review* 82 (June 2001): 252-83.

19. For similar developments in Australia, note Mike Berry, “Unraveling the ‘Australian Housing Solution,’:

The Post-war Years,” *Housing, Theory and Society* 16 (1999): 106-23. The author would like to thank Mike Berry for providing a copy of this article.

20. Kevin Brushett, “Blots on the Face of the City,” Introduction. On “slumologists” in the Scottish council housing context, see the monograph by Seán Damer, *From Moorepark to ‘Wine Alley’: The Rise and*

Fall of a Glasgow Housing Scheme (Edinburgh, Scotland: University of Edinburgh Press, 1989).

21. John Sewell, *Houses and Homes: Housing for Canadians* (Toronto, Canada: Lorimer, 1994), 133.

22. See the classic liberal work on the project by Albert Rose, *Regent Park: A Study in Slum Clearance* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1958). On postwar social reconstruction, note Kevin Brushett, "'People and Government Travelling Together': Community Organization, Urban Planning and the Politics of Post-war Reconstruction, 1943-1953," *Urban History Review* 27 (March 1999): 44-58.

Purdy / TENANT ORGANIZING IN TORONTO

p.543

23. Albert Rose, *Canadian Housing Policies, 1935-1980* (Toronto, Canada: Butterworth and Company, 1980), 34.

24. On Housing Authority of Toronto's (HAT) estimate, see Alderman Shannon cited in *Toronto Daily Star*, July 22, 1948. On tenant families from the clearance area, note Rose, "Regent Park," 151.

25. The Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority (MTHA), *South Regent Park: A Study* (Toronto: MTHA, 1962), 10.

26. Fully 11 percent of those eligible for rehousing in Regent Park North (RPN) by 1953, ninety families in total, were denied entry. Albert Rose described these families as having standards that were "far below the accepted norms." Rose, *Regent Park*, 116. On favoritism in tenant selection, note Fraser, *Fighting Back*, 59. Paul Ringer, a housing relocation officer in both RPN and Regent Park South (RPS) during this period, remarked that Frank Dearlove, RPN manager from 1949 to 1963 and a noted figure in the local Conservative Party, facilitated tenant vacancies in RPN for party members and for City of Toronto workers, hoping to populate the project with upstanding tenants loyal to his idea of conservative citizenship. Paul Ringer, interview with the author, tape recorded, Toronto, November 12, 1996.

27. On social marginalization in public housing in Toronto, see Robert Murdie, "Social Polarization and Public Housing in Canada: A Case Study of the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority," in Frances Frisken, ed., *The Changing Canadian Metropolis: A Public Policy Perspective*, vol. 1 (Toronto, Canada: Institute of Governmental Studies Press and the Canadian Urban Institute, 1994).

28. Toronto Mayor Robert H. Saunders wrote the powerful C. D. Howe, federal Minister of Reconstruction and Supply, saying, "It evidently is possible to purchase much of the property at a most reasonable price." "Letter from Saunders to Howe," in *Papers of the Housing Authority of Toronto* (Toronto: CTA; hereinafter

HAT Papers), RG 28, B, Box 28, File "CMHC Progress Reports 1947-49," August 28, 1947.

29. For the demands of the RPRA see "Presentation of a Deputation from the Regent Park Ratepayers' Association"; *HAT Papers*, May 1947, RG 28, Box 7, File "Miscellaneous 1947-51"; "Deputation Brief of the Regent Park Ratepayers' Association to the Board of Control," *HAT Papers*, April 13, 1949, Box 33, File

"Regent Park Ratepayers' Association 1947-1954"; and Dennis Braithwaite, "City Hall Falls Down on Housing, Labor Says, Cites Regent Park Rents," *Toronto Daily Star*, March 1, 1949, 7.

30. Brushett, "'People and Government Travelling Together,'" 55.

31. Brushett, "'People and Government Travelling Together,'" 55.

32. "Regent Park Files Protest Though Only 26 in 'March,'" *Toronto Daily Star*, April 13, 1949, 3.

