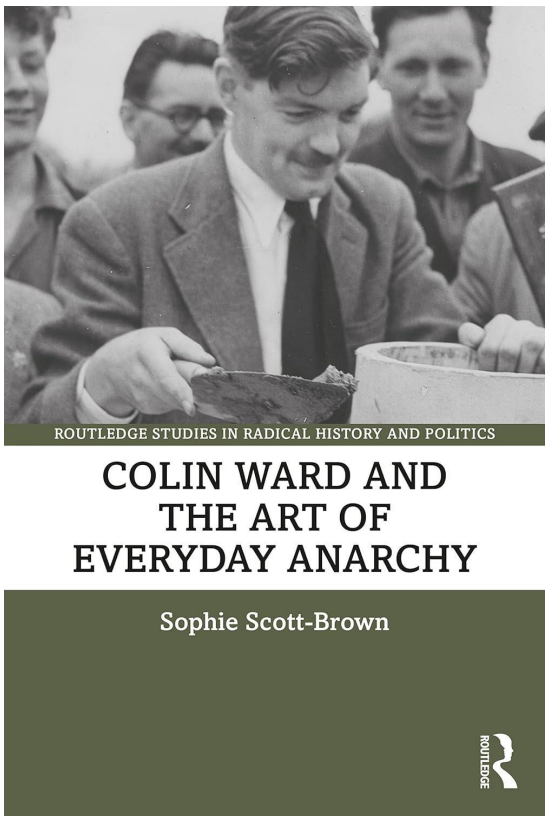
Colin Ward and the Art of Everyday Anarchy

Sophie Scott-Brown



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Contents

Colin Ward and the Art of Everyday Anarchy is the first full account of Ward's life and work. Drawing on unseen archival sources, as well as oral interviews, it excavates the worlds and words of his anarchist thought, illuminating his methods and charting the legacies of his enduring influence.

Colin Ward (1924—2010) was the most prominent British writer on anarchism in the 20th century. As a radical journalist, later author, he applied his distinctive anarchist principles to all aspects of community life including the built environment, education, and public policy. His thought was subtle, universal in aspiration, international in implication, but, at the same time, deeply rooted in the local and the everyday. Underlying the breadth of his interests was one simple principle: freedom was always a social activity.

This book will be of interest to students, scholars, and general readers with an interest in anarchism, social movements, and the history of radical ideas in contemporary Britain.

Sophie Scott-Brown is a Lecturer in the Humanities at the University of East Anglia, UK.

This book is for my parents, Lesley (teacher) and Steven (planner), and partner Matt (anarchist). With love.

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Abbreviations

Archival Collections

CWP	Colin Ward Papers, International Institute of Social History
TGP	Tony Gibson Papers, International Institute of Social History
VRP	Vernon Richards Papers, International Institute of Social History

Institutions/Organisations/Associations

FP/G	Freedom Press/Group
GAG	Glasgow Anarchist Group
LAG	London Anarchist Group
LSE	London School of Economics
PM	Peace Movement
TCPA	Town and Country Planning Association
C/USC	Council (of)/Urban Studies Centres

Magazines, Journals, Periodicals

A	*Anarchy*
AJ	*Architect's Journal*
BEE	*Bulletin of Environmental Education*
NS	*New Society*
NSS	*New Statesman and Society*
SW	*Spain and the World*
TPCJ	*Town and Country Planning Journal*
WC	*War Commentary*

Introduction

For Colin Ward, anarchy was ordinary, everywhere, and always in action. It happened on city streets, allotments, and around kitchen tables, in village halls, town squares, and pub snugs. It went about its business quietly, beneath and beyond official notice. Anarchists were anyone. Sensible, modest, and resourceful people without a bomb between them. They built houses, grew food, and ran workshops. When a thing needed doing, they banded together but parted their ways when done.

Beneath this calm, orderly facade lay startling claims. Schooling is organised mass ignorance. Centralised welfare is coercion by stealth. Ramshackle shanty towns contain more human dignity than the palatial creations of feted architects. For all that these ran counter to accepted ideas of social progress, in Ward's hands they seemed intuitive, like remembering something already known and just briefly forgot. Any reader of sound judgement and good character was hard pushed to object. And yet this was *anarchism*, the ideology defined, surely, by *disorder* and *destruction*. What had this to do with 'common sense'?

This book explores Ward and his everyday anarchism. Focusing on his role as a propagandist, a communicator of anarchist ideas, it examines how he crafted a 'vernacular' anarchism and transformed the impossible dream into a daily routine.

Talking Colin Ward

Ward was born in 1924, in Wanstead, Greater London. An unwilling schoolboy at Ilford County High School (ICHS), he left formal education at 15, becoming first an assistant building surveyor, later an architect's assistant for Sidney Caulfield, the last living member of the Arts and Crafts generation. Conscripted in 1942, he was posted to Scotland, where he encountered the Glaswegian anarchists, began contributing to *War Commentary* (WC), the newspaper of the Freedom Press (FP), and stood as a witness for the prosecution in the FP trial (April 1944). From there, his relationship with the FP group flourished, and on demobilisation, he became an FP editor and writer for *Freedom* (the title *War Commentary* was abandoned after 1945), most notably through his column 'People and Ideas', at the same time as pursuing a parallel career in architecture.

In 1961, Ward launched *Anarchy: A Journal of Anarchist Ideas*, a monthly journal which, while remaining under FP's umbrella, pursued a distinctive political project, exploring anarchism across the fields of education, housing, work, and crime. Through *Anarchy*, thinkers such as Murray Bookchin (writing as Lewis Herber) and Paul Goodman became more widely known amongst a British radical readership. After a decade at the editorial helm, in 1971 he moved on, taking up a post as Education Officer for the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) sparking another creative period in environmental education, during which time he began to write and publish book-length works, alongside articles. From 1979, Ward, now living in rural Suffolk, set-

tled into life as a self-employed author, generating an extraordinary output of more than 30 collaborative and sole-authored books until his death in 2010.

The characteristic features of his anarchism are generally agreed upon: pacifist, gradualist, and, above all, practical. In politics he championed decentralisation, federation, and localism; in society, mutual aid and voluntarism; in economics, human need. He called for workers' control in industry, citizens' control in planning, dwellers' control in housing, and students' control in education. For some, he represented the shift from 19th-century classical anarchism to the so-called 'new anarchism'[1] which, with its increased concern for culture and identity, practice, and prefiguration, became a dominant strand in the 1960s counterculture. 'New anarchism', with its stress on methods, functioned more as an adjective for describing an 'ethics of practice' than as a proper noun for a formal movement.[2] As Stuart White observed, adopting such a flexible stance allowed Ward to reconcile the social and individualist strands of the movement and bring anarchism further into mainstream consciousness.[3]

Others, by contrast, saw 'new anarchism' as only the latest incarnation of a pre-existing 'pacifist-spiritualist' tradition, rather than a specifically mid-century phenomenon, which had always stressed non-violent forms of direct action and individual transformation.[4] From the perspective of more ardently inclined revolutionaries, this amounted to reformism, a critique repeatedly levelled at Ward by several of his contemporaries.[5] For these critics, working within and through existing social structures (or retreating from them altogether) only deferred permanent transformation indefinitely. Tactics for perpetual resistance or selfimprovement did not amount to a systematic revolutionary strategy. Further, Ward's affectionate case studies of grassroots populism downplayed the problematic dimensions of voluntary association in hierarchical societies (vigilante groups, for example, are voluntary), nor did they indicate how isolated examples might stimulate more comprehensive change.[6]

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[1] David Goodway, 'Colin Ward', in Goodway, *Anarchist Seeds Beneath the Snow: Left Libertarian Thought from William Morris to Colin Ward* (Oakland: PM Press, 2012), 309—325; Clarissa Honeywell, 'Colin Ward and the Future of British Anarchism', in Honeywell, *A British Anarchist Tradition* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011); Ken Worpole, *Richer Futures* (London: Earthscan Books, 1999); Chris Wilbert and Damien White, *Autonomy, Solidarity, Possibility: The Colin Ward Reader* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2011), vii—xxx; Carl Levy, *Colin Ward: Life, Thought, Times* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2013); Jeff Shantz and Dana Williams, *Anarchy and Society: Reflections of Anarchist Sociology* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 40—50; Ruth Kinna, *The Government of No One* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2019); BJ Pauli, 'The New Anarchism in Britain and the US: Towards a Richer Understanding of Post War Anarchism', *The Journal of Political Ideologies*, 20:2 (2015), 134–155.

[2] Dave Neal, 'Anarchism: Ideology or Methodology', (1997), https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/dave-neal-anarchism-ideology-or-methodology [retrieved April 2021]; See David Graeber, 'The New Anarchists', 13 Jan/Feb (2002), @@@[[https://newleftreview.org][https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii13/articles/david-graeber-the-new-anarchists@@@[[https://newleftreview.org][[last accessed June 2021]; David Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2004); Uri Gordon, *Anarchy Alive* (London: Pluto Press, 2007).

[3] Stuart White, 'Making Anarchism Respectable? The Social Philosophy of Colin Ward', *The Journal of Political Ideologies*, 12:1 (2007), 11–28; 'Social Anarchism, Lifestyle Anarchism, and the Anarchism of Colin Ward', in Carl Levy, ed., *Colin Ward: Life, Times, Thought* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2014), 116–133. See also: Murray Bookchin, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: The Unbridgeable Chasm* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 1995).

[4] Wayne Price, 'The Two Main Trends in Anarchism', 6 July 2009, https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/wayne-price-the-two-main-trends-in-anarchism [last accessed June 2021].

[5] Albert Meltzer, *I Couldn't Paint Golden Angels: Sixty Years of Commonplace Life and Anarchist Agitation* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 1996); *The Anarchists In London 1935—1955* (Sanday: Cienfuegos Press, 1976). See also Alfredo Bonanno quoted in Ruth Kinna, *The Government of No One*, 165–166; Murray Bookchin quoted in David Goodway, 'Preface', in Goodway and Colin Ward, eds., *Talking Anarchy* (Oakland: PM Press, 2014), ix-x.

[6] Ruth Kinna, *The Government of No One*, 166.

Ward's relationship to the 1960s counterculture was also not straightforward. Although certainly conversant with it, he could not, as Goodman in America, be considered its forefather. There were significant differences between his invocations of 'everyday life' as a sphere of meaningful political action and the 'personal politics' of, for example, feminist activists. Where he laid much stock in invoking 'common sense', the latter sought to challenge, and disrupt, the very notion of it. He was equally distant from the cultural critique advanced through later youth-orientated movements: punk, the rave scene, or the militant components of the green movement.[7] His favourite characters, allotmenteers, art teachers, or housing co-operativists, may have been on the fringes of society but they were not social *outsiders*; if anything they were quite the reverse.

Taking this point further, in the wake of so-called post-anarchism,[8] with its evermore refined cultural sensitivities, Ward and other thinkers of his generation retained a relatively unproblematic view of the universal human subject. Although accepting conflict as an inevitable, even creative, part of an authentic democracy, and embracing liberation in all its guises on principle, the specific barriers to full participation encountered by many social cohorts — such as women, ethnic minorities, or the LGBTQ+ community — were never examined in close detail. His could-be anarchists were generally white, English, lower- middle-class men (and occasionally their wives). He accepted this, perhaps too easily; 'anarchists are products of their times', he told an interviewer when asked about the attitudes towards women in the anarchist movement of his youth.[9] Of course, this was true, and, in his case, the awareness of the present and concern to write anarchism into it was what made him so interesting; nevertheless, it meant certain limits.

Locating Ward's Anarchism

Ward identified as a social anarchist which, situated at the intersection of liberalism and socialism, considers social equality as the necessary pre-condition for individual liberty. Unlike other attempted syntheses, such as social democracy, or even strains of libertarian socialism, which still entertain some role for governance, anarchists are distinguished by maintaining that only through the complete abolition of all permanent authoritative structures could such a reconciliation be either logically or practically possible.

Ward identified most with Pyotr Peter Kropotkin (1842—1921),[10] describing his work as an 'updating footnote' to the Russian's main ideas.[11] As Kropotkin co-founded *Freedom* in 1886, it was inevitable that generations of its editors took him for their major influence. In essence, Kropotkin's anarchism took humans to be fundamentally social beings whose individuality was most enriched through the highest development of their capacity for voluntary association. Throughout history, however, this was perpetually thwarted by an opposing political or

[7] George McKay, *Senseless Acts of Beauty: Cultures of Resistance since the Sixties* (London: Verso, 1996).

[8] See Todd May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995); Lewis Call, *Postmodern Anarchism* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2002); Saul Newman, *The Politics of Post Anarchism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

[9] Tony Gibson, 'Interview with Colin Ward (1992)', Tony Gibson Papers (TGP)/ ARCH00515, International Institute of Social History (IISH).

[10] Richard Boston, 'Interview with Anarchists', in Colin Ward, ed., *A Decade of Anarchy (1961–1970)* (London: Freedom Press, 1987), 11–23.

[11] Colin Ward, *Anarchy in Action* (London: Freedom Press, [1973] 2008), 10.

authoritarian tendency (the state) which, given its characteristic excess of power, was always the stronger. Only with the destruction of all divisive political and economic structures could the social instinct realise its fullest expression. For Kropotkin, the optimum social model for achieving this end was communism.[12]

Beyond this, it gets harder to specify. There were several possible 'Kropotkins' one could update dependent on inclination: the revolutionary-strategist,[13] the natural(ist)-philosopher,[14] or the observer-activist.[15] Ward favoured the third and took bits from the others to taste, supplementing this with nuggets gleaned from other classical anarchist thinkers. He found Pierre Joseph Proudhon's ideas of limited property ownership, small-scale enterprise, and gradualist transformation more prudent for his times than revolutionary communism.[16] William Godwin's attitude of unconditional respect for children's individuality[17] meant more to him than any radical school or curricula design (especially when leavened by the penetrating compassion of Mary Wollstonecraft).[18]

In other respects, Ward belonged as much to an English radical tradition as to a strictly 'Anarchist' one, especially if the former is viewed as a political *style* rather than a defined ideology. He relished outspoken independence, those maverick individuals who stubbornly followed their conscience when it swam against the tide. Amongst those singled out with affection were architect William Richard Lethaby who transformed art and design education, Ebenezer Howard of the Garden City Movement, Patrick Geddes the champion of regional planning, AS Neill of Summerhill school, Dora Russell of Beacon Hill,[19] George Orwell, of course, and alongside him, the more obscure novelist and journalist Edward Hyams.[20]

Certainly, he considered himself in this light, describing to a bemused editor how he was the 'archetype of the English Radical with no academic or theoretical background, who, in a maddening unsystematic way will draw what is useful to me from every possible source'.[21] That said, the Englishness of this tradition was never an especially conscious concern for him. Whilst localism was important for inspiring commitment, grounding ideals in context, and channelling

[12] There is a growing contemporary literature on Kropotkin that covers in life and thought in detail. See: Ian McKay, 'Introduction', in Peter Kropotkin and Ian McKay, eds., *Modern Science and Anarchism* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2018); Brian Morris, *Kropotkin: The Politics of Community* (Oakland: PM Press, 2018); Ruth Kinna, *Peter Kropotkin: Reviewing the Classical Anarchist Tradition* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016); Matthew S. Adams, *Kropotkin, Read and the Intellectual History of British Anarchism: Between Reason and Romanticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[13] Peter Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (London: Houghton Mifflin, 1899); *The Conquest of Bread* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2015 [1892]).

[14] Peter Kropotkin, *Modern Science and Anarchism* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2018 [1904]); *Ethics: Their Origin and Development* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1992 [1921]).

[15] Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid* (New York: Dover Publications, 2006 [1902]); *Fields, Factories, and Workshops* (London: Freedom Press, [1898] 1985).

[16] Carissa Honeywell, 'Colin Ward: Anarchism and Social Policy', in *Colin Ward: Life, Times, Thought,* 88—105. See also Colin Ward, *When We Build Again* (London: Pluto Press, 1985), 111–112.

[17] William Godwin, 'Essay VIII: Of the Happiness of Youth', in Godwin, *The Enquirer: Reflections on Education, Manners and Literature* (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, 1797), 65–75.

[18] Colin Ward, 'William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft', in Ward, *Influences* (Bidesford: Resurgence Books, 1991), 13–48.

[19] Dora Russell was his mother-in-law but his admiration predated meeting her daughter Harriet Unwin.

[20] Colin Ward, 'The Writer and His Sources', *Freedom*, 2 September 1956; 'Sophisticated Peasant: A Note of the Writings of Edward Hyams', *Freedom*, 20 August 1955.

[21] Colin Ward to Robert Young, 7 June 1986, 'Letters 1980–89', Colin Ward Papers (CWP)/ARCH03180, IISH.

action into a 'human scale' framework, he was not patriotic in the manner of Orwell. Nor did he consider the dissenting spirit a unique national product but found it with equal vigour across European thinkers, in architects Giancarlo di Carlo and Walter Segal, philosophers Martin Buber and Isaiah Berlin,[22] and, from North America, in Mark Twain and Goodman.

Another formative but complex influence on him was the British Labour movement, especially the 'ethical socialist' strand of it.[23] Labour was the family politics with both parents Party members. During the interwar years, Labour exercised considerable influence in the Barking and Dagenham area (where his father worked for most of his life) by emphasising a local, 'domestic' agenda: social welfare, education, housing.[24] Following the war, as a *Freedom* writer he was naturally critical of Parliamentary Labour and the welfare state but remained consistently sympathetic to figures like GDH Cole.[25] He had respect for the ethos of the *early* Fabian society, in particular their commitment to detailed research and gradual change through cultural permeation,[26] and considered this legacy continued by the 'new social investigators' (including Richard Titmuss, Peter Townsend, Michael Young, John Vaizey, and Barbara Wootton).[27] Late in life he confessed he remained 'very much a Labour man at heart'.[28] In this sense, anarchism, far from displacing the Labour values of his youth (equality and social justice) only substantiated them more fully.

Kropotkin, however, remained the most consistent focal point for his thought perhaps because, across the Russian's voluminous writings, all the various threads of his interests came together. But in resuming his ideas, Ward revised them. Naturally, the Russian was a man of his time and drew on the dominant theories and rhetorical habits appropriate to them. His credibility as an intellectual, and appeal as an activist, would have been undermined if he had not. As with many of the influential intellectuals of the age, he was of a synthesising mindset, convinced of accumulative progress through reason aided by the flourishing of science.[29] He could also take the possibility of total social revolution as entirely plausible, even inevitable.

By the turn of the century, that confidence had fractured as the impact of Darwin in the natural sciences, Nietzsche in philosophy, and Freud in psychology was fully absorbed. Amongst the anarchists, many now felt Kropotkin relied too heavily on science, even conflating the scientific 'is' with the ethical 'ought'.[30] Errico Malatesta argued that while scientific knowledge could be

[22] Carissa Honeywell, 'Colin Ward and the Future of British Anarchism', in *The British Anarchist Tradition*, 133–174.

[23] See Norman Dennis and AH Halsey, *English Ethical Socialism: Thomas More to R.H. Tawney* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); Mark Bevir, *The Making of British Socialism* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011), 215–316.

[24] Matthew Worley, *Labour Inside the Gate: A History of the British Labour Party between the Wars* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 199.

[25] Colin Ward, 'GDH Cole Tribute', *Freedom*, 24 January 1959. See also David Goodway, 'Introduction', in GDH Cole and Goodway, eds., *Towards a Libertarian Socialism* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2021), 27–28.

[26] Colin Ward, 'Forum on Fabianism', *Anarchy*, 8 (1961); cf. with GDH Cole, 'What Next? Anarchists or Bureaucrats?', *Fabian Journal*, 1954. This admiration was based solely on the principles that informed the original formation of the Fabian Society, as an independent group conducting research into contemporary social problems and formulating solutions accordingly. He was *not* necessarily a fan of the solutions the Society came up with not least because in later years this tended to emphasise the role of the state.

[27] Colin Ward, 'The New Social Investigators', *Freedom*, 10 September 1960.

[28] Tony Gibson, 'Colin Ward Interview'.

[29] Matthew S. Adams, *Kropotkin, Read and the Intellectual History of British Anarchism*, 51–62; Ruth Kinna, *Peter Kropotkin*, 127–155.

[30] Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (London: Fontana Press, 1993), 337.

useful it was neither moral nor stable. It could 'prove' the contrary as much as the case.[31] The notion that a single revolution could, let alone would, destroy the state also looked naive. German philosopher Gustav Landauer addressed the problem by recasting the state as 'a certain way of people relating to one another' which could be destroyed through acting differently.[32] This shift acknowledged more fully the role of both individual and collective psychology in the production of power, something which had been, if not absent, underplayed in Kropotkin's system, especially with regards to the former. His individuals were often 'figures in a landscape', producing food, building houses, and carrying out scientific research with relatively few existential musings.

Writing in the early 19th century, British anarchist Herbert Read deepened his interest in anarchism's psychological dimensions.[33] Anarchism conceived as a form of intimate human self-knowledge, related to one's own experience and applied to one's own fields of interest, meant that the urgency of violent revolution, along with the complex webs of factions, federations, and organisations attendant upon it, diminished in importance compared to the more private work of individual mind change. Not all welcomed this move sensing bourgeois elitism and the gateway to an increasingly depoliticised 'lifestyle anarchism'. Nevertheless, such an expansion was crucial for cultivating a wider audience for anarchist ideas.

For Ward, coming of political age later still, during the Second World War and the post-war, Cold War decades, revolution, as a single cataclysmic event, looked both unlikely and undesirable. Nor did the socialist movement appear to be the prime vehicle through which revolution would be realised. This was a period of dramatic social transformation during which Britain experienced the collapse of empire and withering of its imperial power, the consolidation of the welfare state, the rise of America as a global power, and the uncertainties of the

Cold War. Austerity was followed by an 'age of affluence', fuelled by unprecedented rates of consumption, huge technological advances in industrial production, transport, and mass media, the decline in manufacturing, and growth of service industry informing and informed by the expansion of education and higher education, generating an enlarged student body and a swelling stratum of 'professional' jobs.

Politically, the left seemed weary and directionless. Following the Khrushchev revelations and invasion of Hungary in 1956, the great Soviet experiment was, for many, discredited. In the British Labour Party, the aspirations of social democracy dwindled into welfarism and bureaucracy.[34] By 1960, American sociologist Daniel Bell declared 'the end of ideology' and the effective triumph of liberal capitalism. Resistance, he predicted, would become ever more piecemeal, impermanent, and parochial.[35] As Jimmy Porter notoriously wailed, there seemed no more brave causes left, a lament reflected in the rise of the cultural anti-hero (like Porter) whose attempts at trying to get

[31] Errico Malatesta and Vernon Richards, eds., *The Life and Times of Errico Malatesta* (Oakland: PM Press, 2015), 31–38.

[32] Gustav Landauer, 'Weak Statesman, Weakexsr People', in Landauer and Gabriel Kuhn, eds., *Revolution and Other Writings* (Edinburgh: PM Press, 2010), 214.

[33] Herbert Read and David Goodway, eds., *One Man Manifesto* (London: Freedom Press, 1994), 1–26; Carissa Honeywell, 'Herbert Read: Anarchism and Modernity', in *The British Anarchist Tradition*, 29–79; Matthew S. Adams, 'The Reluctant System Builder', *Kropotkin, Read and the Intellectual History of Anarchism*, 62–74; David Goodway, 'Herbert Read', in *Anarchist Seeds Beneath the Snow*, 175–201.

[34] Carissa Honeywell, 'The Bridging Generation', in Ruth Kinna et al., eds., *Continuum Companion to Anarchism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 111–139.

[35] Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: The Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960).

on, or just by, left little room for aspiring to anything noble.[36] With faith in formal politics, in all its guises, at such low ebb, it seemed, an open invitation, to 're-discover' anarchist traditions.

Ward did not think that modern anarchism was condemned to permanent resistance alone, nor that it was necessary to abandon revolutionary sentiments altogether, only to reframe them.[37] Writing of the relationship between classical anarchism and its contemporary form in the late 1950s, he said of the latter 'it rejects perfectionism, utopian fantasy, conspiratorial romanticism, revolutionary optimism; it draws from the classical anarchists their most valid, not their most questionable, ideas'.[38] Taking his own advice, he accentuated the more gradualist aspects of Kropotkin, turning the so-called 'problems' of the age into potential opportunities. Ideological fragmentation was not disastrous if it could lead in the direction of political decentralisation. The middle classes, swollen through education and the growing 'semi-professions', were not your traditional 'workers', granted, but a receptive audience on topics such as practical education and autonomous social organisation.[39]

In conversation with his times, he recast anarchism from a historical romance (or modern tragedy), into a late-modern picaresque: no matter how great the knocks and small the gains, anarchistic tendencies invariably bounced up again somewhere else. Stripped of any comforting sense of destiny, it was more important than ever to stress anarchism as a continuous presence and existing tendency, already rooted in the most fundamental, and familiar, structures of everyday life. The figure of the revolutionary had also to be repackaged for the mood of the times. Passionate feats of heroism were out, small acts of common decency, undertaken in sincerity, were in. His social histories of self-help and his own public persona as an anarchist 'everyman' all helped naturalise this.

Where he substantiated, he also refined. As Malatesta had objected, Kropotkin's application of the natural sciences to the social could be a blunt instrument. To address this, Ward engaged closely with developments in sociology, a discipline with which he felt a natural affinity. His take up, however, was cautious, closer to the quasi-literary tradition of British social writing than anything more formally theoretical.[40] In a letter to *The University Libertarian* (December 1955), he commented:

I do not believe that the social sciences are objective like the physical sciences. I think they find what they are looking for and I would like them to look in the direction of freedom, autonomy, free association and spontaneity.[41]

His interest in the social sciences was partly strategic. In the post-war decades, sociology flourished in the universities and was the intellectual langue de jour.[42] Connecting it to anarchist

[36] Alice Ferrebe, *Literature of the Fifties: Good Brave Causes* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012); Nick Bentley, *Radical Fictions: The English Novel in the 1950s* (Bern: Peter Lang Books, 2007); Bentley, Ferrebe and Hubble, *The 1950s: A Decade of Modern British Fiction* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019); Shelley Godsland, 'The Neopicaresque: The Picaresque Myth in the Twentieth Century Novel', in JA Garrido Ardila, ed., *The Picaresque Novel in Western Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 247—268.

[37] Colin Ward, 'Discussion: Constructive Anarchism', *Freedom*, 28 May 1960.

[38] Colin Ward, 'The Unwritten Handbook', *Freedom*, 28 June 1958.

[39] Peter Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, 46—54. To some extent, Kropotkin anticipated the importance of the emerging professional demographic. His 'Address to the Young' was specifically aimed at those aspiring to be doctors, teachers, scientists, engineers, and lawyers.

[40] See C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 19.

[41] Colin Ward, 'From the Outside Looking In', *The University Libertarian*, December 1955.

[42] Mike Savage, 'The Moment of Sociology', in Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain since 1940: The Politics of Method: The Politics of Method* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 112–134.

ideas helped towards the goal of 'putting anarchism back into the intellectual bloodstream',[43] forging a bridge with a new generation of social thinkers[44] and inviting them to connect their ideas with anarchist ones.

To stress Ward's work as a continuation of Kropotkin's key ideas is not to detract from his intellectual creativity but to understand it as renovation, rather than innovation. He was fond of this metaphor and the virtues it implied — thrift, attention, and resourcefulness — all essential qualities for the aspiring activist engaged in a gradual, organic (r) evolution.[45]

Anarchist in Action

The discussion above sets out a framework for Ward's anarchism but does not address his specific intellectual role. He considered himself a propagandist and was prepared to defend that role.[46] In the *Talking Anarchy* conversation with David Goodway, when described as one of the 20th century's great anarchist thinkers, he replied firmly: 'I am not a great thinker. I simply apply a few basic anarchist ideas to the ordinary situations of life'.[47] In another interview with Tony Gibson, a fellow anarchist and psychologist (1992), he stated 'now one thing I'm not is original and this simply reflects that [people] haven't been exposed to an anarchist point of view before'.[48]

As with his deferral to Kropotkin, his insistence on the role of propagandist has been dismissed as modesty, but for him, radical propaganda through independent journalism was a distinctive craft which he took seriously, gave considerable thought to,[49] and served an unofficial apprenticeship in. For the post-war FP group, it was Malatesta who most informed their approach to propaganda.[50] 'Our task', the Italian wrote in 1931,

is that of 'pushing' the people to demand and to seize all the freedom they can and to make themselves responsible for providing their own needs without waiting for orders from any kind of authority. Our task is that of [...] provoking by propaganda and action, all kinds of individual and collective initiatives.[51]

Ward absorbed these principles through his friendship with Richards and via the FP group's working culture. It was, however, Alexander Herzen (1812— 1870), the 19th-century Russian writer, who provided his personal model of an ideal propagandist.[52] Conversely, for a propagan-

[43] Colin Ward, 'Last Look Around the Fifties', *Freedom*, 26 December 1959.

[44] Anarchy published the early work of many consequently prominent social thinkers including David Downes, Stan Cohen, and Laurie Taylor.

[45] Colin Ward, 'Is Conservation More Than Nostalgia?', in Ward, *Talking Green* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2012), 127–135.

[46] Colin Ward, *Influences* (Bideford: Resurgence, 1991), 141.

[47] David Goodway and Colin Ward, *Talking Anarchy* (Oakland: PM Press, 2014 [2003]), 105.

[48] Tony Gibson, 'Colin Ward Interview'.

[49] Colin Ward, 'What Is Freedom For?', *Freedom*, 3 September 1955; '70 Years of Freedom Press', *Freedom*, 20 October 1956; '*Freedom* in the Sixties', *Freedom*, 24 October 1959; 'What Kind of Paper Do We Really Need?', *Freedom*, 10 December 1960.

[50] Carl Levy, 'Foreword', in *Malatesta Life and Idea* (PM Press, 2015), xii-iii. See also David Turcato, *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader* (Oakland: AK Press, 2014).

[51] Errico Malatesta, *l'Adunata de Refrattari*, 26 December 1931.

[52] This choice may have partly reflected his wish to engage a wider readership. Herzen was better known to a wider British audience courtesy of Isaiah Berlin's 'A Marvellous Decade' lecture series on him, broadcast on the BBC's *Third Programme* in 1955 and his famous autobiography, *My Past and Thoughts* (1870) available in English translation from most local libraries — always a consideration for Ward.

dist, Ward considered Herzen's refusal to urge people to take up a cause, no matter how noble, to be his greatest strength.[53] Instead, he had offered alternative ideas as 'gifts', rather than prescriptions, through his writing: '[Herzen] considered that simply to spread enlightenment is, in the long run, more important and more truly revolutionary'.[54] He later named Herzen as his main *political* influence, reinforcing his view of politics and political communication as inextricable.[55]

Emphasising propaganda shifts the framework for understanding and judging Ward as a thinker. His goal was not to develop a theory but to spread ideas among a wide general audience. So central was this objective that, even when disagreeing with the ideas, or approaches, of fellow anarchists, he could still commend them for their contribution to the circulation of ideas. 'As a propagandist myself', he once said, 'I value other propagandists by their effectiveness in winning uncommitted people to an anarchist standpoint'.[56] He refused to join the chorus of public critique around Richards, who could be notoriously difficult, crediting him for 'making sure propaganda by the printed word actually happened'.[57] He also expressed admiration for George Woodcock, Herbert Read, Murray Bookchin, and Noam Chomsky for their cultivation of a large general audience: 'unlike the rest of us, they have broken through the sound barrier that limits other anarchists to a small minority audience. They have succeeded in battling through to a large minority audience'.[58]

Woodcock was especially significant during his first years as an anarchist writer in the 1940s, providing an early example of applying anarchist ideas to contemporary culture and social issues through his pamphlets on land, the railway and housing, his articles on regionalism and his attempts towards a regular cultural column. After Woodcock's departure in early 1949, Ward gradually assumed this role within the group through his column series 'People and Ideas'.

For all this, however, Ward was something of a propaganda connoisseur. Whilst alert to the power of the spectacle, good propaganda, he believed, had the ability to live beyond the event, to generate and sustain future activity. In *Cotters and Squatters* (2002), for example, he distinguished between squatting as 'a political demonstration', intended to make a statement, and squatting as 'a personal solution to a housing problem' which tried to be inconspicuous, longing for stability and respectability.[59] Theoretical revolutionaries, he supposed, may resent those adopting temporary personal solutions as conservatives but the practical revolutionary respectfully understood those desires. Similarly, in a lecture on 'The Green Personality', he commended the youthful road protestors of the 1990s on their iconic tree-top villages but observed that this was unlikely to resonate with how most people wished to live their daily lives in the long term.[60]

As such, this concern with reaching a popular 'non-committed' audience placed a layer of strategic subtlety over his work. As a self-confessed 'empirical softie',[61] he was open to trade-offs with the popular mood that the more austere of his fellow anarchists would not have been.

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[53] This was slightly defensive given that Ward's own commitment to propaganda of the word often led to accusations of reformism. Peter Marshall, 'Sower of Anarchist Ideas', in Carlo Levy, ed., *Colin Ward: His Life and Ideas*, 20–28.

[54] Colin Ward, *Influences* (Resurgence Books, 1991), 64.

[55] Colin Ward, 'Alexander Herzen', in *Influences* (Oxford: Resurgence Books, 1991), 49–64.

[56] David Goodway and Colin Ward, *Talking Anarchy*, 2014, 107–108.

[57] Tony Gibson, 'Colin Ward Interview'.

[58] David Goodway and Colin Ward, *Talking Anarchy*, 106.

[59] Colin Ward, *Cotters and Squatters* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2002), 167–168.

[60] Colin Ward, 'The Green Personality', in *Talking Green* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2010), 113.

[61] Colin Ward, 'The Tender Trap — A Letter', *Freedom, 2* November 1957.

This, then, may help to contextualise points at which his 'theoretical' stance and 'practical' writings seemed inconsistent, such as on possible roles of or for the state in creating housing co-operatives.[62] Rather than judge his work in terms of its theoretical coherence, it yields more to consider each piece in context, linked together by recurrent core principles. Moreover, as theoretical exegesis was not his primary goal it is unhelpful to assess him on that basis. Better questions concern the efforts he made to reach his wider audience and his relative success in doing so. Even so, while this may provide a richer context for understanding Ward as an individual, what can a case study of a propagandist, even a skilful one, tell us about the intellectual development of modern British anarchism?

Propaganda, the use of symbols to promote or induce action, is one of the rhetorical arts.[63] For most of modern Western intellectual history, rhetoric has been viewed in a secondary, even oppositional position to the analytical rigour of philosophy or science. In recent years, this view has been challenged,[64] aided by the 'recovery' of a humanist tradition which held it to be a form of philosophical inquiry in action.[65] This tradition, recognising the role of language and aesthetics in mediating experience, considers meaning-making to be a social activity. For the propagandist, preoccupied with the public in a way the theorist is not, this idea resonates. To be effective, they must connect with their audience's existing concerns and desires directly. For any political group, success depends on the capacity to spread ideas, but for anarchists, who place spontaneous popular movement at the heart of their philosophy, the stakes are higher still. Voluntary direct action does not just realise anarchism, it defines it. For anarchists, then, persuasion is paramount.

Given this, it is unsurprising that concern with and for the composition, conduct, and consequences of propaganda is an outstanding feature of anarchism, not least through its (in) famous (and, arguably, misunderstood) preoccupation with the propaganda of the deed.[66] But the situation becomes more complicated still if, like Ward, you believe anarchism to be an open-ended outlook rather than a finite outcome. Now you are no longer just explaining a doctrine or prescribing a set of actions that will lead to an anarcho-communist society. You are attempting to implant and consolidate a whole habit of thinking.

Ward's work, then, was not a simplistic transmission of anarchist ideas dressed up a la mode. By deliberately connecting those ideas to areas of contemporary common experience, he not only made them palatable and interesting but also *possible*. These were the places where anarchistic qualities could already be discerned, however faintly, and where they could, therefore, be best cultivated. In so far as these connections generated action and new forms of lived experience, they also, in turn, fed back and altered anarchist ideas, making propaganda as much a method of revision as a tool of promotion.

How did he do this? To quote him directly, he worked from (italics my own) 'the *common* foundation of *common* experience and *common* knowledge',[67] which was shrewd in that, as Kenneth Burke observed, 'the ideal act of propaganda consists in imaginatively identifying your

[62] Chris Wilbert and Damien F. White, *Autonomy, Solidarity, Possibility*, xxvii, fn 54.

[63] Jonathan Auerbach and Russ Castronova, 'Introduction', in Auerbach and Castronova, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Propaganda Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1–18.

[64] Michael MacDonald, 'Introduction', in Michael MacDonald, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Rhetorical Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 1.

[65] Ernesto Grassi, *Rhetoric as Philosophy: The Humanist Tradition* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2001).

[66] Ruth Kinna, *The Government of No One*, 99–102.

[67] Colin Ward, *Anarchy in Action* (London: Freedom Press, [1973] 2008), 9.

cause with values that are unques- tioned'.[68] In effect, Ward 'reframed' anarchism, opening it up to a new, uninitiated, audience. Firstly, he exchanged outdated metaphors inherited from classical anarchist culture — such as 'the workers' (meaning an industrial working class), or the Spanish collectives — with more accessible ones such as holiday camps, allotments, community health centres, adventure playgrounds. Secondly, he assembled a collection of choice quotes (he freely admitted that he 'thought in slogans' himself[69]) which compressed complex ideas into handy mnemonics which expressed 'valid and valuable' generalisations.[70] Finally, he identified and described sustainable methods for converting symbolic imagery and general principles into practice. Starting a community garden, for example, was much more feasible for most people than bringing down a government. One was also more likely to pursue community gardening long term.

Methods and Sources

This book takes a biographical approach to examine how Ward fashioned his vernacular anarchism. As noted above, successful propagandists are astute cultural readers, integrating their ideas with the wider conditions of their times to stimulate readers to action. Charting the changing patterns and forms of propaganda can reveal much about the evolution of a political group's thought but why, then, distil this into a single life story? Biography offers an intimacy that a broader cultural history cannot. It magnifies the situational logic which forms through the interplay of an individual's lived experiences and the 'local' factors which they encounter. It is, then, intellectual micro-history, attentive to the improvisational nature of thinking which is especially important when considering a process of culture change up close.

That said, the focus here remains on the life as it informed the work, which means that it selects and explores those contexts taken to be most germane to Ward's political development and practice. Naturally, this includes tracing his political 'education', his unfolding relationships with fellow anarchists, especially the FP group, and with other political groups or individuals, but, while these areas comprise his most conscious political activities, they are not enough. This study also includes a wider view of those areas that were equally vital but indirectly so: his family, in childhood and adulthood; his work life in architecture, education, and self-employment; his 'non-political' friendships. It was these spaces, it will be argued, which enabled him to innovate with anarchism.

Given the attention on propaganda, alongside close contextualisation, this book also draws on critical rhetorical analysis to excavate the techniques Ward deployed in generating his 'new' anarchist imagery. As he was first and foremost a writer, these mostly concern his texts and include identifying his recurrent metaphors, narrative strategies, and intertextual references through which he forged wider cultural connections. When approaching his self-presentation, how he styled himself as a public figure (typically in terms of a written 'narrative self', although, in later life, this was extended into a media personality through public lectures, radio broadcasts, and television appearances), I take inspiration from Erving Goffman's juxtaposition between frontstage

[68] Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), 87.

[69] Tony Gibson, 'Colin Ward Interview'.

[70] Colin Ward, 'History and Improvisation', *Freedom*, 4 August 1956.

as conscious public performance (high stakes, desiring to influence) and backstage as private life, relatively unobserved (low stakes, no one needing to be convinced).[71] Contrasting his public and private selves demonstrates the degree of deliberation employed in crafting the outward image.

This last point has special importance when considering the existing autobiographical sources on his life. Ward refused a request for his life story, explaining that,

I have read plenty of such books and have seen how the first few chapters are the most absorbing, after which they tend to trail off into a catalogue of names, jobs and encounters. This in itself is a depressing thought. How can it be that for many people everything after childhood is an anti-climax. And I'm mindful too of Orwell's sharp comment that an autobiography that is not a history of failures is a pack of lies.[72]

This seems an odd comment given the rich tradition of radical autobiography.[73] Ward himself greatly admired Alexander Herzen's *My Past and Other Thoughts* and wrote an introduction for a Folio edition of it ([1870] 1983), as he did for the Kropotkin's *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* ([1899] 1978) and Rudolf Rocker's *The London Years* ([1938] 2005). Moreover, given his view of anarchism as work in progress, presenting a 'history of failures' was potentially instructive. As Australian anarchist George Molnar joked, 'freedom has always had a hard road to tread, as the biography of any anarchist will amply prove'.[74] Still, he was resistant.

While a single-authored account of his life did not appear, there are several important semi-autobiographical sources. These include *Influences* (1991), his personal scrapbooks which date from 1941 to 2006, and three interview conversations, one with David Goodway published as *Talking Anarchy*, first published in 2003, another, unpublished, by Tony Gibson, a fellow FP Anarchist, conducted in 1991, and a film, 'Colin Ward in Conversation with Roger Deakin' by Mike Dibb, filmed in 2003. Then there are the anecdotes scattered across his regular columns including *Town and Country Planning* ('People and Ideas', resumed from *Freedom*, from 1979), *New Society* ('Personal View' from 1979), and later *New Statesman and Society* ('Fringe Benefits' from 1988).

Influences was a collection of essays discussing his favourite writers. The book is hard to categorise which makes it interesting and revealing. It was too personal to be anarchist literary criticism in the manner of Woodcock's *The Writer and Politics* (1948), but too impersonal to be a memoir. It most resembled a propagandist's commonplace book, a repository for the quotes and passages he built his arguments from. In it, he arranged this reading matter according to the themes — education, politics, society, economics, planning, and architecture — he found they most spoke to. Given his life as a journalist, in which role he continually filleted reading matter to reassemble elsewhere, such a collage of fractured texts, was a fitting intellectual self-portrait.

This idea of life-as-anthology resonated well with his anarchist understanding of the social self. As he described it:

if you want to see the way a writers' mind works there is nothing more illuminating than the multitudinous sources with which he works [...] We all live on what we borrow from others, from the past, from the enormous accumulation of printed words which comes our way in a lifetime.

[71] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1959).

[72] Colin Ward, *Influences*, 151, Mar/Apr 1992, 30.

[73] Andrew Kahn et al., 'Subjectivities: Diary Writing and Autobiography: Documentary and Fictional Self-Presentation', in Andrew Kahn et al., eds., *A History of Russian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 385–401.

[74] George Molnar, 'Anarchy and Utopia', *Freedom*, 2 August 1958.

There is a continuous process of selection, rejection and assimilation. What is interesting, what is really us, so to speak, is what we assimilate.[75]

Seeing him through his sources and scraps provides fruitful insight into his mind and methods.

Nevertheless, both *Influences* and the scrapbooks are light on empirical details. The TA conversation with Goodway is more generous in this respect and, for this reason, is the best known and used source for Ward's life. In addition, it also reveals the lengths he went to maintain that control over his public persona. The interview was not conducted face to face but, at his suggestion, by correspondence. This had the benefit of retaining a dialogic quality while permitting him the time to consider and compose his answers. He did this with care, often rephrasing or even adding his own questions.[76] Where there was a gain in depth of detail, there was also a loss in spontaneity; writing allowed him to reflect, control, and self-edit as he went.

In the preface to the second edition, Goodway confessed that his (deliberate) efforts to generate any dramatic tension had been steadfastly thwarted.[77] For example, despite professing an interest in the sociology of group dynamics, when asked about the inner workings of the FPG group or on the wider anarchist culture of the time, Ward's replies were sparse, even defensive. Picking up on a slight suggestion on friction between factions, Goodway asked: 'that's an interesting remark! Who stayed aloof?' The reply was gentle but dismissive, 'I think it is inevitable rather than interesting'.[78]

This refusal to be drawn into indiscretion on controversial characters or situations was just one of several points at which he actively deflected Goodway's questions. In conversation, this is a confronting strategy, amounting to a refusal to validate his interviewer's opinion. Here again:

Colin, you are such a generous person, always unwilling to be critical of fellow anarchists. Yet you imply that there are 'things' which 'divide' you from Murray [Bookchin]. Is it simply a matter of higher theory, of style and changing opinions?

The opening compliment was a statement, not part of the question, and not intended to form part of the response, but Ward deliberately picked up on it:

It isn't that I am kind or generous. It is simply that I take seriously the business of being an anarchist propagandist [...] nothing makes us more ridiculous in the eyes of the world outside than the internal factional disputes that some anarchists enjoy pursuing.[79]

He offered no further comment on Bookchin.

The Tony Gibson interview, recorded face to face a decade earlier, was more spontaneous but again he was given the chance to comment and amend the transcript (he made few changes). Gibson was older than he, a psychologist, and had been associated with the FP group for a long time. He could ask detailed, targeted questions about the FP group's more intimate history, and probe at places Ward may have preferred to omit. But, in focusing primarily on FP, the interview contained few details about Ward's life outside of the movement, such as his work or family.

As noted earlier, the anecdotes, characteristic of his later column writing, offer another source of self-writing. Although these do contain more intimate details of his daily life, they also fulfilled a political function. He used his 'self' as a cypher for his favoured anarchist stock character, the

[75] Colin Ward, 'A Writer and His Sources', *Freedom*, 22 September 1956.
[76] David Goodway, 'Preface to the Second Edition', *Talking Anarchy* (PM Press, 2014), viii.
[77] Ibid., ix-x.
[78] Ibid., 45.
[79] Ibid., 111.

hapless 'everyman', bewildered at the absurdity of the world but also deeply sensible. This figure was intended to assure his readers of their own deep sensibility. The domesticity of the columns' settings (in railway stations, on day trips, in his home village), and the apparent triviality of the stories (a stolen bike, buying a magazine from a newsagent), were intended to reinforce his arguments for anarchism as an everyday practice. It is reasonable to expect, then, that their truth content was stylised.

To discern more clearly the omissions and to thicken the contexts in which he worked, I have drawn on archival holdings in Institute for International Social History. Alongside Ward's papers are housed those of Vernon Richards and FP associate Tony Gibson who conducted a series of oral interviews with members of the FP circle in the early 1990s. In addition, I have used Home Office papers held at the National Archives detailing the events surrounding the Freedom Press trial, the Town and Country Planning Association Archives (in reference to his position as an education officer and the *Bulletin of Environmental Education* which he edited), British Library oral recordings of British architects, and oral transcripts of an interview conducted with surviving members of the Glasgow Anarchists.

Where possible, I have conducted original oral interviews and interviews by correspondence with family, friends, colleagues, and collaborators including Harriet and Ben Ward, George West, David Downes, Dennis Hardy, David Crouch, Ken Worpole, Eileen Adams, Jonathan Croall, Anthony Fyson, David Goodway, and Richard Mabey but, again, it is striking how consistently Ward maintained a reserve, especially on his childhood and young adult years, even with his closest family. He may have believed that the personal was also political, but he also preferred modesty and discretion, 'private faces in public faces'.[80] Here, then, is a part and partial history of a very ordinary anarchist.

[80] WH Auden, *Orators* (1932).

1. The Forward View

Whenever he was asked how he became an anarchist Ward's usual response was to dash lightly over his first 18 years and arrive at the point of 'conversion', in Glasgow, autumn 1943. But epiphanies only feel unexpected; the groundwork that makes them possible has usually been long in the preparation. How was it possible for him to have been 'won for anarchism'?[1] What values, ideas, and inclinations made him receptive in the first place and what sort of anarchist had been won?

In *The Angry Decade* (1958), Kenneth Allsop, four years older than Ward, reflected on his generation. They had lived through the General Strike, the Depression, the war and its 'epilogue of dreary years', the atomic bomb — in short, they had known 'a lifetime incessantly crisscrossed by catastrophe'.[2] Perhaps so, but on the other hand, these were also decades of increasing social mobility, of more scholarships for poor children, full employment during the war, emergent industries, and job opportunities, of new consumer goods: cars, washing machines, television. Importantly, this lurching between extremes — hope and tragedy, progress and loss — was not remote; it touched everyone. It was what underpinned Ward's attraction to anarchism and, ultimately, directed his revision of it.

Wanstead, Childhood, and Youth

It is hard to develop the story of Ward's early life as little survives in his personal papers from this time, and he rarely spoke about his childhood unless prompted, not even to Harriet (his wife), or his children. Silence can hide trauma, but lack of remark can also mean simply that experiences felt unremarkable. In Ward's case, unremarkable was important.

His parents, Arnold Ward and Ruby Ward, nee West, were both born into working-class families on the East India Dock Road, London. Ruby's father was a carpenter and, as with many self-employed tradesmen, reliant on the mercurial fortunes of the building industry. Life could be precarious with the need to seek out work constant, but the family were never desperate. The youngest of three sisters, Ruby was the favourite, and where her sisters were sent to work as soon as possible, she was encouraged to take secretarial training after she finished school. Clerical work offered a respectable means of self and social improvement. With a smart appearance, good diction, and a reasonable standard of written English, she could undertake 'unskilled' office work (skilled office work, such as that required for the civil service, required higher levels of education along with additional languages). Those, like Ruby, with an aptitude for the work

[1] David Goodway and Colin Ward, *Talking Anarchy* (Oakland: PM Press, 2014), 23—25.

