



Before we began

Context – the 1960's

The publication of “Blueprint for Survival” by the Ecologist in January 1972 did not come out of nowhere. In many ways, it was the summation and bringing together of strands that had developed throughout the 1960s.

The generation coming of age in the sixties were too young to have fought in the world war with its immediate threat from bombs, bullets and rockets.

Instead their existential nightmares were less tangible – the threat of nuclear annihilation was a constant background, coming vividly to the foreground for a week in 1962.

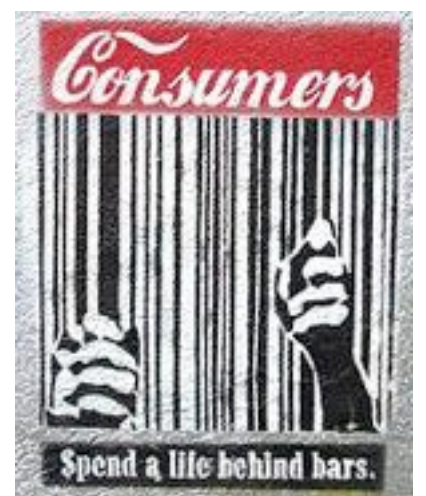
The human population explosion brought the implications of exponential growth into stark relief.



The consequences of uncontrolled pesticide use, the potential for a new ice age, the whispered possibility of planetary warming, the rising exponential tide of garbage all threatened future problems.



At the same time, at least for western kids, the promise of techno-utopia and the flood of consumer goods created demand for satisfaction now.



The MAD doctrine seemed to work, new technologies seemed to solve current problems – we wanted it all now, and not to have to be satisfied with less like our parents...

War, authoritarian control and respect were all part of the old world.

*“Your sons and your daughters are beyond your command,
Your old road is rapidly aging.*

Please get out of the new one if you can't lend a hand...”

Books that Informed Us

A selection of influential books published before 1973. Still as relevant today as when they were first published.

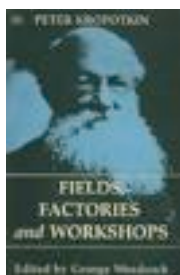


Walden

by Henry David Thoreau
1854

News From Nowhere

by William Morris
1891



Fields, Factories and Workshops

by Petr Alekseevich Kropotkin
1898

The Fat of the Land

by John Seymour
1961

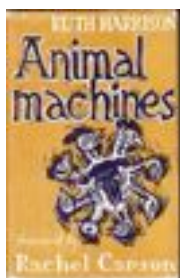


Our Synthetic Environment

by Murray Bookchin
1962

Silent Spring

by Rachel Carson
1962

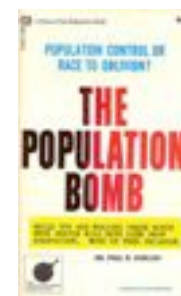


Animal Machines

by Ruth Harrison
1964

The Population Bomb

by Paul Ehrlich
1968

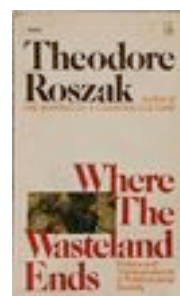
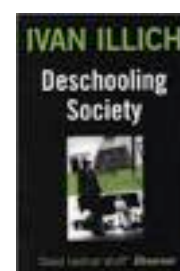


The Greening of America

by Charles A Reich
1970

De-schooling Society

by Ivan Illich
1971



Where the Wasteland Ends

by Theodore Roszak
1972

The Limits to Growth

by Meadows, Meadows,
Jørgen and Behrens.
1972



Of course, this is just a selection. Many more are listed on the Green-History.uk website and if something you think was influential published before 1973 is not listed there then please suggest it.

If you have not read any of these, then you should make a start with one of them. All are readily available very cheap through online secondhand booksellers.

Peace and War



The Bomb dominated life. The Wall divided us.

People sought to reject the madness



Hope died and conflict thrived

The Cuban Crisis terrified the world.



Images like these radicalised some



Protest erupted, confrontation ensued



Progressive and radical leaders were gunned down

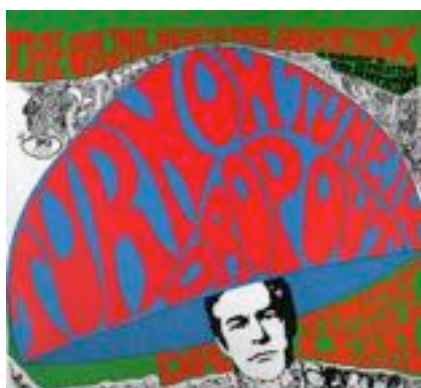
Counter-Culture and Revolution



On the streets in Prague and Paris revolution was in the air.



In Chicago the Democratic Convention was surrounded by rioters.
At Kent State University the National Guard shot dead four protesting students.
Meanwhile in the UK the powder keg of Irish politics was starting to explode.



It wasn't simply consumerism or revolution, drop-out or conform. Civil rights, women's lib, the peace movement all had a political dimension but none of them seriously challenged the growth paradigm or had an environmental agenda.



Ecology was in the air, but not yet in politics.