33. Interview with Paul Ringer.

34. "Letter from Rose Salson to H. Matson, Secretary of the HAT," *HAT Papers*, September 14, 1951, RG 28, Box 7, File "Miscellaneous 1947-51."

35. "Letter from H. Matson to Charles E. Greenlay, Minister of Labour, Province of Manitoba," in *HAT Papers*, October 26, 1951, RG 28, Box 7, File "Miscellaneous 1947-51." For the 60 percent figure, see Rose, *Regent Park*, 175. On the moral regulation of the poor, see Margaret Little, *No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit: The Moral Regulation of Single Mothers in Ontario, 1920-1997* (Toronto, Canada: Oxford University Press, 1998). The theme of moral regulation, which I integrate with a larger concept of territorial regulation, is developed more fully in my "From Place of Hope to Outcast Space: Territorial Regulation and Tenant Resistance in Regent Park Housing Project, 1949-2001" (Ph.D. diss., Queen's University, 2003).

36. See the photograph "Residents Prepare to March on City Hall, 1968," York University Archives, Toronto Telegram Collection reprinted in this article as Figure 3 and earlier in David Zapparoli, *Regent Park: The Public Experiment in Housing*, 25.

37. "Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, TV News Library #3, Protest Meeting Against OHC," *National Film, TV and Sound Archives* (Ottawa: National Archives of Canada, n.d.).
38. "Representations by Some Members of the North Regent Park Citizens Forum to his Worship the Mayor of Toronto and Members of the Board of Control Concerning the Toronto Housing Authority," in *HAT Papers*, April 17, 1968, RG 28 Series B, Box 11, File "1968 Regent Park Presentations."
39. Paul Hellyer, *Task Force on Housing and Urban Development* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1969), 53-54.
40. David Allen, *Toronto Star*, December 7, 9, 10, 11, 14 and 18, 1968.
41. David Allen, "Regent Park South, 'Living Here is Like Getting Kicked in the Teeth,'" *Toronto Star*, December 18, 1968, 9.
42. "Hellyer Promises Fact Action on Housing," *Toronto Star*, October 1, 1968, 1.
43. David Allen, "One Day in the Life of Regent Park," *Toronto Star*, December 7, 1968, 10; Allen, "Living Here," 9.
44. David Allen, "6,000 Words Later, Regent Park Still Needs Help," *Toronto Star*, December 14, 1968, 7.
- 544 JOURNAL OF URBAN HISTORY / May 2004

p.544

45. Janet Ross, "Jody Phillips Award Presented to Regent Park Students," *Regent Park Community News* (hereafter *RPCN*) 3 (June 1974): 6. After several years of tenant pressure, the authorities finally provided a pool. The money collected in the demonstration was used to set up the Jody Phillips Award, a scholarship presented for one graduating boy and girl in each of the five elementary schools serving Regent Park.
46. *Regent Bell* 1 (May 1969): 1; Regent Park Community Improvement Association (RPCIA), *By the People: Evaluation of Regent Park Community Improvement Association, 1969-1973* (Ottawa, Canada: Department of Health and Welfare, 1973), app. D. The author would like to thank Norma Penner for loaning a copy of this report.
47. *Regent Bell* 1 (May 1969): 2.
48. "RPCIA Grant Application to the Department of National Health and Welfare," in *Papers of the Ontario Housing Corporation* (hereafter *OHC Papers*) (Toronto, Canada: Provincial Archives of Ontario [hereafter PAO]), August 20, 1969, RG 44-19-1, Box 37, File B1-7-2A.
49. RPCIA, *By the People*, 69. On women and neighborhood activism, see Richard Harris, *Democracy in Kingston*, chap. 1.
50. A prominent activist in the Regent Park area recalled that during this period, antiauthoritarian ideas had widespread purchase. George Martell, interview with the author, notes taken, George Martell, January 22, 2002.
51. Canada, *Report of the Federal Task Force on Housing and Urban Redevelopment* (Ottawa, Canada: Queen's Printer), 13.
52. "Editorial," *Regent Bell* 1 (September 1969): 1.
53. *Regent Bell* 1 (October 1969): 3.
54. "Letter from RPCIA to OHC Read at January 29, 1970 March to OHC offices," in *OHC Papers*, January 29, 1970, PAO, RG44-19-1, Box 37, File B1-7-2A.
55. "Intense but Realistic," *Toronto Star*, January 3, 1970, 6. According to Norma Penner, a community organizer who worked for the RPCIA, Murray was actually a mainstream Liberal Party supporter. Interview with Norma Penner, November 14, 1996.
56. "Letter from Jerome Murray to H.W. Suters," in *OHC Papers*, May 1969, PAO, RG44-19-1, Box 10, File B1-7, 27.
57. Written in another context, this quote by David Montgomery is nevertheless apt. Cited in Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours For What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 135.
58. Susan Fish and Michael Dennis, *Programs in Search of a Policy, Low-Income Housing in Canada* (Toronto, Canada: Hakkert, 1972), 174-80.
59. "Letter from H. W. Suters to H. W. Hignett, President, CMHC," in *OHC Papers*, November 10,