[2] Kenneth Allsop, *The Angry Decade: A Survey of the Cultural Revolt of the Nineteen Fifties* (London: Peter Owen, 1958), 1.

could pick up shorthand qualifications, taken at evening classes, increasing their chances for higher-paid positions (she later became a shorthand teacher).[3]

Arnold's father, originally from Ireland, was a 'general dealer'. Like Ruby, Arnold was the youngest, and favourite, child. On completing the elementary levels at school, he trained to become a pupil-teacher. At 18 he passed the King's scholarship examination to study at one of the new Local Authority-run teacher training colleges introduced following the 1902 Education Act, a qualification that permitted entry into senior positions, with higher salaries, in the profession. An instinctive, rather than official, pacifist, he bluffed his way to a job in a sausage factory during the First World War (protected, as food production, from conscription), later resuming his studies. In the early 20s, he attended evening classes at the London School of Economics (LSE), eventually gaining a BSc in Economics.[4] Eventually, he rose to a headship at Custom House primary school,[5] Canning Town, but, prior to that, and for most of Ward's childhood, he taught in a series of schools around Barking and Dagenham.[6]

Since the mid-19th century, this borough had been subject to rapid growth and heavy industrialisation. Consequently, it had a high working-class population. Increasing employment opportunities, combined with proximity to central London and the comparative affordability of land, appealed to social reformers eager to address overcrowding in inner-city slums. Between 1882 and 1892, 7,000 housing development plans across the borough were approved. Following the First World War, London County Council (LCC) embarked on the Becontree estate, the largest ever government housing project, 24,000 houses on 3,000 acres of land encompassing Dagenham, Barking, and Ilford, formerly market gardens with clusters of cottages which were bought up through compulsory acquisition orders. Prospective tenants were interviewed to assure their financial and moral suitability, further reinforced by *The Tenants Handbook* which set out strict stipulations on standards of cleanliness and conduct.[7]

Arnold taught the children of those families, but his own family lived in neighbouring Wanstead which was considered genteel (from 1924 to 1964 Wanstead's MP was Winston Churchill). Arnold and Ruby bought 8 Collinwood Gardens, a

three-bedroom semi-detached house with top and bottom bay windows, a front and back garden, on a quiet cul-de-sac of similar-looking houses. These 'domestic-vernacular' details marked it out as the handiwork of a 'speculative builder', one of the many who generated 50,000 more houses than the government managed during the interwar years, but always with the aspirations, and budgets, of a rising middle class (not an improving working class) in mind.[8]

Arnold and Ruby's story could be seen as one of meritocratic social mobility: expanding educational opportunity plus individual endeavour. The couple made two moves, first joining a

[3] Selina Todd, *Young Women, Work, and the Family 1918—1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Anne Bridger, 'A Century of Women's Employment in Clerical Occupations 1850–1950', unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Gloucestershire, 2003.

[4] Ben Ward, 'Interview with Colin Ward', 2003, held in author's private collection.

[5] This was destroyed during the blitz bombing during the war.

[6] Ben Ward, 'Interview with Colin Ward'.

[7] Municipal Dreams in Housing London, 'The Beacontree Estate: Built in England Where the Most Revolutionary Social Changes Can Take Place and People in General Do Not Realise They Have Occurred', 8 January 2013, https://municipaldreams.wordpress.com/2013/01/08/the-becontree-estate-built-in-england-where-the-most-revolutionary-social-changes-can-take-place-and-people-in-general-do-not-realise-that-they-have-occurred/ [accessed 9 April 2021].

[8] Alison Ravetz, *The Place of Home: English Domestic Environments 1914—2000* (E & FN Spon, 1995), 20–21.

swelling stratum of salaried 'semi-professions',[9] teaching and clerical, and then a further 'ascent' following Arnold's degree and promotion to a headship at a state-owned primary school. From another perspective, enhanced material prosperity aside, this was also a process of proletarianisation, a shift away from the self-employment of their parents to the status of employees, albeit, in Arnold's case a high-status one.

But if his parents accepted the status quo and aspired to advance within it, this had an egalitarian spirit. Both had benefited from educational opportunities themselves and believed the same should be extended to others. Arnold's school, Custom House Primary, taught children from poor families, children of dockworkers, whose parents would keep them off school for lack of shoes.[10] Over his years as a teacher, then headmaster, he saw first-hand the vicious cycle of poverty and the role schools could play in breaking it. As such, theirs was an active Labour-supporting household. For the Wards, and, initially, their two sons, the Party took the place of any formal religion in providing the main moral outlook for their lives.[11]

During the interwar years, Labour transformed from a relatively marginal political force into the only credible alternative to the Conservatives as a party of governance. In 1924, the year Ward was born, the first Labour government took office. It was short-lived, lasting only 9 months, ousted because of accusations of Bolshevism which, as Matthew Worley points out, was ironic because during this period Parliamentary Labour strove to assert itself within the establishment, pursuing a moderate agenda. For ideological hardliners, like George Lansbury, the sight of Labour MPs donning formal dress, working men taking their place alongside the members of a cultural elite, was incongruous.[12]

The consolidation of respectable credentials, when combined with the Baldwin government's calamitous handling of the General Strike, returned them to power in 1929. Again, success was fleeting, the internal split over cuts to unemployment benefit prompting another collapse in the summer of 1931. Nevertheless, important ground had been gained. Labour was also beginning to enjoy success at local levels. In 1934, the Labour Party gained control of the LCC, and, led by Herbert Morrison, retained it with an increased majority in 1937. While in office, they launched an offensive on the capital's slums, increasing expenditure on housing, education, and health. As Naomi Woolf, a Labour councillor for Hammersmith from 1934, recalled: 'the domestic political thing — that was the basis of the labour party [...] housing and health I think dominated the Labour Party at that time'.[13]

The Party still faced serious obstacles on their road to becoming a parliamentary force. Their organisational and funding structure remained rooted in the staple industries of the 19th century, leaving them poorly equipped to engage with the emerging new industries, such as transport, artificial textiles, chemicals, and electricity,[14] and, therefore, the new forms of work, and workers, these generated. The Party also encompassed a complex ideological blend, where the ends and interests of working people, trade unionists and socialist intellectuals often contradicted, causing division over the proper direction it needed to pursue.

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[9] Amitai Etzioni, *The Semi Professions and Their Organization* (Free Press, 1969).

[10] Ben Ward, 'Interview with Colin Ward'.

[11] Tony Gibson, 'Interview with Colin Ward', TGP/ARCH00515, IISH.

[12] Matthew Worley, *Labour at the Gate: A History of the British Labour Party between the Wars* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 80–81.

[13] Ibid., 199.

[14] Ibid., 76.

In some ways, however, ideological clarity was less of a priority at this point than gaining and retaining power. There was a widespread sense that practical electoral work, rather than intellectual debate, was the business of the day. What Labour lacked in cars and money, it made up for in volunteers and energetic canvassing. With this came a shift in political culture from the 'tub thumping' of the old politics to the more artful means of persistent persuasion at grassroots levels, a more 'scientific' approach, privileging structure and organisation over reliance on charismatic personalities and gifted orators.[15] Arnold and Ruby were two such volunteers, using the family car to ferry prospective voters to the polls on election days. Arnold was probably active beyond this given that the headship of his school was in the gift of the Labour borough council.[16] As such, it might be reasonably supposed that left-leaning newspapers, Party literature, perhaps even discussions on political strategy were commonplace in the household.

But the internal struggles of the Labour Party were just one aspect of a complicated political landscape, not least the rise and spread of fascism across Western Europe. In Britain, Oswald Mosley, a former Labour MP, founded the British Union of Fascists, which, although never more than a minority movement, gave an uncomfortably close taste of menace. Amongst the wider movement, Spain seized the popular imagination as symbolic of the struggle between left and right, but while sympathetic groups and individuals swung into action with collections and campaigns, both the Government's and the Labour leadership's responses were considered evasive and inadequate.

Marginalised political forces, including the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), but also other independents including anarchists like art critic Herbert Read, now came to the fore, attracting support for their more decisive stances. This was the background against which Ward, then 13, was taken by his parents, to the 1938 May Day rally in Hyde Park where he saw Emma Goldman speak about the anarchist cause in Spain. From the perspective of his parents, this was less a sign of radicalisation than of their sustained commitment to a notion of democracy. From his perspective, this was important exposure, not necessarily, at this stage, to the nuances of different ideologies, but to a general set of values worth fighting for, not least individual freedom. Less directly, it also planted the idea that politics was not confined to parliamentary activity (and often more sincere outside of that framework) and that ordinary people could have a stake and play their part.

Political activism did not dominate family life. There were other, more pleasurable activities such as concerts at Queen's Hall in Langham Place where the BBC orchestra played popular classics, regular visits to grandparents still living in East London, seaside holidays in Southend and Clacton. Later, he and elder brother Harvey took long summer cycle rides in the Essex countryside where he encountered, first-hand, the plotlanders he would later champion. Cycling by these examples of 'domestic bricolage', the makeshift homes and productive gardens, far removed from the uniformity and constraints of suburban life, the association with freedom was intuitive.[17] Especially when the alternative was a dull classroom.

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[15] Ross McKibbon, *The Evolution of the Labour Party 1910—1924* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 145.

[16] Tony Gibson, 'Interview with Colin Ward'; Colin Ward Interviewed by Lyn Smith, *The Anti War Movement (Oral History)*, 29 August 1986, 9327, Imperial War Museum, www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80009116 [accessed 4 October 2021].

[17] Gillian Darley, 'From Plotlands to New Town', in Tim Burrows et al., eds., *Radical Essex* (Southend: Focal Point Gallery, 2018), 101–122.

He found school a dismal affair. Aged 10, he passed a scholarship examination, the forerunner of the 11-plus, to attend Ilford County High School (ICHS), a selective, all-boys grammar, part of a new wave of school building at the turn of the century to prepare children from the aspirant middle (or upper-working) classes for modern careers in industry, administration, and commerce. Ward, however, gained more from his rejection of formal education than his receipt of it. What was he rejecting? Lessons learnt by rote and tested by examinations. Uniforms, structured days, rules, and events, all the training needed to go on into professional jobs. Corporal punishment was used, ICHS was no exception there, but it was not especially rife. He had no tales of Dickensian cruelty to tell of it. He was just bored.

He was never openly rebellious, he just stared out of the window during his lessons, failed to distinguish himself, and left at 15.[18] This seems young to contemporary eyes but in 1939 his grammar school education qualified him for administrative work (as his mother had done some years before). His early jobs on leaving school included being an assistant to a builder illegally erecting Anderson shelters in people's gardens, and then a construction administrator for West Ham Council. Although formal academic study had not excited strenuous effort from him, it was at this time he conceived a passion for printing and typography, even acquiring his own small treadle-operated printing press, a clam model which one person could operate.

If all this furnishes a fuller social picture of his youth, it offers little by way of an emotional one. Ward was not generally given to personal divulgence but did later recall Arnold as a good-humoured man who rarely lost his temper. Ruby was sharper, 'more punitive and moralistic' but hardly tyrannical.[19] Overall Ward's upbringing might be called comfortable, if a little restrained, middleclass but not ostentatious, socially conscientious but not radical, based on the belief that government should ensure fair chances which individuals should seize for themselves. Naturally, education was valued — both parents had been the beneficiaries of it — as the means of self and social improvement. Ward re-negotiated these values. He would spend a lifetime criticising the social 'goods', state education and parliamentary process, that his parents had taken for granted. But he, no less than they, retained respect for respectability and an appreciation for the everyday desires, comforts, and pleasures that many people cherished.[20]

London: Sidney Caulfield

On leaving school, he had hoped first to find a job in printing but when this was not forthcoming, he 'drifted' towards construction and administration.[21] Aged 17, Ward became an assistant at Sidney Caulfield's small architectural practice on Emperor's Gate, Gloucester Road, London. Caulfield was one of few living links back to William Morris and the Arts and Craft movement. Starting as the pupil of gothic revivalist architect John Loughborough Pearson, he had later moved to study with architect William Richard Lethaby, the first director of the Cen-

[18] Oral communication from Harriet Ward.

[19] Ben Ward, 'Interview with Colin Ward'.

[20] Stuart White, 'Making Anarchism Respectable? The Social Philosophy of Colin Ward', *Political Ideologies,* 12:1 (2007), 11–28.

[21] David Goodway, *Talking Anarchy*, 72.

tral School of Art and Crafts, the movement's educational vision, opened by the LCC in 1896, where he also met artist Eric Gill.[22]

In 1912, Caulfield joined the first wave of architects working on Hampstead Garden Suburb, Henrietta Barnett's vision of a permanent, socially mixed settlement in which the classes lived together for their mutual improvement. The idea that the healthy community could be created through intelligent design drew directly on the Arts and Craft principle of life as art. Raymond Unwin, the project's chief planner and former secretary of Morris' Socialist League, applied this in practice through low-density housing, sensitive to the local environment with gardens to encourage wholesome hobbies and ample spacing to promote social mixing. Caulfield contributed houses on the Meadway, Southway, and Bigwood roads.[23]

By 1941, however, the practice had dwindled to repairs on bomb-damaged factories but his enthusiasm for his old mentor remained undiminished and he would press Lethaby's *Architecture* upon his young assistants, urging that here was all they needed to know about their craft.[24] At first, Ward had not been interested in reading it,[25] nor did he much care for his employer's upper-class, often condescending bearing.[26] In this, Caulfield was not unique; despite moves towards professionalisation, architecture remained a class-ridden occupation. The gentleman architect still expected deference and exercised absolute authority in the building process. If uncomfortable to behold, Caulfield's autocratic approach had unexpected benefits; it meant a holistic education for his assistant. Ward was sent with messages to contractors, returning with their (often exasperated) replies about the practical realities of working around shortages in materials, labour, and encountering other unforeseen problems, all of which fuelled his understanding of building as an activity with wider social and economic ramifications. Another task, manual plan-tracing, taught him the details and technicalities of the construction process.

Beyond the job, this was also a period of personal and political expansion. Through necessity, Caulfield had divided his London house into flats with his office at the top, living quarters at the bottom and tenants in-between. Mrs Caulfield, who Ward remembered as a more sympathetic character of wider interests than her husband, sat on Refugee Aid committees and through her connections brought in Miron Grindea, a Jewish-Romanian intellectual and literary journalist who fled Paris for England just before the outbreak of war. Grindea was joined by his wife Carola, a celebrated pianist, and daughter Nadia to live in one of the apartments.

Steeped in European artistic culture, Grindea soon took over the editorship of ADAM (*Art, Drama, Architecture, and Music*), a small journal whose densely packed pages covered a bewilderingly eclectic range of international cultural riches, all compiled according to their editor's taste from the little flat in Emperor's Gate. Caulfield, who viewed his tenant as a 'comic figure', would not deal with him personally. Ward would be sent down with notes for Grindea who would reply and, from time to time, press a free ADAM into the messenger's hands. In this way, he encountered a bibliography more extensive and international than many a university reading list.[27]

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[22] Alexander Stuart Gray, *Edwardian Architecture: A Biographical Dictionary* (London: Duckworth, 1985); David Goodway and Colin Ward, *Talking Anarchy*, 24, 69.

[23] Mervyn Miller and Alexander Gray, *Hampstead Garden Suburb* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1992).

[24] Colin Ward, *Influences* (Bideford: Resurgence, 1991), 92.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Colin Ward, 'Miron Grindea', *New Statesman and Society*, 8 December 1995.

[27] Ibid.

Although Ward was never one of Grindea's long-suffering assistants, charged with a relentless battery of tasks (from proofreading, wheedling authors for articles, and above all coping with the editor's unpredictable temper), ADAM provided a glimpse at the business of independent journalism, not least in the figure Grindea himself, the very embodiment of the autonomous editor. His editorials gave full rein to his idiosyncrasies, combining a montage of styles in astonishing feats of free association. Free to suit himself, he would switch from scholarly erudition to the silliest gossip, from aesthetic appreciation to social critique exactly as it suited him to do so.[28]

Alongside reading ADAM, Ward now began frequenting the Socialist Book Centre on the Essex Road, run by Jon Kimche, and, through here, first came across Freedom Press publications[29] although, given his Labour background it was *The Tribune*, of which Kimche was the de-facto editor,[30] that interested him more at this time. Once the mouthpiece of the then moribund Socialist League, the paper had morphed into the house-journal for those on the harder left of the Party, including many who would become the chief architects of the Welfare State, the arguments for which were rehearsed in its columns. In autumn 1941, alongside sustained critiques of Churchillian domestic and foreign policy, Ward would also have read an especially optimistic set of articles on modern science and socialism and, following Stalin's alliance with the Allies, the virtues of planned economy in the Soviet Union.

The idea of progress as a matter of scientifically informed design was naturally attractive to all those working in architecture, like Ward, but perhaps especially to an emerging cohort of students keen to distinguish themselves from the old gentleman amateurs through their professionalism. This helped prompt a 'rediscovery' of urban thinkers like Patrick Geddes.[31] A botanist by early training, Geddes saw societies as organic entities gradually evolving over time. Reasoning that development aligned with this natural growth would yield more efficient results, he famously proposed the regional survey as the optimum tool for gaining the necessary local knowledge.[32]

In the years immediately following his death in 1932, interest in Geddes waned (due in part to the scattered nature of his oeuvre) until, six years later, American historian Lewis Mumford recovered his reputation in *The Culture of Cities* (1938). In Britain, *The Culture of Cities* was enthusiastically reviewed by WH Holford, then professor of planning at the University of Liverpool in *Town Planning Review*[33] while Patrick Abercrombie, in his 1938 address to the Geographical Association, of which he was the chair, could state that the importance of Geddes' biological triad — folk-work-place — to planning education should be taken for granted.[34]

With the likes of Geddes back in favour amongst some of their teachers and restored to course reading lists, a generation of young architects emerged convinced of architecture's social role, eager for change and frustrated by lingering conservatism in the profession. Some sought inspiration from older British modernists (Max Fry and Wells Coates) and other luminaries like Walter

[28] Rachel Lasserson, ed., *ADAM: An Anthology of Miron Grindea's ADAM Editorials* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 2006); Anthony Rudolf, 'Miron Grindea Obituary', *The Independent*, 20 November 1995.

[29] Colin Ward, 'Report', January 1945, 216, Vernon Richards Papers/ARCH 01182, IISH.

[30] Ben Pimlott, 'Appendix: Tribune', *Labour and the Left in the 30s*, 107.

[31] Andrew Saint, *Towards a Social Architecture: The Role of School Building in Post-War England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 10—11.

[32] See Helen Meller, *Patrick Geddes: Social Evolutionist and City Planner* (Abington: Routledge, 1990).

[33] WH Holford, 'Review of the Culture of Cities', *The Town Planning Review*, 18:2 (1938), 143.

[34] Patrick Abercrombie, 'Geography as the Basis of Planning', *Geography*, 23:1 (1938), 1–8.

Gropius at Bauhaus, but above all from Le Corbusier, the Swiss-French architect who sought, through design and planning, the total transformation of social life. If these elders remained exciting, the students did not wish merely to replicate them. Taking modernism as a technique rather than an aesthetic, they determined that it should not petrify into a single style.

In taking up the modernist mantle, a small group studying the Association of Architecture School in London launched *Focus* (1938—1939), a little magazine in keeping with a longer tradition of proselytising architectural periodicals, through which they intended to mark out their own vision. The mood was earnest and urgent. Writing in the first edition, Anthony Cox, future founder of the Architect's Co-partnership, urged the role of architecture in shaping the social fabric of the whole community (1938). Avoiding fidelity to any one stance, the magazine encompassed a range of modernisms linked by a set of common themes: a concern with materials, technology, and industrial production, the social role of the architect, but above all architecture as a vehicle for social change.

Over four densely packed editions, its columns filled with detailed reports on social projects such as public housing, school building and factories, the last of which were almost entirely ignored by the major periodicals. Materials, from plastic to timber, were assessed for their democratic virtues, and many pages of serious debate were spent on whether the modern architect was to be a prototechnocrat or an advocate between people and industry. Architecture education, they urged, should be conducted via group work and interdisciplinary research. The gentleman architect, instructed in the Beaux-Artes tradition, was to be banished and in his place a new vernacular architecture based on material innovation, responsive to the emergent demands of the new social and economic age. Despite the short print run, *Focus* gained a readership of 1,500 and had an influence belying the brevity of its duration.[35]

The socialist bent of these ideas was clear and in seeking to establish a firm conceptual basis for their project, Marxism, or the contemporary iterations of it, proved especially attractive, not least for its intellectual satisfactions. Marxist theory synthesised normally discrete areas of life into an all-encompassing framework and offered an analytical language for how everything connected. It was also uncompromising in its commitment to applying science to human progress

(the latter it defined, of course, in its own image). This is not to say that all who drew upon it were Party members or even fellow travellers, but it is to acknowledge its influence across 1930s British intellectual life.[36]

This surge of interest had several roots. In the wake of Labour's collapse in 1931, there was doubt over whether socialistic measures were possible by existing parliamentary means. The persistence of economic depression throughout the 1930s also convinced many that capitalism was in fatal decline.[37] It also owed much to the CPGB's Popular Front policy shift (1935) which, by aligning itself with domestic democratic values, did much to seduce a left-leaning liberal intelligentsia towards the cause. Initiatives such as the Left Book Club, brainchild of publishing entrepreneur Victor Gollancz, and, to a less explicit extent, Allen Lane's Pelican Originals (an imprint of Penguin) put socialist ideas into affordable paperbacks intended for a wide reading

[35] Elizabeth Darling, 'Focus: A Little Magazine and Architectural Modernism in 1930s Britain', *The Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*, 3:1 (2012), 39–63.

[36] Daniel Ritschel, *The Politics of Planning: The Debate on Economic Planning in Britain in the 1930s* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 232–279.

[37] Ben Jackson, *Equality and the British Left* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 93–95.

public.[38] Titles such as *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation* (1937) from the former, or *Practical Economics* (1937) from the latter, drew unfavourable contrasts between the timidity of British social reforms against the sheer scale and ambition of the great Russian experiment.

For the most part, British Marxism remained an intellectual project, thoroughly filtered through British conditions and experience. Nevertheless, it was a significant thread inspiring a handful of brilliant individuals. In *The Social Function of Science* (1939), for example, the Cambridge scientist JD Bernal (who was a CPGB member) set out detailed proposals for the application of science at each step of the planning, design and construction process in urban development, assuring his readers that, 'the totally enclosed, spacious, air conditioned, town is rapidly becoming a practical proposition'.[39] The sheer technicality of these ideas, the promise of social perfection and limitless expansion, seized the imagination of scientists, architects and social reformers alike.[40]

If the Marxians dazzled with their elaborate models, others of a humanist bent, such as the supporters of the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), were more circumspect, less certain of the benefits of limitless growth and unchecked technological advance. Whilst welcoming scientific insight, enthusiasm was cautious and careful, generally preferring localised, gradual change that accounted for the whole of human well-being, not just economic productivity. Founded in 1898 by Ebenezer Howard to promote Garden Cities, the TCPA was his response to the pressing problems of land use and social reform at the *fin de siecle.* Assimilating ideas on land tenure, utopian communities, and organised migration, he proposed to synthesise the best of town and country living in small, self-sustaining cities with fixed populations employed in local industries that generated income for reinvestment back into community life. Following the successful completion of a prototype, Letchworth, momentum waned. Garden suburbs, like Hampstead, had greater success although Howard complained that by not generating independent industry, they missed the main point.[41]

During the interwar years, the Association remained a lonely but persistent voice in the call for Garden Cities until, in 1936, with the appointment of Frederic Osborn as General Secretary, it shrewdly broadened its campaign moving towards a more generalised application of Garden City principles which avoided the expense of founding entirely new settlements. This allowed for greater political traction, and therefore state funding which released them from reliance on private philanthropy. Following the outbreak of war, the Association increased its efforts to influence government policy launching the 'National Planning Basis' which called for the creation of a central planning authority, distinct from any existing government department. This authority would be concerned with, amongst other things, the redevelopment of congested urban areas, decentralisation and ensuring the balance of industry throughout the country. Such objectives would be achieved through building new Garden Cities, suburbs, satellite towns, trading estates, or further developing small towns.[42]

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[38] Beatrice and Sidney Webb, *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation* (London: LBC, 1937); GDH Cole, *Practical Economics* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1937); Paul Laity, *Left Book Club Anthology* (London: Left Book Club, 2001).

[39] JD Bernal, *The Social Function of Science* (London: G. Routledge and Son, 1939).

[40] Elizabeth Darling, '*Focus*: A Little Magazine and Architectural Modernism in 1930s Britain', 39–63. *The Social Function* received a glowing review in *Focus.*

[41] For an overview see Dennis Hardy, *From Garden Cities to New Towns: Campaigning for Town and Country Planning 1899—1946* (London: E&FN Spon, 1991), 36–113. See also, Peter Hall and Colin Ward, *Sociable Cities: The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 1998), 17–40.

[42] Dennis Hardy, *From Garden Cities*, 114–239.

Even with their enlarged remit, the TCPA kept faith with its founding principles: sensitive local development, low-density population, balance of residential, rural, and industrial zones, and flourishing community life. This placed it in firm opposition to the high-rise, high-density, ultra-urban, industrial chic enchanting many of architecture's young turks. Bernal's 'totally enclosed, spacious, air conditioned town' may have been 'a practical proposition' but to the TCPA and its membership, it was a horrifying one.

Ward, in forming his ideas on social planning, science, and politics, found two writers important: Lethaby (whose book he finally did get round to reading) and George Orwell. Lethaby, as director of the Central School of Arts and Crafts, had stressed construction and craftsmanship, believing that everyone, architect, carpenter, bricklayer, and furniture maker, should know they were building a house and understand how each component fitted together. He became known for his plain, functional style and stress of rationalism in construction which, he believed, made it more accessible.[43] As he said in an address to the Royal Institute of British Architects annual conference in 1917, 'train us to practical power, make us great builders and adventurous experimenters, then each of us can supply his own poetry to taste'.[44]

This, along with his preoccupation with materials, interest in new technologies and the construction industry, proved so influential to a generation of modernists emerging at that time that some perceived in him a betrayal of his original Morrisian principles.[45] While he did help shape many of the values of British modernism, he did not share in its rejection of the past. That said, his historical consciousness was not crudely reproductive but reflective: to grasp the character of a place, one had to appreciate its history, the ways in which it embodied and expressed the passage of time and people. Only by understanding this could a truly vernacular architecture emerge.

Although of an older generation, Ward saw a contemporary application for Lethaby's ideas, not least in the niche found between forward-facing modernism and backwards-looking traditionalism. His was a modest modernism, open but careful in its use of technology, in close step with how real people lived and felt. Lethaby's character owed much to his route into architecture. Coming from humble origins, he learnt his craft through practice rather than study. His first job as an architect's clerk had placed him in charge of practical operational questions and liaisons. Like Ward, he had organised schedules of work, fielded concerns, and kept the records. Moving restlessly between the various interested parties, he could never disappear too far into a realm of ideas but had to retain a full factual overview of the process.

Where Lethaby caught Ward's architectural interests, Orwell spoke to his political ones. He now read Orwell's journalism extensively, his regular 'As I Please' column in *The Tribune*, and the longer essays which were 'hard to find anywhere else' at the time.[46] The late 1930s had been a period of profound personal and political upheaval for Orwell, starting with his 'epiphany' in Wigan and culminating with Spain.[47] Although radicalised by these experiences, they left him in a complex relationship to the political left. He was never a Party man (even less so after Spain), nor blindly a 'movement' one. From 1940, he wrote extensively on political commitment and

[43] Trever Garnham, 'William Lethaby and the Two Ways of Building', *AA Files*, 10 (1985), 27–43.

[44] WR Lethaby, *Form in Civilisation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 122–123.

[45] See Peter Davey, *Arts and Crafts Architecture* (London: Phaidon Press, 1980).

[46] David Goodway and Colin Ward, *Talking Anarchy*, 24.

[47] Robert Colls, 'The People's Orwell', in Clare Griffiths et al., eds., *Class, Culture, Politics: Essays for Ross McKibbon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 155–172.

English culture, returning constantly to two key ideas. Firstly, that both artistic and political truth stemmed from confronting the world 'as it really was'. Secondly, that ordinary people, rather than ideologists or intellectuals, by not expecting to impose their will upon the world (and therefore having little to gain from self-deception) tended to do this naturally and sensibly.[48]

Orwell's other great value to Ward was his writing style. As Crick noted, he was a master of column journalism whose articles became a 'model for young journalists' with their 'mixture of profundity and humour, their range and variety, and for their plain, easy colloquial style'.[49] Orwell considered good style as more than artistically gratifying, it was a political act. 'All art is propaganda' he observed in his essay on 'Charles Dickens' (1940); even the most apparently trivial of literary ephemera, like 'Boy's Weeklies' (1940), projected ideological messages. Why was it, then, that 'in England popular imaginative literature is a field that left-wing thought has never begun to enter'?[50] Whether Ward embraced the full Orwellian position (which could be dogmatic on questions of intellectual honesty and national culture[51]) or not at this time, he was drawn to the expression of faith in the 'common-sense' of 'common-people'. This mattered at a time dominated by experts and theories.

Ward did not remain a spectator. On 5 December 1941, he got his first publication with a short letter in *The Tribune* replying to a previous article 'Wren's London Can Be Built' by Dr TH Hill. Hill was the Deputy Medical Officer for West Ham Council (for whom Ward had worked as a construction clerk) and author of *The Health of England* (1933), a set of proposals for the reform of public health through a centrally administered voluntary sterilisation programmes for the poor, disabled, and mentally defective as a necessary measure to promote 'the breeding of genius and creation of an intellectual aristocracy'.

In his London article, Hill was equally committed to public improvement through urban regeneration, suggesting that the rebuilding of London be based on plans drawn up by Christopher Wren following the Great Fire of 1666. Wren's designs featured a series of satellite towns in which workers could be housed and overcrowding eased in the city centre. In contrast with this elegant masterpiece of civic design, Hill found much to condemn about the LCC's housing efforts. Drawing from his own patch he lamented the 'ugly' and unvarying design for housing on the Becontree estate in Dagenham.

Ward picked a relatively small point to contest with the Deputy Medical Officer. He defended the plain style of the Beacontree houses, arguing that using building materials familiar to builders and cultivating a 'traditional domestic' style which people could adapt had proved efficient and preserved the unity of appearance across the whole estate. Would, he asked, Dr Hill have preferred 'sham Tudor cottages alternating with bay windowed "semis" with trivial red brick ornaments?' Those, he suggested, were best left to the speculative builder. He did, however, agree with Dr Hill that the estate wanted for better town planning, the 'ribbon' style — row upon row of

[48] See Peter Marks, *Orwell the Essayist: Literature, Politics, and the Periodical Culture* (London: Continuum, 2011). See also Michael Waltzer, *In the Company of Critics* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 117–135.

[49] Bernard Crick, *George Orwell: A Life* (Harmonsworth: Penguin, 1980), 20.

[50] George Orwell, 'Charles Dickens (1940)', in Stefan Collini, ed., *Selected Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 10–55; 'Boy's Weeklies (1940)', *Selected Essays*, 56–79.

[51] Scott Lucas, *The Betrayal of Dissent: Beyond Orwell, Hitchens and the New American Century* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 9–31.

houses — with no shops, work-places or common social spaces gave the estate a certain sterility; a dormitory suburb rather than community, a danger too, perhaps, with Wren's satellites.[52]

Here was a rehearsal of a Lethaby-esque philosophy of architecture, commending function and efficiency in construction, leaving the 'poetry' to the tenants (he was, perhaps, unaware of just how severe the *Tenant's Handbook* regulations were). But the young Labour man was clearly in evidence, government housing remained an unproblematic good. No mention was made, yet, of the lost cottages and market gardens lain to waste.

This proved just the beginning of his activities. A week later, a short notice appeared in *The Tribune*:

Colin Ward of 8 Collinwood Gardens is forming an Architectural Student's Club, and would like students interested in architecture and town planning to communicate with him with a view to starting a discussion group.[53]

On 29 January 1942, *The Tribune* reported in full the contents of the club's first talk, during which one Mr Colin Ward had addressed the advantages of timber houses: it was readily available, easily reproduced, malleable as a building material, efficient as an insulator, and sympathetic with the natural environment, nor was it the fire risk many supposed. In short, it represented a perfect synthesis of beauty, function — and democracy.[54]

A few months later, in the spring, *Town and Country Planning Journal* announced the launch of *The Forward View*, the journal of the Ilford Architectural Students' Club, Ward's first independent foray into publishing. In keeping with the tradition of 'little magazines', echoing *Focus*, anticipating *Anarchy* (but mostly responding to wartime paper shortages), the journal was A5 in size and just 12 tightly packed pages in length per issue. Ward sourced the articles from club members, most of whom were technically artists rather than architects, pasting them up on his kitchen table and running them through the clam printing press.

The first issue covered: 'Is practical planning possible?', 'Youth against fascism', 'The 50th anniversary of the death of Walt Whitman', 'An appreciation of Sickert',[55] and 'The Town and Country Planning Association's "National Planning Basis"'. Where *Focus* had idolised Le Corbusier and science for its universal truths, *The Forward View* looked to art and local knowledge. TCPA chair Frederic Osborn was delighted, noting in his planning commentary 'that a group of lively young architects should refuse to be led away by pseudo-modern philosophies but should give their support to an organisation which is striving for human planning' was highly encouraging.[56] He also wrote personally to Ward expressing his support for the venture.[57]

How many issues of *The Forward View* were produced is hard to say as no trace remains. What he might have gone on to do next with it is equally uncertain as on 14 August 1942, Ward turned 18 and was duly conscripted.

[52] Colin Ward, 'Letter', *The Tribune*, 5 December 1941

[53] Norman Slaughter, 'Private Enterprise and Housing Plans', *The Tribune*, 11 December 1941.

[54] Norman Slaughter, 'The Advantages of Timber Housing', *The Tribune*, 29 January 1942.

[55] Walter Sickert (1860—1942), British post-impressionist painter.

[56] Frederic J. Osbourn, 'Planning Commentary', *Town and Country Planning Journal*, Vol., X (Spring 1942), 26.

[57] Colin Ward, 'Play It Again Ben', *Bulletin of Environmental Education*, 45, November 1974.

2. Sapper Ward

Ward faced conscription with resignation. On the advice of his father, he decided to keep his head down, shrug his shoulders, and lie low.[1] Ward was not alone in his reluctance. The Second World War, Alan Allport notes, inspired far less patriotic zeal than the First. When one Education Corps officer asked new recruits about their reasons for fighting, the most common answers were 'I don't know' or 'Because I have to'. Off-duty talk in the barracks could verge on the mutinous, although this tended to be mostly about venting frustration. Given that only 2% of those eligible to fight applied for hearings as conscientious objectors, such ambivalence cannot be taken as outright hostility; indeed, for the most part, there was compliance. What it does suggest, however, is a low-level discontentedness which, with a little assistance, could be easily fanned.[2]

After Basic Training, Ward, now a Sapper (Private), joined the Royal Engineers and was sent to the Army School of Hygiene in Aldershot where he worked as a draughtsman making large-scale drawings of latrines and insects, a recollection he relished for its inglorious qualities. His time here was brief; in the autumn of 1943, he was posted to Glasgow and quartered in a requisitioned mansion house in Park Terrace. He spent his free Sundays exploring this 'exotic' (for a southern Englishman) city, later reflecting how the shocking levels of poverty encountered there had politicised him.[3] Given that his father's schools had been in some of the poorest areas of London, and that he had already been frequenting the Socialist Book Centre, this seems an embellishment. Still, whatever his political interests had been previously, Glasgow brought them into focus through his encounter with the Glasgow Anarchist Group (GAG).

The Glasgow Anarchists

The Glasgow Anarchist Movement emerged in 1895 out of the Anti-Parliamentarian arm of William Morris's Socialist League and flourished until the First World War when forced to disband for its anti-war position. During the interwar years, its activities were sporadic and by 1932 it seemed a spent force. In 1936 the Spanish Revolution stimulated a revival of interest. Central here was Frank Leech, a former Navy heavyweight boxing champion turned newsagent, originally from Ireland. He was joined by Eddie Shaw, Jimmy Raeside, and Jimmy Dick, shortly followed by John Caldwell Taylor and Charlie and Molly Baird, who formed the core of the

[1] Colin Ward interviewed by Lyn Smith, *The Anti War Movement (Oral History)*, 1, 29 August 1986, 9327, Imperial War Museum, http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80009116 [last accessed 4 October 2021].

[2] Alan Allport, 'An Army of Shopkeepers', in *Browned-Off and Bloody Minded: The British Soldier Goes to War 1939—1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 59—85; James Lansdale Hodson, *The Home Front* (London: Gollancz, 1944), 302—303; Stephen Fielding, 'The Second World War and Popular Radicalism: The Significance of the Movement Away from Party', *History*, 80:258 (1995), 38—58.

[3] David Goodway and Colin Ward, *Talking Anarchy* (Oakland: PM Press, 2014), 24—25; Colin Ward interview by Lyn Smith, *The Anti War Movement*.

new Glasgow Anarchist Group (GAG). Through Leech's connections, GAG affiliated with the Freedom Press group (FP) and, through them, the London Anarchist Group (LAG) along with smaller groups and individuals scattered across the country, to become the Anarchist Federation of Britain (AFB).[4]

The FP journals, *Spain and the World* (SW) (1936—1939), *Revolt!* (1939), and *War Commentary* (WC) (1939—1945), provided the AFB's focal point and mouthpiece, publishing its declaration of aims and principles:

The establishment of an anarchist society which will render impossible the growth of a privileged class and the exploitation of man by man. The Anarchist Federation therefore advocates free access to land, industry and all means of production and distribution on the basis of voluntary co-operation.

Towards achieving this, it committed itself, and its members, to class struggle (as 'the exploiting class and the working class have no interests in common'), and implacable opposition to the state and 'all means of maintaining class-divided society — parliament, the legal system, the police, the armed forces, the Church, etc.'; no compromise was possible with 'the forces of reformism and reactionism'. Accordingly, it rejected the war 'as the outcome of the clashing interests of rival imperialisms' and sought to 'expose the facile slogan of democracy versus fascism', calling instead for direct action, class organisation through syndicates and workers' councils.[5]

Ward's Sundays fell into a routine. In the mornings he would read at the Mitchell Library and after lunch go to Glasgow Green to hear the anarchist speakers, an activity which was part education, part entertainment. Public oration on Glasgow Green was a long-standing tradition and not for the fainthearted, especially for those presenting a minority point of view. In the early 40s, the most aggressive hecklers were the Communists (continuing the longstanding animosity between the two groups) and Trade Unionists (who resented the anarchists' accusations of hypocrisy and careerism). One debate, for example, ironically on free speech, erupted into a physical fight after the anarchist Anti-Parliamentarians accused Communist Party members of dominating a meeting.[6]

For GAG, the stakes were high. Sunday was a crucial opportunity, a small window to court both workers and servicemen on what was typically their one full day of leisure. Performance on the platform mattered. Of the group, Shaw and Raeside were renowned to be 'social animals' and to have, in different ways, the gift of showmanship. Shaw was witty, sardonic, and charming, able to enter a conversation with anyone. Some amongst his fellows found his style self-serving and arrogant; he was, they charged, too quick to pander to the emotions of his audience rather than rely on reason, but he could certainly hold a crowd. Raeside, by contrast, was less flamboyant but considered more logical, sending his audience away thinking. Either way, GAG advocates generally presented a Kropotkinian social anarchist stance (although Shaw claimed to prefer

[4] Mark Shipway, *Anti-Parliamentary Communism: The Movement for Workers Councils in Britain 1917—1945* (London: Palgrave, 1988), 3—32; Charlie Baird Snr, 'An Interview', 6 June 1977, interview transcript available from http://libcom.org/history/anarchism-1940s-glasgow [accessed 12 April 2021]; John Taylor Caldwell, 'Anarchism in Glasgow: Charlie Baird Snr, Mollie Baird, John Taylor Caudwell, Barbara Raeside, and Jimmy Raeside', 14 August 1987, interview transcripts available from @@@[[http://libcom.org][http://libcom.org/history/anarchism-1940s-glasgow [accessed 12 April 2021]; Tony Gibson, 'Philip Sansom Interview', TGP/ARCH00515, IISH.

[5] *War Commentary*, mid-September 1943.

[6] John Taylor Caldwell, 'Anarchism in Glasgow'.

Max Stirner's egoist) which they adapted to topics chosen to appeal to their target audiences; for soldiers, the incompetence of military leadership; for workers, the treachery of trade unions.[7]

After the speeches, the remains of the afternoon were spent milling on the green, or in the anarchist bookshop in nearby St. George Street, with members of the audience who had lingered. This was an important second stage; after the drama of the platform other GAG members came forward, less gifted at oratory but able to stimulate more intense discussion, sell copies of WC, or entice the curious to the bookshop for other FP publications. By 7 pm, those still standing migrated into the room above the Hangman's Rest pub.

Although conducted in a social spirit, these meetings were also serious 'business' occasions, with intense discussion on strategy and campaign planning which constituted the third phase of recruitment, drawing the new initiate into political activity. It could start quite simply; a soldier, for example, might be charged with circulating WC around their barracks, and a worker with reporting on union activity in their factory. Gradually, they might then be invited to join one of a plethora of study and propaganda groups, perhaps to start from for themselves. For the confident speakers, an opportunity to take the platform, for the able writers, a chance to write for the paper.[8] When not working, there were cycling expeditions, snooker competitions, dances, and paddle steamer trips on the Waverley.[9] Trusted with a task, made to feel valued, and included in a network of friendships, the recruit was drawn in by increments.[10]

Such a group depended on intensely personal relationships of trust which could lead to fierce clashes when these were flouted. While theoretical debates inevitably ensued (Shaw's individualism against the others' social anarchism) the demand for doctrinal consensus was relatively low and they accommodated each other's differences philosophically (deciding that, when all was said and done, 'there was not much difference between self and social interest'[11]). The more divisive matter concerned Shaw and Leech's relationship with the FP group which several found unsettling. Despite accepting WC as the mouthpiece of the AFB movement, GAG members found the FP cohort to be 'theoreticals' and 'intellectuals', remote from the movement's workerist roots.[12] Matters intensified when requests to include more coverage of industrial disputes in WC were, in their view, ignored. Considering that GAG, as the largest group in the federation, returned the largest amount of subscription fees and that their membership was primarily industrial workers, they found FP's reluctance unreasonable.

Discontent deepened as it became clear that Leech and Shaw were strategising with the FP behind their backs. Ultimately, this would all come to a head, but in the autumn of 1943, the relationship was holding and GAG gaining numbers.

Ward retained a strong affection for the GAG, but theirs was not his world. He was not an industrial worker and never shared the same understanding of it. If they had been his only experience of anarchism, perhaps his interest might have faded into vague sympathy. It was the charismatic Leech, however, he credited with 'winning him for anarchism'.[13] A veteran propa-

[7] Charlie Baird Snr, 'An Interview'.

[8] John Taylor Caldwell, 'Anarchism in Glasgow'.

[9] Mollie Baird, 'Anarchism in Glasgow'.

[10] See Raphael Samuel, *The Lost World of British Communism* (London: Verso, 2006) for a comparison with 1940s Communist Party recruitment tactics.

[11] John Caldwell Taylor, 'Anarchism in Glasgow'.

[12] Mollie Baird, 'Anarchism in Glasgow'.

[13] Tony Gibson, 'Colin Ward Interview', TGP/ARCH00515, IISH; David Goodway and Colin Ward, *Talking Anarchy*, 25—26.

gandist, Leech was well versed in the intrigues, liaisons, and uneasy alliances of radical activism. His connection with FP had started in October 1936 when he became editor of *Fighting Call*, a short-lived merger between the old *Freedom* and the Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation (APCF) paper *Advance*. After FP reinvented itself and brought out SW (December 1936), he joined the editorial board, distributing the paper through the APCF networks until breaking with that group in April. He went on to co-found the Anarchist Communist Federation (ACF) and to call for unity amongst the various revolutionary groups in support of Spain. He and his wife Mary continued as board members when SW became *Revolt!* and then again when it became WC.[14]

What Leech spotted in the quiet young Sapper was unclear; he was said to have rarely taken interest in anyone as lowly as a private, reserving his most strenuous efforts for the officer class.[15] Still, something about this quiet Londoner roused his interest enough to befriend him. What appealed to Ward about Leech is more obvious; he ran a small independent printing press from above one of his shops on the Netherton Road, out of which he produced and distributed anarchist literature.

An Anarchist Education

On hearing Leech recommend the Italian anarchist Camillo Berneri's pamphlet *Peter Kropotkin: His Federalist Idea* to a sceptical disputant, Ward took the advice himself and bought it from the bookshop. That this pamphlet was one of his earliest encounters with anarchist propaganda is significant. First written in 1922, while Camillo had still been a student in Italy, translated and reprinted by WC in 1942, the piece used federalism as a multifaceted lens into Kropotkin's thought and life. It began by presenting the Russian as a young scientist in his first position as a government secretary in Tsarist Russia exposed, for the first time, to the inefficiency and inhumanity of remote administrative systems even as, at the same time, his scientific research showed him the role of the 'anonymous masses' in the development of civilisation. It then told of how he left his government post to join with left-wing intellectuals only to discover that they only recreated the problems in a different way. Centralism, then, from any ideological direction, would always result in oppression because it always concentrated power in a few hands. Only through total decentralisation was a genuine diffusion of power possible. Only through federalism was decentralisation a workable possibility.

As well as providing a rich introduction to Kropotkin's thought, reprinting the pamphlet in the early 1940s joined a contemporary debate on federalism sideways. Since the 1930s, there had been renewed interest in synchronising national political and economic interests as the basis for permanent peace.[16] Although global in its most ambitious forms, since the war, focus had narrowed to Europe and was steadily gaining support.[17] In autumn 1939, Clement Attlee believed that the future of Europe was federation or destruction,[18] and *The Tribune* concurred that 'most

[14] Colin Ward, 'Frank Leech Obituary', *Freedom*, 17 January 1953; Mark Shipway, 'The Late Twenties and Early Thirties', *Anti Parliamentary Communism*, 107—127.

[15] Mollie Baird, 'Anarchism in Glasgow'.

[16] Martin Caedel, *Semi-Detached Idealists: The British Peace Movement and International Relations 1854—1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 384—386.

[17] Ibid., 400.

[18] Cited in K. Harris, *Attlee* (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1982), 168.

of us' wanted a federation of all countries in Europe.[19] But, read through Kropotkin, making nation-states the primary unit of federal organisation was at best only a partial realisation of the idea. At worst it was a distortion, concentrating power in the hands of a political class. If one accepted the principle, it was then only a matter of expanding it to its most molecular form, community level. Here and here alone would it be fully substantiated.

Such a fine-grained version of federalism was already familiar to Ward. It was a strain in the Garden City movement, championed by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), with its archipelagos of autonomous cities. Kropotkin, as presented by Camillo, had taken it further still. No matter what claims were made in the name of the people, if people themselves were not the active creators of their communities, genuine socialism was undermined. Even the localism of the TCPA, which gave room to real people and their concerns, did so from a position of expertise and still called for a dedicated government department (a centralised authority) to administrate. Only in anarchism, with its complete rejection of authority, was this tension resolved.

Aside from its core argument, the pamphlet was also the model of clever propaganda, or at least the sort likely to appeal to a reader like Ward, concise, well-written, and, above all, supremely reasonable. It avoided many common pitfalls that made political polemic unattractive, such as hectoring or obscurant- ism.[20] Rather than abstract theory in technical language, it used a historical, contextualising approach, framing Kropotkin's federalism as the fruit of his lived experience and the common sense arising from that. As narrator, Camillo was charming and disarming. Kropotkin, he noted, had once said 'I had to elaborate a completely new style for these pamphlets', which, he conceded, he had also needed to do himself.[21]

Its other great strength was in its handling of Russia's controversial support for the First World War, which had caused tremendous consternation amongst the movement and derision from critics outside. Given that anti-militarism was a mainstay of anarchist thought ('Anarchism opposes war as the outcome of clashing interests between rival imperialisms'[22]) the apparent incongruity of Kropotkin's anti-anti-militarism, and the force with which he stuck to it, damaged his credibility in some eyes.[23] Camillo could not leave it unaddressed, and could not be uncritical, but, through the biographical method, he was able to contextualise the decision, to show how the depth of Kropotkin's federalist conviction had, perhaps, blinkered his reading of geo-politics, persuading him that the threat posed by German victory was simply too great. Presented like this, it even became something of a virtue: in anarchism, you would find no infallible prophets, only real men and women grappling with the problems of their day, making good calls and bad ones, but keeping faith with the core value of liberty.

For Ward, this was the beginning of an intense period of reading. After this, he worked through more FP literature which the group willingly supplied to newcomers (providing they consequently 'lost' them in conveniently public places[24]). Between 1942 and 1944, FP published

[19] *The Tribune*, 10 November 1939.

[20] Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the English Working Class* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 308.

[21] Camillo Berneri, *Kropotkin: His Federalist Idea* (London: Freedom Press, 1942), 10.

[22] 'Manifesto of the Anarchist Federation on War', *War Commentary*, mid-December 1943.

[23] Davide Turcato, 'Saving the Future: The Roots of Malatesta's Anti-Militarism', in Matthew Adams and Ruth Kinna, eds., *Anarchism 1914—1918: Internationalism, AntiMilitarism and Anti War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 29—48; Peter Ryley, 'The Manifesto of the Sixteen: Kropotkin's Rejection of Anti-War Anarchism and His Critique of the Politics of Peace', *Anarchism 1914–1918*, 49–68.

[24] FP editors, 'Circular', 25 October 1944, 216, Vernon Richards Papers (VRP)/ ARCH01182, IISH.

a total of 152,574 copies of books and booklets including several abridged reprints from the anarchist 'classics'.[25] In 1943 the publication list promoted *Selections from Kropotkin*, chosen and edited by Herbert Read, *Anarchy* by Errico Malatesta, *Selections from Political Justice* by William Godwin, and *God and the State* by Mikhail Bakunin,[26] all selected for contemporary resonance. Curating these anarchist primers was a vital aspect of FP's work, not just in terms of spreading anarchist ideas but for inculcating a set of common cultural reference points amongst potential new recruits. On the downside, for a novice reader, unlikely to stumble across the originals, it was hard to identify the traces of editorial decision-making.

In Read's *Selections*, for example, the chosen extracts did not appear in chronological order, nor were individual pieces accompanied by explanatory notes. Read described the book as 'a select summary of the main outlines of Kropotkin's social philosophy, as expressed in his larger works' adding that 'it only remains to emphasise once more that Kropotkin gave fresh direction and coherence to a doctrine which [...] still lacked a formulation in the terms of modern scientific thought'. As an editor, he had considered his job to be one of distilling that direction into its most essential form.

The order Read inscribed upon Kropotkin's work reflected less the Russian's intellectual biography than Read's own interests in educational psychology.[27] The arrangement modelled a process of reasoning developing through ever more sophisticated levels of abstraction. Kropotkin's direct experiences, as expressed in his autobiographical writing, were transformed into historical insights. These were then organised into broader principles of political economy which were then, in turn, synthesised into a restatement of materialist philosophy. As such, the process mirrored the metamorphosis of socialism from an intuitive egalitarian sentiment through increasing degrees of conceptual and practical structure, until, in Read's account, it found the fullest, most logical realisation in modern, scientific anarchism.[28] Very different from Camillo's genially contingent contextualisation.