1969, PAO, RG 44-19-1, Box 10, File B1-7.

60. "RPCIA Grant Application to the Department of National Health and Welfare," in *OHC Papers*, August 20, 1969.

61. RPCIA, *By the People*, 29, 34.

62. "Memo: Problems Encountered at 605 Whiteside," in *OHC Papers*, n.d., PAO, RG44-19-1, Box 37, File B1-7-2A.

63. "Memofrom D. Davies to B. Meredith," in *OHC Papers*, December 4, 1970, PAO, RG44-19-1, Box 10, File B1-7-2.

64. George Michael Gabor, "Tenant's Associations and Issues in Public Housing," (B.A. thesis, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, 1981), 38.

65. Comments by Don Davis, Chairman of the Ontario Federation of Citizens' Associations, cited in Canadian Council of Social Development (CCSD), *Who Should Manage Public Housing? A Report of a Workshop* (Ottawa, Canada: CCSD, 1970), 14-15. For a description of the "individual problem" approach of

the tenant relation workers' (TRW), see Robert Bradley, "Community Relations: Where People Count," *Ontario Housing* 16 (December 1971): 2-3; and OHC, *Handbook for Housing Authority Members* (Toronto, Canada: Ministry of Housing, 1977).

66. "Brief of the RPCIA to OHC Members Meeting," in *OHC Papers*, October 20, 1969, PAO, RG44-19-1, Box 10, File B1-7-2-A1.

67. "Memo from Robert Bradley to Alvin O'Dell," in *HAT Papers*, February 14, 1967, CTA, RG28, Series B, Box 12, File "1966-1968 Staff." Bradley warned his staff that RPN must be at a "breakeven" position

financially. To keep to the budget, he said, maintenance would be delayed.

68. "Letters from Murray to Suters," in *OHC Papers*, May 1969 and October 13 1969, PAO, RG44-19-1, Box 10, File B1-7, 27.

p.545

69. John Sewell's recollections of the demonstration in Gabor, "Tenant's Associations," 41.

70. "Letter from RPCIA to OHC, Read at the January 29, 1970 March to OHC Offices," in *OHC Papers*, January 29, 1970, PAO, RG44-19-1, Box 37, File B1-7-2A.

71. "Memo from Riggs to G. S. Cattermole, Director, Operations Branch (Metro), OHC," February 24, 1970; and "Letter from Riggs to Murray," in *OHC Papers*, March 23, 1970, PAO, RG44-19-1, Box 37, File B1-7-2A, 24. See also in this file "Minutes of a Meeting between RPCIA and OHC," March 9, 1970.