An uninitiated reader, reading sequentially, may not have fully appreciated the fact that this was not the order the texts had been written in. That said, there was, of course, no guarantee that any but the most diligent reader would have read it that way. They could just as easily have simply alighted on the sections or topics that happened to interest them. As an anthology, the book accommodated both sorts of readings and could, therefore, produce very different kinds of anarchist thinkers.

Alongside the 'classics' range, FP was also developing a series of pamphlets which applied classic ideas to contemporary issues. In this, George Woodcock, another new recruit and aspiring writer, was especially prolific, applying Kropotkin's ideas (as set out in *Fields, Factories, and Workshops* [1899]) for autonomous organisation to agriculture, transport, and housing, three of the hottest topics of the day.[29] Each FP pamphlet adopted a similar structure. The bulk was devoted to a careful analysis of the problems confronting the issue in question which were, on closer inspection, usually those inherent to parliamentary democracies and capitalist economies. The

[25] 'Freedom Court Case 1945' 216, VRP, IISH.

[26] Freedom Press Publications List, *War Commentary*, mid-August 1943.

[27] Read had just published *Education through Art* (London: Faber and Faber, 1943), which drew heavily from Piagetian theories of child development.

[28] Herbert Read, *Selections from Kropotkin* (London: Freedom Press, 1943).

[29] George Woodcock, *New Life to the Land* (London: Freedom Press, 1942); *Railways* (London: Freedom Press, 1943); *Homes or Hovels* (London: Freedom Press, 1944).

final chapters proposed anarchism as the antidote and gave a few helpful suggestions towards starting the revolution.

Where the pamphlets addressed topics, the paper kept up an anarchist analysis of 'real time' events which, unsurprisingly, mostly concerned the war, although at least one page per issue was reserved for news of industrial reports (in concession to the GAG request). Maintaining such a persistent commentary was demanding and frequent pleas were made for readers 'who write to write and to keep writing and to learn as much about the movement as possible'.[30] Ward did not take much persuasion. Between December 1943 and March 1944, he penned four pieces in the WC 'house style'.

No less than the pamphlets, WC followed an unofficial style template. Articles exposed and denounced authoritarian tendencies or recognised and commended libertarian ones, ideally by anarchists, but workers' or people's uprisings were acceptable. In composition, WC writers would take existing reports, speeches, or books and 're-read' them through an anarchist lens. Where they could, they publicised anarchist or affiliated activities heard about through their own networks but not covered in the mainstream press. The prose style was plain and straightforward but forceful. There were subtle variations between the regular writers — some were more earnest, others more sardonic — but these were relatively slight.

Ward's early pieces followed these conventions. 'Allied Military Government' (December 1943) attacked AMGOT, the first allied organisation established in liberated Europe. The main protagonists, he argued, were all businessmen and military elite with a vested interest in securing power. Its claims to be a liberating force were a lie: 'have the Italian people been helped to rid themselves of the Fascist legacy?' he asked. No, Churchill had outlawed popular action.[31] The following three increased in fluency. 'UNRRA', 'Europe's Next Enemies', and 'The Political Use of Relief' criticised plans to centralise the distribution of relief and disband localised voluntary agencies which, he argued, did not enhance efficiency but were convenient ruses for maintaining civic control. Taken ensemble, the four pieces show how anarchism supplied him with a set of tools for deflating the official rhetoric of Allied heroism and moral superiority.[32]

Back in the Mitchell Library, he kept up his reading of trade journals, submitting two short letters to *Architect's Journal* (1944) and *Keystone: Journal of Association of Building Technicians* (1945) which show how he had begun applying anarchist ideas to his own field. In the first letter (*Architects*) he registered his alarm at the LCC's plans to develop a large housing scheme near Ilford, objecting that London was already too big and that the lack of integrated planning made such developments little more than a shapeless new dormitory, to which he added (invoking Kropotkin) that already 'thousands of acres of London's valuable market gardening land have already been swallowed up',[33] a subtle shift in tone from his letter to *The Tribune* (5 December 1941) defending the Beacontree Estate.

The *Keystone* letter, written a year later, was more politically developed. Whilst welcoming a proposed political levy by building technicians, he strongly opposed that this should be done through the unions. 'The lesson of history', he wrote, showed that unions were concerned with '*economic* not political struggle'. In other words, they had been successful in the 'sterile and

[30] FP Editors, 'Circular', 25 October 1944.

[31] Colin Ward, 'Allied Military Government', *War Commentary*, December 1944.

[32] Colin Ward, 'UNRRA', *War Commentary*, January 1944; 'Europe's Next Enemies', *War Commentary*, February 1944; 'The Political Use of Relief', *War Commentary*, March 1944.

[33] Colin Ward, 'Letter', *Architect's Journal*, 13 January 1944.

ineffectual field of reformist politics' but not on the fundamental question of worker control. Energy, he concluded should not be wasted on the 'vote-catching racket' but on 'direct action for better conditions for building workers and better houses for people'.[34]

Meanwhile in late 1943 Leech was arrested for failing to register for firewatching duty, a minor offence for which he received a fine and refused to pay. Taken to Barlinnie jail he seized an opportunity for propaganda and went on hunger strike. Seventeen days in, the situation looked grim. None of Leech's known associates was permitted to visit. The group considered that Ward, as an unknown soldier in uniform (as he had no other clothes to wear), was more likely to be admitted, and so persuaded him to try and get Leech to relent. In the end, there was no need, the fine was mysteriously paid and all he had to do was escort Leech home. Shortly after this event, however, he was transferred to the Orkney and Shetland Island Maintenance Unit, about the remotest possible place from which to contribute to the war effort, which he suspected owed something to his visit to the prison.[35]

How Ward felt about this posting-cum-exile from the Glasgow Anarchists at the time is hard to tell. As with all soldiers, his life was not his own; this was simply an order which he had to obey. Ultimately, he would recall Orkney, with its remoteness and a small population of fisherfolk, with great fondness.[36] It also meant that there was not much to do, or people to do it with, so one could do a lot of thinking. Assigned a job as a boiler man for the local branch of the WRENs he found, once the boiler was stoked for the day, he had plenty of time to continue his reading (ironic considering the posting was intended to disrupt his anarchist education), which he did keenly, kept well supplied in literature by Lilian Woolfe, the FP's London office manager. Alongside the paper, he read books on *Revolutionary Portugal*, *The War in Spain*, and *Behind the Barricades in Spain*.[37] For such a naturally mild person, exchanging direct action for quiet reading was no great deprivation.

But some mood of rebelliousness prevailed. Not long after arriving on Orkney, he staged, quite uncharacteristically, a small act of resistance. Asked to undertake a surveying job, he refused, making the case that he was a Sapper, not a trained surveyor, and was placed in detention for 56 days for using insubordinate language and disobeying an order.[38] While detained, his belongings were confiscated and searched, and shortly after he found himself being escorted back to the mainland where Inspector Whitehead of London's Special Branch, then investigating subversive political activity, was waiting to interview him. In early 1945, Whitehead, whose investigations bore fruit, summoned him down to London, along with six other soldiers from across Britain, as a witness for the prosecution in the 'Freedom Press' trial.

The Freedom Press Trial

The Freedom Press trial caught the popular imagination and gave a public airing to the anarchist cause in an unexpected way. Cleverly framed as a national debate on free speech and its value in a supposedly democratic nation, it attracted a celebrity following, drew the close attention of the mainstream press and was even the source of parliamentary questions to Herbert

[34] Colin Ward, 'Letter', *Keystone: Journal of the Association of Building Technicians*, 1945.
[35] Tony Gibson, 'Colin Ward Interview'.
[36] Harriet Ward, personal communication with author, 8 July 2020.
[37] Colin Ward to Vernon Richards, 'Report', January 1945, 216, VRP/ARCH01182, IISH.
[38] Ibid. Tony Gibson, 'Colin Ward Interview'.

Morrison, the Home Secretary, who declined to comment. For Ward, the trial was personally important as it was the direct catalyst for his long-term involvement with the FP group. His accounts of it, however, were characteristically understated, the story and his part in it told as another example of farcical governmental bungling. Nevertheless, the episode reveals much about the wider political context in which his early encounter with the FP Anarchists took place.[39]

Special Branch had long been aware of FP and indeed all the AFB activities. Whilst disapproving, they had not, at first, considered them a serious threat, so contented themselves with just monitoring the situation. As the war turned, and the prospect of managing the transition back to peacetime loomed, their attention intensified. In September 1944, WC writer Tom Brown was arrested and jailed for 15 months for handing out seditious leaflets. In November 1944, WC cartoonist John Olday, an army deserter and notoriously erratic character, was arrested and jailed for 12 months for 'stealing by finding an identity card'. In fact, Sansom recalled, this was nothing to what he had really been doing, handwriting, printing, and circulating a newsletter 'urging soldiers to sabotage and all this sort of stuff — quite strong stuff — and much much worse than anything that appeared in the paper openly, because we had to be relatively careful'.[40] Ward remembered receiving this newsletter but finding it so poorly produced as to be almost illegible.

Meanwhile, on 25 October 1944, Baird, the GAG secretary, was surprised to find an open letter from the FP editors circulating around subscribers in the forces urging the infiltration of army education schemes and the establishment of soldier's councils.[41] Leech and Shaw were, of course, not surprised, having long been involved in the plan from the outset. Woodcock later admitted that it had been him that marked up the circular, claiming that he had expressed his concerns that the move was foolhardy but had made no further effort to halt it.[42] In November WC published a series of articles under the general heading 'All Power to the Soviets' on the historical emergence of Workers and Soldiers

Councils in Russia, China, and Germany, along with a piece on the Rail Strike of 1919 and coverage of contemporary industrial unrest in Bristol, Newcastle, Manchester, Paisley, Glasgow, and Greenock. In addition, they printed and distributed 6,000 copies of a pamphlet on the Kronstadt revolt and 3,000 copies of one on the Wilhelmshaven revolt.[43]

On 12 December 1944 the FP offices and the homes of its four main editors — Vernon Richards, Marie Louise Berneri (MLB) (his wife), John Hewetson, and Philip Sansom — were raided by Special Branch, and subscription lists were seized, along with a large number of books and pamphlets. For Sansom, eager, in his recollections of the event, to emphasise the ineptitude of the Special Branch, the whole affair was 'a hit-or-miss attack altogether' in which the police simply missed much more incriminating evidence. They had been forced to content themselves with trifles like his army overcoat which they declared illegally held government property and jailed him for two months.

[39] Colin Ward to Vernon Richards, 'Report'; 'Freedom Press Trial', *War Commentary*, March 1945; Colin Ward, 'Witness for the Prosecution', *Raven*, 2 (1987); George Woodcock, *Letter to the Past* (Don Mills: Fitzhenry and Whiteside Limited, 1982), 264—268; Tony Gibson, 'George Woodcock Interview', TGP/ARCH00515, IISH; Tony Gibson, 'Philip Sansom Interview'; Tony Gibson, 'Colin Ward Interview'.

[40] Tony Gibson, 'Interview with Philip Sansom'.

[41] Charlie Baird, 'Anarchism in Glasgow'; FP editors, 'Circular', 25 October 1944.

[42] George Woodcock, *Letter to the Past*, 265.

[43] 'All Power to the Soviets', *War Commentary*, 1, 11, 25 November 1944; Tom Brown, 'Rail Strike 1919', *War Commentary*, 1 November 1944; 'Wide Unrest in Industry', 11 November 1944; Vernon Richards, 'Trial Notes', 216, VRP/ARCH01182, IISH.

At the end of December, Ward was taken from Orkney to Stromness, his kit was inspected by Captain Edward Davis of the Royal Engineers who confiscated two copies of WC and the circular letter (but not the books). He was then interviewed by Whitehead and asked why he had first got in touch with Freedom Press. He replied, 'my ideas were running in the same direction as theirs — the ideas were there before I got in touch with *Freedom Press*'.[44] Asked his opinions of the WC letter and articles, he remained 'non-committal'.[45] Other soldiers in different parts of the country were also subjected to property searches and interviews.[46]

On 22 February 1945, the four editors were arrested and charged with offences under Defence Regulation 39A and ordered to stand trial. In response, Read, who had not been raided, hastily assembled the Freedom Defence Committee (FDC), recruiting, through his contacts, the creme de la creme of the British cultural elite including George Orwell, George Bernard Shaw, Bertrand Russell, and Harold Laski (Bevin also joined until, anticipating that he might gain a cabinet post should Labour win the summer election, he resigned his membership), to lend their sympathetic support in the name of free speech. Even TS Eliot and EM Forster were persuaded to sign an open letter (23 February 1945) objecting to the government's stifling of dissenting opinions.[47] Through the FDC, funds were raised for expensive defence barristers (which, as some GAG members privately noted, seemed incongruous with the FP group's previously gun-ho attitudes towards political trials[48]). The four agreed that Olday's name should be kept out of it, despite, his newsletter being the principal cause of the trouble. Olday, they reasoned, had a martyr complex and was likely to use the opportunity as a political platform, which would have been disastrous for the rest of them.[49]

On 23 April 1945, notably St George's Day, the trial presided over by Judge Norman Birkett got underway. MLB was let off immediately as a wife could not be charged with conspiracy with her husband. Despite her fury, this meant that she was able to continue producing the paper aided by Woodcock. Ward, along with six other soldier witnesses (including Privates Taylor, Pontin, Ruby, and MacDonald[50]), was brought to London from around the country, where they agreed amongst themselves to deny being seduced from duty. Five of them, including Ward, stuck to this plan (one, with bold defiance, did not) all firmly stating that their reading of WC had not affected their duties as a soldier. When asked if everything he had read in WC had met with his approval, Ward replied calmly that he 'wouldn't say that categorically' (consequently earning himself the nickname 'not categorically Ward' from Shaw who always fancied himself a wit).[51] In the end, the three men received nine-month sentences which, considering the maximum the charge carried was 14 years, was relatively mild. In sentencing them, Birkett even commended their idealism.

The matter of whether the four were *technically* guilty of intentionally attempting to inspire disaffection and insurgency is straightforward: they were. Instigating insurrection was exactly what they wished to achieve, moreover, their decision to act secretly, to conceal their plans from

[44] 'The Freedom Press Trial', *War Commentary*, March 1945.
[45] Colin Ward to Vernon Richards, 'Report'.
[46] Soldiers' letters to Vernon Richards, 216, VRP/ARCH01182, IISH.
[47] www.iisg.nl/collections/war-commentary/war-commentary.php [last accessed 4 October 2021].
[48] Mollie Baird, 'Anarchism in Glasgow'.
[49] Tony Gibson, 'Philip Sansom Interview'.
[50] 'The Freedom Press Trial', *War Commentary*, March 1945.
[51] Tony Gibson, 'Colin Ward Interview'.

members of the wider movement, suggests that they understood the stakes of their actions perfectly well. Asked whether he thought the FDC would have supported them had the facts been known, Sansom was unsure,

impossible to say. I suppose some of them would. Some of them would have shied off completely [...] It was presented as an attack on free speech, the very thing that the noble allies were supposed to be fighting the 'evil Hun' for.[52]

But even for the most paranoid of British officials, the FP group could hardly be said to constitute a serious threat to national security. As the MI5 report (7 February 1945) conceded, given the relatively small circulation of WC (thought to be no more than 5,000) 'MI5 do not think that at present these people constitute a grave menace'.[53]

Later, Ward wondered why the prosecution had been brought in the first place, and who had ordered it (he suspected Morrison, the Home Secretary, had instigated it).[54] Sansom believed it reflected growing government concern over the threat of unrest posed by demobilisation. Already there had been signs; in autumn 1944, for instance, the first-ever wartime strike took place at Betteshanger Colliery in Kent.[55] To an extent, the MI5 report corroborates this, noting that since the beginning of the war,

[they] have been undermining systematically the loyalty of H.M. forces with some degree of success in certain cases, and that their activities might, during the periods of demobilisation and occupation of enemy territory, present a serious problem.[56]

It also observed that since 1944, their campaigning had grown bolder and moved in emphasis from critique towards urging positive action. Although 'ordinary police and disciplinary methods' had been sufficient to contain the problem until then, there was, perhaps, scope for an example to be made.[57] Certainly, there was a show trial quality about the affair, a sense that the law had to be seen to be done (Birkett consequently presided over Nuremberg, another theatrical trial).[58]

Was Ward a good witness for the prosecution? All the six soldiers called to court privately accepted that they had been influenced, but considered it pragmatic and loyal, rather than strictly truthful, to refute the charge, but to what extent were they fully conscious of how this had been done, the depths and extent of it? Defence Act 39A was not concerned with whether they had encountered ideas they found amenable, as objectionable as the authorities found them to be, but how these ideas had resulted in uncharacteristic behaviour such as desertion of duty or active sabotage.

As Ward replied when asked this question in court, one could not say 'categorically' that he had been influenced, still, he had been a discontented conscript finding his frustrations transformed into a political language, further drawn in through a friendship with a charismatic older man, encouraged and helped to start his own political writing. His refusal to obey the order on

[52] Tony Gibson, 'Philip Sansom Interview'.

[53] MI5, 'Summary: The Freedom Press Anarchists and HM Forces Report', 3 February 1945, https://freedomnews.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Mi5-report-on-Freedom-1945.pdf [accessed 18 April 2021].

[54] Colin Ward, 'Witness for the Prosecution'.

[55] Philip Sansom, 'Anarchists against the Army', https://libcom.org/history/anarchists-against-army-philip-sansom [accessed 16 April 2021]. See also: Carissa Honeywell, 'Anarchism and the British Warfare State: The Prosecution of the *War Commentary* Anarchists, 1945', *International Review of Social History*, 60:2 (2015), 257—284.

[56] MI5, 'Summary'.

[57] Ibid., 2.

[58] H. Montgomery Hyde, *Norman Birkett: The Live of Lord Birkett of Ulverston* (London: Penguin Press, 1989).

Orkney, which he regarded as trivial (a sparing of blushes over his perceived inability to complete the required task), he also conceded had been 'quite unlike me'. As such, he was an ideal example of the 'normal young men' the MI5 report described as at risk of being 'led astray' by FP propaganda.[59]

Yet the very fact he had retained all his literature in his kit also implies that he had not considered himself in possession of especially treasonous material. On the one hand, this might mean only that he was one of those 'simple squaddies', as Sansom put it, too 'green' to realise the need to dispose of the evidence.[60] On the other hand, perhaps this was less to do with naivety and more to do with how he was coming to define anarchism for himself. Amongst the papers that were seized from him during inspection was a handwritten note:

I am personally not waiting for concerted action, for I am in my own person concerted action! I'm not waiting for the revolution, for I am myself the revolution! Before the revolution comes, you must have the revolutionary. Before you consolidate the masses you must be sure of the individual.[61]

Ward experienced anarchism as personal transformation, an education, stimulating the expansion of mind he considered wanting from his formal schooling. The excitement and intrigue of underground politics, with all its clandestine activity, some serious, much petty, and tribalistic factionalism, held, at most, only a passing attraction for him, as it did for many of the wartime subscribers, most of whom drifted away again post-1945.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Tony Gibson, 'Philip Sansom Interview'.

[61] From the papers of Sapper Ward, December 1944, seized by Captain E. Davies, Royal Engineers, Millfield Camp, Stromness, Orkney Islands, in 'War Commentary and Freedom Press', 347/14/29, National Archives.

3. The Freedom Press Anarchists 1936–1945

From his seclusion on Orkney, Ward could read through the Freedom Press (FP) literature — on Kropotkin, Spain, the war, people's movements past and present — with some detachment. Physically removed from much of the factional tensions that were simmering, he experienced anarchism as moral and intellectual transformation. When considered accumulatively, these tensions reveal much about the wider conceptual and organisational shifts taking place in the mid-century British anarchism movement.

After nine years of energetic anarchist propaganda amidst constant conflict, the FP group had made headway in restoring an anarchist presence into British political discourse. Nevertheless, for all the gains, there was a sense of failure, of a movement ever more fractured whose moment belonged to a past irretrievably lost. The effort to understand the significance of all that had happened, to reconcile anarchism's past with the uncertainties of the emerging present, would define their post-war political thinking. It is necessary, then, to examine this chapter in the FP's history more closely.

Italian Anarchism and *Spain and the World*

The interwar years were both optimistic and turbulent times for the British left with the problems as illuminating as the gains. The Russian Revolution (1917) unleashed a wave of interest in the great Soviet experiment ranging from cautious sympathy to unbridled enthusiasm, and when, just over a decade later, Wall Street crashed, it appeared that capitalism was indeed on the brink of collapse. Labour finally came of age as a parliamentary force taking power, albeit fleetingly, in 1924. In 1926, the General Strike, the largest co-ordinated industrial action in British history, resulted in the curtailing of mass union power on the one hand, but, on the other, indicated the extent of popular unrest, generated more unions, provided a formative political education for key Labour figures (like Aneurin Bevin the future minister for health), and prompted Labour's return, again briefly, to power.[1] The short-lived and, for many, disappointing early Labour administrations were similarly instructive about the limits on implementing socialism through existing parliamentary means.

Yet British anarchism seemed to slumber. Partly, this owed much to their ambivalent positioning towards the political arms of socialism but also to the ageing, and passing, of a great generation; Kropotkin died in 1921, Malatesta in 1932. In 1936, *Freedom*, the journal launched with such optimism by Charlotte Wilson and Kropotkin, seemed a spent force, appearing sporadically, retaining a loyal but ageing support base. Alfred Meltzer, the newest recruit, was a rare exception being just 15.[2] It was at this point that Vero Recchioni (Vernon Richards) an Anglo-Italian student, approached Tom Keell, the long-serving *Freedom*'s printer, with a proposal to

[1] See Keith Laybourn, *The General Strike of 1926* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993).

[2] Alfred Meltzer, *The Anarchists in London 1935—1955* (Sanday: Cienfuegos Press, 1976), 8.

transform it into a weekly bulletin on the Spanish revolution. In this venture, he was supported by Marie Louise Berneri (MLB), his partner (later wife), and, initially, her father Camillo Berneri.

Richards and MLB were second-generation Italian anarchists, which critically shaped their approach to running the paper. Although Michel Bakunin and the First International are generally credited for stimulating the Italian anarchist movement, neither were not received as 'a new gospel' but assimilated into existing popular libertarian currents. The sense of autonomy nurtured by strong regional identities, along with the endurance of subsistence peasant economies, found a natural traction with anarchism (and, it must be acknowledged, with fascism).[3] An indigenous leadership emerged, out of which Malatesta was the most prominent figure.

Anarchism made slow progress. By the turn of the century, attempts to coordinate the various branches had largely failed. The decades between 1880 and 1914 were spent in the painstaking work of cultivating relations with various socialistic or other sympathetic groups punctuated by the occasional dramatic event (such as the assassination of King Umberto by the Italian-American anarchist Gaetano Besci). By 1914, a 'pattern of anarchist life', with organisations and newspapers, had been established, and during the war, anarchists were able to forge more productive alliances across the wider left.[4]

Despite growing in strength, key figures like Malatesta remained in almost perpetual exile. In fact, this proved useful. Not only did it enable him to build practical networks, but it also allowed him to emphasise the structural similarities between the different national movements in France, for example, or Spain which, like Italy, had large rural populations and strong regional identities. This was crucial for escaping cultural chauvinism. Malatesta may have appreciated the spirit of autonomy and the political energy released by local identities, but his anarchism was always international in outlook and ambition.[5]

Richards' father, Emidio Recchioni (1864—1934) was born in a town a few kilometres south of Ravenna (an anarchist stronghold).[6] Initially a railway worker and a Republican, he was soon drawn to anarchism becoming, according about the Italian police, 'the most active and influential' propagandist in the country. Never shy of propaganda of the deed, in 1899 he made an assassination attempt on the Italian Prime Minister and was forced to flee to England when it failed. There, he opened King Bomba's, a grocery store in Soho, which soon became a favourite rendezvous for all manner of radicals.

Even as a child Richards, born in 1915, was at the heart of this activity. He recalled a 'sightseeing' excursion during which he had seen nothing but the inside of a hotel room while his father went off to discuss 'business'. In the late 1920s, Emidio was once again embroiled in assassination plots, this time targeting Mussolini. The British Special Branch, in a spirit of co-operation with the Italian leader, kept him under surveillance and when their investigations were frozen, leaked

[3] Nunzio Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism 1864—1892* (Princeton: Princeton University Press); Dylan Riley, *The Civic Foundations of Fascism in Europe* (London: Verso, 2019).

[4] Carl Levy, 'Italian Anarchism 1870—1926', in David Goodway, ed., *Anarchism: History, Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 1989), 35; Carl Levy, 'Foreword', in Errico Malatesta and Vernon Richards, ed., *Life and Times of Errico Malatesta* (Oakland: PM Press, 2015).

[5] Carl Levy, 'Italian Anarchism 1870—1926'; 'Malatesta and the War Interventionist Debate 1914–1917: From "Red Week" to the Russian Revolutions', in Matthew Adams and Ruth Kinna, eds., *Anarchism 1914—1918: Internationalism, Anti-Militarism and War* (Manchester: Manchester University, 2017), 69–92.

[6] Carl Levy, 'Italian Anarchism 1870–1926', 55.

allegations to the national press, severely damaging his business. Suing the *Daily Telegraph* for libel, he won generous compensation which was later used by his son to revive *Freedom*.[7]

In his later years, Recchioni appeared a model of respectability, but his former life of restless, dangerous activism had hardened him. Against certain strands within the movement, he was uncompromising in his insistence that the fascist threat should be countered with armed resistance and, to that end, always carried a revolver on him.[8] Relations with his son could be fraught. Like his father, Richards was charismatic, but could also be bullish, fanatical, and manipulative. Despite his father's notoriety as a propagandist, Richards insisted that it was Malatesta (upon whose shoulders he had ridden as a boy) who was his main influence, not least when it came to the practical business of propaganda by the printed word.[9]

Malatesta took the art of anarchist propaganda and organisation very seriously. An early education in rhetoric and Roman history,[10] followed by a political apprenticeship in the 'disappointing aftermath of the Italian struggle for independence and unification',[11] left him mistrustful of all determinisms including Kropotkin's over-optimistic faith in modern science.[12] Anarchism had to be fought for and people had to be persuaded, no matter how 'natural' it might be. To do this he focused on organisational methods (which he saw as 'the practice of cooperation and solidarity'[13]) advocating a middle path between the movement's extremes which, he considered, fatally undermined its general credibility and capacity for strategic alliance. A prolific writer and editor, he urged consistency in propaganda believing that isolated or sporadic propaganda, especially in inauspicious times, was worse than none.[14] This was the strategy Richards pursued ruthlessly and overall effectively, with FP.

Malatesta's political pragmatism had a counterpart in Camillo Berneri's (1897—1937) political philosophy. Camillo was born in Lodi, Lombardy, son of a socialist teacher and a Redshirt official (voluntary supporter of Garibaldi). He joined the Reggio Emilia Socialist Federation aged 15 but became disillusioned with the 'red tape' and 'lack of devotion',[15] later saying that: 'the ideal worker of Marxism or socialism is a mythical figure. It stems from the metaphysics of socialist romanticism and is not historically proven'[16] (an explanation that paralleled his later account of Kropotkin's journey to anarchism) and transferring his allegiance to the Italian anarchists. During the First World War, poor health saved him from active service but did not prevent his sustained anti-militarist activities and intensified involvement with the anarchists, bringing him into close contact with both Malatesta and Emidio smuggling anarchists out of Italy to Switzerland via an underground railway. In 1917, he married Giovanna Caleffi, a former pupil of his mother's, and passionate anarchist activist. MLB was born the following year, her sister, Giliane, the year after.

[7] Emidio Recchioni biography: [[https://libcom.org][https://libcom.org/history/recchioni-emidio-1864-1934-aka-nemo-rastignac-savarin [last accessed 6 October 2021].

[8] Ibid.

[9] Carl Levy, 'Foreword', in Vernon Richards, ed., *Life and Ideas: The Anarchist Writings of Errico Malatesta* (Edinburgh: PM Press, 2015), xii.

[10] Vernon Richards, 'Notes towards a Biography', in *Life and Ideas*, 194.

[11] Carl Levy, 'Forward', in *Life and Ideas*, vi.

[12] Errico Malatesta, 'Anarchism and Science', *Volonta*, 27 December 1913.

[13] Errico Malatesta, 'Organisation', *Il Risveglio*, 15 October 1927.

[14] Errico Malatesta, 'Anarchist Propaganda', *l'Agitazione*, 22 September 1901.

[15] Camillo Berneri, *Die Arbetierkult*, 1934.

[16] Ibid.

In 1922 Camillo completed his studies at the University of Florence where he had worked with the liberal historian Gaetano Salvemini. In October of that year, Mussolini was appointed Prime Minister, advancing the fascist takeover of Italy. Salvemini, once briefly sympathetic to Mussolini as a socialist leader, became an entrenched critic of fascism, earning himself a place at the top of the Party's death list and a 20-year exile during which time he continued to resist the regime. His book, *The Fascist Dictatorship in Italy* (1927), the first historical analysis of Mussolini's rise to power, told an almost comic tale of chance, mistakes, and farce, a dangerous but powerful move considering the importance of mythologising to the regime.[17]

Camillo followed his former tutor in using the historical method as a philosophical and political tool. In his hands, the attention and status afforded to context and contingency showed how inglorious and haphazard most events were. Like Malatesta, he flinched from metaphysical dogma of any kind. The cosmos was not a moral agent, humans were, and this required making choices and acting. In a letter to his daughter, written just hours before his death, he said 'wherever conscience is involved, reason leads me to no decision. The *ultima ratio,* what really decides the issue, is *style:* this is not my style — that is the last word'.[18] In 1926, despite the gathering storm clouds, Camillo took a teaching post and kept up his activism but when he refused to sign allegiance to Mussolini's regime, he lost his job and was forced into exile. Fleeing first to Paris, where Giovanna and the children joined him, he was deported again and forced into the nomadic existence of the exiled radical, later joining the assassination attempts on Mussolini. Giovanna remained in Paris where she raised the girls and continued with covert campaign work.

Inevitably, MLB and her sister grew up to be clever and politically committed. MLB followed her father in studying philosophy and psychology at the Sorbonne, and Giliane became a doctor. Although a loving family, the perpetual absence of Camillo, the constant sense of danger, the high idealism and moral intensity made their upbringing far from carefree, but, dark moments aside, both retained considerable personal charm.[19] MLB met Richards while a student in Paris. Although no less ardent in her dedication to anarchism, she was a much gentler character. Where he blustered, she was gracious which often allowed her to unite where he alienated.[20]

When conflict erupted in Spain, Camillo, like many other anarchists, believed that the time had finally come. Success here would be a beacon of hope triggering a worldwide ripple effect. Following the defeat of Franco's attempted coup in July 1936, the Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo (National Confederation of Labour) (CNT) in partnership with the Federacion Anaquista Iberica (Anarchist Federation of Spain) (FAI) became the strongest force in Catalonia. There, they embarked on a comprehensive programme of collectivisation, implementing workers' control over most of the major industries, including agriculture, which endured even after the revolutionary tide had begun to turn. But, despite their dominance at this time, and their avowed anti-

[17] Simona Falasca-Zamponi, *The Spectacle of Fascism: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 90–91; Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings* (Harvard University Press, 1985), 201.

[18] Quoted in Herbert Read, 'Marie Louise Berneri', in Herbert Read and David Goodway, eds., *One Man Manifesto* (London: Freedom Press), 148.

[19] Marie Louise Memorial Committee, *Marie Louise Berneri 1918—1949: A Tribute* (London: Freedom Press, 1949), https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/various-authors-marie-louise-berneri-1918-1949-a-tribute [last accessed 6 October 2021].

[20] Matthew Adams, 'The Black Rose of Anarchism', in Marie Louise Berneri and Matthew Adams, eds., *Journey through Utopia: A Critical Examination of Imagined Worlds in Western Literature* (Oakland: PM Press, 2019), 1–15.

statism, they chose not to overthrow the Catalan government, even working in alliance with them with some prominent CNT leaders assuming government posts.[21]

On launching *Spain and the World* (SW), Richards and MLB did not create interest in Spain, but, aside from a one-off bulletin produced by the CNT commission in Britain, edited by Max Nettlau, a veteran anarchism historian, they were the first to substantially document and champion the anarchist perspective. Against the open hostility of the mainstream press towards the anarchists (and, later, persecution of them in the Communist press), they worked hard to connect the anarchist cause with the extraordinary outpouring of public sympathy which the intense media coverage of Spain helped to generate.[22]

From the outset, SW set out to differentiate itself from the pro-Soviet line of other left-leaning publications (such as *The New Statesman* and the *New Chronicle*), who framed the situation as an attack on democracy, and the conflict as an antifascist struggle; *not* a revolution.[23] SW, by contrast, was adamant: what was happening in Spain was an anarchist revolution that would *not* be in a Russian image. Camillo's lead article in the first edition set the tone:

For some time yet the States of this globe will be divided thus, normal nineteenth century countries — victims of fascism — states where well meant but unfree social methods prevail (Russia, Mexico — the only countries which openly help Spain) — and Spain where in parts at least, the freest methods are now in an experimental stage. The world's future is being fought for here as the old world ended in treason and bloodshed unheard of. Let everyone help the best of good causes.[24]

'No dictatorship of the Capitalists. No dictatorship of the Workers' read the opening editorial, accredited to the 'Silent Witnesses', only 'Freedom in its fullest sense'.[25] In this, SW was unique, and alongside condemnation of the fascist advance and British non-intervention policy (shared by other leftist papers), it condemned equally the Republican government and the Soviet Union intervention, especially the Communist persecution of the Trotskyite Workers' Party of Marxist Unification (better known as POUM) faction. Through Camillo and his contacts, they were also able, at least in the early months, to carry first-hand accounts of anarchist organisation in Catalonia.[26]

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[21] For accounts of the anarchists in Spain see: Camillo Berneri, *War and Revolution* (Hastings: Christie Books, 2013); George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (London: Harvill Secker, 1938); Vernon Richards, *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution* (London: Freedom Press, 1953); Jose Peirats Valls, *The CNT in the Spanish Revolution: Volume One* (English Translation) (Hastings: PM Press, 2011); Frank Mintz, *Anarchism and Workers' Self Management in Revolutionary Spain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013); Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain: The Experience of Civil War 1936—1939* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1979); Abel Paz, *The Story of the Iron Column: Militant Anarchism in the Spanish Civil War* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2011); Alfred Meltzer, *A New World in Our Hearts: The Faces of Spanish Anarchism* (Orkney: Cienfuegos, 1978); Sam Dolgoff, ed., *The Anarchist Collectives: Workers Self Management in the Spanish Revolution* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1990); Murray Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years 1936—1939* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 1998); Daniel Evans, *Revolution and the State: Anarchism in the Spanish Civil War* (Abington: Routledge, 2018).

[22] See David Deacon, *British News Media and the Spanish Civil War: Tomorrow May Be Too Late* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008).

[23] Rob Ray, *A Beautiful Idea: A History of the Freedom Press Anarchists* (London: Freedom Press, 2018), 57.

[24] Camillo Berneri, 'July-November 1936 in Spain', *Spain and the World*, 11 December 1936.

[25] Editors, 'Silent Witnesses: Introduction to Ourselves', *Spain and the World*, 11 December 1936.

[26] 'Social Revolution in Spain: Economic Reconstruction of Catalonia: Collectivisation of Industry and Commerce', *Spain and the World*, 2, 24 December 1936; 'The Greatest Weapon: Education in Catalonia', *Spain and the World*, 4, 22 January 1937; 'Militant Anarchism and Spanish Reality', *Spain and the World*, 6, 19 February 1937.

The paper provided a rallying point for wider support and promotion efforts, helping to rekindle relations with the movement's best-known figures.

Alongside Nettlau, Emma Goldman returned from southern France to co-ordinate the CNT-FAI London bureau and write for SW. Spain brought Herbert Read out into open declaration for anarchism. In Spain, Read found hope that a genuine people's revolution, 'a constructive socialism', was possible and made his condemnation of Soviet socialism public,[27] beginning a 15-year relationship with the FP group. The cultural clout of figures like Read allowed for further penetration into the intellectual and artistic elite clustered around the Peace Movement and other progressive groups. Novelist Ethel Mannin and her writer husband Reginald Reynolds became regular contributors. Anti-colonial activists Jomo Kenyatta, George Padmore, and Dinah Stock also spoke in support of the anarchists.[28] The most crucial boon to the cause was George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), documenting the author's experiences fighting with the Trotkskyist POUM faction. Not only did *Homage* paint the anarchists in a sympathetic light, but it also reinforced SW's critical stance on the Soviet Union.

Behind the public optimism, however, Camillo was growing more concerned about the CNT-FAI leadership's willingness to compromise with the Republican government, an ill-judged retreat, he felt, from the revolution at its most crucial moment. Expressing this in essays collected and published as *Pensieri e Battiaglie* (Paris 1936), and later in an open letter addressed to Federica Montseny, an anarchist who had taken a post as Minister for Health in the government,[29] he argued that deferring revolution to 'after the war was won' was not expedient but disastrous. Only through revolution could real victory be achieved, any compromise on this was not only betrayal but defeat. Even as he wrote, the revolutionary hopes of the previous year were fading fast; 10 days after his letter was published in Spain, the German Luftwaffe bombed the town of Guernica, opening northern Spain to Franco's forces.

Then, on 5 May 1937, Camillo, walking home with an anarchist comrade, was captured and executed. It is now confidently believed that a Stalinist firing squad carried out the execution.[30] His body was found the following morning in the Rambla (Barcelona), riddled with bullet holes. For the SW editors, the loss was shattering beyond any measure. Returning to Paris shortly afterwards to be with her mother and sister, MLB wrote to Richards of feeling numb as though 'a veil has been drawn over my life'[31] and of preferring that to the pain she suspected must follow. Distraught as they were, they determined to continue his work and legacy[32] by maintaining his critical line against co-operation with the Republican government more vigorously, a move which caused major division within the wider SW group. Nettlau, for example, broke permanently from the group over their condemnation of Montseny's government posting.

On 26 January 1939, Franco's fascists entered Barcelona, once the epicentre of the great anarchist experiment, unopposed. The revolution, all its hopes and dreams, lay in ruins. For many on the wider left, Spain was a tragedy of epic proportions which lay bare the limits of the mass revolution ideal. How was social transformation to be achieved in an age of Guernica, of psycho-

[27] Herbert Read, *Poetry and Anarchism* (1938).

[28] Rob Roy, *A Beautiful Idea*, 62.

[29] Camillo Berneri, La Guerre di Classe, 14 April 1937. Reprinted in English, *Spain and the World*, 4 June 1937.

[30] Vernon Richard, *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution*, 237.

[31] https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/various-authors-marie-louise-berneri-1918 @@@[[https://theanarchistlibrary.org][-1949-a-tribute

[32] Vernon Richards, 'Tribute to Camillo Berneri', *Spain and the World*, 15 May 1937.

logical warfare and guerrilla insurgency that tore up all the traditional conventions of warfare, dragged in civilians indiscriminately and ground on indefinitely, eroding all economic, social, and cultural life, wearing down even the most hopeful heart?

For the FP group, especially MLB and Richards, the loss was devastating in every possible way. Understanding the conflict was vital in repairing both the wider movement and their own minds but it would be well over a decade before Richards compiled and published his detailed analysis.[33] In the immediate aftermath, however, there was plenty of blame to go around. Of course, Franco, aided by the fascist regimes of Germany and Italy was the main antagonist, but the Republicans and the so-called democracies — Britain, America — who had done nothing were equally so. The British Labour Party inspired special resentment for prioritising their own institutional interests over Spanish democracy (amongst the wider British Labour movement, only the Independent Labour Party [ILP] had taken an active stance in supporting Spain).[34] In their eyes, however, the worst betrayal of the revolution was committed by the Soviet Union who, whilst presenting themselves as the champions of anti-fascism and democracy, was actually securing their own interests, just another regime in a vicious game of realpolitik. Not, of course, that there was ever much love lost between Anarchists and Communists.

The issues that really haunted them were the fractures and mistakes made amongst the Spanish anarchists themselves. Neither MLB nor Richards could even entertain the idea of necessary compromise nor move on from the conviction that the revolution might yet have been saved if unity had prevailed. In part this owed something to grief, channelling some of the pain of Camillo's death into taking up the case he had been fighting. It was also, perhaps, an example of slightly austere idealism, a luxury 'silent witnesses' could better afford than most, but then again, it was also logical. If at *any* point anarchists conceded to, much less participated in an authoritative structure, their cause was surely up, not just deferred but defeated. So now the question became: *why?* How was it that egalitarian values had been so easily abandoned and the old conformism, the authority instinct, so quickly restored?

In part, the answer came down to organisation; the Spanish anarchists had been too divided, unable to convert the spontaneous desire for liberty into coherent and sustainable policies capable of uniting the revolutionary strands behind them to press home their early advantage. Not all was bleak; Spain had failed, but aspects of the Spanish experience could be salvaged to offer a rich contemporary source for thought, reference, and even hope. In its happiest days, it had shown how things might work, not least through the worker syndicates and communes that had quickly, even organically, sprung up. Moreover, it was important that Spain had resonated with *popular* sympathies among the British public (in contrast to the apathy of political leaders), suggesting that anarchism too might find some accord with common notions ofjustice. Now was not the time for retreat.

[33] First appearing as a series of columns in *Freedom*, later collected into: Vernon Richards, *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution* (Freedom Press, 1983).

[34] See Tom Buchannan, *The Spanish Civil War and the British Labour Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 107—136.

Revolt! and *War Commentary*

On 11 February 1939, SW was incorporated into *Revolt!*[35] In contrast to the idealism that had opened SW, the introductory editorial, 'The Task Before Us', was cold and grim. They had been a 'lone voice', 'the only ones to faithfully interpret the significance of the event'. In this lonely struggle, they had been joined by 'several enthusiastic men and women' which required a new paper, representative of its enlarged membership. The task now was to champion the cause of the workers or, more accurately, the international proletariat, without compromise, because theirs was the cause synonymous with liberty and truth. As such, *Revolt!* pledged to oppose *all* political parties. Included on their furious list: the Labour Party ('never representative of the working class', whose 'impotence' and 'indifference' could never be forgiven), the Trade Unions (who made of their members 'slaves' to their leaders), the treacherous Communists, the Trotskyists, even the ILP (although their honesty was to be commended). Their opposition to all other groups, fascists, conservatives, liberals, went without saying.

Alongside Frank and Mary Leech in Glasgow, editorial newcomers included Ralph Sturgess and Tom Brown from the Anarchist Syndicalist Union (ASU). Inspired by their Spanish comrades, the ASU had formed in April 1937 to promote the CNT, oppose the increasingly Communist-dominated, bureaucratic unions, and generally further the cause of syndicalism in British industry. As Brown later recalled of the early talks with Richards and MLB, in their mutual desire to sustain a positive revolutionary movement (rather than 'a permanent grouse') in the wake of Spain, syndicalism, which advocated for horizontal structures of worker committees and federations of industrial councils, seemed a constructive direction.[36] It was a vital relationship but always fringed with tension. Firstly, syndicalism, although compatible with anarchism in important respects, was not synonymous with it. Anarchists from Proudhon to Malatesta had warned that syndicalist unions were just as likely to descend into politicking and authoritarianism as socialist or Communist ones.[37] Secondly, although Richards and MLB spoke passionately of the 'workers', this was a political language they had inherited and not their personal backgrounds. They were intellectuals who relished big ideas and tended to find industrial disputes myopic.

The Peace Movement remained an important alliance. Its members were drawn to *Revolt!*'s implacable opposition to the 'imperialist-capitalist' war and its contempt for the idea of it as a 'people's war' against fascism. As Spain had made clear, when it came to the cause of freedom, the great 'democracies' were as corrupt as the fascist states. From the mid-30s, 'revulsion against war was almost universal';[38] over 50 peace organisations were established, gaining significant membership. The League of Nations Union's (LNU) 'Peace Ballot' petition gained 12 million signatures, and over 100,000 signed Dick Shepperd's (founder of the Peace Pledge Union [PPU]) 'peace pledge' vowing to renounce war.[39]

Inevitably in such an expansive movement, there was no unified position or even an agreed definition of peace; instead, a spectrum of viewpoints co-mingled.

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[35] The name referenced *Le Revolte* set up by Kropotkin and Reclus in Switzerland in 1879, later becoming *La Revolte* (1887) in an attempt to avoid a fine for participating in an illegal lottery to assist military desertion.

[36] Tom Brown, 'Story of the Syndicalist Workers' Federation: Born in Struggle', *Direct Action*, 9, 2, February 1968.

[37] Carl Levy, 'Foreword', vii.

[38] Richard Davis, 'The British Peace Movement in the Interwar Years', *French Journal of British Studies*, XXII-2 (2017), 2.

[39] Ibid.

Christian and other religious groups co-mingled with socialists, liberal humanists, even fascist sympathisers. There were those who opposed all violence as a point of principle and those who did not oppose it per se but objected to Britain's involvement in this specific conflict. In part, this played to the FP's advantage. Anarchism was a spacious ideology which, aside from a commitment to rejecting the state, could accommodate a range of opinions. To all, they could simply say that 'war will exist as long as the state exists' and be confident of gaining a hearing.[40] How one should then go about achieving and organising a nongovernmental society were very different questions.

A month after *Revolt!* first appeared, Hitler took Prague and war looked certain. The government stepped up rearmament and passed a conscription act for men aged 20. Labour, outwardly maintaining their opposition, began internal preparations for a policy shift. *Peace News* reported the first major batch of repudiated peace pledges.[41] *Revolt!* held firm; ten days after Prague it continued to urge readers to 'Refuse to Support the War' and to pursue, instead, global revolution led by the international proletariat which would overthrow all dominant 42 powers.[42]

After only a short run, *Revolt!*, which never matched the circulation of SW, collapsed. What remained of the editorial group (Richards, MLB, Meltzer, and Brown) regrouped and brought out the innocuous-sounding *War Commentary* (WC) as a small bulletin. At the same time, the Glaswegian and London anarchist groups combined to relaunch the Anarchist Federation of Britain (AFB), first with Meltzer as general secretary, later Brown. WC was designated as the AFB paper and an AFB editorial board was appointed. A smaller FP group formed under this, ostensibly to manage the daily production of the paper. In 1941, Richards managed to acquire premises for a bookshop in Red Lion Street (London) from which to distribute anarchist literature and provide a meeting point (Meltzer ran this in 1941) and in 1942, thanks to substantial support from the Glaswegians, the group was able to purchase Express Printers in Angel Alley (registered in Richards' name).[43]

Thus bolstered, WC was able to resume its blistering critique of the war, refusing to distinguish between enemies and allies, insisting only on the division between the elite and the workers. The virulence with which they plied this last line was intentionally provocative. From the start, the government understood that conflict on such a scale required the willing co-operation of the British people. As Tom Wintringham, a former Marxist, soldier, and Spanish veteran, argued, coercion through compulsory conscription would not be enough. It was vital that people 'believed' in the morality of the conflict, that this was indeed a 'just' war.[44] To do this, government propaganda tapped into deeply held cultural motifs — self-reliance, common decency, and community spirit — recrafting them into 'blitz spirit' and 'Britain can make it',[45] themes that were also picked up and circulated by commercial advertising.[46] How convincing the general public found this campaign is difficult to gauge but while WC's circulation remained tiny (never more

[40] Herbert Read, *Poetry and Anarchism* (London: Faber and Faber, 1938).

[41] *Peace News*, 21 April 1939, 10.

[42] Editorial, *Revolt!* 25 March 1939.

[43] Albert Meltzer, *The Anarchists in London 1935—1955*, 22.

[44] Tom Wintringham, *Peoples' War* (London: Penguin Books, 1942).

[45] Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1991).

[46] See David Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda in World War Two: Cultural Identity and the Blitz Spirit* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014).

than 5,000), its relentless battery on these claims about the morality of the war brought the group to the attention of Special Branch officials.

WC's uncompromising opposition stood out, even amongst the wider anarchist movement. The editors cut ties with the elderly members of the Jewish *Worker's Friend* group, based in London's East End, when they followed the veteran anarchist Rudolf Rocker's support for the allies.[47] Still, this could be complicated, as the relationship with Orwell shows. Orwell, as many on the left, began by opposing the war, considering it entirely a matter of imperial interest, a view sympathetic to the anarchists' although hardly unique to them. On learning of the Nazi-Soviet pact in August 1939, his line changed. Imperialist though the war undoubtedly was, the alliance between two totalitarian powers made it a moral necessity to 'defend the lesser evil of Chamberlain's England against Hitler's Germany'.[48] Typically, the conversion, when it came, was neither discreet nor apologetic: 'Pacifism is objectively pro-fascist', he declared, 'this is elementary common-sense'.[49]

This was difficult for the anarchists. Retaining the friendship of a figure like Orwell was important; *Homage* had been a vital gain. Nevertheless, his sudden anti-anti-militarism was an insurmountable problem, so much so that later, when, struggling to find a publisher for *Animal Farm* in 1944, he considered approaching Freedom Press but was quietly told by Richards that the editorial board, especially MLB, would never accept it. Yet, because Orwell had never been 'An Anarchist', relations somehow remained cordial. He was one of the founding members of the Freedom Defence Committee in 1945. When *Animal Farm* was finally published in 1945, the Freedom bookshop sold it, as they later did *1984*. Of the latter, Orwell, always conscious of the difficulties inherent in his compromise, confided to Richards 'I am afraid some of the US republican papers have tried to use "1984" for propaganda … but I have issued a dementi which I hope will be printed'.[50]

Where some connections were lost, or complicated, others were gained, or renewed, especially amongst those strands of the PM for whom pacifism had never been an expedient but an act of faith (secular or spiritual) which they could not recant.[51] Having failed to prevent the war, the PPU, at one time the most active and major force in the movement, offered no practical proposals for the role of the pacifist in wartime, leaving many of its members frustrated and lost. As such, Andrew Rigby argues, three main options presented themselves: humanitarian relief work, active resistance of the war effort, or 'reconstruction' by which was meant the cultivation and practice of alternative models of social organisation that could, if successful, provide the structural basis for ensuring lasting peace in the future.[52]

For resistors, the attraction of anarchism was clear; not an issue of WC went by without a strident call (and plenty of tips) for direct action to subvert the war effort. For the 'reconstructionists', it was the philosophical scope of anarchism, as articulated by figures like Read, that appealed. 'Peace is anarchy', he wrote:

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[47] David Goodway and Colin Ward, *Talking Anarchy* (Oakland: PM Press, 2014), 46.

[48] Bernard Crick, *George Orwell: A Life* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), 377.

[49] George Orwell, 'Pacifism', *Partisan Review*, August-September 1942.

[50] George Orwell to Vernon Richards, 22 June 1949, 41, VRP/ ARCH01182, IISH.

[51] Martin Ceadel, *Semi-Detached Idealists: The British Peace Movement and International Relations, 1854—1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 238.

[52] Andrew Rigby, 'Pacifist Communities in Britain in the Second World War', *Peace and Change*, 15:2 (1990), 107–122; 'The Peace Pledge Union: From Peace to War 1936–1945', in Peter Brock and Thomas P. Socknat, eds., *Challenge to Mars* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 169–185.

Government is force; force is repression, and repression leads to reaction, or to a psychosis of power which in its turn involves the individual in destruction and the nations in war [...] Only a non-governmental society can offer those economic, ethical and psychological conditions under which the emergence of a peaceful mentality is possible.[53]

In fact, *Freedom*'s origins lay in similar conversations between Kropotkin's revolutionary anarchism and an indigenous utopian socialism which, inspired by William Morris, saw individual moral transformation as the pre-requisite for any wider social change.[54] For this early *Freedom* generation — often middle class, educated, and as likely to admire the spirituality of Tolstoy as the practicality of Kropotkin — propaganda of the deed more often took the form of experiments in living: communal farms or utopian colonies. Whilst many of these struggled or collapsed they were still, as their historians urge, important crucibles for ideas such as child-centred education, craft industry, and organic farming which have now entered the mainstream.[55]

Back in the 1940s, the Forward Movement, a small splinter group from the PPU led by Frederick Lohr and Laurie Hislam, was key in reviving this relationship. Through this route came aspiring writers George Woodcock and Alex Comfort, the latter still a student at Cambridge. So too John Hewetson, a doctor from a wealthy family working as a casualty officer in St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, his partner Dorothy (Peta) Edsall,[56] and Philp Sansom, a commercial artist from a working-class family in Hackney. Soon after came Tony Gibson, then known as a model for Brylcream, Elizabeth Earley, one of the first British female conscientious objectors, and her partner Tom Earley, writer Gerald Vaughn, and artist Pip Walker. 'Thus began the bourgeois pacifist infiltration into anarchism', Meltzer recorded gloomily.[57]

As Meltzer's comment suggests, the relationship with the PM, while fruitful, could be as difficult as the one with the syndicalists. WC, although anti-war and anti-militarist, was *not* pacifist.[58] It did not reject the use of violence to achieve revolutionary ends. 'Let me put it plainly', Richards wrote in a lecture for the London Anarchist Group (LAG), 'pacifism is a class-organisation, a bourgeois organisation. Who can believe their sincerity when they say that they are for justice . and socialism?'[59] Unsurprisingly, then, when, in late 1941 (America's entry into the war), thoughts across the political spectrum turned towards the prospect of peace, the group and its affiliates found themselves deeply divided over what that should mean for anarchists and how it was to be achieved.

On one matter, there was general agreement. Perceiving that the war and its attendant military culture would normalise extensive levels of state intervention and control over civilian lives, the peace, they suspected, would provide another pretext for maintaining, even expanding that control through international governance bodies. Against this, some saw rich revolutionary po-

[53] Herbert Read, *Poetry and Anarchism.*

[54] Mark Bevir, *The Making of British Socialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 256–277.

[55] A Taylor, 'The Whiteway Anarchists in the Twentieth Century: A Transnational Community in the Cotswolds', *History*, 101:344 (2016), 62–83. See also: Dennis Hardy, *Utopian England: Community Experiments 1900—1945* (London: Spon, 2000).

[56] Colin Ward, 'John Hewetson: Appreciations', *Freedom*, 12 January 1991.

[57] Albert Meltzer, 'War at Last', *I Couldn't Paint Golden Angels* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 1996), http://libcom.org/library/04-war-clouds-taste-defeat-war-last-internment-discernment-splitting-atom-blackpool-bree [last accessed 6 October 2021].

[58] Carissa Honeywell, 'Anarchism and the British Warfare State: The Prosecution of the *War Commentary* Anarchists, 1945', *International Review of Social History*, 60:2 (2015), 257–284.

[59] Vernon Richards, '1936–1939', 108, VRP/ARCH01182.

tential in a demobbed civilian army of young men, those who had been at the most vicious end of political strategising. This made young servicemen vital strategic targets. Meltzer recalled the range of disruption tactics (such as the art of skiving) the group urged upon soldiers.[60] These, of course, did not appear in the main paper but were passed on through meetings, circulated by anarchist agents planted within barracks or occasionally through one-off circulars written by the editors (like the one at the heart of the FP trial in 1945). As the end of the war approached their efforts intensified; in April 1944, they advertised a special subscription fee for serving soldiers ofjust 1/—, as opposed to the usual 6/— (which as, one MI5 agent observed, was 'obviously uneconomic'[61]). By the end of that year, WC counted over a hundred soldiers on its subscription lists.[62]

At the same time as agitating (subtly) for armed insurrection, other members were keen to expand the status of culture in the movement. Here, Woodcock's story is illustrative.[63] By his own account, he came to anarchism through pacifism. A former office boy for the Great Western Railway and an aspiring writer, when the war broke out, he volunteered for agricultural work to avoid having to fight. He was sent to Langham, deep in the Essex countryside, an experimental community founded by John Middleton Murray, intended to provide pacifists with a positive prototype model for future communities. After just three months, he left disillusioned: group discussions were ponderous and inconclusive. Worse, there was no privacy for his writing.

Settling in Cambridge, with frequent trips to London, he planned to produce *NOW*, a literary magazine intended as an outlet for a militant pacifist artistic avant-garde. The search for contributors brought him into contact with Read and Comfort. Through them, he began tentatively attending anarchist meetings and lectures.[64] The ideas made sense, he liked the anarchists' sincerity, but ultimately it was MLB who won him for anarchism. Glimpsing her at the meetings, and learning from Read who she was, he was only too happy to take up his pen for anarchism at her behest.

His first pamphlets, *New Life to the Land* (1942) and *Railways and Society* (1943) reveal something of his early anarchist education. Both were topics he had direct, and rather negative, experience of. Through writing them up, he used anarchism to diagnose (to himself as much as to his readers), what had been wrong in both cases and to illuminate how that might be corrected. The pettiness of the railway unions and the inertia of Langham could be resolved through implementing more robust workers' collectives (such as those that had emerged in Catalonia in the early months of the revolution). Anarchism, in this form, brought practical substance to vague intentions.

[60] Alfred Meltzer, *The London Anarchists 1935—1955*, 20–22, 26–28.

[61] MI5, 'The Freedom Press Anarchists and H.M. Forces', 7 February 1945, https://freedomnews.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Mi5-report-on-Freedom-1945.pdf [accessed 18 April 2021].

[62] Tony Gibson, 'Philip Sansom', TGP/ARCH0515; Alfred Meltzer, *The London Anarchists 1935–1955*, 21–22.

[63] Many of the FP anarchists, including Meltzer, Richards, and Gibson (who interviewed him in 1991) consider Woodcock an unreliable narrator, disputing many of his claims. Gibson's commentary on the interview was highly critical, and, like Richards, frames Woodcock as careerist, delusional, and self-serving. In the interests of balance, it should be acknowledged that this tension was both ideological and personal in nature, owing much to his pronouncement of the death of the movement in *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas* (1962) and other unguarded comments about MLB's relationship with Richards. Nevertheless, his assertions are treated here with care and cross-referenced with other evidence where possible.

[64] Tony Gibson, 'Interview with George Woodcock', TGP/ARCH0515, IISH.

Political writing aside, Woodcock's first passion remained literature and his thoughts turned back to *NOW*. In this, he was joined by MLB and Hewetson who saw scope to turn it into an anarchist cultural review.[65] There were good reasons for wanting such a review, not least for nurturing the relationship with pacifist intellectuals like Read, who, given the paper's ambivalent stance on violence, was at risk of drifting away. In terms of the wider political landscape, cultural content reached more people than technical debate; the Communists had certainly cultivated artists for this reason and the anarchists had no counterpoint.

Spain, which was never far from any FP reasoning, had also shown the need to better understand why certain beliefs persisted, how they operated through cultural forms, and how alternative forms might disrupt them.

In early 1943, FP published its first, and last, edition of *NOW*. Other members of the AFB editorial board, including Meltzer, promptly objected: what had literature to say to the experiences of workers in London and Glasgow? In the end, a compromise, somewhat murky in the details, was reached wherein *NOW* was printed by Express Printers and distributed by FP but was technically classified as a solo venture by Woodcock. After this point until its final demise in 1947, *NOW* remained a sporadic publication but made some important gains, not least in fostering closer links with American writers including Paul Goodman who was an early contributor.

In 1944, tensions in the FP group reached boiling point. Superficially it appeared that a series of small incidents, stretched over the course of the year, ultimately triggered a dramatic split. There is little clarity surrounding what happened, it was complicated and much remains unresolved but underlying it was a struggle for the heart of the movement. One main issue was the relationship with two Spanish comrades, Pradas and Delso, CNT members in exile, who would not declare opposition to the war. Given their own commitment to this position, the core FP group felt they should not be allowed AFB membership. Upset, the Spaniards accused the FP group of being uncomradely. Brown, as general secretary of the movement, proposed that whilst the CNT commission held this position, they, as a collective, should be excluded, but individual comrades who seemed to share the AFB position should not.

MLB objected to this so strongly that in July she resigned her membership of the AFB and her place on the WC editorial board. In a detailed letter, which also hinted towards deeper underlying discontents, she explained that she was 'resigning in protest against what I consider to be a lack of revolutionary morale' the AFB, she continued, was more than a political party with a joint programme but 'a movement in which each member loves and respects his fellow members'. She was hurt that 'some comrades sneered at the last meeting when John and I talked of the love and loyalty members should feel towards one another' and lamented what she took as coldness, even hostility, towards the FP group, evident in board members' preference to take the word of strangers over those they had worked with for years. She found this inexplicable, putting it down to wounded feelings over some necessary criticisms made about 'lazy and inefficient' contributions to the paper.[66] From an external perspective, the coldness was not so inexplicable; MLB, Hewetson, and Richards invoked 'the workers' but were themselves middle-class writers and intellectuals. For someone from the working class, to be called 'lazy and inefficient' by someone like MLB may have been difficult to accept in the 'constructive' spirit she intended it.

[65] Ibid. See also: George Woodcock, *Letter to the Past* (Don Mills: Fitzhenry and Whiteside Limited, 1982), 247.

[66] MLB to Tom Brown, 'Resignation Letter', July 1944, http://katesharpleylibrary.pbworks.com/w/page/139511268/The%201945%20split%20in%20British%20anarchism [18 April 2021].

For AFB board members this was just another example of the increasingly authoritarian manner with which the FP group were controlling the paper and manipulating the movement. They moved to switch to a policy of decision by majority voting (instead of unanimity) which would allow them to exercise greater control over the direction of the paper (they outnumbered the FP group). The FP group opposed the decision on the grounds that with the AFB board in control, they could force greater focus on industrial disputes over all else. Strategically this would narrow the interest value to audiences outside of industry — especially the intellectuals and writers drawn from the pacifists — foreclosing opportunities to expand the support base of the movement.

At a meeting on 29 October, the proposal was carried but rather than concede, the FP group, Richards, MLB, and Hewetson walked out. Woodcock went with them (he later claimed his decision to have been based on personal friendship, agreeing that they were acting in an authoritarian manner). With Express Printers registered in Richards' name and FP in Hewetson's, they were able to carry on the paper independent of the AFB. The AFB members were outraged and shortly after there was a further confrontation (which some sources suggest became violent) at Richards and MLB's flat where AFB group members demanded money to start their own paper, *Direct Action*.[67]

If these troubles were not enough for the movement to contend with, at the same time, Special Branch finally struck with raids on the FP offices and the editor's homes, shortly followed by the arrest, trial, and sentencing of Richards, Hewetson, and Sansom in April 1945. MLB and Woodcock were left to keep the paper going which in August transformed back into *Freedom*.

Freedom — Through Anarchism?

For the rest of that year, Woodcock and MLB worked together, generating much of the material themselves (between the trial and the split, their supply of regular, experienced writers had been depleted). According to Woodcock, those submissions they did receive required vigorous editing. To this extent, the rebirth of *Freedom* was cast in their image, an opportunity to signal a new direction. The lead article 'Is This Peace?' still insisted that only international workers' revolution could ever bring true peace but stopped short of urging worker insurrection. Woodcock's series 'Aspects of Anarchism' pressed for a more humanistic science in the wake of the atomic bomb. MLB's 'Anarchism for New Readers' column welcomed a 'native body of thought which relates anarchism to the circumstances of modern society and makes it a living and relevant doctrine'. There was a review of George Orwell's new book (*Animal Farm*), William Blake provided the 'Thought on Freedom', and over the page was a careful but critical analysis of the new elected Labour government (5 July 1945).[68]

Was this a strategic concession towards the pacifists and a deliberate shift of focus towards the domestic movement? Certainly, this was a precarious time for the paper. The war had instilled an urgency in their work; now the lack of it did the same but for different reasons. With the peace less than a few months old, and the toxic dust of the atomic bomb still settling, no one had the stomach for more violence. Moreover, the conflict had disrupted people's daily routines in an important way; it had made the previously unthinkable thinkable, prizing open a window

[67] Rob Ray, *A Beautiful Idea*, 76–77.
[68] *Freedom*, 25 August 1945.

of receptivity to radical ideas. As 'business as usual' reasserted itself, this was quickly diffused and replaced with mistrust towards partisan political rhetoric or just wearied apathy. Moreover, with the Labour victory, predicated on promises of a 'people's peace', there was great potential for complacency to set in, to assume that justice would now be done. They needed to press the case that 'fair shares' could not simply be *given* to people but must be taken, yet it was tact, not aggression, that was required now.

For all these prudent considerations, *Freedom* remained constant in its essential commitments to international revolution, and even to the use of violence to achieve it. Page two of the first edition carried a letter from Mannin who charged the FP Anarchists to answer exactly how a co-operative society was ever to be formed: 'I know what answer I would give as a pacifist [...] it is the revolution-in-the-human-heart answer. I know what answer you would once have given [.] that the workers must seize power by any means at their disposal'. But now, she implored, surely all that had to change: 'The atomic bomb is the logical, inevitable conclusion of the use of violence as a means to an end'.[69]

As a pacifist, Woodcock would probably have agreed, but MLB preserved the old line when it came to the editors' answer. 'Comrade Mannin conveys a somewhat distorted picture of the anarchist attitude towards violence', she opened, continuing that the revolutionary had still to destroy the apparatus of power, which now included the atomic bomb, by any means necessary. In fact, the bomb made it even more imperative to do so.[70]

These, then, were the conditions out of which the post-war *Freedom* emerged and began to reform its identity. After almost a decade spent writing in and against conflict, it was inevitable that, despite their opposition to the war, their own thinking was militaristic in nature. Spain dominated all, first as a live, unfolding event, later as a tragic allegory from which the chief lesson to be drawn was the need for total unity and organisation. This they shared with a political and intellectual culture also preoccupied with planning and efficiency, but, if 'the administration of things' had long attracted progressively inclined minds, the anarchists, with their visions of workers' councils arranged into orderly federations, took matters further still. This, then, was a thoroughly modern(ist) anarchism, the epitome of intelligent design and social 71 engineering.[71]

But times were changing. The atomic bomb planted a decisive full-stop to what the Spanish experience had begun. Traditional forms of warfare were gone and in their place something total and catastrophic. For the anarchists, although, as the editorial reply to Mannin showed, this did not *have* to mean abandoning violent insurrection as a strategy, it certainly required reimagining of what revolution meant. The need to re-examine the old verities, including the necessity of violence to the cause, made the relationship with the pacifists, for all their occasional crankiness, vital, but no less fraught.

[69] Ethel Mannin, 'Atomic Energy and Anarchism: A Discussion on Revolutionary Methods', *Freedom*, 25 August, 1945.

[70] Editors, 'Reply to Mannin', *Freedom*, 25 August, 1945.

[71] Richards was a trained civil engineer.

4. Building and People

On 8 May 1945, the war in Europe ended. On 5 July, Clement Attlee's Labour swept to power promising to 'Face the Future' with fair shares for all. On 7 and 9 August, the US bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing thousands, mostly civilians, in the initial attack, and thousands more in the months that followed. On 2 September the Japanese signed surrender documents and the 'Peoples' War' officially became the 'Peoples' Peace'.

Once in office, Labour passed a series of reforms at a blistering pace: Redistribution of Industry, 1945, the Family Allowances Act 1946, National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) 1946 (and 1948), National Insurance 1946 (and 1949), National Health Service Act (1946), National Pensions (Increase), 1947, the Landlord and Tenant Control act (1947), and the Town and Country Planning Act (1947) (which made planning permission a legal requirement). These, in conjunction with full employment and the nationalisation of key industries, seemed to announce the arrival of British social democracy, but almost as quickly problems began to emerge.

Despite the talk of facing the future, the Attlee government gave relatively little thought to modernisation. Economic recovery was based on the old staple manufacturing industries which, while booming at that time, underplayed the fact that four of the six major occupations were non-factory based.[1] Added to this, the prolonged programme of rationing proved especially punishing for the middle classes whose consumption levels it most affected. Sustained higher taxation levels, stagnation of salaried positions, and restrictions on consumption felt punitive and paternalistic.[2] In fact, it was the middle classes that benefited the most from non-means-tested social provision in health and education which freed up income levels, but, significantly, this was not how many perceived the situation.

For the wider left, it was apparent that for all the earnest activity, fundamental social structures remained intact with all the traditional divisions still in place. The government remained no less committed to empire and upholding Britain's position as an influential world power. There was a difference between the alleviation of poverty in the interests of general economic prosperity (and political stability) and building a more equal society. So-called 'revisionists' questioned whether merely increasing the income of the poor or extending public ownership were the best means to equality.[3] There was a space opening for a leftist politics able to synthesise collective values with individual liberties.

The three *Freedom* editors, Vernon Richards, John Hewetson, and Philip Sansom, spent victory in Europe Day in jail. Ward spent it in detention in Orkney.[4] His earlier misdemeanour having

[1] Kevin Morgan, *Britain since 1945: The Peoples' Peace* (3rd edition) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 106; Paul Addison, 'Fair Shares: The Working Man's Britain', in *No Turning Back: Britain's Peacetime Revolutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); GDH Cole, *Condition of Post-War Britain* (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1956), 48.

[2] Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918—1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 62—64. For a contemporary commentary: Roy Lewis and Angus Maude, *The English Middle Classes* (London: Phoenix House, 1948).

[3] Ben Jackson, *Equality and the British Left: A History of Progressive Thought 1900—1964* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 151—182.

[4] Colin Ward, 'Fringe Benefits', *New Statesman and Society*, 26 May 1995.

delayed his demobilisation, he returned with his unit to London the following year to dismantle army camps and dig latrines for the Victory parade on 8 June 1946. On parade day, he was arrested by the Civilian Police and his possessions searched, an irony he enjoyed in later years.[5] Nevertheless, his relationship with FP, which began in such incongruous circumstances, now flourished.

By the end of 1945, *Freedom*'s main editors were Richards, Hewetson, Sansom, and Marie Louise Berneri (MLB), with George Woodcock and several others as regular contributors. After the tumult of the last decade, the group now experienced a period of relative calm. Ward would later quip that their high point came in 1947, just *before* he joined them.[6] The line was delivered for laughs, but the point was serious. After 1947 *Freedom* (as indeed the British anarchist movement and the wider left as a whole) began another difficult metamorphosis.

The People Act

The trial, and his detention, paused his writing for WC but from July 1945, he resumed. Now, in contrast to his earlier articles, he took up a topic close to his heart, direct action on housing. In 1945, Britain faced an acute housing shortage with chronic overcrowding rife across the country, putting pressure on public health and fraying tempers. In the summer of 1946, the situation reached boiling point; 45,000 people took over empty military camps across Britain and by the end of August, 520 camps were occupied in England and Wales, rising to 921 a month later. In Scotland, 152 camps were occupied.[7] The mass squatting movement, as it became known, was the largest of its kind in British history and the first major challenge to the Labour government.

The war exacerbated this situation, but housing had long been an issue which successive governments had underperformed. The four million houses built between the two wars had not covered the demand, a problem further compounded by the fact that most of these had been built by speculative builders courting an emerging middle-class market. For the working classes, forced into private rented accommodation, not only were conditions often appalling, lack of regulation left them at the mercy of landlords and subject to sudden rent increases. This, as Ward recorded, had been the source of the rent strikes in Glasgow during the First World War, and Birmingham and London in the late 1930s.[8] During the last war, incidents of squatting were common, especially during the height of the blitz where provisions to rehouse those made homeless simply could not keep pace. Local authorities pressed the government for an extension of requisitioning powers for available land (such as that put aside for army training camps) to cope with the shortage. This was granted, prompting a flood of interest that proved difficult to administrate and remained insufficient to meet demand.

Following Labour's victory, Aneurin Bevan was appointed minister for health, extended to include housing. Initially, the founding of the National Health Service (NHS) claimed most of his attention. It was to be, he claimed, a nationwide expansion of the sort of mutual aid practices he had known amongst his fellow miners in Tredegar (developed to extend health insurance

[5] Ibid.

[6] David Goodway and Colin Ward, *Talking Anarchy* (Oakland: PM Press, 2014), 36.

[7] Don Watson, *Squatting in Britain 1945—1955: Housing, Politics and Direct Action* (London: Merlin Press, 2016), 76. See also James Hinton, 'Self Help and Socialism: The Squatters' Movement of 1946', *History Workshop Journal*, 25 (1988), 100—126.

[8] Colin Ward, 'Direct Action for Houses', *Freedom*, 28 July 1945.

coverage to the miner's families and other unwaged dependents). On housing, by contrast, he exercised less effort, partly because of the severe practical difficulties involved such as the short supply of materials, the lack of skilled builders (many were yet to be demobbed), and the restrictions of working hours for those who were available. Moreover, as with the NHS, he had very firm notions about exactly what sort of housing a working man was entitled to expect and was hostile to temporary measures. In the meantime, thousands of families bunked where they could in overcrowded, unsanitary environments. A perfect storm was brewing.

In summer 1945, Brighton, ex-servicemen returning from the war and finding themselves homeless formed a group called the Vigilantes. Under cover of night, they moved families into empty properties, fixing them up to make them habitable. So effective was this that it prompted a successful campaign to grant local authority requisitioning powers. Not all such requests were granted, leaving individuals to take matters into their own hands. When his pleas for help fell on deaf ears, James Fielding, a cinema projectionist from Scunthorpe, moved his family into a deserted camp where he was quickly joined by more families in the same situation.

There was a uniformity to the organisation of this process. On claiming a hut, tenants would then arrange themselves into committees dividing up resources and chores between themselves. After a while, efforts were made to personalise the huts; some began gardens. The government, although refusing to condone the actions, did not, could not, respond forcefully without risking adverse publicity and inviting scrutiny of their failings in this area. They sought other means to dislodge the squatters, appealing to the 'fair shares' ethic by condemning 'queue jumpers', placing German prisoners of war in disused camps to act as scapegoats, and, eventually, conceding requisitioning power to the local authorities to at least regain some control over the mushrooming communities.

The mainstream press was generally sympathetic; local papers in the areas affected were a little more hesitant, but others were outright supportive. *The Economist*, for example, remarked, 'In a country so law-abiding as Great Britain it is always refreshing when people take the law into their own hands on an issue on which the spirit of justice if not its letter, is so eminently on their side'.[9] The right-wing press, seizing an opportunity to attack an interventionist left-wing government, commended the resourcefulness and respectability of the squatters.[10]

Naturally, this sort of spontaneous popular movement was all grist to FP's mill. Woodcock's pamphlet *Homes or Hovels?* (winter 1944) had even anticipated its likelihood:

After this war a housing shortage of far greater dimensions than any before is unavoidable […] Events during the present war, such as the taking over of the underground stations by the people as air-raid shelters, show that the workers will be no less ready to act after this war.[11]

In the event it was Ward, not Woodcock, who took up the story for *Freedom* with his first piece, 'Direct Action for Houses', appearing shortly after the Brighton occupations.

That winter, back in London for his father's funeral, he returned to the topic, producing his own pamphlet *Building and the People*, on his old home printing press. 'Capitalist society is of its nature incapable of solving the housing shortage', the front cover announced, if people were 'to get even an amelioration of the present conditions' they had to act on their own initiative in such a way as would 'force the government to take far more radical measures than they have

[9] *The Economist*, 24 August 1946.

[10] Don Watson, *Squatting in Britain 1945—1955*, 71.

[11] George Woodcock, *Homes or Hovels?* (London: Freedom Press, 1945), 28.

yet envisaged'. Inside, 'Building Workers Face a Crisis' described a series of strikes by building workers which despite being 'the largest single-industry demonstration that the capital has yet seen' were overlooked and unsupported by the major unions, preoccupied, as they were with 'centralism and career making'. 'Mexican Fresco — A People's Culture at Last' and 'New Trends in Furniture' offered parables of anarchist ethics in action. The first praised the fresco painter 'who does not paint ON the wall for his work is part of the wall itself'. The second extolled the virtues of built-in furniture which made moving house much easier and less expensive but still allowed scope for personal touches. 'Houses in a Free Society', the only piece of explicit theorising, he extracted directly from Woodcock's *Homes or Hovels?*

Although prim in style, the pamphlet anticipated the domestic practicality that would become his hallmark. His series of *Freedom* articles, by contrast, written the following summer as the mass squatting movement escalated, was more conventionally radical. 'The People Act' (24 August) optimistically announced an impending social revolution, 'the great movement of the homeless continues, without any apparent sign of abatement [.] Let us recognise that we are witnessing the most important movement of direct action in England since 1926'. Anarchists could best support these momentous events by minding Kropotkin's words on the subject (italics my own),

Remaining people among the people, the earnest revolutionaries will work side by side with the masses, that the abolition of rent, the expropriation of houses, may become an accomplished fact. They will prepare the ground and encourage ideas to grow in this direction; and when the fruit of their labours is ripe, the people will proceed to expropriate the houses without going into theories which will certainly be thrust in their way [...] *For the expropriation of dwellings contains in germ the whole social revolution.*[12]

The optimism was short lived. On 8 September 1946, 800 homeless people, many recruited by Communist organisers, invaded and settled in empty mansions, including the Duchess of Bedford flats in Kensington, in wealthy areas of London. In contrast to the occupation of old army camps, this was theatrical, loaded with carefully choreographed symbolism: ragged crowds marching upon the wealthiest London districts, the poor reclaiming the privileges of the wealthy to satisfy their need. The government, taking it, correctly, as a deliberate provocation and, aware of the heavy Communist involvement, reacted more firmly than before. A siege situation with the police ensued and the Communist leaders were later arrested for incitement to trespass.

Ward covered the episode in 'Politics and Squatters' (21 September), condemning police tactics and emphasising, again, that squatting was a reasonable response to a chronic shortage of adequate housing. He dismissed the suggestion that Communist Party organisers had been central to the action, claiming that this was opportunist politicking after the fact. As Don Watson has argued, there is ample evidence to show that the CP were actively involved in the entire campaign and especially in the London events designed to provoke the government.[13] Whether or not Ward knew this cannot be said, but, as one of the FP Anarchists, Communists were an enemy to be deplored regardless.[14]

The mass squatting campaign had a significance for Ward analogous to Spain for the other editors, albeit on a much smaller scale. It offered the same 'real time' experience of live action, as well as a similar (but far less extreme) emotional arc of excitement turning to disappointment.

[12] Colin Ward, 'The People Act', *Freedom*, 24 August 1946.

[13] Don Watson, *Squatting in Britain 1945—1955*, 89.

[14] Colin Ward, 'Squatters Force Concessions', *Freedom*, 5 October 1946; 'Bevan's Campaign against Squatters', *Freedom*, 19 October 1946.

Above all, it made for a convenient dramatisation of all anarchism's key principles and their limitations. The squatters had (in many cases) acted spontaneously and demonstrated mutual aid in action. They had (in his interpretation) been thwarted or manipulated for political gain by official political bodies but their own enthusiasm, even when relatively successful in their efforts, had dwindled too. This prompted the question of why so many had been willing to concede their autonomous committees to local authority control and to be, ultimately, officially rehoused.

It may not have been such a mystery had he spoken *to* more of the people involved rather than *of* them. Only one of his articles mentioned a personal visit to any of these occupied camps.[15] Given that his military role involved the deconstruction of military camps, it is reasonable to assume he did see several first-hand, but still he did not include any direct quotes in his articles and made a little advance on generic descriptions of their orderliness. The truth was that most of those involved did not see themselves as revolutionaries, nor had any wish to be. They desired the social respectability that an adequate home could provide and had acted from necessity only, seeing their committees as practical expedients until the problems could be 'properly' resolved. His criticisms of the CP involvement came close to this insight but did not apply the same back to his own side.

Ward was not alone in going back to the 'germ of the whole social revolution'. From 1945 onwards, *Freedom* substantially increased its coverage of domestic issues in dialogue with the national focus on reconstruction and welfare policy. This suited the FP's pacifist contingent who tended to have existing interests and networks in the fields of health, agriculture, and education. The *Freedom* editorial meeting minutes from January 1946 set out a programme of work responding to what they considered priority issues:

Pamphlet on Health by J. Hewetson, 5000 printed [...]

Attractive Work by Camillo Berneri [.] 3000 copies

Pamphlet on the Colonies written by several people [.] 5000 copies

As well as proposals for pamphlets on 'War Communities', 'Irish Community', and the Anarchist trial.[16]

Alongside subject matter, an alteration of tone was also necessary. It was no longer enough to rage against political leaders as callous and war crazed. They had to be more subtle and produce more probing analysis to expose how centrally administered welfare not only failed to deliver on its promises but allowed the government to encroach on individual freedoms. At the same time, they had to present anarchism as a natural and sensible approach to realising equality without sacrificing liberty.

Hewetson's pamphlet *Mutual Aid and Social Evolution* (1946) led the way towards 'positive' anarchism by revisiting *Mutual Aid*, Kropotkin's rebuttal to the Social Darwinists. Through his careful study of natural history and tribal peoples, Hewetson noted, the Russian had proved that competition was not a law of nature but one of capitalism and a class-divided society which, in fact, thwarted overall human development. On the contrary, in the struggle for life, it was the elimination of competition through mutual aid that had most promoted human survival. Natural selection, then, favoured the co-operative instinct as much as the destructive one:

anarchism is the most realistic and practical method of all. because it is in line with the tendencies which have operated throughout the whole length of human history, and have their roots of

[15] Colin Ward, 'Squatters Force Concession'.

[16] 'Freedom Minutes 10 January 1946', 130, VRP/ ARCH 01182, IISH.

nature itself. It is the schemes to bring about the social revolution by means of coercive authority which are illusory and Utopian, and ultimately prove reactionary in effect.

He omitted mention of Kropotkin's commitment to the necessity of violent revolution.

Others moved from the other direction, attacking the government's reconstruction plans. Proposals further expanding London, Sansom argued, would result in an 'over bloated metropolis', exacerbating the very poverty and social destruction that urban regeneration was supposed to address.[17] An anarchist solution would favour regionalism and 'the gradual-breaking up of the metropolises', and with them the end of centralised authority, as a 'necessary preliminary' to 'an unlimited extension of freedom'.[18] Freedom, as Gerard Vaughan and Hewetson reminded readers, also required food security. How, then, could the government justify an agricultural policy that left the country dependent on imports while productive farmland went to waste? Anarchists, by contrast, would seek a more efficient integration of rural and urban life.[19]

As with Ward's squatters, another tactic was to seek out and promote 'vernacular' examples of mutual aid in practice.[20] The most important of these was Richards' account of the resurrected Peckham Health Centre, a longstanding source of fascination for the FP group.[21] In 1926, Dr George Scott Williamson and Dr Innes Pearse had begun the project as a means of investigating the factors that made for positive health rather than the mere absence of disease. The plan was simple — 875 local families (2,000 individuals) were recruited to join as members (for which they paid a low weekly rate) and given total free rein over the centre's facilities, which included a swimming pool. Their progress was charted through annual health checks. Scott Williamson's hypothesis that, given the right environment, people would self-organise with beneficial results for their overall health was realised in full. Members not only used the facilities regularly but initiated their own social activities.

The success prompted the building of a new centre which opened in 1935, a model of modern social architecture using cutting-edge research to fashion large, light open spaces believed to stimulate social interaction.[22] During the war, Peckham closed and was converted into a factory but, owing to the efforts of the members themselves, it reopened in 1946. There was, in this tale, much to attract the anarchists: the centrality of the environment in shaping human behaviour, the idea that self-determination not only fostered individual good health but created a sense of community. Peckham, Richards contended, 'vindicated the sound biological basis of the Anarchist philosophy'.[23] It also paid tribute to how effective and efficient an autonomous, community-based organisation could be, in contrast to the unwieldy centralised administration of the NHS whose costs were already beginning to spiral.[24]

[17] Philip Sansom, 'The City', *Freedom*, 18 January and 1 February 1947; Patrick Abercrombie, *Greater London Plan* (1944).

[18] George Woodcock, 'Regionalism', *Freedom*, 1—29 November 1947.

[19] Gerard Vaughan, 'Land Notes', *Freedom*, 27 December 1947; John Hewetson, 'Agriculture and Social Revolution', *Freedom*, 19 April — 14 June 1947.

[20] Emily Charkin, '"A Parable of the Way Things Ought to Be": Colin Ward, the Peckham Health Centre and the Deschooling Movement', in Ken Jones and Catherine Burke, eds., *Education, Childhood and Anarchism: Talking Colin Ward* (Abington: Routledge, 2014).

[21] Innes Pearse and Lucy Crocker, *The Peckham Experiment: A Study in the Living Structure of Society* (London: Sir Halley Stewart Trust, 1944) was sold in the Freedom bookshop immediately on publication. See 'Freedom Bookshop Publications Listings', *War Commentary*, 1 November 1944.

[22] Innes Pearse and Lucy Crocker, 'Appendix I: Notes on the Building', in *The Peckham Experiment*, 300—302.

[23] Vernon Richards, 'Peckham Health Experiment', *Freedom*, 4 January 1947.

[24] Kevin Morgan, *Britain since 1945*, 75.

The attraction was not without its contradictions. The vindication of the 'sound biological basis' Richard spoke of was the result of meticulous planning and exhaustive monitoring. In this sense, the directors always retained a significant degree of control. The 'users' were observed subjects fulfilling the promise of a theory,[25] a fact reflected in Richards' account which made no space for the voices of the people themselves, only for the directors.

For all the sensible solutions proving that anarchists had better planning skills than either bureaucrat or Fabian, it was still important, perhaps more so than ever, to believe that the world could, and more importantly, should be different but difficult to do without being dismissed, once again, as damn fools in utopia or, worse, chiliastic despots. MLB took up this problem in *Journey through Utopia* (1948),[26] an intellectual history of literary utopias. Giving no quarter to scepticism, she opened,

Our age is an age of compromises. Visionaries are derided or despised, and 'practical men' rule our lives. We no longer seek radical solutions to the evils of society but reforms. At a time when man is so concerned with what is practicable and capable of immediate realisation, it might be a salutary exercise to turn to men who dreamt of Utopias, who have rejected everything which did not comply with their ideal of perfection.

Defiance aside, she could not but detest the dogmatic, authoritarian aspects of the classic utopias, for all the boldness of their vision. In this, as Matthew Adams points out, *Journey* had an unexpected sympathy with *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945), Karl Popper's attack on the traditions of utopianism and historicism which he considered underpinned the modern philosophy of totali- tarianism.[27] Nevertheless, she could not follow Popper in a defence of political liberalism, nor could she be reconciled with the paucity of vision and crude materialism of the modern democracies, no better, she believed, no less dehumanising, than their authoritarian correlates. What must be retained from utopia was its vitalising imaginative energy. 'Utopias', she concluded, 'have often been plans of societies functioning mechanically, dead structures conceived by economists, politicians, and moralists; but they have also been the dreams of living poets'.[28]

Ward, demobbed and restored to Sidney Caulfield's architectural office, was now able to increase his involvement with *Freedom*. In addition to producing *Freedom*, FP's activities extended to public oration in Hyde Park, lectures at LAG meetings (and other sympathetic groups), and an annual anarchist summer school. He was not the only new recruit at this time, Rita Milton also joined the group, later recalling the sheer fun and excitement of those years with all their intense activity. Like Ward, her encounter with anarchism had first come through the Glasgow orators

[25] Innes Pearse and Lucy Crocker, 'Appendices III, IV, X', in *The Peckham Experiment*, 300–324. Appendices include breakdowns of member occupations and income levels, detailed medical records, and charts tracking 'spontaneous activities in the centre'.

[26] Marie Louise Berneri, *Journey through Utopia: A Critical Examination of Imagined Worlds in Western Literature* (Oakland: PM Press, 2019). For earlier anarchist/libertarian discussions on the topic see Lewis Mumford, *The Story of Utopia* (New York: Viking Press, [1922] 1962); Rudolf Rocker, *Nationalism and Culture* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1933).

[27] Matthew Adams, 'Introduction to the 2019 Edition', in Marie Louise Berneri, ed., *Journey through Utopia*, xxxii-xxxviii.

[28] Ibid., 317. For an updated discussion of the creative, pedagogic qualities of utopian thinking see Ruth Levitas, *Utopia as Method* (Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

which had brought her to London to attend summer school. On falling in with the FP crowd, she was soon a regular Hyde Park speaker, flourishing in the thrill of the public platform.[29]

Where Milton relished the activist side of FP life, Ward was more reserved on this front. He did not recall having attended many LAG meetings, although he did give the occasional talk for LAG on topics that interested him, and attended the summer schools in London and Glasgow.[30] Never an enthusiastic performer, he rarely spoke in Hyde Park but took his turn in putting the paper into its wrapper for distribution and selling it. What he most enjoyed was the process of producing on the paper and other FP publications, not just writing but editing and pasting up the 'dummies' ready for the printer.[31]

But being part of *Freedom* was always about more than the paper. The sense of shared purpose, and alienation from mainstream views, fuelled an intense intimacy amongst the inner FP circle. Friendships made in those years, most of them lifelong, did more to cement his belief in voluntary association than anything else.[32] Moreover, they were a brilliantly talented and cosmopolitan group which meant that in those notoriously dreary post-war days, his world opened intellectually and culturally. Richards, a keen gardener and cook, would prepare delicious Italian meals using 'exotic' home-grown produce. He was also, along with Hewetson, an aficionado of opera and chamber music. Ward, raised on the popular classics played by the BBC orchestra, would listen spellbound as the two men passionately debated music in Richards' living room, one or the other leaping to the record player to illustrate their point. In a different direction, Sansom was a jazz devotee, with a gift for improvising songs himself, and the singer George Melly a close associate.

Outside of music, Richards and MLB connected them with a global anarchist network. Naturally, this included many Italians such as the architect Giancarlo di Carlo, an early champion of popular participation in architecture, who became a close friend and whose article, 'The Housing Problem in Italy', he learnt Italian especially to be able to translate.[33] Read and Woodcock linked the group to international art and literary scene, including North American anarchist and radical writers. Not only did some of them write for Woodcock's occasional *NOW* magazine, but *Freedom* also distributed *Why?*, later *Resistance*, edited by David Wieck, *Retort*, edited by Dachine Rainer and Holley Cantine, and Dwight MacDonald's *Politics*.

The mood of the American radicals was unapologetically iconoclastic. Writing in 'The Root is Man' (1946), MacDonald declared that 'the firmest ground from which to struggle for that human liberation which was the goal of the Old Left is not history but of those non-historical values (truth, justice, love, etc.,) which Marx made unfashionable amongst socialists'. A new political attitude was needed, he continued, one that emphasised 'the emotions, the imagination, the moral feelings, the primacy of the individual human being'.[34] Of the *Politics* contributors, it was Paul Goodman who most supplied these qualities in abundance.

[29] Tony Gibson, 'Interview with Rita Milton', TGP/ARCH0515, IISH.

[30] London Anarchist Group Winter lecture programme 1946 'The Housing Problem and the Squatters Movement'; London Anarchist Group Summer lecture programme 1947, 'Building and the People' (with Duncan Gilchrist).

[31] Tony Gibson, 'Interview with Colin Ward', TGP/ARCH0515, IISH; David Goodway and Colin Ward, *Talking Anarchy*, 41–43.

[32] Ibid., 41–43.

[33] Giancarlo di Carlo, 'The Housing Problem in Italy', *Freedom*, 12 June and 26 June 1948.

[34] Dwight MacDonald, 'The Root Is Man', *Politics*, April 1946.

Goodman, a protean, idiosyncratic thinker, in the tradition of American 'individualist' pragmatism,[35] believed the chief principle of anarchism was autonomy rather than freedom, which, he conceded, was a much harder sell. While having plenty to say on subjects from psychotherapy to urban planning, education reform to professional ethics, his thought was more a style than a theory, roaming freely across the disciplinary boundaries, combining Orwellian frankness with Mark Twain's warm vernacular. In 1947, he published *Communitas: Ways of Livelihood and Means of Life* (1947) with architect brother Percy, an evanescent book overspilling with ideas for new community paradigms which made good on the failures of modern urban planning. For Ward, one of the few to read it at the time of its publication, the sheer imagination applied to a subject often dry and technical was its most enduring influence.[36]

It was not just in art and literature that the group were 'avant-garde'. Their interests in sex were, he felt, far advanced of other leftist groups.[37] MLB introduced an English readership to the work of Wilhelm Reich, a German psychologist who up-turned Freud's view of neuroses as the 'conflict between an individual's instinctual demands and opposing social demands' by focusing on the orgasm reflex. 'No neurotic is able to be orgastically potent', he argued, attributing this 'sexual chaos' not to social living in general but to societies 'based on authority' and patriarchal social order.[38] For further confirmation of this, MLB pointed to Bronislaw Malinowski's study of the Trobriand Islanders whose children, she pointed out, knew 'no sexual repression and no sexual secrecy' and had 'no sexual perversions, no functional psychoses, no psycho-neuroses, no sex murder'. The following year, Comfort's *Barbarism and Sexual Freedom* (1946) took up the link between authority and sexual chaos and Hewetson developed the biological case for liberation in his *Sexual Freedom for Youth* (1951).

Two points might be made about Ward's early years amongst the FP Anarchists. Firstly, sexual openness notwithstanding, his closest relationships were mostly with the men of the group. He knew MLB through Richards and was, as many were, struck by her but not especially close. There were also several other women actively involved at the time; there was Milton, one of their finest speakers, Peta Edsall (then the partner of Hewetson) who undertook substantial editorial work preparing the FP anthologies, and, of course, Lilian Wolfe still managing the office in her 70s, answering, in person, every single letter they received. Nevertheless, they were little more than passing mentions in his recollections. When asked directly in an interview about the status of women in the movement, he was vague, shrugging it off: 'anarchists are products of their times'.[39] One woman connected to the group who he did become close to was Vera, Richards' sister, recently divorced from David Balfour, the charming but 'feckless' heir to Balfour Castle, Orkney.[40]

Secondly, there was, initially, a tutelary character to the relationships. Ward first appears named in the minutes for a meeting on 5 June 1947. In the meetings that followed, he seems

[35] On the American pragmatic-individualist tradition: James Albrecht, *Reconstructing Individualism: A Pragmatic Tradition from Emerson to Ellison* (New York: Ford University Press, 2012). On Paul Goodman's relationship to it: Taylor Stoehr, 'Preface', in Paul Goodman, ed., *Drawing the Line Again* (Oakland: PM Press, 2010), 5–18.

[36] Colin Ward, 'Planning', in *Influences* (Resurgence Books, 1991), 116.

[37] David Goodway and Colin Ward, *Talking Anarchy*, 42.

[38] Marie Louise Berneri, 'Sexuality and Freedom', *NOW*, 1945, https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/marie-louise-berneri-wilhelm-reich-and-the-sexual-revolution [last accessed 6 October 2021].

[39] Tony Gibson, 'Interview with Colin Ward'.

[40] See https://landedfamilies.blogspot.com/2018/09/346-balfour-of-balfour-castle-shapinsay.html [accessed 20 June 2021].

to have raised a few objections (noteworthy ones anyway) and accepted his share of the tasks allocated to him without comment. In part, that was to be expected. He was younger than the others, new to anarchism, new to propaganda. But there was also a gulf in social backgrounds. Writing to Richards in 1948 he noted casually that 'being neither as adaptable nor having had the same educational opportunities as some members of the group' he had to 'learn his metier and stick to it'.[41] The comment was made in jest but does suggest he was aware of a distinction.

One of the jobs he accepted was the role of News Editor. With editorship came some curb on the freedoms enjoyed by a correspondent. He had a responsibility to address important issues that no one had the time or the inclination to attend to. On becoming the 'universal emergency journalist',[42] he also had to cover column content when their usual writers were busy. As such, he took on topics far beyond his usual interests. This was not too troublesome. As with his first four *Freedom* pieces, it only required re-reading existing news stories through an anarchist lens. So, ongoing worldwide hostilities — war in Greece, treason trials in Eastern Europe, escalating tension in China, Korea, and Japan — confirmed this was a phoney peace. Trouble in the building trade following cuts in public spending proved that nationalising industry did not empower the workers. The United Nation's impotence in colonial affairs demonstrated 'that national revolution will only exchange foreign masters for masters of their own race. Their revolution, to be effective must be a social revolution directed against governmentalism itself' (10 November 1949). No matter what the topic, most of the articles ended this way, as they always had, with a solemn call for workers' control, gained through social revolution, but what, in a nuclear age, did that really mean?[43]

Anarchism Past and Present

The year 1947 got off to a cold start. In January, a severe winter turned into a national calamity due to a fuel shortage which the government, despite forewarning, failed to prevent. Sensing that two years of frantic activity had overstretched resources, they resolved to cease the welter of reforms and concentrate on con- solidation.[44] To mounting public frustration, this did not mean an end to rationing which, with Stafford Cripps now in the treasury, became even more severe.[45] With coldness, dingy food, and dreary clothes trying everyone's patience, in the wider Labour movement, concerns that the 'New Jerusalem' was out of step with both popular sympathies and practical realities continued to grow.[46]

Amongst the anarchists, Herbert Read found the moment ripe for reflection and reassessment. On 17 May 1947, he gave a lecture on 'Anarchism: Past and Future' for the LAG, starting out with the challenge: 'no fundamental thought has been devoted to the principles of anarchism for half a century. The last important contribution to anarchism was Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*, written

[41] Colin Ward to Vernon Richards, 7 July 1948, 130, VRP/ARCH01182, IISH.

[42] Tony Gibson, 'Interview with Colin Ward'.

[43] Colin Ward, 'A Plan for Misery', *Freedom*, 24 January 1948; 'Ten Years After', *Freedom*, 3 September 1949; 'The Dark Continent', *Freedom*, 10 December 1949.

[44] Kevin Morgan, *British History since 1945*, 71–111.

[45] See Ina Zweineger-Bargielowska, 'Rationing, Austerity and the Conservative Party Recovery after 1945', *The Historical Journal*, 37:1 (1994): 173–197.

[46] Ben Jackson, 'Revisions', in *Equality and the British Left* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 151–153.

fifty years ago'.[47] In the intervening time two world wars, the failure of the great socialist experiment, and the persistence of capitalism had done much to erode confidence in any imminent social revolution. Above all and everything else, the atomic bomb had handed the state absolute power with 'decisive implications for revolutionary strategy'.[48] Total revolution of the kind, as imagined by the great classical thinkers, was implausible. The movement had to adapt or perish as a romantic byway of history.

Read proposed resuming Kropotkin's *Ethics* (1922) project, a naturalist account of morality. 'Science and philosophy have given us both the material strength and the freedom of thought' required for progress;[49] ethics, the Russian argued, had lagged. Yet the need for 'a system of ethics worthy of the present scientific revival' was 'more necessary than ever', especially in the face of scepticism towards the authority of science in ethical questions.[50]

Two principal schools, Kropotkin claimed, came down from ancient Greece. One located morality in an external source, the other in 'man' himself. The first fixed ethics to universal, timeless truths. The second recognised the changing conditions of human life.[51] The former provided a solid framework for judging right from wrong but, unable to account for origins, obscured them with mysticism, producing a hierarchy of mediators — priests, philosophers — to interpret. The latter was more egalitarian but mercurial; it did not provide the constancy necessary to measure and, therefore, create the consensus necessary for collective living. His aim, he explained, was to synthesise the two into a system that combined discrimination with diversity.

> The fact is, that while the mode of life is determined by the history of the development of a given society, conscience, on the other hand, as I shall endeavour to prove, has a much deeper origin, namely in the consciousness of equity, which physiologically develops in man as in all social animals.[52]

With this knowledge of itself, humankind could cast off the last unwieldy apparatus of social control — the church, state, and legal system — and assume full responsibility for its own development. But before this proof could be attempted, he died.

In taking up this project, Read proposed adding the tools of modern psychology, the cutting-edge science of his own age, which would illuminate more intensely the dynamics between the individual, group, and environment. This, he believed, would bring about the positive theory of ethics upon which anarchism could be validated and justified into a coherent philosophy of personal liberty, mutual aid, and non-violence, able to account for all facets of human experience. It would also prove how individual neuroses (such as deviancy) and collective social maladies (such as crime) would be remedied, not perpetuated, by anarchism as the form of social organisation that most optimised the social instinct.

To this end, Read hoped to see the word revolution struck from anarchist propaganda and replaced by education.[53] Of course, he conceded, not everyone was suited to study; those whose temperaments inclined to activism could direct their energies to the current campaign to resist

[47] Herbert Read, 'Anarchist Past and Future', in David Goodway, ed., *One Man Manifesto*, 117.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Peter Kropotkin with Louis S. Friedland and Joseph Piroshnikoff, trans., and N. Lebedev, ed., *Ethics: Origins and Development* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, [1924], 1993), 13.

[50] Ibid., 18.

[51] Ibid., 260.

[52] Ibid., 264.