72. RPCIA, *By the People*, 34.

73. The quotes come from the debate that raged in the pages of the RPCIA newspaper. *Regent Bell* 1, nos. 9, 10, 11 (January-February 1970).

74. "Letter from Brenda Gorman to L. Heinemann, Principal Program Officer, Demonstrations, Welfare Grants Division, Department of National Health and Welfare," in *OHC Papers*, May 27, 1970, PAO, RG44-19-1, Box 37, File B1-7-2A.

75. RPCIA, *By the People*, 40.

76. Norma Penner, interview with the author, tape recorded, Toronto, November 14, 1996. See also the interview with Bud and Margaret McCormick in Zapparoli, *Regent Park: The Public Experiment*, 41-47.

77. "Tenant Associations in Metro Toronto, Memo from B. Meredith, OHC, Community Relations to L. Schipper, Supervisor, Community Relations Branch, East Region," in *OHC Papers*, December 2, 1970, PAO, RG44-19-1, Box 37, File B1-7-2.

78. Gabor, "Tenant's Associations," 2-3.

79. *Guerrilla*, no. 25 (May 1971): 3. For more information on welfare rights and tenants' organizing in Toronto, see George Ford and Steven Langdon, "Just Society Movement," *Canadian Dimension* 7 (June-July 1970): 19-23. See also "How the Poor Are Upsetting the Welfare Applicant," *Chatelaine* (February 1971): 164-67.

80. Humphrey Carver and Alison Hopwood, *Rents for Regent Park: A Rent-scale System for a Public Housing Project* (Toronto, Canada: Civic Advisory Council of Toronto, 1947).

81. Carver and Hopwood, *Rents for Regent Park*, 9-10.

82. Sewell, *Houses and Homes*, 18; J. D. Hulchanski, *The Use of Housing Expenditure-to-Income Ratios: Origins, Evolution and Implications* (Toronto, Canada: Ontario Human Rights Commission, Background Paper 2, 1994).
83. The Toronto Housing Authority, *A Review of Progress, 1947-1964* (Toronto: City of Toronto, 1965), 9-10.
84. Homer Borland, "Rent to Income Formula for Public Housing," *Ontario Housing* 15 (1970): 19. The quote is from Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1875) (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970), 17.
85. "Letter from F.W. Challoner to H.W. Suters," in *OHC Papers*, November 13, 1967, PAO, RG44-19-1, Box 10, File B1-20-1.
86. "Lose Last Luxury, If Regent Rents Up," *Toronto Star*, April 26, 1963, 31; "Memo from Robert Bradley to Gordon Frizelle," in *HAT Papers*, February 26, 1965, CTA, RG 28, Series B, Box 12, File "1964-166 Staff"; Newspaper clipping from the *Toronto Star*, n.d., probably November 1961. For details on evictions in RPN in the same year, see "Analysis of Vacancies from January 1, 1961 to May 1, 1961 Inclusive, RPN," in *HAT Papers*, CTA, RG 28, Series B, Box 25, File "1957-1966 Regent Park North."
87. "Letter from RPCIA to H. W. Suters," in *OHC Papers*, May 12, 1969, PAO, RG44-19-1, Box 10, File B1-7-2A1.
88. "Letter from H.W. Suters to E. J. Whaley, Deputy Managing Director, OHC," in *OHC Papers*, June 4, 1969, PAO, RG44-19-1, Box 10, File B1-7-2A1.
89. RPCIA Brief in RPCIA, *By the People*, app. G, 1. As James Struthers has meticulously detailed, welfare payments in Ontario were always below subsistence levels. *The Limits of Affluence: Welfare in Ontario, 1920-1970* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1994).
90. For the most poignant and well known, see Fish and Dennis, *Programs*, 179-80.
91. "New Rent Scale: Opportunity to Earn Additional Money Without Paying Higher Rent," *Ontario Housing* 15 (Summer 1970): 5, 20. A 1973 brief by an Ontario government ministry confirmed RPCIA's claim that tenants who relied on social assistance, especially mother-led families and nonattached single elderly people, spent a much higher proportion of their incomes on housing than did those employed. "Housing and Social Policy," Brief prepared by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) for the Advisory Task Force on Housing, 1973 (Toronto, Canada: MCSS, 1973).
92. RPCIA, *A New Deal for Ontario Housing Tenants* (Toronto, Canada: RPCIA, 1972), 6.
93. RPCIA, *A New Deal*, 2.