[53] Herbert Read, *One Man Manifesto*, 122.

military conscription. Accordingly, thought should be given to forms of non-violent action. But it should never be forgotten that the real revolution was internal and the most effective action, 'molecular'.[54]

Reaction to the lecture (printed in *Freedom* 17 May 1947) was predictably mixed, filling the letters to pages for several weeks. Some welcomed it with a wholehearted agreement. Alan Smith found 'the outlines of a satisfactory answer to the headaches of an anarchist in this year 1947' in which 'the state is supreme'. He agreed that anarchism had now to shake off the dogmas of its own doctrinal traditions and 'educate men for freedom'.[55] John Larkman agreed in seeing education as a definite weapon[56] and Stephen Marletta warmly welcomed Read's inclusion of non-violence as a core principle, ever more important in the atomic age.[57]

Others, while agreeing that anarchism needed to adjust to the times, considered that Read had misread them. 'The transformation of our present mental and emotional attitudes […] would probably take millions more years and in this Atomic age, Time marches with the speed of youth', argued JMcD. Read 'like many more intellectuals has lost touch with realities'; passive resistance just perpetuated slavery, only energetic militant action secured any gains.[58] Alfred Meltzer too considered the lecture characteristic of the loss of vigour amongst the left since the previous war and urged the distinction between anarchy, which was a state of peace, and revolution as the necessary means of reaching it.[59] CS Craig found that Read's privileging of psychology failed to take into account sociology, a stable social system, like the one his research programme appeared to assume, would always frame, and therefore, limit both the production of knowledge and its uses.[60] Another reader, LH, complained that good arguments were undermined by *Freedom*'s catchphrases and 'party line tone' which had no place in an anarchist movement.[61]

For all the talk of anarchism's future, the lecture and its fallout rehearsed all the same divisions that had dogged *Freedom* since its inception: should revolution be piecemeal or wholesale? Was violence an unfortunate necessity or entirely contradictory to the cause? Was anarchism really a battle of ideas or one of the deeds, a creed for the bourgeois intellectual or the worker? If it stirred the same questions, it reached the same impasses. One kindly voice of compromise attempted to mediate; LS, a regular letter writer and distributor of the paper, proposed that education run alongside other developments but did not suggest what these might be.[62]

Avoiding the initial furore, Ward's reply appeared later, in a letter published on 12 July. Given his bookish inclination and mild manner, his inclination towards Read may seem assured, but this was not the case. 'It would be hard', he began, 'not to sympathise with the exasperation voiced in our Glasgow comrade's letter'. Read's picture of scholarly anarchism was attractive, but this was a quality that also made it dangerous, too welcome a reprieve from the 'rough and tumble' of propaganda and agitation. Such a stark division of labour between intellectual work and activism would be 'fatal' for an already heterogeneous movement.

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[54] Ibid., 125.
[55] Alan Smith, 'Letter', *Freedom*, 28 June 1947.
[56] John Larkman, 'Letter', *Freedom*, 28 June 1947.
[57] Stephen Marletta, *Freedom*, 14 June 1947.
[58] JMcD, 'Letter', *Freedom*, 31 May 1947.
[59] Alfred Meltzer, 'Letter', *Freedom*, 31 May 1947.
[60] CS Craig, 'Letter', *Freedom*, 31 May 1947.
[61] LH, 'Letter', *Freedom*, 31 May 1947.
[62] LS, 'Letter', *Freedom*, 28 June 1947.

Moreover, it reduced activism to mere functionality, executed according to the careful direction of cleverer comrades which, he felt, went against the very essence of what anarchism was about. 'Are we so justified in setting-at-nought the activities of the last 50 years because they have not found literary expression?' he asked. To press his point further, he too invoked Kropotkin:

Kropotkin observes that anarchism began among the people and will only retain its vitality while it remains a movement of the people, and it is the revolutionary efforts of 'ignorant' and unlettered people, which (if we are willing to learn) should teach and encourage us.[63]

People like the peons of Mexico, the Makhnovists of Ukraine, the Spanish working class, the British squatters.

This silent contest in (and for) the name of the great anarchist ancestor was chiefly a question of methods. The intellectual Read warmed to Kropotkin as the 'philosopher-interrupted', believing that the movement's maturity depended on a solid theoretical foundation, an all-encompassing narrative accommodating every facet of human experience. As the FP's newest propagandist, Ward valued ideas in so far as they stimulated action. For him, then, Kropotkin was best as the 'activist-observer' who simply gave voice, 'literary expression', to the organic good sense and spontaneous action of the '"ignorant" people'.

In advocating for the generative power of direct action his reply was, in many respects, a straightforward expression of *Freedom*'s pragmatism, the party-line that had so irritated LH, but again, this was not entirely so. The editors' response came in a long article on 9 August 1947 which not only addressed Read but the debate amongst the readers. Unsurprisingly, they agreed with 'CW' (Ward) that the popular movement was at the core of anarchism, although they were willing to concede that the lessons from these needed better intellectual expression into a general theory of anarchism. Education was indeed important; 'the fundamental questions always remain the fundamental questions'. But these were not the matters that really exercised their attention, that was saved for the questions of non-violence and the definition of revolution.

Despite proposing that the 'thorny' matter of violence not be reopened, they did so all the same, urging its practical necessity, and stressing, as Meltzer had, the distinction between long-term aims and short-term realities. They were unwilling to relinquish or redefine the old notions of revolution just yet. Since the late 19th century, they noted, revolutionary theoreticians had been declaring that the days of the barricades were over. Read and others now claimed that the atomic bomb made the matter decisive, the state held absolute power now. They disagreed, whenever workers seized the means of production, barricades, forcefully defended, had been found necessary.

Freedom editor and pragmatist though he was, Ward disagreed with their position on violence. Here at least he was in complete accord with Read. This probably provoked considerable discussion, after all, the piece declared itself to be by 'the editors' collectively. A compromise was found. Directly underneath the editorial was a short piece 'It Is for Us to Decide', signed off with a 'C.':

We must counter [authority] with the weapons that are to hand to everyone who cares to use them, the weapons of disobedience and human solidarity [...] They spring from the heart of everyone who thinks and acts for himself. In the words of our rulers: It all depends on you.[64]

[63] Colin Ward, 'Anarchism Past and Present', *Freedom*, 12 July 1947.

[64] CW, 'It Is for Us to Decide', *Freedom*, 9 August 1947.

This debate shows Ward negotiating his stance within the movement's spectrum of positions. He followed Read's stress on inner — intellectual and emotional — revolution, and non-violent forms of action but not his scholastic methods. He aligned with the FP editors on the centrality of popular direct action and ongoing struggle, but not on the use of violence. He wholeheartedly supported the principle of worker control but rejected any overly narrow, industrial definition of this.

The outcome of all this, however, remained ambiguous. How were the 'weapons of disobedience and human solidarity' to take form and be effective against such unbridled destructive power? If a positive programme of his own still eluded him, he found a partial reconciliation of these elements in the role of propaganda, and in his own identity and responsibility as a propagandist. In April 1949, whilst parrying yet another wave of complaints from worker readers about *Freedom*'s modish intellectualism, he set out his views on the subject decidedly:

Freedom exists for the expression and exchange of anarchist views and for the propagating of anarchist ideas. In its capacity as a propagandist paper, it exists to tell people what anarchists think, and not what they think. There would be no use at all in hanging it up like fly-paper to catch people by pretending that our views are other than they are. Fraternally, CW.[65]

No other publication at this time did more to resist and counter the moralistic claims made for the government's welfare policies, anticipating many of the contradictions and limitations that began to emerge more clearly before the decade was out. Where change and democracy were proclaimed, they exposed the persistence of old structures and attitudes, the contraction of individual liberties and the expansion of the state's power to intervene in people's daily lives. If there was a genuine and significant redistribution of income and resources during this time, *Freedom* interrogated the redistribution of power — the capacity of people to actively shape and participate in their social worlds — and on this score, with ever-increased centralisation, run by an inflated class of managers, bureaucrats, and experts, the welfare state fared poorly.

Yet, for all this, the *Freedom* group shared, and suffered from, a similar problem. Their ideas, values, and methods of working were also drawn from an earlier age. Created in the wake of Spain, immediately followed by the war, it is unsurprising that conflict metaphors dominated their ways of thinking and speaking, even after physical fighting was over. They shared this tendency with the wider left; even the pacifists continually couched their arguments in martial terms. As novelist and former Communist Doris Lessing remarked: 'For that is how I see our lot now — war crazed — even if we were hundreds or thousands of miles from the fighting'.[66] Inevitable though this was, it made it hard to conceive of direct action or revolution outside of these terms, restricting, then, how they responded to change.

In those early post-war years, the time when, as Ward had joked, they reached their high-point, the peak was as much an end as a beginning. By 1948 *Freedom* was financially stretched with rent prices increasing and subscription rates not; the costs of running a shop, office, and printers were proving prohibitive even for Richards' mysterious financial resources. Moreover, the old personnel were drifting as livelihoods, problems, and opportunities beckoned them away. Richards and MLB were also expecting a baby.

In a mark of his increasing prominence in the group, it was Ward who put the case bluntly to Richards in a letter. None of the existing group was able to do more, Hewetson's GP practice was

[65] Colin Ward, 'And a Letter on the Subject', *Freedom*, 9 April 1949.

[66] Doris Lessing, *Walking in the Shade* (London: HarperCollins, 1997).

growing, Meltzer had personal issues to attend to, Woolfe was never going to change her ways, Richards himself, the 'father' of the group, was 'already holding too many babies' and needed some relief. Although promising to progressively increase his own contribution (until then his architectural work had preoccupied him), he still insisted that new blood was needed, not only to get the group's work done but to revitalise the paper's content and prevent it from becoming stale.[67]

The following year did bring dramatic changes, of the worst kind. First, Woodcock and Inge, his wife, left England for Canada. He would continue to be a *Freedom* correspondent until well into the 50s but his ties to the group loosened considerably. (He later became involved in a bitter feud with Richards.[68]) Then, in the spring, MLB lost her baby. To the shock of all, she followed her child, Alan, soon after, dying from a related infection. Devastation rippled across the entire international movement. Distraught letters poured in from all corners of the globe. On one thing they all agreed. Anarchism's brightest light had gone out.

Woodcock, with a tinge of melodrama, later claimed that with her died the anarchist movement itself.[69] This was hard on those left struggling on, and yet there was some truth to it. MLB and Richards, and in a different way Read and Woodcock, were interwar anarchists with Spain in their souls. Not only moderns but modernists, they were internationalists in outlook, combining cultural erudition with sophisticated scepticism. Liberation of the human psyche, as much as the social body, preoccupied them. At the same time, they still earnestly invoked the 'mass of workers' as the 'energy of social change',[70] no less than the Marxists, their perennial foes. Although conceding that such change would be piecemeal, and struggle ongoing, they still believed in total revolution, if only unity could be preserved and the correct model — regionalism, federalism, syndicalism — put into place.

Ward had not, of course, caused the splintering of this group and he aligned closely with many of their ideas and values. Nevertheless, he also represented, in his own person, some of the fundamental challenges which the changing times would usher in. Not least of these was sociological, how to engage with 'middle England', the people existing somewhere *between* workers and intellectuals, a group that the gradual decline of manufacturing, the rise of the service economy, and the long-term effects of the welfare state would swell further. Living out there in the mushrooming suburbs and estates, often better educated than their parents and hoping for a bit more from life, what attraction did the barricades hold for them?

Ward understood this group. He had come from a Labour family but not an especially radical one committed to vague notions of fairness and social respectability. As a teenager, he was interested in socialism, but only in an Orwellian key. He was grammar school educated but had not attended university, interested in writing but not as an intellectual or an artist. He did not work in industry but in its administration. Anarchism had not drawn him for its dramatic or romantic elements, but because it struck him as *sensible*, or, in other words, because he had been able to align it easily with the views and values he already held. And if he had been able to read it in this way, why not other 'ordinary people'?

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[67] Colin Ward, 'Letter to Vernon Richards', 7 July 1948.

[68] This was a common occurrence. Richards' vicious dispute with Meltzer was well known, and in later life he was no longer on speaking terms with Hewetson, Comfort, or Sansom. Only Ward remained a friend, and even this was occasionally uneasy.

[69] Tony Gibson, 'Interview with George Woodcock'.

[70] Editorial, *Freedom*, 9 August 1947.

5. The Social Principle

On 7 January 1950, Ward, looking back to see forward, remarked gravely, 'the thought must be in many minds today that the half century now ending must have seen more human misery than any other period in Man's history'. In this 'Century of Fear' moral progress had not kept pace with scientific achievement. Hope that the great body of the oppressed would rise up and apply their 'tremendous latent strength to shape a hopeful future' had faded. Downtrodden and disillusioned, he imagined their reply through the words of Goethe: 'Hush! Leave us where we are resigned; Wake not the ambitious longings of our mind'. What could be done 'in the face of such apathy?' Little more, he supposed, than to continue '"trundling the little wheelbarrow around the world"[1] destroying the foundation upon which the structure of power rests'. That, then, was what anarchists must do, devote themselves to developing the 'techniques of resistance' out of which rise the 'forms of social organisation appropriate to civilised men'.[2]

On 26 December 1959, Ward took a 'Last Look at the Fifties', the decade where '"Britain can make it" changed to "Make me an offer"'. Labour was languishing, the Conservatives modernising. The anticipated third war had not materialised, but still political leaders everywhere scrambled to join a nuclear programme. American power boomed while Britain's withered, but, on closer inspection, decolonisation was just imperialism with a new facade and less responsibility. At home, the New Elizabethan age dressed in Edwardian decor, the first wave of angry young men blew a raspberry through the *House and Living* dining rooms, the second 'nagged his missus' for want of a good cause. Then came 1956, the Suez Crisis and the invasion of Hungary, a student generation were aghast but impotent. 'What could they do but write letters to *The Guardian*?' Meanwhile, anarchism suffered from 'the fact that its numerical weakness inhibits its intellectual strength'. The job of the movement was to 'put anarchism back into the intellectual bloodstream, into the field of ideas which are taken seriously'.[3]

The first was lyrical and tragic. Despite the terrible loss, there was hope. Anarchism had only to develop its techniques of resistance and patiently ply its message to gain a hearing. The second was sharp and sardonic. In a world plunged into farce the old ways no longer applied. It was not, now, the working classes he charged with apathy, but the *Guardian*-reading, letter-writing student body who had woken up too late. Anarchists could not be so naive as to suppose good ideas were enough; their project now was to find better ways of communicating, more in tune with the wider public they sought.

The change of tone was unsurprising. He was not only a reader of his times, but a listener too, and the voice of the 50s was anti-heroic and sceptical. How, then, to preserve any faith in such an age of disbelief?

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[1] Reference to a quote from Rabindranath Tagore, 'Pushing the little wheelbarrow of propaganda around the world'. See Krishna Dutta, *Selected Letters of Rabindranath Tagore* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[2] Colin Ward, '1950', *Freedom*, 7 January 1950.

[3] Colin Ward, 'Last Look at the Fifties', *Freedom*, 26 December 1959. An earlier version of this article appeared in 'A Change in the Climate', *Freedom*, 5 January 1957.

Make Me an Offer

As the 50s dawned, *Freedom* diagnosed apathy and antagonism as the two great problems of the decade. The sense of ennui seemed ever more impermeable as politics became either petrifyingly atomic or paralyzingly technocratic. Rationing, always a useful means of stirring popular discontent, ended in 1954. Under the shadow of the bomb, people could at least eat what they liked. Added to this, ideologies were in bad odour (unless they were liberal democracy) and radicals of all stripes projected into the public imagination as at best dreamers, at worst traitors.

The paper was, as usual, struggling with a stubbornly static subscription list. With characteristic audacity it responded by going weekly, the logic being:

that the quickening pace of events and the searching for an 'alternative' that is to be found everywhere among the politically disillusioned, make it necessary for us to try more than ever to influence public opinion and events rather than wait for them to catch up with us.

It further marked the change by adding:

people are not free to accept or reject the anarchist case, unless it is brought to their attention and we believe this to be our principal function. And since the subjugation of man today is not only political and economic, the scope of Freedom includes education, sex, literature and arts, and our social environment. For as anarchists we are concerned with widening the whole field of human activity.[4]

In effect, the main innovation was only to increase the workload of all its voluntary workforce who were themselves undergoing shifts in personnel. Hewetson was still writing, but less often as his medical commitments increased. Woodcock was in Canada and contributing less frequently. Read and Comfort still wrote but were drifting. Read's astonishing decision to accept a knighthood in 1953 alienated him from many of the FP group. New writers trickled in to fill the gaps including cartoonist Donald Rouum, teacher and psychologist Tony Gibson, political scientist Geoffrey Ostergaard, and teacher Anthony Weaver.[5]

Changing to weekly made little impact on the content. International politics continued to dominate and, given that the world, as they saw it, was locked in a permanent state of war,[6] they were not short of material. The Spanish people wilted under Franco.[7] The Soviet Union gripped Eastern Europe[8] and advanced in Asia. The Americans hunted Communists at home and abroad.[9] International agencies proved ineffectual mediators in proliferating conflicts.[10] Britain kept rearmament spending high and National Service in place, only now conscripts were despatched to Korea,[11] or sent to quash 'emergencies' in Malaya[12] and Kenya.[13] Providing some balance to this miserable catalogue were accounts of direct action and alternative communities, including sev-

[4] Editorial, 'Ourselves', *Freedom*, 5 May 1951.

[5] Other new columnists joining over the course of this time included Sid Parker, Arthur Uloth, Philip Holgate, Bill Christopher, and Jack Robinson.

[6] 'Permanent War Economy and Conformity', *Freedom*, 19 September, 1953.

[7] 'Save Franco's Victims', *Freedom*, 16 February, 1952.

[8] 'Confessions in Russian Trials', *Freedom*, 24 June 1950; 'Budapest Trials', *Freedom*, 14 July 1951; 'Pogrom in Prague', *Freedom*, 6 December 1952.

[9] 'Capitalism, Communism — Or Liberty?', *Freedom,* 13 May 1950.

[10] 'Can Peace Be Enforced?', *Freedom*, 14 October 1950.

[11] 'Korea: Permanent War', *Freedom*, 17 May 1952; 'Has the Korean War Ended?', 1 August 1953.

[12] 'Do You Support a Policy of Head Hunting?', *Freedom*, 9 June 1951.

[13] 'Cause and Effect in Kenya', *Freedom*, 13 December 1952; Jomo Kenyatta, 'How Kenya Is Governed', *Freedom*, 13 December 1952.

eral by Ward on the Israeli Kibbutz movement,[14] and the Bhoodan 'Community Projects' movement led by Gandhian disciple Vinoba Bhave.[15] More tentatively he covered the prospects for workers' councils in Eastern Europe.[16]

Now too came more reviews of contemporary social research. Partly, this acknowledged Read's proposed programme of study (set out in his 'Anarchism Past and Future' lecture [1947]), but it also reflected a general expansion in the social sciences during this period.[17] Psychology, which many considered best placed to address the burning issue of the times, particularly flourished. 'We need', wrote C. Wright Mills in 1951, 'to characterize American society of the mid-twentieth century in more psychological terms for now the problems that concern us most border on the psychiatric',[18] a sentiment equally applicable to 1950s Britain.

As Mathew Thomson observed, there were several reasons why this should be the case. Firstly, the war had raised serious questions about the mechanisms of political radicalisation. These took on a renewed urgency in the Cold War.[19] Secondly, the institutions of the welfare state, although not created for this purpose, were practically able to supply more and better data on people's intimate lives. They also offered an instrument through which to administer psychological interventions as well as socio-economic ones. Finally, as the decade progressed, psychology offered a tool for coping with social change, the breakdown of traditional social order and community structures, and the impact of affluence and aspiration, especially on the young.[20] As the Committee on Children and Young People reported in October 1960, 'the material revolution is plain to see. It is not always so clearly recognised what a complete change there has been in social and personal relations and also in the basic assumptions that regulate behaviour'.[21]

From an anarchist perspective, the psychological turn brought mixed implications. On the one hand, in the 'official' hands of governments and their representatives, it threatened unprecedented levels of intrusion into private life. When enforced through education, the law and social welfare, it had the power to define, and impose, 'normal' human experience. On the other, as Read had urged, for anarchists committed to non-violent means social psychology, with its emphasis on relations between individual, group, and environment (biology plus culture), could positively confirm their principles and inform their proposals for leaderless modes of organisation. In both these cases, the 'official' and the anarchist, human nature (and, by extension, individual character) was assumed to be relatively fixed. Debate hinged around whether psychological insight should be employed to adjust the individual to society (the 'official' view) or to adapt society to the needs of individuals (the anarchist view). In America, Paul Goodman took off in a different direction, proposing psychoanalysis as a tool of self-creation (rather than revelation) but, even amongst the *Freedom* group, the idea gained little serious attention at *this* time.

[14] Colin Ward, 'Notebook on Anarchism, Zionism and the Kibbutz', *Freedom*, September 1955.

[15] Colin Ward, 'Land Revolution through Love', *Freedom*, 5 February 1955.

[16] Colin Ward, 'Workers' Councils', *Freedom*, 1 August 1959; 8 August 1959; 15 August 1959.

[17] Roger E. Backhouse and Phillippe Fontaine, 'Toward a History of the Social Sciences', in Backhouse and Fontaine, eds., *The History of the Social Sciences since 1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 184–254.

[18] C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), 160.

[19] Mathew Thomson, *Psychological Subjects: Identity, Culture and Health in Twentieth Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). See also, Robert Farr, *The Roots of Modern Social Psychology 1872—1954* (London: Wiley, 1996).

[20] Mike Savage, '1948–1962: The Remaking of Social Class Identities', *Identities and Social Class in Britain since 1940: The Politics of Method* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 215–237.

[21] 'Committee on Children and Young People Report', HMSO, 1960.

Either way, what the anarchists had in mind was *not* the work routinely funded by research committees. 'Official' research, accepting the status quo as 'objective reality', tended to place the burden of failure to integrate on individuals (with more sympathetic minds accepting the impact of mitigating circumstances), and debate only the best methods of correction. As no one suspected the problem to lie in the fundamental structure of social arrangements, they never provided satisfying answers because, from the outset, they were not asking the 'right' questions.

One response to this was to pay attention to the findings of action research, far from mainstream scientific practice, but slowly developing a significant niche in areas of educational and biomedical research, like Peckham. Here, the investigator could engineer and assess different patterns of social organisation and the dynamics they produced. Another was to call for a systematic study of psychology in Western intellectual history, rigorously pruning it of tradition and superstition, all that could not be positively verified, leaving only a science based on pure reason.[22] A third was to turn researcher and do it themselves.

Interest in social psychology amongst the FP group was well established. Marie Louise Berneri introduced Wilhelm Reich to English anarchists. Read's *Education through Art* (1943) dabbled in educational psychology. In the early 50s, John Hewetson, Tony Gibson, and Alex Comfort turned their attention to the topic of delinquency which was fast becoming the hottest subject matter of the day, not, as the newly launched *British Journal of Delinquency* explained, because of any sudden spike in crime rates (which had been rising steadily by 6% each year since the 1930s, a statistic owing as much to evolving methods of reporting and recording crime as any substantive increase) but because it was becoming more visible especially with regards young people.[23]

From the early 50s, Teddy Boys gripped media interest, intensifying following the riots at screenings of *Blackboard Jungle* (which featured Bill Hailey's hit 'Rock around the Clock') in 1952. What horrified — and hypnotised — public attention was that these young working-class white men did not just defy moral norms with their defiant aggression but completely rejected conventional values and aspirations. In their consumption of clothes and music, they took their ideals from America (or a projected ideal of America). As such, they provided a convenient focal point for those lamenting Britain's political and social decline.[24]

Anarchists, often considered deviant themselves, had a natural sympathy with delinquents. Far from precipitating the breakdown of social order, they took them as an inevitable consequence of that order. They were society's inner-other and, therefore, a penetrating lens into its internal contradictions. Both Hewetson and Gibson argued that delinquency was the result of continually subjecting natural urges to oppressive moral codes and coercive institutions.[25] Flipping the focus, Comfort, following Reich's *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1933), argued that most political leaders shared common psychological characteristics with 'non-utilitarian' deviants[26] (these included sustained adolescence or perpetual craving for attention and need for

[22] Alex Comfort, 'Introduction', in *Authority and Delinquency in the Modern State* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950), https://libcom.org/files/authority-delinquency.pdf [last accessed 8 October 2021].

[23] Editorial, *British Journal of Delinquency,* 1:1 (1950), 1—2.

[24] For the classic account of Teddy Boys as subculture see Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1979), 46—51, 80—83. See also Ray Ferris and Julian Lord, *The Teddy Boys: A Concise History* (Wrea Green: Milo Books, 2012).

[25] John Hewetson, *Sexual Freedom for the Young* (London: Freedom Press, 1951); Tony Gibson, *Youth for Freedom, Freedom for Youth* (London: Freedom Press, 1952).

[26] Deviancy without apparent purpose or end.

control). Government, he concluded, was little more than a set of institutions which allowed such individuals to dramatise and act out their desires without ever achieving real satisfaction.[27]

The idea that the state had degrading effects on human capacities was not new to anarchists. What Comfort, Gibson, and Hewetson did, as Kropotkin had before them, was to set this out in the technical language of the science of their day, giving it certain credibility in the eyes of mainstream culture and absolving them, in part, from accusations of utopian idealism. If this seemed too conciliatory and reformist an objective then, Comfort argued, it ought to be remembered that:

a scientific attempt to ferret out the concrete factors in society, the family, and in the individual which lead to 'crime' of the delinquent type is in itself a revolutionary activity, if by revolution we mean the attempt to alter inadequate social patterns by deliberate action.[28]

Although published and publicised, the pamphlets were not *Freedom*'s 'line', and the paper gave equal space to articles and letters questioning the arguments. Andre Prunier warned of the authoritarianism implicit in most 'scientific' ide- ologies.[29] Several readers objected to Comfort's insistence on the technical distinction between the authoritarianism in a fascist personality and a Communist one.[30] Others were dissatisfied by his reply explaining that as a psychiatrist he had to understand the subject in order to 'treat' them rather than simply condemn tyranny and injustice.[31] 'One cannot help thinking there is something of the political simpleton in his attitude to the rulers of the contemporary world', complained SE Parker,

No, comrade Comfort, I am afraid that if we wish to see tyranny eliminated and the order of anarchy prevail, it will be futile to dispense with the masses and to rely on the well-meaning but unrealistic and, up to the present, undefined efforts of the psychiatrist.[32]

Under Richards' watch, then, Malatestean caution prevailed, science was not about to let anyone off the rough and tumble of propaganda. As one editorial put it:

We live in a sociologist's and psycho-analyst's paradise. Every aspect of human behaviour and motivation conscious and unconscious, individual and collective is being probed and explained [...] In a word, we know a great deal more about ourselves than those innocent 19th century revolutionists could ever have imagined to be possible. But neither could they have dreamed that with so much knowledge, 20th century man could be so inarticulate in advocating and applying it![33]

[27] Alex Comfort, *Delinquency and Authority*. *Delinquency* anticipated two similar studies in political psychology, Theodore Adorno, *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), and Hans Eysenck *The Psychology of Politics* (1954). Like Adorno, but unlike Eysenck, Comfort acknowledged the authoritarian traits on both left and right but distinguished the psychological profile of the fascist from that of the Communist. This caused considerable controversy amongst the anarchists; see Alex Comfort, 'Stalin the Nerve Soother', *Freedom*, 20 January 1951.

[28] Alex Comfort, 'Delinquency and Authority', *Freedom*, 2 September and 16 September 1950.

[29] Andre Prunier, 'The Authority of Scientific Ideology', *Freedom*, 28 July 1951.

[30] PJH, 'Neuroses in Russia', *Freedom*, 23 December 1950; IA, 'Stalin the Nerve Soother', *Freedom*, 23 December 1950.

[31] Alex Comfort, 'Stalin the Nerve Soother', *Freedom*, 20 January 1951.

[32] SE. Parker, 'The Psychiatric Approach', *Freedom*, 3 February 1951.

[33] Editorial, *Freedom*, 2 May 1956.

Re-Reading Anarchism

For Ward, the 50s were a full and busy time. In 1951 he left Sidney Caulfield's office, initially for a position as an assistant with the Architects' Co-Partnership (ACP). The ACP was founded in 1939 by a group of ambitious young architects, alumni from the Architectural Association School of Architecture, and led by Michael Powers, former editor of *Focus*, the student architectural journal. Amongst their credits was the iconic Brynmawr rubber factory. His time here was brief and in 1952 he became a drawing board man with Bridgewater, Shepheard, and Epstein (BSE), a small private firm, mostly engaged in public housing and school buildings. The senior partner, Derek Bridgewater, began the firm in 1936. He was joined by Peter Shepheard in 1948, fresh from a troubled secondment to the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, and later Gabriel Epstein in 1955.

George West, another fresh recruit to the drawing board, met Ward at the train station on their first day and recalled liking the mild but self-possessed young man at once. The atmosphere in the office was one of amiable chaos, kept in a semblance of order by the long-serving, long-suffering office manager Mr Woods, who provided every service, including cutting the assistants' hair as they worked, his wife baking sausage rolls and mince pies, adjusting their trousers in or out accordingly.[34] The three partners, in their different ways, were generally kind towards their juniors. West remembered most the excitement when new jobs came in and the office would erupt into raucous misrule, scattering papers and leaping on tables.[35] Ward was soon a popular employee, renowned for his wide reading. They knew he was a 'Friend of King Bomba'[36] and were charitably convinced that if everyone could be like him, anarchy might work quite well.[37]

In another personal shift his mother Ruby retired and, after selling the family home, 8 Collingwood Gardens, bought a cottage in rural Sussex. He moved into 33 Ellerby Street as the lodger of Vera Balfour, Richards' sister, also sharing the house with her two young sons. In his not-so-secret second life as an anarchist propagandist, he was also gaining stature. Now an experienced FP journalist and editor, he was more involved with the practical running and strategic direction of the paper (in so far as that was possible under Richards' watchful eye) and committed to developing the 'techniques of non-violent resistance' and 'forms of social organisation appropriate to civilised man'.[38]

The closure of the Peckham Health Centre in 1951 presented a prime opportunity to revisit just such a contemporary example of anarchy in action. Despite the success of the endeavour and the heroic efforts of some of its members in resurrecting it after the war, no further support had been forthcoming. Appeals to government bodies had fallen on deaf ears, and the Centre had shut its doors for good. In the conclusion of their last report, its directors, George Scott Williamson and Innes Pearse, lamented that 'a "welfare state" must be the sole arbiter of its Nation's destiny. To maintain its integrity, it can brook no influence that comes from outside its own programme of compelling "care"'.[39] Surely, an anarchistic sentiment?

[34] Colin Ward to Geoffrey Golzen, 2 September 1986, 'Letters Misc 1980s', Colin Ward Papers/ARCH03180, IISH.

[35] George West, 'Oral Communication with Author', July 2019.

[36] A reference to Emidio Recchioni who was dead by the time Ward started working at BSE but still a shorthand reference for British anarchism.

[37] Andrew Saint, 'Interview with Peter Shepheard', 5/8, 18 August 1989 and 22 August 1989, https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Architects-Lives/021M-C0467X0001XX-0600V0 [last accessed 8 October 2021].

[38] Colin Ward, '1950', *Freedom*, 7 January 1950.

[39] George Scott Williamson and Innes Pearse, *The Passing of Peckham* (London: Pioneer Health Centre, 1951).

Taking the story over, Ward wrote a series of pieces to mark the occasion.[40] The most interesting of these was a double feature 'Anarchist Aspects of the Peckham Experiment' where, rather than presenting a narrative (re) confirming how Peckham vindicated 'the sound biological basis of anarchist philosophy',[41] he assembled a cut-and-paste selection of quotes from the writings of the Peckham directors juxtaposed with those from classical anarchist thinkers arranged under themed headings, for example:

Spontaneity and Order

For us there is no contradiction between spontaneity and order. On the contrary we anticipate order as the result of free growth

(I. Pearse and G. Scott Williamson, The Case for Action: A Survey of Everyday Life under Modern Industrial Conditions*, 1931)*

Order is the free equilibrium of all forces that operate on the same point.

(— P. Kropotkin)

No Authority

the attempted promotion of any sort of stereotyped organisation based on leadership was early discarded …

(I. Pearse and L. Crocker, The Peckham Experiment*, 1943)*

I receive and I give — such is human life. Each directs and is directed in his turn.

(- M. Bakunin)

Education

In circumstances where they are not starved of action, it is only necessary to place before [children] the chance or possibility of doing things in an orderly manner for them to grasp it.

(I. Pearse and L. Crocker, The Peckham Experiment*, 1943)* It is our wisdom to incite men to act for themselves, not to retain them in a state of perpetual pupillage.

(- W. Godwin)[42]

The result was a 'do-it-yourself' anarchist myth in the making, encouraging readers to see the connections for themselves. Unfortunately, Scott Williamson did not find it so obvious, writing to the paper to: 'register a protest at the label, or libel, you have fixed to my name and Peckham? I am not an anarchist nor do I believe in anarchy — not even the Kropotkin type',[43] a reminder that for all *Freedom*'s efforts towards metamorphosis, 'anarchy' still bore inflammatory connotations.

Of course, this owed much to the tense Cold War mood, but Ward felt that the anarchists should yet heed the warning. As he reflected in an editorial on the matter:

are our movement and our ideas in fact as free from the political outlook as we would wish? How many anarchists, how many syndicalists nourish half-avowed desires for a 'mass-following' which has little enough to do with the 'creative capacity of the people' of Kropotkin, the self-activity of Malatesta.[44]

A year earlier he had complained of 'the way in which political, legalistic and authoritarian attitudes cling to us long after our "understanding has renounced them"'.[45] In that instance, he had

[40] Colin Ward, 'Peckham Health Centre: The Experiment Ends', 'Beyond Peckham', 'Anarchist Aspects of the Peckham Experiment', *Freedom*, 11 August 1951.

[41] Vernon Richards, 'Peckham Health Experiment', *Freedom*, 4 January 1947.

[42] Colin Ward, 'Anarchist Aspects of the Peckham Experiment', *Freedom*, 11 August 1951.

[43] George Scott Williamson, 'Autarchy at Peckham Health Centre', *Freedom*, 25 August 1951.

[44] Colin Ward, 'Editorial', 'Anarchism and the Modern Pioneers', *Freedom*, 25 August 1951.

[45] Colin Ward, 'Anarchist Activity', *Freedom*, 2 September 1950.

been reflecting on discussions about membership conditions for the Union of Anarchist Groups (UAG) (formed in Glasgow, December 1945). He believed that any group who expressed support for the UAG's *Aims and Principles*[46] were entitled to describe themselves as UAG members with no further criteria as 'there is nothing more valuable for our purpose than a loose association of a multiplicity of small groups each with its own chosen function'.

While he was right to reiterate the old insight that any revolution which was not spontaneous, organic, and voluntary was either short-lived or tyrannical, it was not clear how he thought such a fragmented movement could gain enough capacity to move beyond life on the cultural margins. For thinkers like Read and Comfort, following Kropotkin, science was the path through the impasse. If one could present an irrefutable rationale, supported by solid data, for anarchism as the optimum social arrangement attuned to human nature, they would gain a hearing beyond their own circles.

The problem was, as it had ever been, that modern science could prove the validity of many different types of 'human natures'. Ward maintained his earlier doubts, repeating them again in a letter to a new anarchist student journal the *University Libertarian*:

In your letter announcing the University Libertarian, you mention the evidence for anarchism provided by the social and human sciences, and you comment that this highly significant material 'quite possibly forces us to change our views somewhat.' I agree with you but am glad you did not take the argument any further, as Alex Comfort did. He said that his scientific conclusions drove him to anarchism, and that if scientific investigation led him elsewhere he would abandon anarchism. I think he was wrong. I do not think the case for anarchism rests on science.[47]

These misgivings were not about Comfort personally nor a rejection of science per se, but an antipathy towards the authority theorising seemed to bestow. Perhaps this reserve owed something to his own sense of academic failure, in the same letter he commented, 'I am not qualified to contribute to your pages because I was lost to education at the age of fifteen'.[48] It also had to do with his working experiences.

As an assistant with the ACP, he had caught the tail end of the Brynmawr rubber factory project. In the mid-40s, landowner Lord Forrester hired the team to build the factory as a means of restimulating the local economy which had declined following the Great Depression. It was, it seemed, an ideal opportunity to put ideals into action and realise through design a space that would provide a locus for regenerating community life, the essence of socially responsible architecture. Despite meticulous design work, it soon ran into trouble. Not only was the location, although socially laudable, difficult to access, and therefore uncommercial, the team underestimated the practical realities of the post-war building industry (still heavily depleted in manpower and suffering from a shortage of materials). Five years into the project and the factory was simply not economically viable (the cost was over twice the original estimate), functioning at only quarter capacity, and unable to provide the local jobs promised. The Board of Trade took it over in 1952.[49] Although not involved with the bulk of the project (which began in 1946), Ward arrived in time to witness the outcome.

[46] As set out in Aims and Principles of the Union of Anarchist Groups (Freedom, 1945).

[47] Colin Ward, 'From the Outside Looking in', *The University Libertarian*, December 1955; 'Constructive Anarchism', 14 May 1960.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Victoria Perry, *The Brynmawr Rubber Factory* (Oxford: White Cockade Publishing, 1994), 15–52.

Scientific planning was less in evidence at BSE. Shepheard, who had fallen foul of bureaucratic procedures during his stint at the Ministry for Town and Country Planning, was content to go against the current of professional fashions. A keen naturalist, he was fond of landscapes, preferring houses that aged well and melted into their surroundings. A talented draughtsman himself, he admired Ward's abilities here, recalling later that he was an 'excellent practical architect. He was able to put a building together. He wasn't terribly interested in the design, didn't really care what it looked like, but, if you said, "how did it actually work?"'.[50]

Notes Ward prepared for Epstein on plans made for school buildings in Leicester in the early 60s bear this out, and show his outspokenness when design took precedence over functionality.

Ridiculous to have fortress-like piers on the sides of the building and burst out into enormous and extravagant spans on the ends [...] Absolutely impossible to bring partitions into the windows of the teaching block [...]

The aesthetic of anti-aesthetics is like making a religion out of atheism [...] your method of designing on the diagonal, it doesn't work.[51]

For all that he enjoyed office life and was a valued employee, BSE was hardly egalitarian. Outside of the office, the partners held a God-like status on building projects. West remembered how when attending on-site visits construction workers would line up, remove their hats, and, if addressed, answer with a 'yes' or 'no sir'. The architect's word was rarely questioned much less challenged. On one occasion, one of the builders recognised Ward from schooldays and called out 'you've done well for yourself Wardy!', causing his friend to squirm with embarrassment over the inequity of their positions in that situation.[52]

Even in these small, casual ways, seeing first-hand such a hierarchy of knowledge, the status afforded to overarching visions over practical experience or technical understanding (despite all being integral to the task) only fuelled his misgivings towards claims of intellectual authority. Translating this onto a larger, philosophical scale, he drew further inspiration from the Oxford philosopher Isaiah Berlin whose lecture series, 'Freedom and Its Betrayal', he heard on the BBC's *Third Programme* in the early 1950s.[53] Interest piqued, he followed Berlin's work eagerly, collecting his essays and books,[54] and attending his lectures at London's Pushkin Club. The charm, for him, lay as much in Berlin's conversational style of philosophising (Berlin notoriously improvised his 'Freedom and Betrayal' lectures for the *Third Programme*[55]), which he considered 'a pleasure to listen to, one seems to be actually hearing his acute and subtle brain thinking'.[56]

The attraction to Berlin was both in and out of sympathy with his *Freedom* anarchism. On the one hand, Berlin's commitment to liberty, his critique of totalitarianism from right *and* left, and

[50] Andrew Saint interview with Peter Shepheard, National Life Stories, 5/8, 18 August 1989, and 22 August 1989, https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Architects-Lives/021M-C0467X0001XX-0600V0.

[51] Colin Ward, 'Gabi: Points about Leicester', undated, Letters 1960s-70s, CWP/ARCH03180, IISH.

[52] George West, private communication with author.

[53] Isaiah Berlin, 'Six Lectures on Freedom and it's Betrayal', broadcast on BBC *Third Programme* (30 October—3 December 1952); 'A Marvellous Decade 1838—1848', Northcliffe Lectures, broadcast on BBC *Third Programme* from 2 February 1955.

[54] In Ward's personal collection: Isaiah Berlin, 'Alexander Herzen and the Grand Inquisitors', *Encounter*, 6, 5, May (1956), 20—34; 'Russian Populism', *Encounter*, 15, 1 July (1960), 13—28; 'The Hedgehog and the Fox' (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson Ltd., 1953).

[55] Humphrey Carpenter, *The Envy of the World: Fifty Years of the BBC Third Programme and Radio 3* (London: Phoenix, 1996), 127.

[56] Colin Ward, 'Mr Berlin, The Indian Village, and Erasmus', *Freedom*, 14 May 1955.

his empathy for the 'anarchistic socialism of the Russian populists'[57] had a strong resonance. On the other, his robust assertion of value pluralism, the core of his philosophical contribution, was disconcerting. On the surface, it seemed to promise the sort of intellectual and moral freedom that anarchists found attractive, but the idea that certain values, such as equality and liberty, were not always compatible, at times even irreconcilable, was problematic for those attempting to declare them inseparable. Moreover, if it did not quite destroy, it certainly weakened any optimism that the world might be brought into rational order through increased knowledge and reason alone.

Wisely, Ward made no attempt to claim him for anarchism but used him to think through his own struggles with anarchism's lingering utopian tendencies. In 'Anarchism and the Open Society' (1952) he reviewed Berlin's 'Freedom and Its Betrayal' lecture series along with Jacob Talmon's *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (1952) (a critique of Jean Jacques Rousseau) and Karl Popper's *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945). From these, he synthesised the 'reasonable arguments' emerging from the liberal critique of anarchism:

(1) Anarchism is an idealist and perfectionist philosophy of personal freedom stemming ultimately from Rousseau,

(2) Anarchism in its rejection of compromises and lesser evils is like the varieties of religion […],

(3) Anarchism often talks in a Messianic way of a revolution which is to inaugurate a golden age, and,

(4) Anarchism makes the same false assumptions about human nature as those 18th century French philosophers.[58]

At the top of his reply to the charges, he acknowledged (italics my own) 'people are *justified* in raising them, as a glance at the world's anarchist press will show'. The concern with the 'justness' of accusations and propositions recurred repeatedly throughout the short piece: 'What *justification* have we for saying that?', 'Dr Popper and Mr Berlin *justifiably* attack'. Responding to the question of human nature, he chose to answer in his own name only: 'What I think anarchism says is this: human nature is neither good nor bad, it is capable of anything', adding that he drew this conclusion from his observation of society and '(*if one regards social psychology and anthropology as scientific*), the observations of social scientists'.[59]

Berlin was not the first to perceive messianic tendencies lurking in the most ardent of libertarian bosoms. George Orwell had not minced words on this topic:

There are people who are convinced of the wickedness of both armies and of police forces, but who are nevertheless much more intolerant and inquisitorial in outlook than the normal person who believes that it is necessary to use violence they will if they can, get inside his brain and dictate his thoughts for him in the minutest particulars. Creeds like pacifism and anarchism rather encourage this habit of mind.[60]

Unlike Orwell, Berlin showed a path forward. This was not through any explicit political statement of his own (his position has often been criticised as ambiguous and the implications of his value pluralism under-theorised[61]); rather, an alternative lay in his affectionate treatment

[57] Aileen M. Kelly, *Towards Another Shore: Russian Thinkers Between Necessity and Chance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 2.

[58] Colin Ward, 'Anarchism and the Open Society', *Freedom*, 22 November 1952.

[59] Colin Ward, 'Anarchism and the Open Society', *Freedom*, 29 November 1952.

[60] George Orwell, 'Lear, Tolstoy and the Fool', *Selected Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press [1947], 2021), 274.

[61] George Crowder, *Value Pluralism: Isaiah Berlin and Beyond* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019).

of Alexander Herzen, the nineteenthcentury Russian radical,[62] and it was this which captured Ward.

Ward first read of Herzen in EH Carr's *The Romantic Exiles: A NineteenthCentury Portrait Gallery* (1933), then again in Woodcock's *The Writer and Politics* (1948) but it was not until Berlin's BBC lectures 'A Marvellous Decade' (1954) and 'Alexander Herzen and the Grand Inquisitors' (1956) that the full significance of the 'other' Russian radical struck home.[63] Carr, whose Marxist sympathies were well known, was easy to read against the grain but Woodcock, for whom he had great regard, was harder to dismiss. Woodcock's interpretation of Herzen bore the weight of his own growing pessimism:

For to-day we live in a world of uncertainty, and disillusionment the social movements that were founded by idealists have become dominated largely by career 'revolutionaries' the genuine revolutionaries who remain are radically different in their attitude from their nineteenth-century predecessors. Doubt and scepticism have become unhealthily dominant in their outlook. Consequently they are completely unable to summon the vast enthusiasm, energy and self-sacrifice that were shown consistently by men like Bakunin, Proudhon and Stepniak. The comparison is melancholy the study of an ironic figure like Alexander Herzen will show that, even in the great era of revolutionary upsurge, the disorders of doubt and disillusionment were already present.

It is because he suffered so much from these modern maladies, because he was so much the revolutionary malgre lui, that Herzen possesses an almost contemporary interest.[64]

Berlin, by contrast, as a political liberal himself, did not see malady in Herzen's personal struggles with doubt, but maturity.

Born the illegitimate son of a Russian aristocrat, Herzen (1812—1870) became politicised as a student at the University of Moscow starting out as a liberal but moving quickly towards socialism, specifically the form of peasant socialism found in the Russian communes, although he was also sympathetic to the small independent artisan communities envisaged by Proudhon whom he admired.[65] From the outset, however, this idealism was qualified.[66] As many radicals, he read Hegel entranced but believed that the German, by retreating, in the last, to transcendentalism, had lacked the full courage of his own philosophy. For Herzen, the principle of dialectic meant an acceptance of motion and change, which, in turn, implied the impossibility of absolutes or universals, and required, instead, full attention to the contingencies of the present. Moreover, he knew he could never fully renounce the liberal values he most cherished — individual autonomy, intellectual and artistic excellence, pleasure — even though he accepted that these were the values of a privileged elite (of which he was one), and alien to those thousands that enabled that privilege through their suffering. Nevertheless, he considered them more humane, more worth striving for, than the compelling but chilling abstractions — progress, national unity, historic rights — that seized his fellow socialists and drove them to violence.

[62] Aileen Kelly, *Towards Another Shore: Russian Thinkers Between Necessity and Chance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 15—24; 'Isaiah Berlin on Liberty', Isaiah Berlin lecture, Wolfson College Oxford, 8 November 2018, https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/isaiah-berlin-on-liberty/id381700653?i=1000425546266 [last accessed 8 October 2021].

[63] Colin Ward, *Influences* (Bideford: Resurgence, 1991), 49–64.

[64] George Woodcock, 'Alexander Herzen', in *The Writer and Politics* (London: Porcupine Press, 1948), 56–57.

[65] Aileen Kelly, 'Herzen and Proudhon', in Kelly, *Views from the Other Shore: Essays on Herzen, Chekhov and Bakhtin* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 82–113.

[66] Isaiah Berlin, 'Alexander Herzen and His Memoirs', in Berlin and Henry Hardy, ed., *The Proper Study of Mankind* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2000), 499–524.

Here, then, was a paradox he could not fully surmount, let alone synthesise. Privileging liberty left him unable to dictate a single ideal of it without falling into bad faith with the principle. Privileging the dignity of the individual person as a political end meant he could not then deny the validity of their views or values when they contradicted his own. They were, as his, the fruits of their lived experience ('all that exists is specific conditions, and sacred discontents').[67] What, then, for political commitment? How could one act sincerely in such a state of perpetual irony? The answer, for Herzen, came through his revolutionary journalism. He would spread the ideas he thought good and wise but never let himself be entirely captured by them. He would neither join a revolutionary army nor would he urge others to do so.[68]

Enthralled, Ward's first *Freedom* piece on Herzen was another composed solely from quotes (quotes of Berlin's quotes from Herzen's *From the Other Shore*) which, as in the Peckham piece, let the Russian's own words (albeit carefully curated) demonstrate his contemporary relevance. A second piece, mostly summarising Berlin's essay, concluded approvingly that Herzen 'put his trust in men rather than institutions' praising him further for believing 'that simply to spread enlightenment is in the long run, more important and in truth more revolution- ary'.[69] While this chimed with Comfort's earlier claim for scientific understanding as revolutionary activity, it subtly shifted emphasis to the *spreading* of ideas rather than the assertion of them.

Another thinker impressing Ward with the revolutionary properties of communication was Martin Buber.[70] He most appreciated Buber's mode of expression (which was appropriate for a philosopher of dialogue); 'the reason why I found Martin Buber to be the best explainer of everything I believe about social organisation was precisely because he did it more simply than anyone else'.[71] There was more at stake in this than just a well-turned phrase (although Ward would have been the first to agree with Orwell that clear expression was a basic democratic act[72]). From Kropotkin's voluminous writings, Buber had extracted and distilled the observation that 'the political principle is always stronger in relation to the social principle than the given conditions require. The result is a continuous diminution in social spontaneity'.[73]

This was more than pithy restatement but a declaration that the struggle between the political and social principle was permanent, no revolution would conclude it. All that could be done was to preserve the social principle wherever it could be found. As Herzen, his tool for this was communication. Only through truly free and open dialogue between individuals could the relationships imposed upon people by state power be challenged. As Ward explained it:

Against the irresponsibility of detachment he opposed the concept of We, from the essential relationship between person and person, of communal speaking that begins at the moment of speaking to one another, of mutuality in the great stream of reciprocal sharing of knowledge.

[67] Alexander Herzen with Isaiah Berlin, *From the Other Shore* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 128.

[68] Alexander Herzen, *My Past and Thoughts*, with Isaiah Berlin, ed., Dwight MacDonald tr. Constance Garrett (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982); Aileen Kelly, *The Discovery of Chance: The Life and Thought of Alexander Herzen* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

[69] Colin Ward, 'Herzen's Testament', *Freedom*, 9 July 1956.

[70] Colin Ward, *Influences*, 79; 'In Defence of Martin Buber', *Freedom*, 19 May 1956.

[71] Colin Ward, *Influences*, 79.

[72] George Orwell, 'Politics and the English Language (1946)', in *Selected Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 209–221.

[73] Colin Ward, *Influences*, 89.

By seeking to restore the 'genuineness of speech' and leaven 'the human race in all places with genuine community', Buber was not, he accepted, speaking the language of sociology, 'but' he added, 'there are truths which are not susceptible to scientific analysis'.[74]

None of this meant Ward rejected the social sciences. To do so would have been to cut himself out of an important and flourishing aspect of intellectual culture. In fact, the 50s were something of a golden age for popular sociology. From America came David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* (1950), William H. Whyte's *Organisation Man* (1956), and JK Galbraith's *The Affluent Society* (1958). From Britain, arguably more reticent towards 'professional' sociology, but with a strong tradition of applied social work and social studies writing,[75] there were surprise successes. From Michael Young and Peter Willmott's *Family and Kinship in East London* (1957) and Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), to those which balanced, ambivalently, between creative non-fiction and social analysis such as Young's dystopian satire *Rise of the Meritocracy* (1959) and CN Parkinson's irreverent *Parkinson's Law* (1959).[76] The most successful of these books tended to offer general comments on social and cultural change or on issues of personal importance to readers such as changes in work, family, health or social class. Stylistically, they were typically free of technical jargon and published in affordable paperbacks.[77]

Alongside their own publications, books and pamphlets, and others from independent anarchist presses or authors, *Freedom* regularly reviewed non-anar- chist books pertinent to their interests. This was not, of course, a review column in the sense of assessing a work for its literary merit. The primary purpose was to show how certain ideas either supported the anarchist case or could be criticised on anarchist principles. After Woodcock's departure, Ward became the regular 'reviewer' but where Woodcock's tastes tended more toward literature, his leaned toward social non-fiction. More important than what he read, however, was how he read, cherry-picking through for useful facts or elegant phrases to support his cause, never taking anything whole.

The American books were attractive because they advanced bold analyses of post-war industrial society which captured public attention. They also coined memorable expressions which filtered readily into common parlance. In *The Affluent Society*, for example, Galbraith argued that orthodox economic theory, the 'conventional wisdom', assumed that goods were scarce and that economics was the study of scarcity. This, however, was hard to reconcile with the reality of the modern industrialised West where productive capacity dramatically outstripped need. The ideological differences between economists like Adam Smith, Karl Marx, and John Maynard Keynes, he contended, were less striking than their mutual, tacit conformity to the 'conventional wisdom' and yet this was precisely what limited their use as guides to the problems of a post-scarcity society.

Galbraith was hardly a political radical but that was all for the better, 'the fact that the Professor of Economics at Harvard has come round to the "each according to his need" principle'[78]

[74] Colin Ward, 'In Defence of Martin Buber'.

[75] Lawrence Goldman, *Science, Reform and Politics in Victorian Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University 2002). C. Wright Mills commented that 'In England … sociology as an academic discipline is still somewhat marginal, yet in much English journalism, fiction, and above all history, the sociological imagination is very well developed indeed'. *The Sociological Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 19.

[76] Colin Ward, 'Organisation Man', *Freedom*, 24 May 1958.

[77] Herbert Gans, 'Best Sellers by Sociologists: An Exploratory Study', *Contemporary Sociology*, 26:2 (1997): 131–135.

[78] Colin Ward, 'Unconventional Wisdom', *Freedom*, 25 October 1958. He later republished it in the first edition of *Anarchy*, 1, March (1961).

provided an even more elegant vindication of Kropotkin's prophetic words, quoted at the head of Ward's review of *Affluent Society*:

If you open the works of any economist you will find that he begins with PRODUCTION … From Adam Smith to Marx all have proceeded along these lines . Only in the latter parts of their books do they treat CONSUMPTION that is to say of the means resorted to in our present society to satisfy the needs of individuals.[79]

The British studies he featured were issue- or area-specific.[80] If sympathetic, the case could be harvested, like Peckham, for use in a domestic 'mutual aid casebook'. If unsympathetic, it could be used to expose the concealed hand of ideological manoeuvring in objective social research. In 'Industrial Relations', for example, he blasted *The Changing Culture of a Factory* (1951), Elliot Jacques' study of modern industrial workers, for seeking its quarry, increased worker freedom, from within a top-down, hierarchical structure which, he believed, was incapable of producing it.[81] On the other hand, Polish economist Ferdynand Zweig was praised for speaking to the workers he was studying, especially as their quotes supported anarchist argument for workers' control perfectly: 'my employer never looks at me, he just sees the £ s d that I represent. For him I am manpower not a man' or 'there is something in factory work which is soul destroying. You don't feel like a man but just a number shifted here and there as the laws of profit dictate'.[82]

His discussion of anthropology in the 'Tribal Anarchist' sequence demonstrates this further. The series was prompted by a review of *Tribes Without Rulers* (1958) (*Tribes*) and Ernest Gellner's radio broadcast 'How to Live in Anarchy' (*The Listener* 3/4/58) both naturally attractive to anarchists. Even when not as explicitly linked as this, anthropology had long been important to anarchist thought. Kropotkin's chapters on 'primitive' societies in *Mutual Aid* were key to his case for co-operation as a driver in human evolution. Criticism here was high stakes, something Ward recognised:

The anarchists have always been interested in the reports of travellers and ethnologists on those human societies which were once called savage … There are both historical and ideological reasons for this interest — links through Godwin, and even through Bakunin with those 18th century French thinkers who began the cult of the 'natural man' . while in later generations, anarchist thinkers themselves [Kropotkin and Reclus] have made important contributions to geography and anthropology.[83]

Instead of discussing the details of these contributions, he turned to their rhetorical significance: anthropology had helped anarchists make more convincing arguments. Knowing there were examples of human societies without institutionalised authority had been 'comforting', offering a convenient counterargument to claims that '[anarchist] theories run contrary to "human nature"'. As a result, 'you will often find quoted in the anarchist press some attractive description of a tribal anarchy'. So useful was it to have such a set of counterexamples to hand, he continued, that 'one could, and perhaps should, make an anthology of such items. Several anarchist writers of the past did just this; Kropotkin in his chapter on "Mutual Aid Among Savages", Elie Reclus

[79] Ibid. See also Peter Kropoktin, *The Conquest of Bread* (London: Penguin [1892; 1906; 1913] 2015), 169–170.

[80] For example, F. Zweig, *The British Worker* (1951); M. Lloyd Turner, *Ship without Sails: An Account of the Barge Boys Club* (1953); J. Robb, *Working Class Anti Semite: A Psychological Study in a London Borough* (1954); AH Richmond, *Colour Prejudice in Britain: A Study of West Indian in Liverpool 1941—1951* (1955).

[81] Colin Ward, 'Industrial Relations' *Freedom*, 10 November 1951.

[82] Colin Ward, 'The Industrial Worker', *Freedom*, 31 May 1951 and 7 June 1952.

[83] Colin Ward, 'Tribal Anarchists', *Freedom*, 29 November 1958.

in his *Primitive Folk*'. In this casual manner, he categorised *Mutual Aid* and *Primitive Folk* as *anthologies* (assortments of items loosely linked by a common theme of the compiler's choosing) and referred to their authors as *writers*, not scientists.

'Anthropology' he continued, 'has developed its techniques and methods of analysis greatly since their day'. He referred to the introduction of compulsory fieldwork, rigorous methods of data collection, and the emergence of functionalism as a framework for organising that data. Put crudely, functionalism focused on how apparently discrete social phenomena connected into a coherent social whole. In some guises, it stressed how social institutions emerged to satisfy individual human needs (biological and psychological), in others it emphasised structure over individuals, excavating macro patterns of social and political organisation.[84]

All this meant that 'the anecdotal or anthologising approach, with its accumulation of traveller's tales and subjective observations, is now frowned upon as unscientific' which, in turn, implied that anarchist arguments invoking them lost credibility. To keep their own arguments robust, anarchists had to keep pace with the evolving technical proficiency in scientific methods and 'ask more sophisticated questions'. Firstly, he recommended they reflect on the difference between tribal anarchies which, even without formal governance, still used indirect forms of coercion (through, for example, close observance of traditional customs and rituals), and anarchist societies which rejected *all* imposition of the authority of any kind. Secondly, he urged them to recognise that the authors of books like *Tribes* were describing social structures and not, like Margaret Mead in *Coming of Age in Samoa* (which, along with Malinowski's Trobriand Islanders, was an anarchist favourite), concerned with peoples' subjective experience. It could not be known, then, if the people in question *felt* especially autonomous.[85] Nevertheless, *Tribes* remained useful to anarchists for its practical descriptions of different models of leaderless organisation. Reading across the chapters he noted that size seemed critical (the bigger the social unit the more conflicts were observed) and that the number of distinct social groupings within a tribe was less important than their 'intricate interrelations of interests and loyalties'.[86]

Translating the relevance of these insights beyond their immediate context, however, was more an act of informed poetry than a strict science, but no less valuable for being so. He concluded his article with Kropotkin, quoting not from *Mutual Aid*, but the Russian's pamphlet 'Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal':

Harmony appears as a temporary adjustment established among all forces acting upon a given spot — a provisory adaptation. And that adjustment will only last under one condition: that of being continually modified.[87]

Ward welcomed the scientific method, then, when it meant an attention to detail which grounded imagination. In '"Freedom" in the Sixties', he urged his fellow anarchists that 'we have to earn the right to be taken seriously. In the last decade there has grown up a whole school of writers on social and economic affairs who are making a careful and critical appraisal of this country's social institutions'. 'We must', he added, 'find their anarchist equivalents among contributors to this paper'.[88] The following year came his series on 'The New Social Investigators'

[84] Adam Kuper, *Anthropology and Anthropologists: The Modern British School* (London: Routledge, 1996), 1–65.

[85] Colin Ward, 'Harmony through Complexity', *Freedom*, 20 December 1958.

[86] Colin Ward, 'Tribal Anarchists'; 'More Tribal Anarchists', 6 December 1958.

[87] Colin Ward, 'Harmony through Complexity', *Freedom*, 20 December 1958; Peter Kropotkin, 'Anarchism Its Philosophy and Ideal', *Freedom Pamphlets*, 10 (London: Freedom Press, 1897).

[88] Colin Ward, 'Freedom in the Sixties', *Freedom*, 24 October 1959.

('investigators' as opposed to theorists or even scientists), under which heading he included: Richard Titmuss and Brian Abel Smith's *The Cost of the National Health Service* (1956), JP Martin's *Social Aspects of Prescribing* (1957), Titmuss' *Essays on the Welfare State* (1958), J. Vaizey's *The Cost of Education* (1959), Barbara

Wootten's *Social Science and Social Pathology* (1959), and various works produced by the Institute of Community Studies (ICS) researchers. These writers, he said,

had shown that most of the things that are said and written about the welfare state are the expression of either hope or prejudice, unsupported by facts, and they have done this simply by taking the trouble to analyse statistics and undertake surveys.[89]

His admiration for these investigators shows, again, his Labour roots. All had close but critical connections to the Labour movement. Most were the colleagues, students, or associates of Titmuss, the first Professor of Social Administration at the London School of Economics which was itself the institutional legacy of the Fabian society whose founding belief in gradual social change, informed by extensive independent research,[90] Ward agreed with in principle.[91] Yet this was not unqualified. As with the anthropologists, surveys and statistics could reveal inconsistencies in government claims, but they could not get to the heart of the problem with state welfare which lay, as he saw it, in its inherent denial of human agency. Moreover, although many of the researchers had grown critical of Labour,[92] they retained faith in state-controlled methods of distributing and managing welfare services, only advocating for more enlightened leadership. So, although 'welcoming their diagnoses' he preferred to remain 'sceptical about their remedies'.[93]

The exception to this was Young, founder, with Willmott, of the ICS. As David Goodway remarked in his 2001 conversation with Ward, the two men seemed to have much in common[94] but, surprisingly, despite warmth towards the ICS's work, he made no in-depth engagement with it at this time, simply lumping it in with that of the LSE academics. He did not review *Family and Kinship* for *Freedom*, nor discuss in detail the other ICS reports, Peter Townsend's *The Family Life of Old People: An Investigation in East London* (1957) or Peter Marris' *Widows and Their Family* (1958). Not even Young's satire *The Rise of the Meritocracy* (1959) drew his attention when it was first published.[95] This was an odd omission because at the heart of Young's work, as much as his own, was an attempt to think through the tension between 'merit', a cold calculation of 'effort plus IQ'[96] which both men equated with welfarist philosophy, and 'kinship', the organic webs of social relations that sustained individuals through trial, triumph, and tragedy.

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[89] Colin Ward, 'The New Social Investigators — I', *Freedom*, 10 September 1960. This was not entirely the case, Titmuss and Abel Smith's *The Cost of the National Health Service* was largely positive about the social impact of the NHS.

[90] 'The trouble', Raymond Aron was once heard to remark, 'is that British sociology is essentially an attempt to make intellectual sense of the political problems of the Labour Party'. AH Halsey, *A History of British Sociology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 70.

[91] John Ellerby, 'The Fabian Society: A Symposium', *Anarchy*, 8, October 1961.

[92] Colin Ward, 'Freedom in the Sixties'. Here he quoted John Vaizey saying: 'Being radical in modern British politics now means having a certain detachment about the fate of the Labour Party. For fifty years it has seemed important to get "the movement" in; only now is it realised that "the movement", when in office, consists of much the same sort of power-seekers as the other lot'.

[93] Ibid.

[94] David Goodway and Colin Ward, *Talking Anarchy* (Oakland: PM Press, 2014), 101.

[95] See John Ellerby, 'Education, Equality, Opportunity', *Anarchy*, 1, February 1961. Here Ellerby (Ward) quotes from and comments on *Rise of the Meritocracy* at length.

[96] Michael Young, *The Rise of the Meritocracy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1959).

It was possible that Ward, at this time, simply considered him 'too Labour'; he had been, after all, the author of *Let Us Face the Future*, Labour's winning 1945 manifesto. But Young had soon found life in the Party machine stultifying. He conceived the Institute, in part, as a corrective to this. Rather than assess welfare policies for cost against value, it looked at their impact on people's lives.[97] Alongside subject matter, the ICS also differed in its research methods. Alongside the traditional social survey, Young and the other researchers carried out extensive oral interviews. In the series of reports that followed, they were able, as Titmuss et al., to problematise any straightforward narrative of welfare as progress, but here the problem at stake was not the government's *failure* to deliver. It was how what they had delivered, and the ways this had been done, had caused loss as well as gain, not least in the fracturing of the family and community as social units.

Inevitably, the ICS incurred 'the suspicion and hostility of academic sociologists' who considered them as 'extra-curricular researchers, amateur anthropologists' whose 'quotable writing suggested journalism'. Worse still was the charge that their work was openly partisan and shot through with nostalgia for 'commu- nity'.[98] Recently, it has become fashionable to expose how Young and Willmott extracted from their interviews selectively to augment their case.[99] This both hits and misses the point of what the ICS group were trying to do. Granted, this was not science in the purest sense but a form of activism on two fronts. Firstly, it was an objection to how the human experience was marginalised in much contemporary social research. As such, including people's views, in their own words (albeit framed and selected) had a symbolic significance as much as anything else. Secondly, Young and the ICS authors were not naively nostalgic about the working-class community (they readily accepted its hardships and limitations) but they were attracted to the *principle* of community life and to qualities like mutual aid and self-reliance which they believed underpinned it. What concerned them was that state welfare, in addressing many of the conditions that had necessitated this principle, was also eroding much of the spirit and capacity for it.

The point here is that even if Ward did not fully recognise his common ground with Young in the late 50s, it was there nonetheless. Debates on the claims of the individual in relation to society or on the status of science against other forms of knowledge were not only widespread, but they were also challenging the left's traditional fidelities to collectivism and scientific planning from within the very heart of the movement.

Conclusion

Re-reading anarchism through figures like Buber, Herzen, and, tangentially, Berlin, provided Ward with the intellectual resources he needed to re-compose classical anarchism for a sceptical age. If the activist side of the movement were wrong in their efforts to coerce people into joining the revolutionary cause, they were right to stress anarchism as an ethical stance realised through direct action. If the intellectuals were right to focus on the individual and seek out practical forms

[97] For accounts of Young's relationship to Labour see: Asa Briggs, *Michael Young: Social Entrepreneur* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001); Lise Butler, *Michael Young, Social Science, and the British Left 1945—1970* (Oxford: Oxford Historical Monographs, 2020).

[98] AH Halsey, *A History of British Sociology*, 110.

[99] Jon Lawrence, 'Inventing the Traditional Working Class: A Re-Analysis of Interview Notes from Young and Willmott's *Family and Kinship in East London*', *The Historical Journal*, 59:2 (2016), 567–593.

of non-violent action informed by reasoned reflection, they were wrong to suppose that this would reveal a singular human nature from which could be inferred some ultimate, universal design. By cutting and pasting elements from both positions and moving the stress from direct action towards an end goal (be that revolution or the fulfilment of a social design) towards the act of voluntary action itself as an end, one could nurture the habit of autonomy in people that any truly comprehensive revolution required if it was to be spontaneous and avoid descent into tyranny.

This move either solved everything or nothing at all, and for many of his anarchist comrades, the latter was true. Amongst the activists, it was defeatist, suggesting an unrealistic grasp on the tenacity of power structures. At best it was naive, an overly optimistic faith in change by civic means that was not remotely feasible in a modern world of comprehensive bureaucracy and the bomb. At worst, it was sabotage; some wondered, half-jokingly, if he was really 'a Labour Party stool pigeon'.[100] From the intellectual's standpoint, when they deigned to read it,[101] it was 'interesting'[102] stuff, with some use as propaganda, but unserious, sentimental, and lacking in hard analysis. But Ward remained unmoved. Anarchism, he believed, was 'ultimately based on the aspirations of the heart rather than the deductions of the mind'[103] and it was these he determined to speak to.

[100] Colin Ward, 'Notes on Becoming an Anarchist Columnist', *Raven*, 12 (1990).

[101] Tony Gibson, 'Interview with Alex Comfort', TGP/ARCH 0515, IISH. In his interview with Gibson in 1992, Comfort claimed to have never read Ward's work.

[102] Tony Gibson, 'Interview with George Woodcock'.

[103] Colin Ward, 'From the Outside Looking In', *University Libertarian*, December 1955.

6. Domestic Anarchy

Speaking to 'aspirations of the heart' required a different register to that of 'deductions of the mind' but, in 1950s Britain, what were those aspirations? A glib answer might be a new house, white goods, and colourful paintwork. As Mark Abrams, market researcher—turned sociologist, described it, this was the dawn of the 'home-centered society'.[1] Housing was the hot political topic of the decade. As the 1951 Conservative manifesto put it, housing was the top priority for social service and economic development:

Work, family life, health and education are all undermined by crowded houses. Therefore, a Conservative and Unionist Government will give housing a priority second only to national defence.[2]

Sensing the public mood that, in this area, Labour had not moved fast enough, they pledged 300,000 'people's houses' per year (beating Labour's 200,000 per year). Many considered this to be the decisive element in their 1951 victory and 1955 re-election. Harold Macmillan was charged with the job which he was rumoured to have viewed as a game of cricket, watching 'houses going up like runs on the board'.[3] Construction in the New Towns resumed in earnest and was key to meeting the target, as were 'Expanded towns' which emerged after the Town Development Act (1952) granted local authorities power to determine suburban expansion and boundary extension on their patches.

Despite, perhaps because of, the target, planning dramatically downgraded in importance, disappearing from the name of the ministry altogether. Britain's changing appearance now owed more to the priorities of housing investors than any centralised vision. As such, it was often ad-hoc and opportunist. In 1955, critic Ian Nairn wrote witheringly of 'subtopia' in a special edition of the *Architectural Review*. This, he explained, meant: 'Making an ideal of Suburbia.

Visually Speaking, the universalisation and idealisation of our town fringes. Philosophically, the idealisation of the Little Man who lives there',[4] before condemning their ugliness, lack of regard for natural surroundings, destruction of the countryside, and sheer monotony.

The New Towns also came in for critique. They seemed to please no one. Conservative critics pilloried their designs as blemishes on the landscape and worried how encroachment onto agricultural land would impact British farming (prompting a government circular in 1955, one of the decade's few pieces of planning legislation, inviting local authorities to protect their green belt land but providing little direction for the development around the protected areas). The more progressively inclined lamented the cultural confinement, if not outright philistinism, of their residents.[5] Meanwhile, a generation of young architects, still fired by Le Corbusier, decided that

[1] Mark Abrams, 'Home-Centred Society', *The Listener*, 26 November 1959.

[2] Conservative Party Manifesto 1951, http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1951/1951-conservative-manifesto.shtml [last accessed 8 October 2021].

[3] Quote in Peter Hennessey, *Having It So Good* (London: Penguin, 2006), 21.

[4] Ian Nairn, 'Outrage: On the Disfigurement of Town and Countryside', *Architectural Review*, 1 June 1955.

[5] Angus Wilson, *Late Call* (London: Faber and Faber, [1964] 2013).

against this ennui, the future must be urban, with high-density living allowing more people to retain all the stimulus of the big city. Even, Lewis Mumford, an old champion of Ebenezer Howard's Garden City movement, found them disappointing, writing in the *New Yorker* that 'the New Towns do not yet adequately reveal what the modern city should be'.[6]

Nevertheless, on becoming Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan re-galvanised building in the New Towns as part of a root-to-branch programme of modernisation which, alongside construction, extended to include stimulating new industries in home-making including the mass production of materials like vinyl, aluminium, fibreglass, products like dishwashers, refrigerators, all of which transformed the experience of domestic life. Exhibitions like the Festival of Britain (1951) or the earlier 'Britain Can Make It' (1946) promoted futuristic living conditions while a growing advertising industry promoted the allure through images of domestic desirability. With more leisure to enjoy rather than endure the home, DIY became popular. The *Practical Householder* launched in 1955, paint, fabrics and ceramics became available in an ever more exotic range of colours.[7]

Ward was eager to put an anarchist slant on such a hot topic in public debate and well placed to do so. In 'What Is *Freedom* For?', a response to a reader's letter of the same question, he confessed the

temptation, as I found when I used to 'write up' news items, to go through the daily press, pick on a topic and rehash them into some sort of article. This is a waste of time and a breach of faith with the reader.

By contrast, 'where there has in fact been access to special knowledge, FREEDOM has contained first rate reporting'[8] which was simply because, when well informed, writers could bring a level of substance to the anarchist principles they were talking about. In his case, it was housing and urban planning.

His role on the drawing board of Bridgewater, Shepheard, and Epstein (BSE) placed him frontline on the shifting ground between government policy, architects' vision, and the practical realities of construction. This insider knowledge allowed him to deflate government rhetoric with precision. Macmillan's 'political stunt' was to be achieved through granting local authorities the discretion to issue licences to private enterprises; the implications were perfectly clear if one consulted the 'Economics of the Council House' report in volume XVI of Planning where you would find that the decision 'would merely lessen the chances of those whose need is more desperate' acquiring a house. Moreover, despite the Dudley Committee report into housing standards which had worked out at 'a three bedroomed house areas of about 920 sq. ft.', the latest government circular had 'recommended an area of less than 900 sq. ft. for a three bedroomed house for five people'.[9] Reviewing Macmillan's *Houses 1952*, which set out new specimen plans for houses with reduced space, he was able to report that '*The Architect's Journal* has compiled an impressive list of disadvantages' which were 'inevitable when you try to squeeze a quart into a pint pot'.

[6] Lewis Mumford, 'The Sky Line', *New Yorker*, 17 October 1953.

[7] David Kynaston, *Family Britain: 1951—57* (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), 667—668; See also: Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory* (London: Verso, 1994); John Shepherd and Janet Shepherd, *The 1950s Home* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2017).

[8] Colin Ward, 'What Is Freedom For?', *Freedom*, 3 September 1955.

[9] Colin Ward, 'Macmillan's Addled Egg', *Freedom*, 9 February 1952. See also Colin Ward, 'Should Housing Standards Be Cut?' *Freedom*, 7 July 1951; 'Housing: Hypocrisy and Deception', *Freedom*, 26 July 1952.

He could also speak fluently on the connected question of planning. Of the 22 articles on regional planning in *Freedom* since 1945, he was the author of 14 of them and in 1955 he noted, partly with pride, partly with regret, that he was one of the few journalists to attend, and stick out, the First International Regional Planning conference.[10] In 1958, he also took over coverage of the motor car debates. Between 1950 and 1960, the number of private vehicles had doubled from 4.5 to 9 million, all of them attempting to use Victorian road systems with chaotic and dangerous results. Rather than assess the implications of increased motoring and attempt to plan transport infrastructure accordingly, the government response was typically ad-hoc. Using Colin Buchanan's *Mixed Blessings: The Motor in Britain* (1958)[11] as a departure for a multi-part series on 'The Motor Age', he contested the assumption that more private vehicles meant an overall increase in freedom. Not only had accident rates risen sharply, but congestion made city and town centres unusable for most people. Organising future urban development around car use, through satellite towns and dormitory suburbs, not only exacerbated traffic problems but implicitly favoured the wealthy, leaving those unable to afford a car trapped in unaffordable cities or isolated on their fringes with limited access to work.[12]

His capacity to decipher the technical debates on housing and planning, combined with his access to specialist forms of evidence — like government reports and commentary in trade journals — made him an intelligent commentator. He could unveil Tory failings in housing like a gifted Labour critic or extol the virtues of dispersal and regional planning like a spokesperson for the Town and Country Planning Association, but he was still not getting much closer to how ordinary people were feeling. 'The People' were regularly invoked but real individuals were absent from his writing.

Now and then, he caught himself on this matter. In an article on 'The School Building Crisis', he devoted three quarters to explaining how reductions in government investment had thwarted attempts by architects in the Ministry of Education's 'Development Group' to embed progressive education principles into their designs (for example, making class spaces open plan, removing walls, rows, and other 'barriers'). But, with every school oversubscribed, and the average class size reaching 45, teachers complained that the new spaces, while inviting for small group project work, were impossible to control in contrast to the old-fashioned rows. Both the cuts and complaints, he lamented, were short-sighted. Then suddenly he changed tack. 'All the same, when we think of enlightened education experiments in council schools, three schools spring to mind: Alex Bloom's George's-in-the-East (London), AL Stone's Steward Street Junior (Birmingham) and EF Neill's Prestolee (Bolton)'.[13] All three had taken place in dark ugly overcrowded buildings revitalised solely through the energy of these dynamic headteachers. Despite these occasional vignettes of exemplary individuals, the views of ordinary people remained few and far between. What was affluence like for the people supposedly enjoying it so much?

Domesticity has become the iconic trope of the 50s, for good reason. Never had everyday life, the home, been so intensively scrutinised. Architects agonised over whether Jo Citizen dreamed of a castle on the ground in the New Towns or an inner-city flat, whether she required the Dudley

[10] Colin Ward, 'The Conference on Regional Planning', *Freedom*, 8 October 1955.

[11] See also Colin Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns: A Study of the Long Term Problems of Traffic in Urban Areas* (London: Routledge, [1963] 2015).

[12] Colin Ward, 'The Motor Age 1–6', *Freedom*, 22 March 1958, 29 March 1958, 5 April 1958, 12 April 1958, 19 April 1958, and 26 April 1958.

[13] Colin Ward, 'The School Building Crisis', *Freedom*, 16 February 1952.

Committee's 920 sq ft or whether Macmillan's 900 sq ft would suffice. If not a miniature on an architect's model, then a folk character for a burgeoning marketing industry. Advertising increased from 0.77% of gross national product in 1952 to 0.93% in 1956, bringing benefits to women's magazines; *Woman* quintupled revenue from advertising between 1951 and 1958. Regular advertising features for the 'Modern Kitchen', extolling the virtues of kitchenware, began appearing in old staples like *Homes and Gardens* and *Picture Post.*[14]

Yet, even as the ideal of domesticity permeated everywhere, the craft of it was coming under threat. Alva Myrdal and Viola Klein, in their study *Women's Two Roles: Home and Work* (1956), observed that since the industrial revolution, as work became more divided from home life, traditional female economic activities — crafts such as baking, soap-making; skills such as budgeting and thrift — lost both economic and consequently social status. To restore that status, women increasingly looked beyond the home to the workplace, but social attitudes had not matched pace with the industry, leaving many women working, in effect, two full-time jobs. New domestic technology-supported women's transition to the workplace by reducing the labour required for the home. Affluence also recalibrated other traditional values. Buying readymade was no longer presented as slovenly but efficient; what could not be afforded now could be rented and paid in instalments without fear of appearing extravagant.

Another implication of changing home life was the fragmentation of extended kin networks (as stressed by the Institute of Community Studies researchers) which reduced and intensified the family to the core 'nuclear' unit. As archaeologist and science writer Jacquetta Hawkes commented, this made 'fearful demands on the human beings caught up in it; heavily weighted for loneliness, excessive demands, strain and failure'[15] and an especially isolating experience for those non-working women stranded out in the suburbs.[16] For their children, it was a monotony to be escaped, fuelling the growing attraction of a younger generation to modern flats and city living.

Applying an anarchist perspective, Ward understood that wanting a house of your own, material comfort, freedom from needless toil, and relationships of your choosing stemmed from a basic desire for autonomy, the wish to shape and direct your own life. This was also what the young generation desired from their flats and careers. But even as first government, then the market promised liberation from poverty and drudgery, people's independence was pushed further and further back. With every hire-purchase payment that required the security of a monthly salary, every skill deferred to a machine, every household item acquired in a department store, people's dependence on buying in the expertise of others — for security, shelter, food, even entertainment — further diminished their dream. How, though, to reach these people and speak to their desires and problems on their own terms?

Re-Writing Anarchism

Ward's answer to this was to move from news stories to column writing.[17] There had been forerunners for this. George Woodcock's 'Literary Notes' and Gerald Vaughan's 'Land Notes'

[14] David Kynaston, *Family Britain*, 664–665.

[15] Jacquetta Hawkes, 'The Choice before Man', in CH Rolph, ed., *The Human Sum* (New York: Macmillan, 1957), 108.

[16] See Penelope Mortimer, *Daddy's Gone A-Hunting* (London: Persephone Books, 1958).

[17] Colin Ward, 'Notes on Becoming an Anarchist Columnist', *Raven*, 12 (1990).

had been consistent features in the 40s. Read too had written a short-lived column, 'Kicks and Ha'ppence' (1951). Ward followed in this vein, cultivating the anecdotal approach that would eventually become his trademark.

For any propagandist, anecdotes are a staple tool. Their disarming sense of disclosure, of the speaker as a 'real' person, builds rapport with an audience but although personal, they are not usually intimate, not aiming to shock or disrupt common values. They are social emollients, belonging to polite society and pleasant conversation. In the right hands, however, this very innocuity gave them a radical potential. For Ward, they offered *the* mode through which to talk to the times.

Like most writers, he learnt his craft by reading other writers. 'Books', he wrote:

are the multiplication of minds, and I suppose that most readers have had the experience of coming into contact by way of books with a mind with which they feel an immediate sympathy, and of being in touch, solely through the printed page with someone whose attitude to life and view of the world seems immediately familiar and likeable. To mention only writers of our own day, I have felt this sense of communication with Ignazio Silone and George Orwell, and increasingly in the last few years with Edward Hyams.[18]

He was, then, a sensuous reader, seeking points of identification, building his essays around the passages that excited him and 'expressed his own feelings better than he could himself'.[19] His concern for expression (as the means through which ideas became tangible) meant that he paid equal attention to *styles* of writing as to the content. But what was the alchemy behind the 'sense of communication' he felt with these men?

Orwell exercised a deep but uneasy fascination for the FP anarchists. *Homage to Catalonia* had performed a vital service for the anarchist cause in Spain. He had been a founder member of the Freedom Defence Committee and remained on friendly personal terms with several of the FP group, including George Woodcock and Vernon Richards. Moreover, his rising stature as a political writer made it desirable to connect him to the cause, but here his consequent change of stance on the war, his public attacks on pacifism, and (albeit reluctant) acceptance of American liberal democracy as a lesser evil made the connection tricky.

Woodcock, who had received withering criticism for his defence of paci- fism,[20] dealt with the problem by framing him as a great writer but a weak political thinker. 'If iconoclasm is Orwell's role in political writing', he wrote, 'then we can hardly expect to find the opposite virtue, and, indeed, we find that he has little to say on *how* society can be changed'.[21] Richards took this further. Following Orwell's death on 21 January 1950, *The World Review* printed extracts from his private notebooks[22] (kept between May 1940 to August 1941 and March to November 1942) which Richards scoured for evidence of the author's inner struggle, finding plenty of 'examples of Orwell's healthy distrust of the ruling classes alongside quite reactionary views'. Quoting passages such as 'towards the government I feel no scruples and would dodge paying taxes if

[18] Colin Ward, 'The Writer and His Sources', *Freedom*, 23 September 1956.

[19] David Goodway and Colin Ward, *Talking Anarchy* (Oakland: PM Press, 2014), 130–131.

[20] George Orwell, 'Pacifism and the War', *The Partisan Review*, August-September (1942). See also George Orwell, 'The Writers' Dilemma', *The Observer*, 22 August 1948.

[21] George Woodcock, 'George Orwell: 19th Century Liberal', *Politics*, December 1946. See also, George Woodcock, *The Crystal Spirit* (London: Little, Brown, 1966). Despite what went out in print, the two remained on good terms personally.

[22] *The World Review*, June 1950.

I could. Yet I would give my life for England ready enough if I felt it necessary' as proof of these contradictions, he concluded that Orwell's 'desire to play his part' had clouded his reason, preventing him from learning the 'painful lessons' necessary to cure him of the optimistic illusion that 'power does not always corrupt'. Still his 'love for humanity' could not be disputed.[23]

Ward's interest in Orwell was equally ardent[24] but different in purpose. 'I don't believe that there is any point in setting out to "prove" that Orwell was an anarchist'[25] he wrote, proposing, instead, that anarchists understand him on his own terms.[26] In a series of five essays, he presented a potted political biog- raphy.[27] His Orwell was a lonely youth, constantly contorted between contrary forces: the poorest boy at the wealthiest school, the imperial policeman who hated empire, the gentleman tramp, the repulsed champion of the working class, the socialist irritated by socialists. Then came Spain, the political coming of age and *Homage to Catalonia* as its testament. Finally, the legacy of this experience, the pathological horror of totalitarianism reaching a crescendo in the fiction *Animal Farm* (1944) and *1984* (1948).[28] It was clear to him that Orwell could never have been won for 'Anarchism'; he feared it was 'simply another ism', more dangerous too as by claiming to govern through 'love' and 'reason' it better concealed its totalitarian instincts.

Orwell was not 'An Anarchist', then, but somehow more anarchic for not being. Rather than resolve his contradictions, he made of them a virtue: inconsistency, uncertainty, imperfection became forms of human resistance. 'Stay human: love one another' was, Ward believed, Orwell's ultimate message. It was not, he admitted, revolutionary, political, or even original,[29] but it was more than the unsatisfyingly vague 'love of humanity' that Richards had permitted him. 'Love', in Orwell's case, was nearer to respect, an extension of the ferocious independence of mind he cherished for himself to all other people.

This strenuous effort to assert his individuality, and that of others, was realised, in part, by adopting a style of unflinching honesty which, no matter how messy (the messier, the more believable), stood defence against delusion. For Ward, his non-fiction realised this best (he was less impressed with the fiction; *Animal Farm* was a 'satire of limited intention', *1984* was 'an allegory which transcends satire' but still a political fable nonetheless). If, like Richards, he found the man's inconsistencies frustrating, it was more important to him that Orwell made no attempt to gild them. He not only exposed the full agony of his deliberations but made a persona out of

[23] Vernon Richards, 'Orwell's Unpublished Notebooks', *Freedom*, 10 June 1950. See also, Vernon Richards, ed., *Orwell at Home (and Among the Anarchists)* (London: Freedom Press, 1998).

[24] 'Essays by George Orwell', 11 November 1950; 'Orwell's Heart & Mind', *Freedom*, 19 February 1955; 'Orwell and Anarchism I-V', *Freedom*, 26 February 1955, 5 March 1955, 12 March 1955, 19 March 1955, 9 April 1955; 'Orwell and Orthodoxy', 15 September 1956.

[25] Colin Ward, 'Orwell and Anarchism I', *Freedom*, 26 February 1955.

[26] Cf. Camillo Berneri, *Kropotkin: His Federalist Idea* (London: Freedom Press, [1922] 1942). Ward adopted the same biographical method that Berneri used to contextualise Kropotkin's controversial decision to support the allies in the First World War. Like Berneri with Kropotkin's federalism, he was able to identify in Orwell both the roots and realisation of a core idea — the hatred of totalitarianism — and use this as a key to elucidate his apparently contradictory ideas.

[27] Cf other 'political lives' of Orwell including: Peter Wilkin, 'George Orwell: The English Dissident as Tory Anarchist', *Political Studies*, 61:1 (2013), 197–214; Robert Colls, *George Orwell: English Rebel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Stephen Ingle, *Orwell: A Political Life* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993).

[28] See also George Orwell, 'Why I Write (1947)', in Orwell, ed., *Selected Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

[29] Colin Ward, 'Orwell and Anarchism 5', *Freedom*, 9 April 1955.

it. In fact, Ward observed, the need to maintain this plainspeaking, 'realist' persona was another reason he had avoided close association with the hopelessly 'utopian' anarchists. The challenge, then, was how to present an anarchism so 'realistic', so accommodating of flaws and eccentricity, that even Orwell might have been persuaded.

The Italian author Ignazio Silone[30] shared similar traits. The ex-Communist Party member also painted intimate portraits of people 'as they really were', in remedy of the abstraction and idealisation of 'the worker' he had encountered during his time in the Party. He was, however, less indulgent than Orwell, less forgiving of the meanness in peasants' lives and of the superstition that gave rise to it. As a writer, he was also more subtle, more delicate in his fusion of realism and fable. In part, he achieved this through using anecdotes as 'the last defence of the downtrodden', into which 'the crux of thought and experience, the kernel of inherited wisdom embodied in anonymous voice and skeptical gesture' could be kept 'close to Earth', compressed into concrete particulars.[31]

Orwell and Silone were fairly standard leftist reading; the more obscure Hyams, however, was Ward's personal choice and therefore especially revealing of his taste. Having abandoned a comfortable career in advertising for socialism and a smallholding in Kent, Hyams turned to write to supplement what fruit farming (strawberries and viticulture) could not provide, becoming the gardening correspondent for the *Illustrated London News* and *The Spectator*, producing histories of agriculture, horticultural manuals, and a series of novels. He enjoyed a modest success which did not outlive his own lifetime.[32]

Like Orwell and Silone, he favoured an augmented realism, but where they inclined to fabulist or mystical elements, he preferred the absurd. His principal themes were commercial society, the limits of human control and the possibilities of a return to the land. Despite this, his was no cosy appeal to a lost pastoral order. In *William Medium* (1947), the title character's escape from the world of commerce for self-sufficiency, and desperate struggle to hold at bay the forces which would engulf him, showed that nature, far from a refuge, offered only a different form of struggle. *The Slaughterhouse Informer* (1955) examined the collision of urban ideals and rural life charting how the worst traits of the latter were exacerbated by an inability to discriminate between the best and worst aspects of invasive modernity.

His non-fiction was also devoted to the 'man-soil' relationship. Ward reviewed *Prophecy of Famine* (1953), a collaboration with author and farmer Harold Massingham, which addressed food sovereignty and Britain's reliance on imports (still, at this time, mostly acquired through colonial exploitation), expanding this into a critique of modern political culture. This suited well enough, but Massingham caused Ward discomfort.[33] Introducing him, disparagingly, as a writer in the 'country books' section […] a passionate admirer of the old rural order and an enemy of both industrial capitalism and socialism', he considered the two 'an unlikely pair. The reactionary

[30] See Dario Boccia, *Ignazio Silone: la doppia vita di un italiano* (Milan: Rizzoli, 2005); Stanislao G. Pugliese, *Bitter Spring: A Life of Ignazio Silone* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009); Mauro Canali, 'Ignazio Silone and the Fascist Political Police', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies,* 5 (2000), 36—55. In the 1990s it was revealed that Silone had been a fascist informer. Ward could not, of course, have known this during the 1950s but, as Boccia noted, it certainly reinforces the theme of moral conflict which runs throughout his work.

[31] Irving Howe, 'Introduction', in Ignazio Silone, ed., *Bread and Wine* (New York: Signet Classics, [1936] 1986), xi.

[32] Edward Hyams, *From the Wasteland* (London: Turnstile Press, 1950).

[33] For a previous astringent discussion of Massingham, see Colin Ward, 'Land Notes: Rural Melancholy', *Freedom*, 23 August 1947.

and the socialist', but in fact they provided a useful opportunity to demonstrate the differences, and the similarities, between the libertarian left and the libertarian right.[34]

Massingham, one of several influential interwar rural writers, was a passionate advocate for organic farming and a co-founder of the Soil Association. Unlike some of his close associates (such as Henry Williamson) he did not openly express far-right sympathies but did mourn for the passing of an ancient village economy. This self-supporting and productive life, he claimed, had been the underpinning of Renaissance Europe, had fuelled the flourishing of high culture, but had been crushed in the name of economic efficiency and industrialised farming, leaving soils depleted and barren and Britain dependent on importing a large percentage of its food through colonial exploitation. While he praised the independent spirit of a lost peasantry, he believed this had depended upon an old, semi-feudal pastoral structure, headed by a 'responsible landowner',[35] with all keeping to their place.

Fortunately, Ward explained, his 'able collaborator was free from the prejudices and assumptions that weakened his case'. Hyams valued the principle of peasant independence over any one particular image of it and proposed a future of small farmers who 'owned suits and books, used technology wisely, and cared for crops and fertility'.[36] The ideological distinction, Ward believed, rested on whether one preferred Massingham's chapter on 'The Return of the Peasant', which aspired to recreate some version of an idealised past, or Hyams' on 'The Modern Peasantry', which aspired to reinvent the peasantry along the lines of Kropotkin's *Fields, Factories, and Workshops*.[37]

But Hyams' significance to Ward was as much about how he wrote as what. The former adman was another accomplished stylist, witty and light of touch. While always a comic writer, at some point in the early 50s, the laughter changed. Late 40s fiction, like *William Medium* (1947), resumed the picaresque tradition of Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne by following the open-ended travails of an unlikely, but likeable, hero.[38] Later fiction turned Swiftian, with no one able to withstand, much less defeat, the monstrosities of bureaucracy, institutionalisation, and commercialisation. Socialists and intellectuals who might elsewhere have been tragic heroes were simply different parts of the same problem.[39] Such furious irony was not, Ward argued, encroaching cynicism but 'deeply felt compassion and indignation'.[40] Notably, though, it was the more hopeful *William Medium* he preferred to quote from.

Another Hyams device he valued was miniaturisation, the microscopic focus on a set of individuals or community and their concerns. Again, he said, anticipating would-be detractors, this was no retreat from seriousness but a more intensive effort to get at the foibles and terrors of the human heart. To understand these at work in the most ordinary and mundane of settings would yield as much, if not more, insight than the most exacting analysis of global-scale corruptions.

Hyams' influence informed his vision for the paper's future. Musing on *Freedom*'s distinctive personality at the turn of the decade, he wrote:

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[34] Mick Smith, 'Edward Hyams: Ecology and Politics under the Vine', *Environmental Values*, 20:1 (2011), 95–119.

[35] Edward Hyams and HJ Massingham, 'Preface', in Hyams and Massingham, *Prophecy of Famine* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1953).

[36] Edward Hyams, 'The Modern Peasantry', in Edward Hyams and Harold Massingham, eds., *Prophecy of Famine*.

[37] Ibid; Colin Ward, 'Book Review: Prophecy of Famine', *Freedom*, 4 April and 11 April 1953.

[38] Edward Hyams, *William Medium* (London: The Bodley Head, 1947), 9. The title character, William Medium, lists *Tom Jones*, *Gil Blas*, *The Golden Ass*, *Don Quixote*, *Tom Sawyer*, and *Robinson Crusoe* as his favourite reading.

[39] Colin Ward, 'Sophisticated Peasant', *Freedom*, 20 August 1955.

[40] Ibid.

One of its characteristics should be the use of satire and irony, by which I do not mean heavy-handed sarcasm which often serves as an inadequate and irritating substitute for it. Satire is a difficult art, and not a very popular one in the press today.

This, he supposed, owed much to pressures from advertisers which *Freedom*, clinging to life through subscriptions and voluntary labour, did not have to contend with. Life on the margins allowed scope for dissent:

another of the distinguishing characteristics of Freedom in the sixties is the attractive combination of levity and moral seriousness. By levity I do not mean a nervous titter, nor by moral seriousness do I mean a proneness for moralising which is one of the things we must shake off. I mean the bawdy irreverence which other papers cannot afford to adopt, and the forthright constituency of attitude which they have thrown overboard because they are preoccupied with playing politics.[41]

For Ward, then, the comic anecdote was the literary mode of choice for anarchism in a sceptical age. Through its sheer ordinariness, particularity, triviality, it punctured grand illusions and returned them to earth. At the same time, it held the reader to account by asking: how do you, even in small and unthinking ways, participate in your own domination? By fragmenting 'Anarchism' as a grand narrative of a post-revolutionary world and scattering it across the most common places of everyday life in the present, anecdotes could better insist on anarchistic possibilities in the here and now.

The Parish Pump and the Village Fete

Ward's early attempts at column writing came in a short-lived 'Out and About' series, an ad-hoc compilation of miniatures where very minor incidents (his aunt's daily train commute, his efforts to paint his house) were ambitiously mined to illuminate larger points (the inefficiency of bureaucrats, the imprac- ticality of technocrats). He honed the technique in the consequent 'Comment' series. In 'Parish Pump' (1952), for example, he took the opportunity of a reader's complaint that *Freedom* had not covered the recent council and borough elections to revisit the idea of the parish pump (William Godwin's shorthand for village politics[42]) as the optimum-sized social unit, and of the practice of informal conversation on common concerns as the optimum mode of politicking.[43]

Reviving this symbol of organic people's politics, he counterposed it against 'the social dissectors of the day', who, he teased, preoccupied themselves with 'international problems, with great affairs, the psychology of the big-wigs[44] or with social organisation of the Trobriand Islanders and the Eskimos, we neglect the small affairs that affect us and our ideas just as much'. When it came to anarchism, such grand visions were, ironically, short-sighted: 'We live in the world of water supplies and slum clearance as well as of cold wars and iron curtains, and they are just as much the concern of anarchists', more so, in fact, if it were ever to be made a reality: 'The first

[41] Colin Ward, 'Freedom in the Sixties', *Freedom*, 24 October 1959.

[42] A forerunner for other recurrent anarchist metaphors for the small, decentralised political unit, the base — irreducible — unit within a federated system, e.g., guild, syndicates, commune, kibbutz, village).

[43] William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1793] 2013).

[44] A possible allusion to Alex Comfort, *Authority and Delinquency in the Modern State* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950).

step to the regeneration of the life of the town or village is a concern for and understanding of its functions'.[45]

He did not go unanswered. The following edition carried a reply from RM (probably Rita Milton). Local government, RM argued, was still government, they still elected representatives, still thought and acted within the train tracks laid down by government. Ward looked in the wrong place if he believed they were a conduit to local power. Even if this had *once* been the case, the all-encompassing arm of modern bureaucracy now made individual initiative at the parish council level impossible. Moreover, RM worried about parochialism. The narrowness characteristic of rural life was not conducive to the sort of broadminded, open enquiry her comrade had in mind. 'CW', she concluded, 'will continue to prod his local officials and kow-tow to the local gentry while I close my windows to the sound of my neighbours and absorb myself in the sex-life of the Trobriand Islanders'.[46]

The exchange, riddled with FP group in-jokes (such as the mutual ribbing over Eskimos or Trobriand Islanders) had a slightly choreographed quality. 'Set pieces' were not uncommon in the paper and had the benefit of rehearsing theoretical debates in the guise of open exchange. In this case, prudent reformism was, again, set against the integrity of social revolution. RM, representing the latter, argued that there were genuine limits to the extent existing social and cultural institutions could change. Freedom, as the anarchists understood it, was literally inconceivable within their given structures. Kropotkin's notion of the commune only worked because he intended it to emerge from a total economic, political, and social revolution through which the weary baggage of history

— superstition, tradition, and custom — that circumscribed much provincial life would be destroyed.

Ward did not respond at this time but resumed the topic three years later in 'Comment: On the Human Scale' (1955).

Every couple of years or so I write an article under the title *The Man Who Knows His Village.*[47] I have forgotten how the quotation ends but the inference is clear. The phrase is a sort of shorthand for a series of ideas which to me are fundamental. For the idea that the man who knows his village understands the world, that everything important starts in small ways in small places, that the only real politics are those of the parish pump. For the idea of small communities, dispersal, fragmentation, the human scale, anarchy.[48]

He then launched into a tale of a weekend spent at his local village fete,[49] an event organised by 'those voluntary bodies which add savour to the life of most villages', local branches of the Royal Horticultural Society, the Rural Women's Institute, and the Young Farmer's Club (an example of the odd blend of 'pomp and domesticity' characteristic of much English culture[50]).

[45] Colin Ward, 'The Parish Pump', *Freedom*, 24 May 1952.

[46] RM, 'Leaning on the Parish Pump', *Freedom*, 31 May 1952.

[47] There was only one previous article under this title by him in 1954 marking the centenary of *Walden*.

[48] Colin Ward, 'On the Human Scale', *Freedom*, 27 August 1955.

[49] Herbert Read, 'Kicks and Ha'ppence: The Village Hall', *Freedom*, 2 June 1951. Ward's story recalled Read's account of his village's effort to raise funds for a village hall through holding a series of whist drives, jumble sales, socials and then, when sufficient had been raised, how they set to work assisting with the actual building. In this account, the hall took the place of the parish pump, as a symbol of vernacular politics, 'a community of a few hundred souls, unaided by national, state, or local government, has brought into being, by its own spontaneous efforts, a centre for its communal life'.

[50] Peter Hennessey, *Never Had it So Good*, 116.

He had entered his 'cauliflowers, shallots and blackcurrants' explaining the odd assortment in a singsong passage: 'my gooseberries were too early, my raspberries too late, my peas too thin, my beans too short, my celery too green and my surviving carrot too solitary'. As Ward and the other men 'eyed each other's efforts', the women 'openly reckoned their chances' in the baking and home crafts tent. Jauntily, he listed all the other features to be expected of such an occasion:

> the sun shone, the sports were hilarious, an old lady won a pig in the draw[51] and wondered what to do with it, gardening techniques were discussed, prize-winners were proud and the rest of us resolved to do better next year.[52]

Ward's account, a mixture of *Lark Rise* and *Cold Comfort Farm*,[53] both teased and appealed to rural nostalgia and the 'frustrated small-holder' trapped in urban offices and factories alike. It was a sound strategy as, in the 1950s, gardening was one of few occupations to cut across class lines. Although his companions enjoying refreshments in the tea tent were most likely to be middle-class homeowning commuters with private gardens, 'the persistence of the desire to grow things',[54] as Richard Hoggart put it, was as strong amongst the urban working classes and most evident in the widespread popularity of the allotment movement. This was reflected and further bolstered by the huge popularity of post-war radio programmes *In Your Garden* and *Gardener's Question Time*, the birth of the TV gardener with Percy Thrower and Roland Smith's *Gardening Club*,[55] but if Ward sought to massage this persistent desire, there was, as ever, a twist.