p.546

94. Neil Tanner, "From the Desk of the President," *RPCN* 1 (February 1973): 2; "FOHRA Rent Brief Summary," in *OHC Papers*, n.d., PAO, RG44-19-1 Box 81, File B1-7-2.
95. "Rent Scale to be Reviewed—Robert Welch," *RPCN* 2 (November 1973): 1.
96. CMHC, *Compendium of Rent to Income Scales in Use in Public Housing and Rent Supplement Programmes in Canada* (Ottawa, Canada: CMHC, 1980), 22.
97. RPCIA, *By the People*, 67-73. RPCIA coordinators Norma Penner (1970-1973) and Simon Mielniczuk (1973-1976) both recalled that an impressive number of tenants got involved with the RPCIA. Penner stated that activists gained the self-confidence needed to effect change. Simon Mielniczuk, letter to the author, January 16, 2002, and interview with Norma Penner.
98. RPCIA, *By the People*, 46. A useful discussion of the differences and intersections of the terms *redistribution* and *recognition* in the context of social movements can be found in Rob Shields, "Culture and the Economy of Cities," *European Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 6, no. 4 (1999): 1-9.
99. CCSD, *Who Should Manage Public Housing?*, 1.
100. Canadian Conference on Housing, "Recommendations of the Conference," in Michael Wheeler, ed., *The Right to Housing* (Montreal, Canada: Harvest House, 1969), 331-34.
101. CMHC Internal Memo cited in Fish and Dennis, *Programs*, 180.
102. "CRW Reflects on Public Housing Career," *Chez News* (December 1975): 6-7. This was the journal

- of employees of OHC and the Ontario Ministry of Housing.
103. Letter from Simon Mielniczuk to author, February 2, 2002.
 104. RPCIA, *By the People*, 88. Author's emphasis.
 105. RPCIA, *By the People*, 68.
 106. RPCIA, "A Proposal for Tenant Participation in Management," Submitted to the board of directors, OHC, November 2, 1973, found in RPCIA, *By the People*, app. J.
 107. Harold Jackman, "Rise Up Regent Parkers," *RPCN* 3 (June 1974): 5.
 108. "New Unit Reps Elected," *RPCN* 1 (May 1972): 6.
 109. Dr. V. Pande, "Management Proposal to Reach OHC Board," *RPCN* 2 (October 1973): 1; RPCIA, "A Proposal for Tenant Participation"; Dr. V. Pande, "Tenants Participation in Management Proposed," *RPCN* 2 (June 1973): 2. For OHC's position, see "Letter from H. E. Stimpson, Director, Housing Operations (Metro) to J. B. S. Rose, Divisional Director, Property Management (Metro)," in *OHC Papers*, November 2, 1973, PAO, RG44-19-1, Box 81, File B1-7-2A.
 110. Pande, "Management Proposal to reach OHC Board," 2; RPCIA, *By the People*, 112.
 111. "Letter from H. E. Stimpson, Director, Housing Operations (Metro) to J. B. S. Rose, Divisional Director, Property Management (Metro)," November 2, 1973.
 112. "Tenants Participation," 2.
 113. For the details, see "OHC & RPCIA Sign Contract," *RPCN* 3 (June 1974): 1.
 114. "Tenants Help to Manage Canada's Oldest Project," *Ontario Housing* 19 (April-May 1975): 10.
 115. Harold Jackman, "Tenant Management Report," *RPCN* 4 (April 1975): 2.
 116. Harold Jackman, "Tenant Management," *RPCN* 5 (April 1976): 2.
 117. "RPCIA Signs Contract with OHC," *RPCN* 5 (May 1976): 1; "Management Responsibilities Increase for Regent Park Tenants," *Ontario Housing* 20 (May-June 1976): 10-11.
 118. "Management Responsibilities," 10.
 119. "Election Sept. 15," *RPCN* 5 (September 1976): 1.
 120. See Harold Jackman's comments in "Tenants Vow to Fight Public Housing Stigma," *Toronto Star*, February 10, 1977, 14.
 121. See the special issue of the *RPCN*, "RPCIA Fights OHC," 7 (July 1978): 1-4.
 122. For instance, see "New Contract," *RPCN* 6 (October 1977): 1.
 123. The following is based on the special issue of the *RPCN* 7 (July 1978).
 124. See "OHC Cancels Tenant Program Following Dispute with Employees" *Seven News*, September 9, 1978.
 125. Sandra Langille, "Regent: Get Your Act Together," *Seven News*, October 7, 1978, 3.
 126. Simon Mielniczuk, letter to the author, February 2, 2002.
 127. Cited in "OHC Cancels Tenant Program," 1.
 128. Marcuse, "Housing Movements," 79.
 129. On this question in the U.S. context, see Peter Dreier, "Labor's Love Lost? Rebuilding Unions' Involvement in Federal Housing Policy," *Housing Policy Debate* 11, no. 2 (2000): 327-92.
 130. Marcuse, "Housing Movements," 79. In recent years, some of the themes dealt with by the RPCIA in the 1970s have been taken up again. In 2001, for example, the Toronto Community Housing Corporation

p.547

(now responsible for all publicly subsidized housing in the city) introduced elements of participatory budgeting among social housing projects. See Toronto Social Housing Connections Web site, http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/toronto_housing/connections.htm (January 3, 2003).

131. Marilyn Gittell, *Limits to Citizen Participation: The Decline of Community Organizations* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1980), 44; cited in Randy Stoecker, "The Community Development Corporation Model of Urban Redevelopment: A Critique and an Alternative," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 19 (1997): 8. For a more successful version of tenant management initiatives in the 1980s, note Jacqueline Leavitt and Susan Saegart, *From Abandonment to Hope: Community Households in Harlem* (New York: Columbia University Press

1990).

132. See Andy Friedman, "Responsible Autonomy versus Direct Control over the Labour Process," *Capital and Class* 1 (1977): 43-57. On this management strategy in the British state housing context, note Cliff Hague, "The Development and Politics of Tenant Participation in British Council Housing," *Housing Studies* 5, no. 4 (1990): 242-56.

133. Cited in "Management Responsibilities," 11.

134. Metropolitan Toronto Planning Department, *Assisted Housing Study* (Toronto, Canada: Metropolitan Toronto Planning Department, 1977), tables T.22.1-T.24.

135. J. B. S. Rose, "Change to Rent Scale?" *RPCN* 1 (June 1972): 5.

136. On cuts to housing and the welfare state in general, see David Hulchanski and Glen Drover, "Housing Subsidies in a Period of Restraint: The Canadian Experience," in W. van Vliet--., ed., *Housing Markets and Policies Under Fiscal Austerity* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987); Alan Sears, "The 'Lean' State and Capitalist Restructuring: Towards a Theoretical Account," *Studies in Political Economy* 60 (Summer 1999):

91-114.

137. While outside the scope of this article, it is worthwhile noting that in the 1970s, the RPCIA also worked successfully to implement a project-based Community Services Unit and Community Health Centre,

which are still considered national models of community-based social service and medical care. See the Regent Park Community Health Centre Web site, <http://www.regentparkchc.org> (October 24, 2002).

Sean Purdy, Ph.D., is the Society of Fellows Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Humanities, Temple University. He is currently working on a comparative study of "outcast spaces" in Canada, the United States, and Brazil. He can be reached at sean_purdy1966@yahoo.ca.