> 'The show', he said, shifting suddenly from sardonic to serious,
>
> is one of the only occasions in the year when the village acts like a community and not like the scattered collection of weekend farmers, retired majors, rural proletarian, petty gentry, small shopkeepers, struggling small-holders and commuting stockbrokers that it largely is.

The event had been only a thin mask covering the destruction of the very village life it proposed to celebrate, a townsman's pastiche of community life, reproduced according to the vision of national organisations like the RHS, not a spontaneous expression of its own unique life. Its attendees knew, on some level, that they were actors in a pastoral drama and, willingly suspending disbelief, played their parts accordingly.

Nevertheless, it was significant that they had been *willing*, indeed 'there was ample evidence that this village can still cultivate its garden and preserve its fruits'. The fact that such a ritual of community togetherness retained some appeal suggested something of its latent power. For Ward, nostalgia required the sort of careful examination that Marie Louise Berneri (MLB) had given to utopia in the late 40s. In many respects, nostalgia was only utopia in a different form; both offered an affective vision of a more desirable world but where the latter believed that this world might yet be built, the former considered it already lost. Nostalgia was more suited to an age where things already felt like they were moving too fast.

As MLB had done for utopia, Ward acknowledged the problems with nostalgia but also its creative potential. No less than an idealised 'no-where', an idealised past expressed a sense of discontent with the present reality. In trying to articulate and correct what was wrong, it ad-

[51] This was taken from Flora Thompson, 'Harvest Home', in Thompson, *Larkrise to Candleford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1945), 226–244.

[52] Herbert Read, 'Kicks and Ha'ppence'.

[53] Flora Thompson, *Larkrise to Candleford*; Stella Gibbon, *Cold Comfort Farm* (London: Longmans Green, 1932). The former might be taken as an exemplary model of rural writing, the latter an exemplary parody of it.

[54] Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (London: Penguin, 1957), 327.

[55] Charles Quest-Ritson, *The English Garden: A Social History* (London: Viking, 2001), 256.

vanced a form of social critique and attempted to imagine a different reality. It was a fine line to tread. The ideal had to remain just that, an image to fire the poetic imagination, or it would fall quickly into sterility or, worse, tyranny. Nevertheless, it was important to tread softly upon such dreams because in order to 'reverse the unconsciously authoritarian lines of thought that make the elephantine city [...] seem desirable', it was necessary to 'foster the autonomy of the small unit, the provincial, the local, the parish pump'.[56] This would not be done through rational planning alone, but from the bric-a-brac of people's half ideas and dim desires, of values which collided on a daily basis in a hundred small ways. Autonomy was the difficult business of people living with people and all the messiness that entailed. This made ordinary, trivial events like a village fete important. It also made telling stories about them, elevating them to the status of the literary, important. To this end, anecdote, as used by Ward, was the literary correlate of the dispersion principle: care and attention for small matters, and the people they concerned.

The notion of 'Human scale' was, for Ward, anarchism's basic conceptual and methodological principle. But was he living out his ideas? At one level: no. He worked for a wage in an office and was slowly developing a promising career in architecture. He lived in a terrace house on Ellerby Street, bought his food from the market, and was as excited as anyone to try his first-ever avocado in the mid-50s.[57] He enjoyed simple pleasures: the BBC *Third Programme*, beer, cigarettes, above all reading. He adored music, from the BBC orchestra playing the classics to George Melly performing live jazz at the Malatesta Club. He was more reserved about skiffle but appreciated it's DIY qualities and how, prior to commercialisation, it had emerged as an organic form of expression amongst frustrated youths.[58] Benjamin Britten remained his favourite composer. Outside of city life, he visited his mother in rural Sussex, spent weekends and holidays in the countryside. In person, his friends and colleagues found him kindly, affable, and deeply knowledgeable. He paid his taxes, and rent, on time.

There was, however, another side. Even as he arrived in the office punctually, neatly dressed, in a tie, thick hair tamed into a side parting, he was also an anarchist journalist, at the heart of a radical minority culture that wanted to rethink all the old shibboleths of order — government, law, family, trade unions — once and for all. Nor did the aspidistra fly inside that terraced house on Ellerby Street. He lived there with Vera Balfour, nee Recchioni, Richards' sister and her two young sons. Vera was vibrant, glamorous but troubled. She had spent her youth running with a high society set, marrying David Balfour, an actor and heir to Balfour Castle, after a whirlwind romance. The marriage failed almost immediately. They parted and, with another lover, a married man from Essex, she had the two children born in 1949 and 1951. Richards persuaded his sister to invest her inheritance from the sale of the family business into buying a house. He then encouraged Ward to move in as a lodger and persuaded Vera and the children to join him there, which they did in 1953. As the relationship with the boys' natural father was then over, Ward slowly came to fill that role.

Vera shared the charisma of her brother but also his temper. She would rage with uncontrollable fury and then suffer agonies of remorse for days afterwards. Prone to bouts of depression, she drank heavily but was adept at concealing it. At times, she struggled with eating. For the boys, Ward provided stability their mother could not. For her no less than them, he was a source

[56] Colin Ward, 'Human Scale'.

[57] George West, oral communication.

[58] Colin Ward, 'Is Skiffle Piffle?', *Freedom*, 18 May 1957.

of support, helping her to connect and be involved with her children's lives.[59] Recounting this time in later years, he felt he had been manipulated by Richards who, knowing his mild manner, had manoeuvred his friend to save himself the burden of responsibility. That same gentleness, however, was ill-equipped to cope with Vera's volatility much less to comprehend the sources of it.

As his anarchist comrades, including Richards, spoke and wrote in great earnest about the restrictions of the traditional family and youth deviancy as socially exacerbated problems, he lived, first-hand, the collision between pursuing personal freedoms and the responsibility that comes from being entangled with others. He could not simply leave as he loved the two little boys too much. So, he stayed, even convincing Vera to join the Parent Teacher's Association at the children's primary school. When the school was closed and the Association disbanded in 1957, he supported her efforts to overcome the fierce new headmistress and start one at the children's new school.[60]

Colin Ward's Childhood

FIGURE 6.1 8 Collingwood Gardens, Wanstead, London. *Photos courtesy of Harriet Ward, 2021.*

[59] Colin Ward, 'Private Communication', 2001, transcript in author's collection.

[60] 'Battle for Finlay School Lost', *Fulham Gazette*, 8 November 1957; Colin Ward, 'Letters to the Editor', *Fulham Gazette*, 15 November 1957; 'Valuable for Both Sides', *Fulham Gazette*, 22 November 1957.

FIGURE 6.2 Colin Ward aged 5, 1929. *Photos courtesy of Harriet Ward, 2021.*

Anarchists, 1940s

Colin Ward in later life

FIGURE 6.3 Ward and brother Harvey, 1937. *Photos courtesy of Harriet Ward, 2021.*

FIGURE 6.4 Ruby and Arnold Ward, 1945. *Photos courtesy of Harriet Ward, 2021.*

FIGURE 6.5 Anarchist Summer School Expedition, Scotland c. 1948, Colin Ward with Pip Walker and Michele and Leo Emery. *Photos courtesy of Harriet Ward, 2021.*

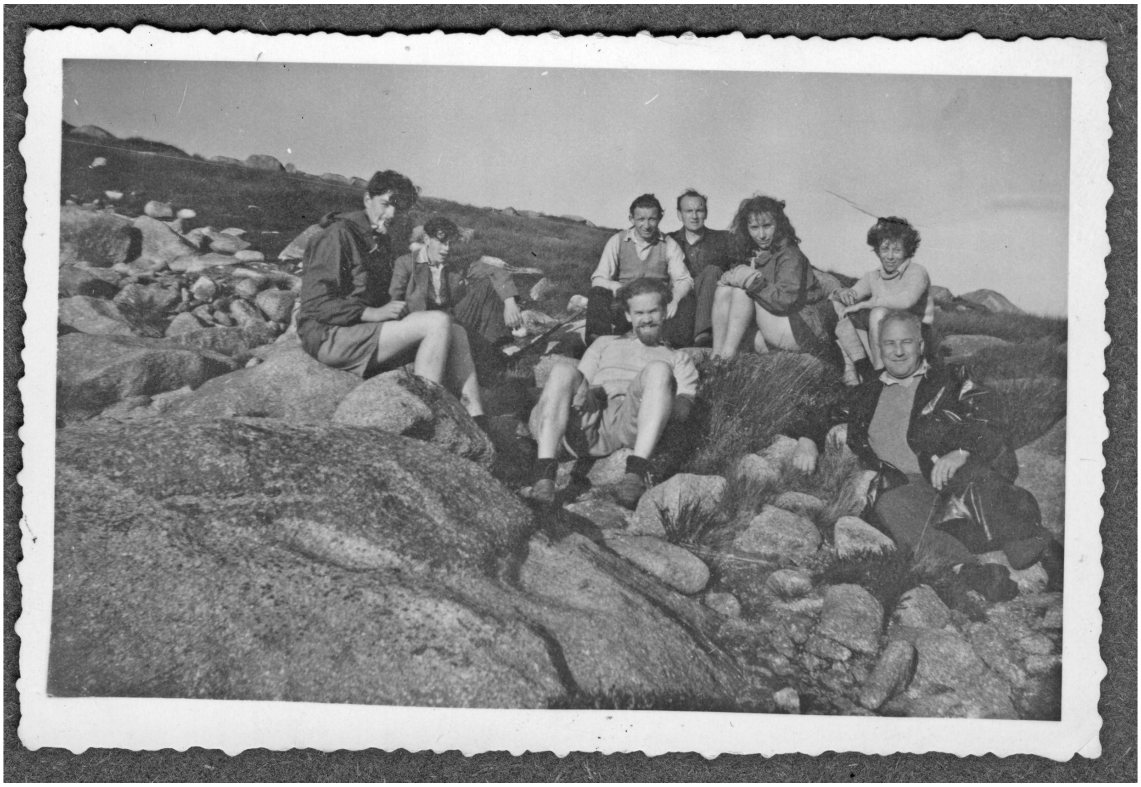

FIGURE 6.6 Anarchist Summer School Expedition, Scotland c. 1948, Colin Ward with Philip Sansom, Frank Leech, Pip Walker, Michele and Leo Emery, and others unknown. *Photos courtesy of Harriet Ward, 2021.*

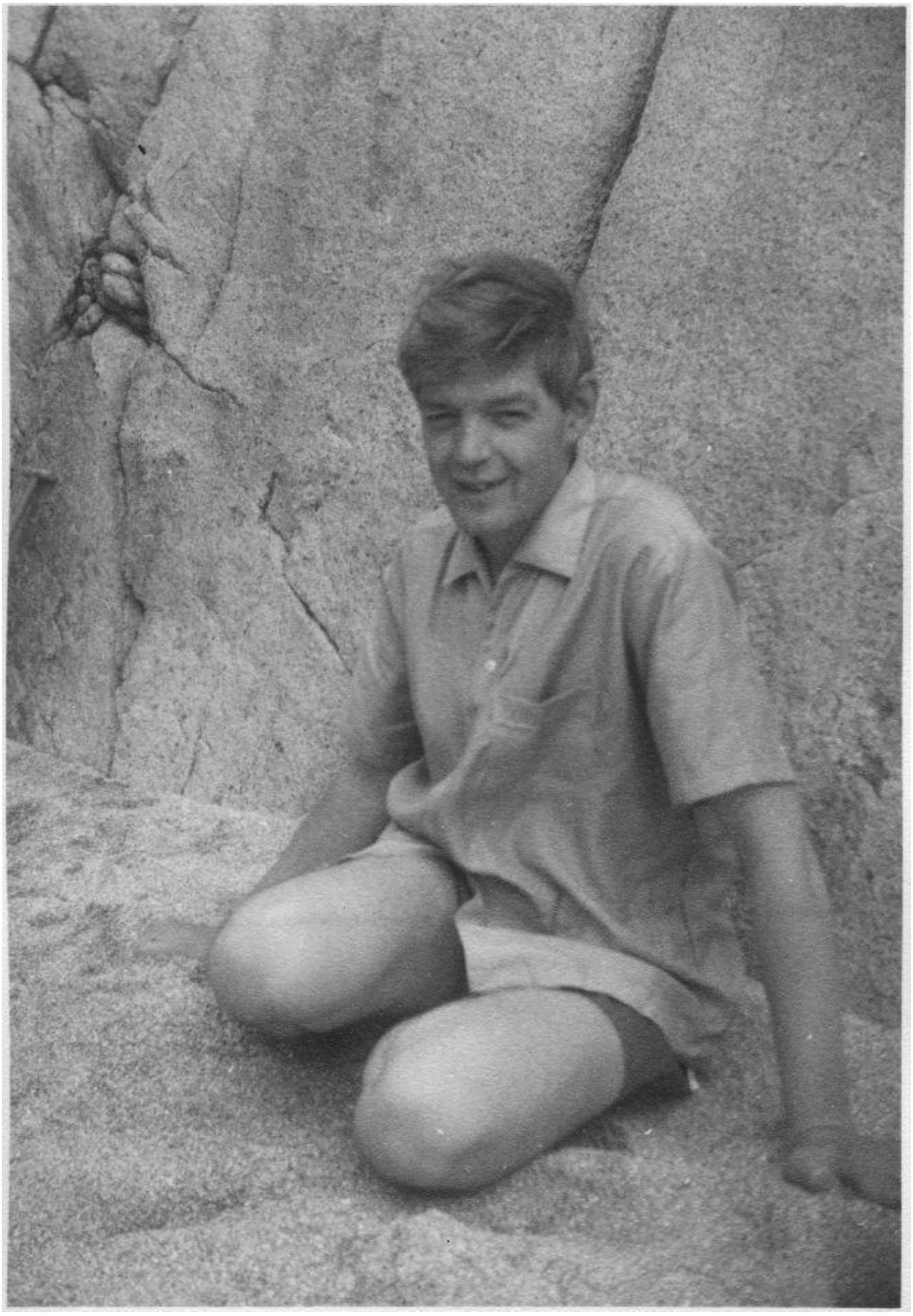

FIGURE 6.10 Colin Ward, c. 1960. *Photos courtesy of Hornet* PKrrd, *2021.*

FIGURE 6.11 Colin and Harriet Ward, c. 1995. *Photos courtesy of Hornet Word, 2021.*

7. Autonomy

1956

Just as it seemed that nothing could permeate the 'thick hides and drugged consciousness' of the 'smug fifties', 'all of a sudden the real world broke through'.[1] 1956 was a tumultuous year in British politics: Khrushchev's speech denouncing Stalin and the Soviet invasion of Hungary prompted a mass exodus from the British Communist Party. In the second half of the year, the government faced international humiliation over their attempted invasion of Suez. Not even this, however, was enough to dislodge the Conservatives and restore Labour to power. Nevertheless, it was enough to stimulate the student population. Thousands of young people travelled to London to protest Suez. Others, in an echo of Spain in the 30s began volunteering to fight with the Hungarian partisans. Sensing a change in the air, a group of young socialists, recently graduated from Oxford, declared open the search for a new socialism, and joined with others on the dissident left, now swollen with former Communists, to form the first British New Left.

It was, however, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) (1957-) that proved the most vital, certainly most visible, vehicle for reviving popular politics. The roots of CND lay in small-scale anti-colonial protests — such as Operation Gandhi — organised through the *Peace News* journal in the early 1950s but following the shift in public mood, the scope and scale of their ambition increased. On 4 April 1958, 8,000 people[2] set off from Trafalgar Square braving four days of rain and wind to reach Aldermaston. From the following year, in the interests of attracting maximum publicity, the direction of travel reversed, and the event culminated at Trafalgar with a rally which, at peak, reached up to 100,000 people.[3]

Freedom had several direct links to CND. Herbert Read and Alex Comfort were both prominent members of CND and later the Committee of 100. Member of the Direct Action Committee (DAC), who co-ordinated the first march and, later, the series of sit-down protests in the capital, were also known to them. Naturally, the editors were sympathetic in their coverage of the first Aldermaston march, promoting it warmly if idiosyncratically — 'Ban All Bombs: But it Means Banning Government Too'.[4] Many, including Ward, took part themselves. The follow-up piece, 'Aldermaston and After',[5] however, was more circumspect. The march, they allowed, had achieved reasonable press coverage and, perhaps more importantly, tapped into a strong vein of public support, but there was no escaping the fact that the numbers had dropped off along the

[1] Colin Ward, 'A Change in the Climate', *Freedom*, 5 January 1957.

[2] Pat Arrowsmith, 'Marching the Ban the Bomb: Pat Arrowsmith Recalls the First Aldermaston March', *The Socialist Worker*, 18 March 2008.

[3] Michael Randle, 'Non-Violent Direct Action in the 1950s and 1960s', in Richard Taylor and Nigel Young, eds., *Campaigns for Peace: British Peace Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 131—161. See also Holger Nehring, 'Demonstrating Security', in Nehring, *Politics of Security: British and German Protest Movements and the Early Cold War 1945—1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 190–229.

[4] 'Ban the Bomb', *Freedom*, 5 April 1958.

[5] 'Aldermaston and After', 12 April 1958.

route, which had marred the final impact, and that the speeches about Britain giving a moral lead had not impressed several of the younger marchers. They concluded that 'the Aldermaston March was a magnificent gesture and a moving protest. Now if we mean business it is needful to clothe the slogans with action informed by a dispassionate examination of the problem', which meant, of course, going to the workers — the scientists and technicians developing the bomb, the engineers producing it — and persuading them to take over the means of production.

The following year, although impressed with a rise in numbers (aided by the change in direction), the coverage, now by Ward, was more sceptical; 'the march isn't going to change anything in the world of public affairs', he wrote, 'its significance is in the personal history of the people who participated'. By 1960, irreverent levity had taken over completely. In February he looked forward to 'that annual Easter outing for the left-wing conscience',[6] and the opportunity to shift copies of *Freedom* to students. Following the event, *Freedom* led with 'Is Aldermaston Enough?' arguing that 'the CND, whatever the original motives of its founders, bases its public appeal on the fear of universal extermination'[7] which was not a sound basis for an alternative movement. Nevertheless, they acknowledged the positives: the march had revealed an appetite for disobedience amongst the young[8] and provided an interesting case study in 'the functional problem of organising the good will of thousands of individuals'. In the battle of propagandists, *Freedom* had acquitted itself admirably, shifting over 1,000 copies.[9]

The relationship between CND and *Freedom* retained the same tensions as that with the pre-war Peace Movement. Of course, the editors realised it was a vital connection, but the tendency, even from Ward, towards derision, prevented them from capitalising on it. Aloofness cut them off from a rich source of people politicised but not able to identify with any of the conventional political channels open to them. Despite this coolness, they still managed to gain some much-needed new recruits to the writing team,[10] including Nicolas Walter, a recent modern history graduate from Oxford.

The need for newcomers, readers and writers, was, as ever, acute. The paper's regular circulation stuck stubbornly just below 2,000 and refused to budge. Ward used the opportunity of the paper's 70th birthday (1956) to reflect on this situation. Part of the problem, he conjectured, was that it had to combine so many functions; it was 'a *news*paper in the strict sense, an internal bulletin for anarchists, a propagandist paper, a journal for the discussion of anarchist theory and at the same time a magazine lively and varied enough to retain the interest of longstanding readers'. The question of a second paper, he noted, had often arisen but never came to fruition.[11]

In his view, *how* they were communicating was as crucial as what. Certainly, he had continued experimenting with style over the years and from that year, 1956, responded to the shifts in political climate by exchanging his 'Comment' column, with its cosy anecdotes around the parish pump, for edgier, and wider- ranging, cultural essay writing in 'People and Ideas'. He also kept a close watch on both 'friendly' and 'rival' publications. In 1955, he supported Victor

[6] Colin Ward, 'Anarchist and the Aldermaston March — A Suggestion: Easter Parade (with Soup)', *Freedom*, 13 February 1960.

[7] 'Is Aldermaston Enough?', *Freedom*, 16 April 1960.

[8] G., 'Are You Marching for Kicks?', *Freedom*, 16 April 1960.

[9] Colin Ward, 'The Easter Parade', *Freedom*, 23 April 1960.

[10] Richard Boston, 'Far from the Barricades: An Enquiry into Anarchism Today', produced by Tony Gould for BBC Radio 3, 10 January and 30 January 1968: https://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/f203537ca4e24f49a50d20c8da73ff24; https://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/52a8a1da064441af bf255455ed4efc60.

[11] Colin Ward, '70 Years of Freedom Press', *Freedom*, 20 October 1956.

Mayes, a student at the University of Manchester, in producing *The University Libertarian* (UL). UL struggled bravely through a few issues before demising from lack of support.

At the same time, he followed keenly the birth of the New Left student journal *Universities and Left Review* (ULR) which he contrasted with the humbler UL:

The University Libertarian gives you seven articles on 16 pages for 10d. The Universities and Left Review gives you 74 pages for 3s and 6d. The UL contains writers mostly familiar to readers of the anarchist press it has struggled to get through its third issue, with a lack of publicity and support, at the expense of its editor. The U and L.R. contains articles by several of the 'big names' of socialist journalism, its arrival was heralded with a great deal of publicity and advertisement, it has sold 7000 copies and has been reprinted.

the U.L. reflects a heretical, sceptical attitude, its emphasis is social rather than political. The U and L.R. mirrors the views of people who have been disillusioned by the experience of socialism both in its Western welfare state form, and in the Stalinist icebox but still think in terms of political socialism and Marxism.[12]

While his aim was clearly to praise the virtues and integrity of the homespun against the temptations of commercialism, the envy was palpable. Within a year, a group of new graduates had achieved over double *Freedom*'s (let alone UL's) readership. As he wrote elsewhere:

why does the Universities and Left Review flourish — and improve its contents — while its semi anarchist equivalent stumbles along and only just escapes extinction? Or how did it come about that a month after the Malatesta Club, pride of the London Anarchist Group, had to close down, the people group around the U & LR were able to open their Partisan Coffee Bar? These organs of the 'New Left' whether in union militancy, publishing or catering, have been able to get more people, more money and more support since their beginnings in 1956 than the anarchists have been able to muster.[13]

What made it more frustrating still was the ambiguity of their political project, its vague appeals to socialist humanism and a 'socialism from below'. There were clear anarchistic inflections here and yet these languished undeveloped. To add insult to injury, in an interview for the *New Left Review*,[14] Alan Lovell, a Committee of 100 organiser, described how the CND and the New Left attracted 'emotional anarchists' (intellectuals, students, and unattached people) because the British Anarchist Movement was 'an absolute disaster for any kind of serious anarchist thinking'.[15]

The movement itself was in no small part responsible for this perception. Debates on anarchism's future direction had been ongoing since *Freedom*'s rebirth in 1945. Every few years new writers stepped in to resume the old positions which broadly split into revolutionists and reformists. Within these two camps ran a further spectrum. On the one hand, there were the idealists who divided into revolutionary hardliners steeped in classical theory and uncompromising in its applications, or gentler communitarians engaged in small utopian experiments which they hoped would gradually diffuse into wider society. On the other were the empiricists split between

[12] Colin Ward, 'University Probes and Publications', *Freedom*, 1 June 1957.

[13] Colin Ward, 'A House of Theory', *Freedom*, 31 January 1959.

[14] The *Universities and Left Review* merged with another paper, *The New Reasoner*, edited by ex-communists EP Thompson and John Saville, to form *The New Left Review* in 1960. Stuart Hall assumed the first editorship.

[15] Stuart Hall, Alan Lovell, and Patrick Whannel, 'Direct Action: A Discussion with Alan Lovell', *New Left Review*, I/8 (March/April) 1960, 16–24. See also Kenneth Tynan, 'Theatre and Living', in Tom Maschler, ed., *Declaration* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1958).

'toughies' unscrupulous about compromise provided it served their 'ultimate' (revolutionary) interests and 'softies' who only compromised in line with their values but did not seem to greatly advance structural change.[16] By the end of the 50s, the reformists seemed to have gained the upper hand with FP old-hand Albert Meltzer complaining that since the infiltration by a 'right wing' 'PPU' bloc[17] had begun in the late 1930s, the movement's roots amongst the industrial working classes had been marginalised, weakening its radical integrity by 'following the new political hares started by the new political left'.[18]

His comments followed a run of articles setting out the case for pragmatism. Australian philosopher George Molnar's 'Anarchy and Utopia' (2 August 1958) proposed that anarchism's contemporary significance was now more or less confined to permanent protest but on this, it should not retreat. Ward's 'Anarchy for Adults' agreed but insisted that there was still a positive, constructive role for it to play.[19] Walter argued that anarchists should not dismiss parliamentary politics out of hand but, as the early Fabians had done, face the questions of the day.[20] The pragmatists did not have it all their own way. Sid Parker considered the very thought of working with the parliamentary process as a fundamental betrayal of anarchist principles. He preferred to struggle without illusions.[21]

These debates had a weariness which even their protagonists recognised. Meltzer found it

difficult to see how theoretical articles could be consistently worth reading — either the old ground is repeated or the old values revised (in the direction of reformism rather than becoming more revolutionary). One can of course apply theory to the problems of the day but does it always hold a readership?[22]

As Philip Holgate saw it, the problem was that anarchism was a minority sect amongst minority sects appealing to those who enjoyed the exclusivity of belonging to a minority sect. To break into the mainstream, it would need to be prepared to make compromises, to settle for spreading anarchist ideas as widely as possible rather having them taken up in full; if it did not do this, it condemned itself to the margins in perpetuity.[23]

To break through the impasse, and out of the margins, the FP editors resolved on a scientific approach with Tony Gibson proposing a readership survey. This was not an innovative idea. Applying market research techniques to revitalise flagging left-wing strategies was in fashion. David Butler's and Richard Rose's *The British General Election of 1959* identified Labour's failure to account for a weakening of traditional working-class loyalties or to engage the expanding middle classes as fatal to its future electoral prospects.[24] Mark Abrams' *Must Labour Lose?* (1959), based on 724 interviews, also concluded that a younger generation of future-orientated, modern consumers found little to identify with in the existing Labour programme.[25]

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[16] Colin Ward, 'Letter to the Editors: The Tender Trap', *Freedom*, 2 November 1957.

[17] PPU references the Peace Pledge Union from which several key FP writers — George Woodcock, John Hewetson, Alex Comfort — had first emerged. Meltzer seems to extend it here to refer to the organised British peace movement more generally.

[18] Albert Meltzer, 'An Analysis of an Analysis', *Freedom*, 12 March 1960.

[19] Colin Ward, 'Anarchy for Adults', *Freedom*, 2 August 1958.

[20] Nicolas Walter, 'Anarchism: A Revisionist Approach', *Freedom*, 2 January 1960.

[21] SE Parker, 'Revisionist Anarchism — A Comment', *Freedom*, 23 January 1960.

[22] Albert Meltzer, 'An Analysis of an Analysis'.

[23] Philip Holgate, 'Is Anarchism a Minority Sect?', *Freedom*, 22 October 1960.

[24] David Butler and Richard Rose, *The British General Election 1959* (London: Macmillan, 1960).

[25] Mark Abrams, *Must Labour Lose?* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960).

Accordingly, the *Freedom* questionnaire set out to construct a socio-psycho- logical profile of its readership based on age, location, education, occupation, religious convictions, and marital status.[26] Predictably, the response rate was low, less than 25% of the total subscribers; nevertheless this still amounted to some 400 replies. In August, eight months from the launch, Gibson gave a talk on the survey at the Anarchist summer school. The results, he announced would take years of work to process but he felt able to venture some provisional comments. Most respondents were in their 30s, a little younger than the average age of the FP editors, and living in urban areas. They had strong levels of formal education with many educated in grammar schools and a high proportion than the national average having continued into higher or further education. Teaching, a profession regularly subject to pillory in *Freedom*'s pages, came out as the most common occupation (architect likewise was well represented). Industrial workers were far more infrequent.[27] When asked what sort of anarchism they identified with, 'individualist' came back the highest, followed by anarcho-communist, with syndicalist the smallest number but also the group least likely to be members of political parties or to vote in elections.[28]

What portrait of a *Freedom* reader did this produce? Meltzer saw the move from traditional working-class occupations and, therefore, old solidarities, as one reason for the high number of 'individualists' amongst the respondents. Gibson agreed, adding that the replies revealed how selective education worked to 'cream-off' a working-class elite, leaving behind, he feared, an unbrilliant mass susceptible to manipulation.[29] What remained, then, was a cohort alienated from traditional class identities and whose loyalties were free-floating and self-interested. In this way, *Freedom*'s survey aligned readily with other emerging narratives about affluence and its implications for the future of the political left.[30]

Aspects of these affluence narratives, however, were surely over-determined. For one, they tended to assume a rigidity to former class identities that did stand up to close historical examination. For another, as the New Left's Ralph Samuel argued, they often mistook changing modalities of solidarity for changes to its substance.[31] Moreover, there was an element of self-fulfilment to all such accounts, reliant, as they were, on the questionnaire method for raw data. As in the case of the *Freedom* survey, what had been produced was a profile of those *Freedom* readers inclined to fill out forms, the sort of clerical activity that educated professionals were more likely to take seriously as it formed part of their daily work anyway.

A certain 'Tristram Shandy', using the licence permitted by his namesake, poked a little fun. Shandy had read Mr Huff's *How to Lie with Statistics* (1954)[32] and knew all about the problems with both asking and answering questions. He had spent an afternoon, he told readers, helping a friend complete his survey and at each step seen how the man misunderstood instructions and contested every term. His friend had selected 'Individualist', for example, not because he had

[26] Editors, 'A Message to All Readers of Freedom', *Freedom*, 2 January 1960.

[27] The highest number of responses, 70, were for no occupation, which encompassed both student and retired; education followed with 11% of the total response. Those replying 'architect' accounted for 4% of total replies, a disproportionately high figure for the sample size and nature, probably accounted for through Ward's connection with that world.

[28] Tristram Shandy, 'Freedom Readership Survey', *Anarchy* 12, February 1962.

[29] Tony Gibson, 'Summer School Lecture: Summary of Readership Survey', *Freedom*, 4 August 1960.

[30] Lawrence Black, 'Must Labour Lose? Revisionism and the Affluent Worker', in Black, *The Political Culture of the Left in Britain 1951—64* (Houndsmill: Palgrave, 2002), 124–154.

[31] Ralph Samuel, 'Dr Abrams and the End of Politics', *New Left Review*, Sept/Oct, I/5 (1960), 1–8.

[32] Darrell Huff, *How to Lie with Statistics* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1954).

ever read Max Stirner's *Ego and Its Own*, but because he had been unable to agree with any of the other descriptions. On hearing Shandy's careful descriptions of the different sorts of anarchist one could be, this 'friend' had declared Shandy must be a 'philosophic anarchist': full of ideas but lacking any programme.[33]

Shandy was Ward in poltergeist mode, exercising his right to irreverent levity. When it came to setting out his case for *Freedom*'s future in 'The Kind of Paper We Really Want', he preferred the market as a social barometer. Weeklies, he explained, were demising whilst new monthlies were rising. This reinforced his view that the frantic pace of weeklies encouraged sloppiness, so much effort went on simply meeting print deadlines that there was

no time to be selective about contents, no time to make them up into an attractive whole, no time for all the vital activities that would make the most of the good material the paper contains, no time to prune it of stale-old cliches and prefabricated phrases, no time to address seriously the problems of anarchism.

He continued:

The typical pattern for FREEDOM articles is in three parts: firstly a topical introduction, secondly a survey of the facts, finally a conclusion outlining anarchist attitudes or solutions. And it is just when we get to this finale (in the small hours of the morning) that mist descends and the conclusions are vague generalisations or routine denunciations.[34]

A monthly, by contrast, allowed for greater depth. The New Left people had shown what was possible with a less ferocious publishing schedule. As to the objection that middle-class intellectuals read monthlies while the man in the street preferred weeklies, he replied that he was not sure it was the man in the street, ground down and tightly repressed as he was, they really needed to speak to. Elsewhere, Shandy put the matter more bluntly:

I don't want to aim at the man in the street, whoever he is, I know anyway that seventy per cent gets a kick out of flogging and that seventy-five per cent of him reads the papers put out by three gangs of advertising managers. He's dead from the neck up, but I want to reach his children while they're still alive and kicking. And thinking too.[35]

Ward won his case. On 11 February 1961 *Freedom* announced an experiment. Although not prepared to abandon the weekly format, they were prepared to turn over one edition a week to *Autonomy: A Journal of Anarchist Ideas* which would appear as a monthly supplement. The following week they announced that the first edition of *Autonomy* would feature Alex Comfort on 'Sex and Violence and the Origins of the Novel' along with articles on education, the New Wave, and JK Galbraith (in other exciting news, *Freedom* would now be published on better quality paper and contain colour and photographs). Readers' letters expressed cautious interest; NR from New York worried that the movement's real problems were not to be solved by rhetorical solutions alone. SF from London feared that 'unless the reservoir of literary contributors is greatly increased the same limitations that governs FREEDOM at present will also limit the future of "*Autonomy*"'.[36] Concerns notwithstanding, on 25 February 1961, *Anarchy: A Journal of Anarchist Ideas* launched.

[33] Tristram Shandy, 'End Game', *Freedom*, 9 January 1960.

[34] Colin Ward, 'The Kind of Paper We Really Need', *Freedom*, 10 December 1960.

[35] Tristram Shandy, 'Thinking Aloud', *Freedom*, 3 December 1960.

[36] NR, 'Letter', *Freedom*, 18 February 1961; SF, 'Letter', *Freedom*, 18 February 1961.

Anarchy: A Journal of Anarchist Ideas

The sudden name-change was not Ward's idea. *Autonomy* was his preference, part of the strategy to break out of the minority sect readership, but the other editors, fearing that such a name, especially when so closely associated with *Freedom*, symbolised too great a revisionist drift, forced a switch at the last minute. In most other respects, however, he was given the space he desired. *Freedom* editorial committee meeting minutes show that while *Anarchy* was often discussed, the conversation kept to practical matters, typesetting, distribution, and financial arrangements for example.[37] This did not mean a lack of support, in 1966 objections were raised to a proposal for a monthly eight-page edition of *Freedom* as it would 'interfere with *Anarchy*'.[38]

From the start, *Anarchy* was an experiment in both propaganda and pragmatic anarchism. For Ward, the two were inseparable. Pragmatic anarchism was selective not systematic, it rejected 'perfectionism, utopian fantasy, conspiratorial romanticism, revolutionary optimism', drew 'from the classical anarchists their most valid, not their most questionable ideas', supplemented by 'the subtler contribution oflater [...] thinkers Landauer and Malatesta' and 'the evidence provided in this century by the social sciences, by psychology and anthropology, and by technical change'.[39] This not only invited a new style of propaganda, it also depended on it. Denied recourse to the authority of any 'Absolute Truth', the practical anarchist had to work harder to engage and persuade. Tone mattered here too. Satire not only deflated the enemy, it held their own tendencies to dogma at bay too.

Despite the aspirations, in form *Anarchy* retained much of the style typical to the FP pamphlets, A5 in size, with dense essays arranged in plain formatting. It bore little resemblance to the glossy *ULR* Ward had so envied. Fortunately, Rufus Segar's iconic front covers helped alleviate aesthetic severity. In fact, the journal's success owed much to Segar whose designs ranged from whimsy through to the outright risque depending on his personal response to the monthly theme (this, he later joked, explained much about their variability in quality).[40] Matching the sober interior, *Anarchy* articles tended to be earnest and studious in tone, a considered response to those survey completers who had returned comments such as:

We should get down to anarchist applications in our world as it is. Those who do that sort of thing in, for example, CND, seem not to have Freedom's blessing. Why?

Within limits of space, would like contributions from say, Direct Action Committee, Abortion Law, Reform Society, Euthanasia movement, Homosexual Law Reform Society.

More emphasis on what could be the practical applications of Direct Action as protest.

I would like to see FREEDOM brought more up to date dealing with the DAC. How about a review of surrealism sometime?

Try to get out in front of progressive movements and give a lead to peace-loving types.

The paper suffers occasionally from amateurish and ill-informed articles. There should be greater attempts to write up progressive activity and opportunities for constructive activity should be put before readers.

[37] Freedom Editorial Minutes, 'Freedom Minutes — 7 July 1965', 130, VRP/ ARCH01182, IISH.

[38] Freedom Editorial Minutes, 'Freedom Minutes — 1 February 1966'.

[39] Colin Ward, 'The Unwritten Handbook', *Freedom*, 28 June 1958.

[40] Rufus Segar, 'Covering Ourselves', in Colin Ward., ed., *A Decade of Anarchy (1961— 1970)* (London: Freedom Press, 1987), 280–283.

These same readers reported their content preferences as being political commentary, anarchist theory, satire, sociology, and education (but not really industry or agriculture).[41]

Between 1961 and 1970, Ward literally was *Anarchy*, personally overseeing the production of 118 issues, approximately 25% of which covered anarchism history, theory, and methods, 14% education, 10% international events or area case studies, 9% political commentary, 8% housing and environment, 8% health and relationships, 7% popular culture, 7% work and industry, 5% crime and law, and 2% modern technology. In so much as the journal issued statements of purpose, he was usually the one to write them.[42] He was also largely responsible for initiating many of the themes which he planned out months in advance. Writing in 1962 to Joe Benjamin, a friend and pioneer of the adventure playground movement in Britain, he forecast:

The general themes for forthcoming issues are No. 12: two pieces of original research on the anarchists — psychological and statistical. No. 13: Direct Action, No. 14: Disobedience, No. 15: The work of David Wills, No. 16: ? No. 17: Jazz.

I haven't yet given up the idea of a number about the gang (not necessarily JD[43]) as a social institution, but haven't found the contributors.

Some other topics I want to 'do' this year are Secondary Modern, and The Autonomy of the Teacher.[44]

Editor-in-chief though he undoubtedly was, he used this authority to ensure openness. He was, Charles Radcliffe, a contributing writer to *Anarchy*, recalled, extremely 'ecumenical',[45] rarely even copy-editing contributors' submissions. Nevertheless, he would quietly fail to pursue certain suggestions, such as Stuart Christie's call for an edition on Italian terrorists,[46] which did not suit his taste.

He was not only the editor. In the time-honoured tradition of independent radical journalism, no job was too small, whether that was pasting the mock-up on his kitchen table or overseeing its stately progress to the setters in Clerkenwell, the printers in Bishopsgate, the binders in Fulham, and finally the distribution point in Whitechapel.[47] He was also the most regular writer (again from necessity) contributing an average of six articles a year, some of which were written under pseudonyms either resumed from *Freedom* (like Tristram Shandy) or newly invented (John Ellerby, Frank Schubert, Ward Jackson, Tom Jones, Philip Ward). Sometimes he signed off with just a C or W. The reason for such an array of personas was mostly practical, to deflect the impression of the journal as a one-man band. In this comically ramshackle manner, *Anarchy* ran for ten years without once ever missing a beat (although it was occasionally late).

As SF from London had feared, much of *Anarchy*'s content was initially supplied by the *Freedom* stalwarts, although in some cases the new format provided them with a platform to write more freely. This was especially true for Walter who, in important respects, embodied the journal's ethos almost as much as its editor did. Across the 118 issues, he wrote at least 24 articles for *Anarchy* which made him, other than Ward, the most regular contributor.[48] Born in London in

[41] Colin Ward, 'Readership Survey, Fifth Interim Report', *Freedom*, 26 March 1960.

[42] Colin Ward, 'The Future of Anarchism 3', *Anarchy* 28, June 1963; 'The Anarchist Idea', *Anarchy* 77, July 1967.

[43] Juvenile delinquent.

[44] Colin Ward to Joe Benjamin, 2 January 1962, 'Letters 1960s and 1970s', CWP/ ARCH03180, IISH.

[45] Charles Radcliffe, *Don't Start Me Talking: Subculture, Situationism and the Sixties* (London: Bread and Circus Publishing, 2018), 131.

[46] Stuart Christie, 'Observations on Anarchy 100', *Anarchy* 103, September 1969.

[47] Colin Ward, ed., *A Decade of Anarchy*, 280.

[48] This figure is approximate because Walter would often write under different names.

1934, Walter boasted an impressive radical ancestry. Karl Walter, his paternal grandfather, was the second British delegate to the first international anarchist congress. SK Ratcliffe, his maternal grandfather, was a radical journalist. His father, cybernetics pioneer William Grey Walter, moved from communist fellow-traveller to anarchist sympathiser after the war.

On coming down from Oxford with a degree in modern history, he became intensely involved with the CND and on the peripheries of the New Left but grew frustrated with both.[49] Seeing a letter of his on the Suez crisis published in the *Manchester Guardian* in 1956, Ward sent him a copy of *Freedom.* Years later, when considering writing a memoir of those years, he recalled fondly the older man's influence:

You were almost the first person I made contact with when Karl pushed me into meeting Lilian and Vic Mayes in 1959. Seems such a long time, but for you it must seem much longer; though I was only 21 when I first read the paper, and was taken by your sane 'People and Ideas' among all the sectarian and strident dogmas and formulas. So if I manage to write it, prepare to be embarrassed.[50]

As the quote suggests, the relationship with *Freedom*, however, could be uneasy. His piece on revisionist anarchism had earned him critics from amongst the more 'traditional' revolutionists. He, in turn, considered their views intolerant.[51]

Anarchy, by contrast, was the ideal vehicle. Walter shared Ward's commitment to practical, non-violent direct action. Through his links with the CND and New Left, he provided a vital link to the younger cohorts the journal hoped to engage,[52] not just through direct networks but in terms of identification and understanding. His first piece in the first issue, for example, used trends in contemporary literature to get under the skin of the 'New Hero':

the intellectual tough or tough intellectual, who has retreated from aestheticism into philistinism, from political commitment into non-committal dissent, from exquisite sensibility into simple decency, and who is sensitive not to what is cruel or wicked, but to what is bogus or phoney.[53]

Whether styled as amoral picaro,[54] tortured outsider,[55] or semi-delinquent,[56] these figures shared an almost masochistic desire for hard realities; 'everything is likely to be stood on its head: failure is interpreted as a form of unexpected success; laughter is better than tears; irony is better than anger'.[57] Not all were sceptics by disposition, for some it was only a defence against deception: 'their commitment is essentially autonomous and antinomian, adhering to no ideology and demanding no shibboleths — it is commitment in the age of the Cold War, the Welfare State

[49] Nicolas Walter, 'O Brave New Left', *Freedom*, 4 June 1960 and 11 June 1960; Natasha Walter, 'Introduction', in Nicolas Walter, ed., *About Anarchism* (Christie Books, 2015), 2–6.

[50] Nicolas Walter to Colin Ward, 28 August 1986, 'Letters 1980–89', CWP/ARCH 03180, IISH.

[51] Nicolas Walter, 'Anarchism: A Revisionist Approach', *Freedom*, 2 January 1960; SE Parker, 'Revisionist Anarchism — A Comment', *Freedom*, 23 January 1960; Nicholas Walter, 'Revisionist Anarchism — A Reply', *Freedom*, 30 January 1960.

[52] Colin Ward, 'Nicolas Walter', *Freedom*, 25 March 2000.

[53] Nicolas Walter, 'The "New Wave" in Britain', *Anarchy* 1, March 1961.

[54] Kingsley Amis, *Lucky Jim* (1952); John Braine, *Room at the Top* (1954); Iris Murdoch, *Under the Net* (1954).

[55] John Osbourne, *Look Back in Anger* (1956); Colin Wilson, *The Outsider* (1956).

[56] Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958).

[57] Nicolas Walter, 'The "New Wave"'.

and the Affluent Society', which was precisely what made them 'more human and humane' than the explicitly political artists of the previous generation.[58]

Of all these writers, Alan Sillitoe was singled out for praise, partly because of his prominence in the DAC organised 'sit-down' protests, but also because his was a voice of pure dissent:

He offers no comforting message like Forster or Wesker, no prophetic cure like Shaw or Lawrence, no escape into art like Wilde or Behan, no indulgent affection like Orwell or MacInnes. He is just for the ordinary people and against their bosses and rulers, without question or quarter.[59]

For Walter, the essence of the 'New Hero' as represented by Sillitoe was ardent but alert; they yearned for brave causes but were not about to erase themselves in the name of them.

He followed these pieces with two major articles on the new pacifism, injecting the cause with some much-needed edge and chic. 'Direct action and the New Pacifism' (A13) refused the 'Kantian antinomy' of violent resistance and passive non-resistance, invoking Gandhi as the non-violent warrior par excellence. The Indian spiritual leader had applied the Hindu principle of satyagraha ('insistence on truth') to mobilise thousands into carefully choreographed collisions with authority in which coming under attack was not failure but success:

The way of doing this is to draw the opponent's violence onto oneself by some form of non-violent direct action, causing deliberate suffering in oneself rather than in the opponent. The object of satyagraha is to make a partial sacrifice of oneself as a symbol of the wrong in question.[60]

Effective though Gandhi had been, he was not to be copied unquestioned. The new pacifism, Walter explained:

Is not really all that new. It is little more than an eclectic mixture of ideas and techniques borrowed from its various predecessors. From the old pacifism comes the flat refusal to fight; from the old anti-militarism comes the determination to resist war; and from Gandhi comes the use of mass nonviolent direct action. There are other borrowings. From socialism comes the optimistic view of the future; from liberalism comes the idealistic view of the present; from anarchism comes the disrespect for authority. But the new pacifism is selective. It rejects the sentimentality of the old pacifists, the vagueness of the anti-militarists, the religiosity of Gandhi, the authoritarianism of the socialists, the respectability of the liberals, the intolerance of the anarchists.[61]

The new pacifism found concrete form in the Peace Movement (here he had in mind the DAC rather than the CND which had been an 'unwilling utopian vanguard'[62]) and its use of symbolism and non-violent mass action. Whilst it was easy to sneer at the limited impact of marches or sit-down protests, what was more important was that 'we are at last learning to take direct action' something, he remarked pointedly, no left-wing periodical had achieved at such scale since the war.

'On Disobedience' (A14) discussed the struggle for freedom in terms of that between the individual and society. This, he argued, had formed the crux of romantic ideology with its idolisation of untamed youth as a creative force against social stagnation:

The romantic view of life and death is the adolescent view. The sense of personal responsibility for good and evil is the adolescent sense. The taste for Shelley and Beethoven rather than Pope

[58] Ibid.

[59] Nicholas Walter, 'Because He Is a Man', *Anarchy* 10, December 1961.

[60] Nicolas Walter, 'Direct Action and the New Pacifism', *Anarchy* 13, March 1962.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

and Bach is the adolescent taste. It is adolescents who make mistakes, adults who avoid them — but the person who doesn't make mistakes doesn't make anything. It is bad to be infantile but it is worse to become an adult; we should grow up but we should never stop growing, questioning, agitating, disobeying.[63]

To disobey was to force space for imagination, for possibility. It was to regenerate the very society the rebel stood accused of disrupting. But the Peace Movement rebels did not want mere regeneration but transformation. This energy, then, had to be channelled constructively. Sitting down in Trafalgar Square might cultivate disobedience as a habit but little else. The protests staged outside of military bases, while far less well supported,[64] had more substance, but were still not enough because the struggle they faced took place on two fronts, 'the Warfare State and the Welfare State — difficult because they overlap so much. For the first we want revolution, and for the second devolution'.[65]

If revolution required active non-violent resistance against clear authoritarian targets — government, the army, the police, the bomb — devolution needed action of a different kind sensitive to the insidious methods of control imposed through administration, for example, or education. It had also to contend with the fact that the allure of the welfare state was ease. It divested responsibility for dealing with life's most difficult problems, poor health, unemployment, old age. But, with the decrease in responsibility came a loss in practical capacity which, in turn, reinforced and increased dependency. As such, the arena of struggle was not just the public square but the most intimate spaces of people's lives; 'the only real direct action by people is in their homes and work-places'.[66]

Despite this concession, Walter, then in his late 20s, was more inclined towards revolution. Ward, on the other hand, was quite happy to play a prosaic Godwin to his friend's poetic Shelley and to set about the fine-grained work of devolution. A4 carried 'The Shoe that Pinches', his first long, original essay for the journal on the theme of 'de-institutitionalisation' inspired by Peter Townsend's article on 'the trend to de-institutionalisation' in the social services published in *The Listener* (23 June 1960). Where Walter chased the spirit of anarchic dissent through literary and cultural history, he naturalised it in contemporary social studies. Ward headed his piece with a quote from John Vaizey, a 'new social investigator':

All institutions, all social organisations, impose a pattern on people and detract from their individuality; about all it seems to me, they detract from their humanity [...] Everyone in an institution is continually adapting himself to it, and to other people, whereas the glory of humanity is that it adapts its environment to mankind, not human beings to their environment.[67]

He then mirrored this with Kropotkin, a few lines down, on the aims of anarchism: 'it seeks the most complete development of individuality combined with the highest development of voluntary association in all its aspects, in all possible degrees, for all imaginable purposes'.[68]

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[63] Nicolas Walter, 'On Disobedience and the New Pacifism', *Anarchy* 14, April 1962.

[64] See 'Spies for Peace', *Anarchy* 29, July 1963. The issue was written by Walter who had been one of the group but had remained anonymous at this time to protect himself from arrest.

[65] Nicolas Walter, 'On Disobedience'.

[66] Nicolas Walter, 'Direct Action'.

[67] John Vaizey, *Scenes from Institutional Life* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959). *Scenes* opens with the dedication 'For [...] Kay and Richard Titmuss who agree that institutions give inadequate people what they want — power'.

[68] Colin Ward, 'De-Institutionalisation', *Anarchy* 4, June 1961.

Now, he continued, that the trend in current thinking on 'special institutions' (maternity institutions, children's homes, old people's homes, asylums, and detention centres) was all towards de-institutionalisation, it was necessary to ask whether these were indeed 'special' cases or whether the anarchists were right, and these were only extreme examples of a general truism? In other words, could the same objections be applied to so-called 'good' institutions such as colleges, schools, or hospitals? Working systemically through each 'special' institution, he argued that the feature common to all was the total erasure of the individual personality as a pre-condition for acceptance or success. As this was a characteristic which all shared, regardless of their specific purpose, it must, he reasoned, belong to the concept of institution in general. Whether patient, prisoner, or pupil, reward came through exhibiting obedience and submission. So,

when people complain of the lack of spontaneity, individuality, and initiative in our society, perhaps they are really complaining of the authoritarian institutions which govern our working lives.[69]

It was hardly surprising, then, that it took catastrophic events, like war, to remind people of their potential, long smothered by life within institutions.

The real irony was that time and again, institutions proved themselves not merely inhumane but ineffective at achieving their intended purpose. This was the insight, long held by the anarchists, that now drove the new thinking. Barbara Wootton's *Social Science and Social Pathology* (1959), he noted approvingly, had exposed how the dominant theories of delinquency not only failed to solve the problems they were supposed to address but, in many cases, created them. Wootton believed this could be remedied by substituting a therapeutic approach in place of the authoritarian one, but here, Ward feared she too missed a vital point. Contrasting her argument with that of Comfort in *Delinquency and Authority*, he observed that where Wootton felt that more enlightened leadership would resolve the problem, Comfort, speaking for the anarchists, believed that it was the leadership principle itself that was the root cause of the rot. Only through thorough de-institutionalisation, by which he meant decentralisation, dispersal of administration and full empowerment of individuals to resume active responsibility for their lives, would such a waste of human potential be eliminated.

'The Shoe' was an exemplary model of his 'respectable anarchy' strategy: detailed, documented, and seemingly supremely reasonable. Placing Vaizey and Kropotkin, Wootton, and Comfort in dialogue with one another allowed him to 'show' how anarchism aligned closely with mainstream progressive thought, so close, in fact, that when examined carefully it seemed that in the example of the latter at least, Comfort had only nudged Wootton's sensible, and rigorously empirical, observations to their logical conclusion.

Not all were convinced. Ward sent A4 to Townsend and Vaizey for comment. From the former he received a warm endorsement, but Vaizey replied:

I think, as a socialist, I would make two comments. First, how do you make institutions as democratic as possible when you have to keep them going? It is not sufficient to be just against things, and this involves educating people in new knowledge and teaching people to observe facts and take notice of them.

Secondly, the community has to operate against fractional power, including (as you so rightly say) the family. I am utterly opposed to Peter Townsend's view because the family is extremely

[69] Colin Ward, 'The Institution and the Individual', *The Listener*, 30 June 1960.

limiting and quite unsuited as a vehicle of the liberation of the human spirit. I quite agree with Bernard Shaw. If this is so, then individualism is quite an inadequate doctrine. Indeed, laissez-faire is what we have always been against.

Therefore, what do we do? Perhaps I haven't understood the line of argument; but as it stands I find myself pro-Lady Wootton, and anti-anarchy.[70]

Anarchy was a conscious attempt to break from the confines of an 'Anarchist' culture and speak to concerns of the times, to that emerging generation of social researchers, teachers, social workers, students, and peace activists feeling 'the pinch' only too sharply. As such, it shared much in common with *New Society* (NS) which, launching shortly after in 1962, also aimed at supplying critical social commentary across the fields of planning, housing, education, welfare, family, crime, popular culture, economics, and political and social theory.[71] The first issue carried reviews of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961),[72] urban activist Jane Jacobs' inditement of post-war American planning, and *The New Radicalism* (1962),[73] British philosopher Bryan Magee's case for the non-Marxist left, letters assessing the limits of science and urging the need for philosophy (J. Brennen), calls to assess the value of funding social science research (M. Jahoda), and to make it accessible to the public (WS Steer).[74] Wootton contributed a provocation on how the Socratic method thwarted progress in the social sciences by privileging clever but self-referential conversation over attentive observation.

Ward was an instant fan,[75] marking the start of a fruitful personal and professional relationship with NS. In many respects, however, *Anarchy*, through the licence afforded by marginality, was able to push its social imagination, and its social demands, much further, its contributors had no fear for their status or reputations. Where *New Society* gained ground, and subscriptions, was that it did not first have to seduce readers into overcoming their preconceptions of an extreme political ideology, it was already *respectable.* Denied the less inflammatory *Autonomy* for a title, *Anarchy* had to work much harder to have its social research content taken seriously. This was why, for Ward, any suggestion of looseness, of utopianism, like that implied by Vaizey's questions, were sensitive matters which, as the journal hit its stride, he determined to address.

[70] John Vaizey, 'Observations on *Anarchy* 4', *Anarchy* 7, September 1961.

[71] Mike Savage, 'The Moment of Sociology', in Savage, *Identities and Social Class in Britain since 1940: The Politics of Method* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 112–136.

[72] Malcolm MacEwan, 'Review of *Death and Life of Great American Cities*', *New Society*, 4 October 1962, 33–34.

[73] John Cole, 'Review of *The New Radicalism*', *New Society*, 4 October 1962, 34–35.

[74] Marie Jahoda, J. Brennen, and John Cole, 'Correspondence', *New Society*, 4 October 1962, 42.

[75] Colin Ward to Paul Barker, 23 October 1990, 'Letters 1990–1999', CWP/ARCH 03180, IISH.

8. A Journal of Anarchist Ideas

In June 1963, *Anarchy* 28 addressed 'The Future of Anarchy', prompted by the English publication of George Woodcock's *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (1962) in a Pelican paperback. While *Anarchism* was not the first history, nor Woodcock, the first historian of anarchism, it was the first to target a popular readership. The account was split into two parts. The first presented key ideas through six portraits of 'great' anarchist ancestors: Godwin, Stirner, Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Tolstoy. The second surveyed the movement across its various regional manifestations. It was, however, the epilogue that wounded Woodcock's former comrades. He had concluded his account in 1939, he explained, because, with the defeat of the Spanish revolution, anarchism perished. While there was still some anarchist activity, in truth there was 'only the ghost of the historic anarchist movement, a ghost that inspires neither fear among governments nor hope among peoples'.[1] This strange dismissal demanded an answer.

In *Anarchy* 28, the response addressed both the anarchist past and its future. On the former, Nicholas Walter, although welcoming the first popular history of anarchism (but only because no other existed), found it limited in its tiny selection of 'big figures', inattentive to prehistory, and silent about the many men and women who had, in their own ways, struggled for freedom (but lacked the time to write their thoughts up in a philosophy book). Woodcock's *Anarchism* failed because the former FP writer used too narrow, sectarian, a definition. A much more searching history would be necessary to reveal the full breadth of anarchistic ideas and their ongoing relevance.[2]

Ward picked up this thread in his look at anarchism's future.[3] Resuming earlier arguments in 'The Unwritten Handbook' and 'Anarchy for Adults', he also rejected consignment to permanent protest. Writing with uncharacteristic directness, he said:

It is also the particular function of ANARCHY to serve as a journal of anarchist applications and techniques: the techniques of 'encroaching control' in industry, of 'de-institutionalization' in the organisation of social welfare, of applying in the ordinary primary and secondary schools the lessons of the progressive schools, of encouraging and widening the field of the habit of direct action. If we can manage to implant anarchist aims and methods in the fabric of our daily common life, we won't have to worry about the future of anarchism.[4]

That year, 1963, marked a turn in the journal's history. It saw the greatest and most evenly distributed range of issues (approximately 16% anarchist history, theory, and method; 16% contemporary politics; and 8% across education, crime and law, health and relationships, popular culture, work and industry, science and technology). In 1964, *Anarchy* dedicated the lowest proportion of issues to anarchist theory and the highest to housing and the environment. In many

[1] George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, [1963] 1975), 443.

[2] Nicolas Walter, 'The Anarchist Past 1', *Anarchy* 28, June 1963.

[3] Colin Ward, 'The Future of Anarchism 3', *Anarchy* 28, June 1963.

[4] Ibid.

respects, the gear change reflected Ward's growing confidence as editor, but it was also a response to external events.

Politically, the climate was changing. In 1963 Labour leader Harold Wilson, heeding the Party's revisionists, delivered his 'Labour and Scientific Revolution' speech at the Annual Conference, declaring there was 'no room for Luddites in the Socialist Party' and that Britain must embrace the 'white-hot technological revolution'.[5] On coming to power in 1964, Labour prioritised the training of scientists and, in line with the recommendations of the Robbins report (1963), commissioned new universities to accomplish this. Between 1960 and 1970, full-time teaching and research staff in the social sciences doubled.[6] Pragmatically speaking, teaching the social sciences was cost effective, requiring only library access rather than expensive laboratories, which meant that the commitment to science could be accommodated with the rapidly swelling student numbers.[7]

The decade also saw a welter of significant social reforms. Capital punishment was abolished (1965), racial discrimination criminalised (1965 and 1968), homosexuality and abortion decriminalised (1967), divorce simplified (1969), domestic work recognised in separation agreements (1970), and the pill made accessible to unmarried women (1967). In 1968, the Representation of the People Act lowered the voting age from 21 to 18. Rapid though this seemed, many considered the reforms a long-overdue recognition of the dramatic but uneven transformation of British society since the end of the war.

Although material changes had, in most cases outstripped cultural ones, in others it had lagged. Despite a general overall rise in standards of living, the 'age of affluence' had created new divisions and ever starker contrasts between rich and poor leading to the 'rediscovery of poverty'.[8] The impact of this was most keenly felt by the young who were urged by both government and advertisers to aspire and acquire. When those aspirations proved out of reach (satisfying work remained elusive, consumer goods too expensive) disappointment and frustration prompted the search for alternative means of satisfaction. Crime rates rose at 11% per year during the decade.

In fact, this owed as much to an increase in reported cases (and successful prosecutions) as it did to a 'real' rise, but it was enough to stimulate public imagination. The juvenile delinquent became an iconic 'folk devil'. Youth gang culture (as epitomised in the mods and rockers clash on Whitsun bank holiday weekend, 1964) was reported in the press with horrified pleasure as a sure sign of moral degeneration in the permissive society. These figures roamed the streets in gangs being disrespectful to their elders and committing crimes with no apparent utility: mindless destruction of property, senseless violence. And they took drugs (cannabis use rose at this time, as did amphetamines and LSD) placing them even further beyond the realms of reason.[9]

It was this fermenting, frustrated energy that the first New Left's activist contingent had sought to channel through their youth club network but just at the point they might have gained

[5] Harold Wilson, 'Labour and the Scientific Revolution', Labour Party Annual Conference Speech, 1 October 1963.

[6] AH Halsey, *A History of Sociology in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 89.

[7] Peter Mandler, 'The Rise of the Social Sciences in British Education 1960—2016', in Plamena Panayatova, ed., *The History of British Sociology: New Research and Revaluation* (Cham: Springer, 2019), 281—300.

[8] Brian Abel-Smith and Peter Townsend, *The Poor and the Poorest: A New Analysis of the Ministry of Labour's Family Expenditure Surveys of 1953—54 and 1960* (London: Bell, 1965).

[9] Arthur Marwick, *British Society since 1945* (London: Penguin, 2003), 116—117.

serious traction, the initiative collapsed. In 1962 the *New Left Review* buckled under financial collapse and internal tension. It was rescued by Perry Anderson who took it in a theoretical direction and distanced himself from the club network. At the same time, following the Paris testban treaty 1963, there was a dwindling of CND momentum. As such, a vacuum opened in direct action politics that *Anarchy* was well placed to fill.

There were also significant changes to Ward's own life. In 1959 he returned to formal education, passing two General Certificates in English Economic History and Economics at the University Centre in London. In 1961 he left Bridgewater, Shepheard, and Epstein (BSE) for a new position in the Research Section of Chamberlin, Powell, and Bon, ambitious and unapologetically modern architects working on the new Barbican development in London[10] (which he later confessed to having hated[11]). Here, he prepared technical reports, advised on building materials, and provided information as requested by the architects.[12]

Then, early in 1963, Vera, his companion, died of undiagnosed tuberculosis, shocking the little household on Ellerby Street. In the aftermath, Richards, with his companion Peta Edsall (the former partner of John Hewetson), moved in to assume guardianship of his two nephews. Immediately things grew difficult. Whilst Edsall was a peacemaker, Richards, naturally domineering, clashed with the two young boys, now teenagers. Tensions escalated resulting in one of the few occasions that Ward lost his temper, becoming infuriated by a casual sneering remark Richards made about the boys' tatty state of dress.

Troubling though the situation was, he now had the opportunity to change his own life. Aged 40, he realised a long-held ambition and left architecture to retrain as a teacher.[13] In September 1964 he enrolled at Garnett College for teacher training in further education and it was here he met Harriet Unwin, a fellow student, also recently bereaved with two young sons. Looking back,

Harriet remembered how Ward, usually an unobtrusive presence, came to her attention following a session on environmental education when he delivered an inspiring lesson plan on the lifecycle of a tomato seed, *post* digestion.

From that point, their friendship blossomed and deepened. To get to know this quiet man with the extraordinary imagination and striking mane of grey hair (not to mention tell-tale cat hairs on his trousers, a very good sign), Harriet timed her departures from class to coincide with his, driving him home and testing her childminder's patience by staying out late for tea with the anarchists. As she was about to leave on one of these occasions, she hugged him goodbye and on feeling her hug tenderly returned, understood their connection was more than intellectual.

In fact, Ward was captivated by this clever, warm woman with a fine radical pedigree of her own. (Harriet is the daughter of Dora Russell, feminist activist, writer, second — and rather reluctant — wife to Bertrand Russell and the cofounder of the progressive Beacon Hill School.) He was even quite nervous, shyly presenting her with the letters of reference collected for his Garnett application. They passed inspection, but there were still delicate matters to deal with. A letter followed soon after explaining the complicated history with Vera and his absolute love for

[10] Elain Harwood, *Chamberlin, Powell, and Bon: The Barbican and Beyond* (London: RIBA, 2011).

[11] Harriet Ward, private communication with author, July 2019.

[12] Peter Chamberlin, 'Employer's Reference: 18 June 1965', 'Miscellaneous', CWP/ ARCH 03180, IISH.

[13] Andrew Saint, 'Interview with Peter Shepheard', 5/8, 18 August 1989 and 22 August 1989, https://sounds.bl.uk][https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Architects-Lives/021M-C0467X0001XX-0600V0 [last accessed 8 October 2021].

her two boys. Harriet was unperturbed, simply seeing this as further proof of his affectionate nature. She was content to be patient.[14]

Gradually, all was resolved. They both completed their courses and Harriet got a job at Kingsway College of Further Education. Ward was interviewed there too but turned down, consequently taking another post at Wandsworth Technical College instead. Eventually, they found a house on Schubert Road, close enough to Ellerby Road but big enough to accommodate their newly formed family. In 1966, the pair did a most un-anarchist thing and married. In 1968, they added Ben to their number.

Harmony in Complexity?

Anarchy was a product of and, in a modest way, a contributor to this mood of expansion which, more than ever before, collapsed the distance between the private and the public, the personal and the political. Labour in power changed the terms of the debate. When the Conservatives were in, and 'the mere refusal to bend the knee' was a service,[15] big ideals and satire were tools of survival. When a government was, at least outwardly, affirming its commitment to social equality, discussion amongst radicals had to become more specific and technical. As in 1945, the anarchists needed to be well-informed and precise to be taken seriously.

Accordingly, the first move *Anarchy* made was a gentle revision of anarchist mythology. The old ancestors (Woodcock's 6, plus Americans Emma Goldman and Alex Berkman) were all preserved, quoted, and referenced, but now younger members, namely Comfort and Goodman, were formally inducted.[16] Not only had the two men come to widespread public attention as anti-war activists in their respective countries, but their writing also combined two of the key strands of Anglo-European post-war culture: scientific advance and existential anguish. For both, psychology provided an intersection between the biological human and the feeling subject. Therapy was simultaneously a personal and political action. As Comfort put it, the work of a 'revolutionary'

> committed to the purposive changing of the pattern of society toward the life-centred values, can now no longer be treated as a task of political intrigue. It is a branch of medicine — its main weapons are study and conciliation.[17]

Ward recognised their relevance for the mood of the sixties, but carefully. Of the two, he found Goodman most convivial, as much for the style of his work as its content.[18] He wrote three of the five articles in 'The World of Paul Goodman' issue (A11) and the lead review of Goodman's *The Community of Scholars* (A24). Goodman, although a qualified psychologist and pioneer of gestalt therapy, roamed widely across many subject areas. Accusations that he spread himself too thinly across too many areas were taken in comfortable stride, 'It is true that I don't know much but it is false that I write about many subjects. I have only one theme, the human beings I know in

[14] Harriet Ward, private communication, July 2019; See also, Harriet Ward, 'Meeting Colin in the Sixties', in Ward et al., *Remembering Colin Ward* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2010).

[15] John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (1853).

[16] Colin Ward, 'The World of Paul Goodman', *Anarchy* 11, January 1962; 'The Community of Scholars', *Anarchy* 24, February 1963; 'The Anarchism of Alex Comfort', *Anarchy* 33, November 1963; 'The Present Moment in Education: Paul Goodman', *Anarchy* 107, January 1970.

[17] Alex Comfort, 'The Individual and World Peace', *Resistance*, June 1954.

[18] Colin Ward, *Influences* (Bideford: Resurgence Books, 1991), 115.

their man-made scene'. What most delighted Ward was the mood of serious playfulness in his writing. He quoted him saying:

I seem to be able to write only practically, inventing expedients … My way of writing a book on social theory has been to invent community plans. [.] A discussion of human nature is a programme or pedagogical manual of therapeutic exercises.[19]

For Goodman, the truth of any idea relied on its usefulness in practice.

Comfort's style was further from Ward's natural taste but, through his involvement with the Peace Movement, he was a familiar name amongst young British activists. He had also recently published *Sex and Society* (1963). In 'The Anarchism of Alex Comfort' special, however, one-third of his essay, written as John Ellerby, was a comparison of Goodman and Comfort with the former receiving more attention. When the focus did turn to Comfort the tone was respectful but cooler. The account was also selective. He cut out from Comfort's writing only what he wanted to foreground: the principle of liberation with responsibility, the idea of anarchism as an adjective for 'life-oriented' social change, and the notion of anarchists as well-informed educators open to compromise.

Goodman and Comfort were *Anarchy*'s post-war icons but alongside them, space was provided for other emerging figures such as Noam Chomsky, the linguist and activist (A116). There were also two articles from Lewis Herber on liberatory technology and social ecology. Herber was a pseudonym for Murray Bookchin, and it was here that he first rehearsed his arguments on anarchy and environmentalism.

There were also numerous features on those who did not call themselves 'Anarchists' but whose ideas had relevance. In many respects, these were more important as they indicated anarchism's breadth of application. Psychologist Wilhelm Reich (A105), 'had things to say — and do — essential for the chief revolutionary actions of the young, whether their politics or their hippie lifestyle; indeed, he is the connecting link between these contrasting tendencies'. Homer Lane (A39) was 'a pioneer in the non-punitive treatment of delinquency and of freedom in education'. David Wills and AS Neill (A15) had 'spent most of their lives in the liberation of the young' but went unrecognised, forced to carry out their group experiments with children outside of the official educational system'.[20]

Outside of Europe, A42 revisited Ward's *Freedom* writings on Vinoba Bhave, the Indian philosopher, activist, and spiritual leader of the Bhoodan movement. A16 carried a profile of Ezekiel Mphahlele, the South African-born writer of *Down Second Avenue* (1959), and his account of the 'African paradox' which, he argued, arose from the imperialist technique of educating small groups of Africans, severing them from the traditions of their own people while simultaneously barring them from full participation in the culture of the white ruling classes. In its present form, the alienation that followed had had tragic effects, but in the fusion of cultures lay the seeds of a new synthesis, an opportunity to shed once and for all the old authorities in both the tribal and colonial pasts. Out of this might arise a new and liberated African.[21]

Vibrant though these thinkers were, some of them posed problems. Lane, for example, had been accused by girls in his care of sexual abuse; no charges were brought, and the authorities

[19] Quoted in Colin Ward, 'The World of Paul Goodman'.

[20] 'The Work of David Wills', *Anarchy* 15, May 1962; 'The Legacy of Homer Lane', *Anarchy* 39, May 1964; 'Wilhelm Reich', *Anarchy* 105, November 1969.

[21] Vinoba Bhave, 'On Government', *Anarchy* 42, August 1964; Henry Dowa, 'Africans and Anarchism', *Anarchy* 16, June 1962.

seemed not to feel the claims worth pursuing, which Ward, in his introduction, gave (oddly for an anarchist) as evidence of his innocence. Goodman had lost his job at the Black Mountain progressive college for some of his more eccentric sexual exploits.[22] Reich had gained notoriety for his advocacy of vegetatherapy, during which he would massage the genital regions of unclad clients. *Anarchy* did not evade these problems (where they were known about at the time); to do so would have diminished the credibility of its claim to be a source of serious propaganda. If a writer did not acknowledge the issues in their article, Ward did so in an editorial. Sometimes too briefly, sometimes uncritically, but always frankly.

Far from undermining the value of these people for promoting anarchism, these acknowledgements complimented *Anarchy*'s substitution of prophets and heroes for flawed, unheroic humanity. Imperfection was also a theme in the case studies. Learning from past mistakes was valuable. For the *Freedom* old guard, Spain had been the optimum parable and much pored over as a result. Unsurprisingly, it was one of *Anarchy*'s first special editions. Despite a fresh examination, it drew similar conclusions (that failure had been assured when anarchists had taken governmental posts) in contrast with the unexpected successes of enterprising peasant collectives.

But Spain was remote to the post-war generation. More prescient were the studies of contemporary efforts to apply libertarian principles. A92 carried an account of Risinghill School. In 1950 Michael Duane assumed the headship of a troubled school in a difficult, poverty-stricken area. His consequent attempts to apply libertarian principles, specifically outlawing the use of corporal punishment, met first with incomprehension, then hostility from amongst his own staff as well as local education authorities. Oxford history graduate Martin Small, in an astringent review of writer Leila Berg's passionate account *The Life and Death of Risinghill* (1968), accepted (more fully than Berg) the failings on the part of Duane. What the whole sorry affair highlighted, he wrote, was a fundamental unfamiliarity with freedom at the root of British society. Duane, rather than imposing his ideas on his bewildered staff, and showing contempt to their resistance, should have worked harder to bring them along with him.[23]

Acknowledging the complexity of situations also provided a useful means of expanding the range of contributors. Close study of libertarian methods required forging links with practitioners on the ground and hearing their testimonies. Often this happened organically. A7 featured 'Adventure Playgrounds' an initiative from Denmark (1943), later spreading to the USA and the UK where children were left completely free to build, destroy, and create again, using junk, scrap, and tools, without direction or mediation. An adult 'leader' could 'make suggestions' but could 'never demand' and had to 'be prepared at any moment to give way to new activities'.

Ward had long treasured these playgrounds as formative anarchist societies in miniature,[24] but if they were to become widespread, detailed accounts of their set-up and practical day-to-day running were needed. His friend Joe Benjamin's book *In Search of Adventure* (1961) provided a great starting point for this, pulling no punches about the difficulties involved. These were followed by testimonies from play leaders Sheila Meskine and Annie Mygind on their involvement in playgrounds or their struggles to get one started. They shared their frustrations about bullying

[22] Casey Nelson Blake, 'Foreword', in Paul Goodman, ed., *Growing Up Absurd: Problems of Youth in the Organised Society* (New York: New York Review Books, 2012), ix.

[23] Martin Small, 'About Risinghill', *Anarchy* 92, October 1968.

[24] Colin Ward, 'Adventure Playgrounds', *Freedom*, 6 September 1958.

among the young people and fierce resistance from local communities which sometimes resulted in closure. Nothing, however, had dented their faith in the concept, only grounded it.

One effect of *Anarchy*'s effort to hear from real educators, community activists, health and social workers was, as in the case of Meskine and Mygind, to increase the number of female contributors (at least 24 over the course of the decade), many of whom worked in or wrote about these fields. Alongside Berg, there were articles from poet and former editor of *Retort* Dachine Rainer (A15); Pat Arrowsmith, a CND organiser, provided an insider's view of Holloway women's prison (A10); another peace activist, Diana Shelley, gave her account of the Committee of 100 (A50); Sally Anne (A113) examined the female delinquent. Harriet was persuaded (coerced) to write on education and, later, on feminism (A56). Through her came Dora Russell who joined her daughter on feminism and wrote on Beacon Hill School (A71).

Another effect was to bring in an emerging generation of social researchers, especially those working in criminology. In its first year, *Anarchy* 10 (November 1961) was devoted to prisons, a topic of enduring importance to the anarchists.

Ward, finding himself short on contributors, was forced to write three of the articles himself (as CW, John Ellerby, and Ward Jackson) which, as a result, did little more than reiterate the *Freedom* position and added no more detailed insight. Fortunately, his growing links with a group of new deviancy theorists changed all this and resulted in some of *Anarchy*'s most original issues: 'Anarchism and Crime' (A57), 'Vandalism' (A61), 'Libertarian Criminology' (A98), 'Approved Schools and Detention Centres' (A101).

The connection emerged through David Downes, then a graduate student at the LSE, who was working on delinquent sub-cultures in Stepney and Poplar. Sue Downes, his wife, was teaching art at Woodberry Downs. Frances Solokoff, one of her colleagues, was the partner of *Freedom*'s Philip Sansom and facilitated the introduction.[25] Ward's interest was further piqued by Downes' evening work at the Teen Canteen (founded by Benjamin), an alternative youth club for teenage 'unclubbables', in other words, those disillusioned with the standard 'boy scout' and youth club fare.[26] There were others too, also based in and around LSE. Stanley Cohen was then developing his research into the cultural representation of young deviants and Jock Young was studying drug addiction in Notting Hill. The three, together with Ian Taylor, Laurie Taylor, and Paul Rock, later co-founded the National Deviancy Conference in 1968.

Looking back, Ward wrote, with a note of pride, that *Anarchy* had linked them to 'an older tradition of anarchist criticism' and supplied an alternative critical framework to the standard Marxian one, at the very moment they were seeking it. Like the anarchists, they rejected unreflective 'positivist criminology', with its focus on the individual deviant and failure to question the system which labelled and produced such a figure. At the same, they objected to reductive tendencies in Marxian accounts that often only exchanged individuals for structures.

In a special on 'Libertarian Criminology', *Freedom* stalwart and psychologist Tony Gibson reiterated the anarchist case for dispensing entirely with legal or penal systems (which generated more crime than they ever prevented) and developing, instead, more sophisticated means of understanding deviant behaviour as a source of potential social energy that might be positively diverted if channelled into rational outlets. Rejecting 'Durkheimian claims' that crime in a society was inevitable, and punishment a ritual affirmation of collective values, as 'reactionary

[25] David Downes, email communication with author, October 2020, transcripts in author's possession.

[26] See David Downes, 'Down in the Jungle', *Anarchy* 15, May 1962.

rubbish', he concluded that the first job of a libertarian criminology was to expose such spurious claims empirically.[27]

This was an attractive idea, but the new researchers did not adopt it uncritically. Cohen found the dismissal of Durkheim simplistic and evasive on questions about the mechanisms of social cohesion. Criminals provided a cultural other which, in turn, defined a cultural self. Punishment not only dramatised the division but reinforced it through warning of the fate for those who stepped outside of the group's security. The real question to pose, then, was why did abolishing the penal system remain so unthinkable, when, as Gibson had argued, there was so much evidence for its inadequacy? What made these displays so successful? What would be lost without them?[28]

In A98, Jock Young's target was not the lack of science or even science done badly, but science itself. Taking aim at the very notion of the expert he argued that, in their various guises, whether coercive or therapeutic, they still assumed the power to explain, or explain away, bolstering their claims to authority in 'an "ideology of objectivity"'. On closer examination, 'the moral yardstick of this objectivity is middle-class values'.[29] In A101, Cohen began his 'Notes on Detention Centres' by stating 'I don't want to set up any such facade of neutrality; my antagonism to detention centres is undisguised. But antagonism needs to be documented as much as acceptance'.[30]

The new criminologists were more sensitive to the mediating roles played by language and aesthetics in ideology. Natural ironists struggled to accept the possibility of unproblematic objectivity in scientific knowledge. This was not confined to criminology. In A24, Australian anthropologist Kenneth Maddock critiqued the anarchist's passion for primitive societies which, he argued, functioned for them as a set of counter-myths which allowed them to critique the present. While such myths had inspirational value, they should not be presented as rigorous science.

For Gibson, this too was reactionary:

Undoubtedly such self-reflexive science is seized upon by capitalists, Marxists and other ideologues with the argument that there can be no objective fact — only facts seen through this or that pair of subjective goggles. It is against this, as I have said, that the scientist must kick.

Other attempts to reaffirm the bond between anarchism and modern science were more refined. 'In our own times', Herber/Bookchin admitted, 'we have seen the assimilation of … once liberatory sciences by the established social order. Indeed we have begun to regard science as an instrument of control over the thought processes and physical being of man' but in ecology he saw hope to revive science's critical edge because here, one was forced always to consider the *totality* of relations between humans and nature. Moreover, as healthy eco-systems were dynamic and diverse, anarchism, with its principles of decentralisation and constant dispersal, emerged as a compatible political logic.

For those of a more futuristic orientation and technical disposition, cybernetics, the science of communication systems, was attractive. In its stronger programmes, it too proposed to dissolve all distinction between biology and politics (as Kropotkin had sought to do between biology and ethics). Neurologist William Grey Walter (father of Nicolas Walter) argued that 'if there was no boss in the brain', which was, fundamentally, a communication system, if 'no oligarchic ganglion

[27] Tony Gibson, 'Anarchism and Crime', *Anarchy* 98, April 1969.
[28] Stanley Cohen, 'Notes on Detention Centres', *Anarchy* 101, July 1969.
[29] Jock Young, 'The Zookeepers of Deviancy', *Anarchy* 98, April 1969.
[30] Ibid.

or glandular Big Brother' could be found there, why would the same operational principles not apply with equal ease and success to suprasystems like societies?

Here, then, were the latest bottles for old wine: was anarchism the inevitable conclusion of scientific findings or was science a tool to be used in supporting anarchist ideals? Systems-based sciences like ecology and cybernetics, all relation and flow, lent themselves well, overcoming some of the old problems by using natural history, anthropology, and psychology as the basis for validating anarchist ideas. *Anarchy* welcomed them, embracing their potential, but, ultimately, the scepticism of the young criminologists better suited its mood of anarcho-realism.

Nevertheless, as John Vaizey had said in his review of *Anarchy* 4, 'it is not sufficient to just be against things'. The lessons to be drawn from acknowledging complexity were not hopelessness, but the importance of maintaining a dialogue between theory and practical conditions. As Ward urged, the challenge was to transform anarchism into a practice applied in everyday life. This meant finding and then enlarging the existing spaces for autonomous action even if this could often seem a pale compromise of once greater ambitions. The point of *Anarchy*'s parables of complexity was to prepare readers, intellectually and emotionally, for identifying *appropriate* compromises — those which kept faith with the larger ideals — and to cope with initial disappointments, sustaining them when progress seemed slow.

His article 'Tenants Take Over' (A83) offered an example ofjust this approach. 'At the moment', he began, 'an argument is going on between the two major political parties over the issue of the sale of council houses to tenants'. At the same time, the Greater London Council was planning a phased transfer of 70,000 houses and flats to the control of London boroughs in 1969. 'Discussion of the control of housing is in the air, and no time is more propitious than the present for raising the genuinely radical demand; for tenant control and tenant responsibility'. The article that followed, he explained, was 'intended as ammunition for such a demand'.[31]

As in his 'deinstitutionalisation' article (A4), he began with a detailed empirical survey of the current state of British housing, divided between owner-occupied, public rental, and private rental, from which he was able to conclude that Britain had the lowest range of choice in housing in Europe. His next section explained that this need not be the case and presented housing associations, with their roots in the mutual aid and building society movements from the previous century, as viable alternatives currently inhibited by restrictive legislation. Even where this legislation had been eased, and political infrastructure developed to support them, there was a lack of demand from below which posed two questions: why the lack and how to address it?

The answer was the same for both. There was no demand because people lacked practical experience in tenant control and needed to acquire it. Without experience, they neither expected to nor knew how to take and exercise control. This situation was perpetuated by the very condition of tenancy which fostered a sense of dependency and, in the context of a chronic housing shortage, one of gratitude to the landlord. Given this, leaping straight to promoting co-operative housing associations would prove too great a step. Nevertheless, no matter how long it might take,

must we necessarily assume that the existing municipal housing estates, the homes of well over a quarter of the population, must continue to be administered paternalistically from above as though the vast social changes of the post-war world had not taken place?[32]

[31] Colin Ward, 'Tenants Take Over', *Anarchy* 83, January 1968.
[32] Ibid.

He proposed an intermediary step, the formation of tenant associations on existing housing estates which would gradually take over much of the daily work of estate management. Should anyone have still considered this wildly idealistic, the next two sections, 'Under New Management' and 'Legal and Financial Problems', set out how these *could* be set up, what responsibilities they might assume, how barriers could be overcome, and exactly what the benefits in terms of overall efficiency (including for tenant well-being) would be.[33]

The technical elegance of 'Tenants Take Over' provides an excellent model of Ward's approach to anarchist solutions. Tenants' associations were not only a tangible, achievable goal, but in pursuing that goal, all the practical skills, as well as the intellectual and emotional aspects, necessary for cultivating the habit of autonomy were rehearsed and reinforced. It was also a perfect example of *Anarchy*'s anarchism as political praxis rooted in the radical potential of individual initiative, within the constraints imposed by the existing structure.

Not all, however, were ready to concede the barricades for the committee rooms so readily. In A88 Bookchin's 'Against Meliorism' (the first *Anarchy* article published under his own name) condemned reformist approaches to anarchism and rejected Goodman-style pragmatism as weak liberalism. Reform was not merely ineffectual, it reinforced the *ancien regime* by making it bearable, defusing the build-up of frustration necessary to bring about its final destruction.[34] Bookchin spoke from an American perspective, with the shortcomings of the American New Left in view, but the stinging reference to Goodman probably annoyed Ward, reminding him that the old dualism between reformism and revolution was not so easily abandoned.

Talking about Youth

As the years passed and *Anarchy*'s pages filled with the intelligent comments of social researchers and writers, there were points when the journal risked appearing as a progressive's confessional. This was especially the case with the content on young people who, since Shandy's outburst in 1960, had been the audience the journal supposedly wished to engage. Despite this, young people were more often the subject matter than authors in its pages. Efforts were made in this quarter; younger writers such as Small and Ratcliffe were given a platform, A18 carried an interview with a recent school leaver and an essay by a sixth former, A24 a verbatim description of life on the dole for teenager Tom Pickard, and A99 had interviews with Gabriel and Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Alexander Hebert, leaders of the French student movement. These, however, were whispers in a chorus of articulate adult voices.

Yet this was exactly the time that young people, globally, *were* gaining in political volume and visibility, reaching a crescendo in 1968. While each movement responded to unique national contexts, and important distinctions must be recognised (not least between those protests taking place under repressive regimes, such as Prague or Mexico City, and those in the industrialised democracies) there were common factors. Firstly, this was a generational clash. Across the world, middle-class growth led to a rapid increase in university attendance and enlarged student populations acutely aware of the lag between traditional social structures (including the universities) and their own life experiences in a rapidly changing world. Secondly, this was a political rebel-

[33] This was later written up in full as Colin Ward, *Tenants Take Over* (London: Architectural Press, 1974).
[34] Murray Bookchin, 'Against Meliorism', *Anarchy* 88, June 1968.

lion against militarism, capitalism, and, in many cases, American dominance. Finally, this was a cultural struggle, fuelled by a desire for new ways of living and forms of expression.

Common factors notwithstanding, student movements were neither uniform nor always united in their aims and ideals. There were many strands to them. For some, a revitalised cultural Marxism was influential. America's intervention in Vietnam (re) united Marxists with pacifists and anti-war activists.[35] Others were motivated by a moral rejection of imperialism (in historic and contemporary forms) which forged sympathies with national liberation movements (such as in Northern Ireland), indigenous rights movements, and 'back-to-the-land' movements (also fuelled by mounting awareness of environmental destruction). Elsewhere, the battlegrounds were more 'personal' with the growth of Women's Liberation, Gay Liberation, and Black Power movements. Again, connections were made within and across this dynamic ensemble, but alliances were often fragile.[36] In Britain, student protests were less outwardly dramatic than their counterparts in America and Europe but, although smaller in number, their leaders considered them, in some respects, more robust.[37]

Naturally, *Anarchy* covered these events attentively: A66 was devoted to Provo, the Dutch countercultural movement, A99 addressed the French protests of May 1968, A112 focused on anti-apartheid struggles in South Africa, and A90 surveyed the global student movement. On the surface, then, it seemed like the journal's moment, and ideal audience, had arrived, as Ward commented in the A90 editorial summary: 'the student movement has been a microcosm of anarchism-in-action: spontaneous self-directed activity replacing the hierarchy of authority by a society of autonomous groups and individuals'.[38] But this was not entirely the case, and not just because the more organised factions tended to be Marxian rather than libertarian.[39]

A96 sounded notes of caution. Richard Mabey, then an editor with Penguin, wrote on an anti-Vietnam demonstration which had left him strangely unmoved. The march on 27 October 1968, involving some 25,000 people, had ended with a minority in violent scuffles with the police outside the US embassy in Grosvenor Square. Watching the television news coverage, he found himself asking:

What was this ritual we were being asked to join? A revolutionary prelude, a sort of mass shaking of the fist? A vast symbolic morality play starring the Metropolitan police as Satan and Tariq Ali as Everyman? Or a mini coup, an actual attempt to take over the control of certain key institutions? The fact that nowhere to my knowledge were these questions even discussed […] seems to me a sad reflection of our lack of any theory of demonstrations.[40]

His comments echoed Ward's on Aldermaston almost a decade earlier.

Anarchy might well have offered the students direction and guidance, but Ward was a skilful enough propagandist to know to avoid a tutelary role. Sensitivity to the politics of language

[35] Michael Frey, 'International Peace Movement', in M. Klimke and J. Scharloth, eds., *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism 1956—1977* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 33–44.

[36] See also: Richard Vinen, *The Long '68: Radical Protest and Its Enemies* (London: Penguin, 2018); Ben Mercer, *Student Revolt in 1968: France, Italy and West Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

[37] Caroline Hoefferle, *Student Activism in Britain in the Long Sixties* (Abington: Routledge, 2013).

[38] Colin Ward, 'Editorial', *Anarchy* 90, August 1968.

[39] David Goodway and Colin Ward, *Talking Anarchy* (Oakland: PM Press, 2014), 65. See also Dennis Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism in Post War Britain: History, the New Left and the Origins of Cultural Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

[40] Richard Mabey, 'Grass Roots or Hair Roots?', *Anarchy* 96, February 1969.

and self-expression was a defining feature of the move- ment,[41] a fact evident by the plethora of radical underground newspapers and magazines that now emerged. From Britain alone came *The International*, *Oz*, *Black Dwarf*, and *Gandalf* to name but a few. In both form and content, these were strikingly different from *Anarchy*.[42] While not all the students' political language and iconography were to his taste, Ward still admired their autonomy. He of all people knew the value (and fun) of getting up a journal through which to spread ideas. He was also older; as he told journalist Richard Boston, 'the young should be individualistic, I am middle aged and have different priorities'.[43]

In December 1970 the last *Anarchy* (118) under Ward was issued. This was no inglorious decline; *Anarchy*'s peak may have been mid-decade, but it had not dwindled and the subscription rates remained a steady 2,800. In 1989, Raphael Samuel, whose *Universities and Left Review* he had watched so enviously in the late 50s repaid the compliment, remarking that in the mid-60s *Anarchy* had been 'the only revolutionary reading around at that time'.[44] His comment was significant because what he saw in *Anarchy* was the sort of constructive social libertarianism that he and his fellow activists in the first New Left (1957—1962) had instinctively sought but only partly achieved.

Like the first New Left, *Anarchy* emerged from the political 'moment' of the late 50s and early 60s. This was conversant with the mid to late 60s but also distinct from it. While the 50s are routinely dismissed as conservative and conformist, as Isaiah Berlin observed, 'the demand for conformity generates a demand for "more light" and extension of the areas of individual responsibility and spontaneous action'.[45] In that nuclear age of faltering solidarities, where first welfare and then affluence penetrated deeper into social and civil life than ever before, those areas retreated further into private life. Nevertheless, if politics had become personal there was yet a subtle difference between that and the personal politics of the next generation.

The *Anarchy* chapter of Ward's life was concluded with two book-length works on anarchism, neither, at this time, through Freedom Press, but with commercial publishers Allen and Unwin. The second of these was an edited edition of Kropotkin's *Fields, Factories and Workshops*. Ward proved a thoughtful editor, respectful of the original text, his personal favourite amongst the Russian writings, which he left untouched. After each chapter he used an 'Editor's Appendix' to connect Kropotkin's arguments to contemporary problems which allowed him to demonstrate their continued relevance.[46]

The first, *Anarchy in Action* (1973) (*Action*), has become his best-known book. Allen and Unwin wanted an accessible book on anarchism for their lists. They approached Walter first but, as he was over-committed with writing assignments, Ward took on the job, treating it as a chance to promote the practical modern anarchism that he and Walter advocated to a lay audience who

[41] Richard Vinen, *The Long '68*, 4.

[42] See James Birch and Barry Miles, *The British Underground Press of the Sixties: A Catalogue* (London: Rocket 88, 2017).

[43] Richard Boston, 'Interview with Anarchists', in Colin Ward, ed., *A Decade ofAnarchy (1961–1970)* (London: Freedom Press, 1987), 11–23.

[44] Raphael Samuel, 'Then and Now: A Re-evaluation of the New Left', in Robin Archer et al., eds., *Out of Apathy: Voices of the New Left* (London: Verso, 1989), 148.

[45] Isaiah Berlin quoted in Aileen Kelly, *Towards Another Shore: Russian Thinkers Between Necessity and Chance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 17.

[46] Cf. with Herbert Read's *Selections from Kropotkin* (London: Freedom Press, 1942).

'had no idea at what [anarchism] implied'.[47] Not (like Woodcock) as a historical curiosity, but as a living possibility. He got straight to the point: 'How would you feel if you discovered that the society in which you would really like to live was already here, apart from a few little local difficulties like exploitation, war, dictatorship, and starvation?'[48]

Moving briskly, he diagnosed the cause of these 'local difficulties' as the continued existence of a centralising, authoritarian state which provided a neat means of distinguishing social anarchism from socialism. He then marshalled evidence from theories of spontaneous order and harmonious complexity to support the anarchist ideal of leaderless federalism. The remainder set out how dispersion, far from destroying civic life, would repair the damage caused by institutionalisation in housing, the family, education, work, social welfare, and the legal system.

The methodical structure gave the book a well-rehearsed air, as did its source material. *Action* was a digest of extracts from *Freedom* and *Anarchy* remixed into a playlist of practical anarchism's greatest hits. Bakunin, Kropotkin, Landauer, and Buber were combined for the case against the state, Geddes supplied an alternative approach to planning. The 'tribes without rulers' shaded into cybernetic theory to prove the harmony inherent to complex systems, while Spanish peasants, Hungarian rebels, Peckham leisure seekers, junkyard children, and mass squatters demonstrated spontaneous order.

The final chapter, 'Anarchy and a Plausible Future', tackled the heated question of utopianism. Ward kept cool. Anarchism, he explained, was 'not a programme for political change but an act of social determination'. By this definition, it could never arrive in a blaze of glory, it must remain a continuous process 'through which people enlarge their autonomy and reduce their subjection to external authority'. The restraint of this conclusion was in keeping with the book's praise for other homely virtues such as individual effort, patience, and responsibility. Far from inciting readers' passions, it deliberately diffused them, and yet it was this very plainness that proved its greatest innovation.

If *Action* is compared with Raoul Vaneigem's *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (1967) (*Revolution*), the iconic radical handbook for the 1968 student movement, the point becomes clearer. While sharing many common points in their critique and preferred social alternatives, the two books were very different in tone. *Revolution* became a radical partly because it met the conventional expectations for 'radical writing' as a literary genre. It was angry, energetic, and prophetic, with flashes of brilliance and a fair amount of obscurity. Where analysis faltered, eloquence filled the gap. 'Spontaneity is the true mode of being of individual creativity, creativity's initial, immaculate form, unpolluted at the source and as yet unthreatened by the mechanisms of co-optation'.[49] Poetry was creative spontaneity realised, 'the act which brings new realities into being, reverses the perspective'.[50]

By contrast, *Action*, with its even tone and measured remarks, seemed relentlessly prosaic, but in this lay its power.[51] Starting from 'the common foundation of common experience and

[47] Colin Ward, *Anarchy in Action* (London: Freedom Press, [1973] 2008), 9.

[48] Ibid., 23.

[49] Raoul Vanegiem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (London: Rebel Press, 2006), 134. This quote comes from an English translation rather than the original French but the translator Donald Nicholson-Smith notes his concerted effort to convey 'the work's warts-and-all accessibility to English language readers', 6.

[50] Ibid., 200.

[51] Gary Saul Morson, *Prosaics and Other Provocations: Empathy, Open Time and the Novel* (Boston: Academic Press Studies, 2013), 12.

common knowledge',[52] *Action* asked readers to deepen, rather than jettison, their existing perspectives which, in turn, allowed Ward to creep stealthily into the minds of those automatically hostile towards 'Radical' cultures. *Action*'s most radical quality, then, *was that it did not read as radical*. But here even the best-laid plans can go awry. Allen and Unwin, attempting to attract a younger readership, used riot imagery for the original 1973 front cover.

Coincidentally, that year also saw the second edition of Woodcock's *Anarchism*, to which he added a postscript conceding his earlier dismal prophecy had been hasty. The events of the 1960s had shown an appetite for anarchist ideas. In Britain, this owed much, in his view, to Ward and *Anarchy*, which he described as:

more flexible and mature in its approaches than any of the American literature of new radicalism, the British neo-anarchists developed ramifying links in the universities, acquired a new generation of sympathetic writers [...] and even established links with the professions [...] Where young British rebels in the 1930s joined the Communists, in the 1960s they were likely to become anarchists. Mark the change; becoming rather than joining.[53]

Still, Woodcock noted, turning back to a broader assessment of the new radicalism, libertarianism had become 'a trend of the young and especially of the middle-class young', in essence 'a revolt — not of the underprivileged — but of the privileged who have seen the futility of affluence as a goal; it is strongly reminiscent of the movement of guilty noblemen in Russia during the nineteenth century',[54] which meant that it was 'unlikely that the general outcome would be a wholly non-governmental society', leading instead to 'the development of forms of democracy more sensitive to modern conditions',[55] drawing him back to the conclusion that anarchism could only ever have value as an inspiring source of permanent protest.

Again, Ward did not fully agree. The instincts of the student rebels had been right. Part of the problem was their lack of practical knowledge about how to convert their ideals into sustainable forms of practice. As products of an education system that routinely separated and valued intellect over feeling, academic achievement over practical ability, this was inevitable. *Anarchy* sought to intervene here but came too late for those who, in early adulthood, were weary of being taught and eager to assert themselves. If those practical skills were put in place much earlier, cultivated from childhood, for example, the young might well be left to make, and apply, their own poetry in peace.

[52] Colin Ward, *Action*, 9.
[53] George Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 458.
[54] Ibid., 462.
[55] Ibid., 463.

9. Liberal Studies

Ward had long been interested in education. His father had been a primary school headteacher, his mother a teacher of secretarial skills. After his own underwhelming experience of formal schooling had ended abruptly at 15, he had begun his own, more pleasurable, education, partly through his working life in architecture, partly through anarchism with its thriving autodidactic culture, rich in literature, discussion, study groups, and summer schools.

In later years, Ward rejected the idea that there was any such thing as 'anarchist education', preferring to say that there were 'different kinds of educational experiments which anarchists have supported and been involved in'.[1] Nevertheless, for the Kropotkinian social anarchist tradition he identified with, education was a major preoccupation. Believing individuals to be social beings, knowing the world primarily through their interactions with one another and their environments, social anarchists held that where those interactions were coercive, restrictive, and static, the individual became alienated, intellectually and spiritually impoverished. Where they were voluntary, open-ended, and dynamic, individuality was enriched. Education was a conduit of those relations, for better or for worse.

From an anarchist perspective, the school system produced by, and for, the modern industrial world exclusively served the interests of the status quo by providing a direct pipeline into the labour market and by making virtues of obedience and submission. In its place, they proposed approaches to education that nurtured independence, providing the practical skills and knowledge necessary for people to become 'active agents creating the possibilities of their own future'.[2] As such, the concept of integral education, the synthesis of mind and brain work, was generally endorsed but given various nuances.

Kropotkin, for example, saw science as the ultimate fusion of mind and body through the interplay of observation and reflection. In the final chapter of *Fields, Factories and Workshops* he noted that, quite apart from the great economic, moral, and personal benefits of raising 'a young army of educated and well-trained producers', the subject would be more quickly advanced by putting at its disposal a great cast of investigators equipped with a vast wealth of experience.[3] In another version, William Morris fused eye, hand, and mind in the ideal of the artistcraftsman. By shifting emphasis from science to art, he granted more space for emotional expression than implied by Kropotkin's 'army' of 'well-trained producers'. Morris' disciple Lethaby used the same principle to architecture with his notion of the architect-builder.

Morris and Lethaby were not anarchists, Kropotkin never founded a school, but there were plenty more classic examples in the anarchist yearbook: Tolstoy's educational experiments in 'The School of Yasnaya Polyana' (1862), Paul Robins at Le Prevost Orphanage Cempuis 1880—1894, and Sebastien Faure at La Ruche in 1904. Most famous of all was Francisco Ferrer who

[1] Judith Suissa, *Anarchism and Education* (Oakland: PM Press, 2010), 77.

[2] Erin Mckenna, *The Task of Utopia* (Lanham: Rowan and Littlefield, 2001), 52.

[3] Peter Kropotkin and Colin Ward, eds., *Fields Factories and Workshops* (London: Freedom Press, [1974] 1985), 180–181.

founded the Escuela Moderna (Modern School) in Barcelona 1904—1907. In 1909, Ferrer was arrested on fabricated charges of inciting rebellion, found guilty, and executed by firing squad, crying 'Long Live the Modern School' just before he died, and live it did. The Escuela model spread around the world and Ferrer entered the anarchist annals as a martyr for free education.[4]

Among Ward's *Freedom* contemporaries, Gibson and Weaver both taught at Burgess Hill, a progressive school in London. Through Burgess he met Herbert Read who, although never a teacher, was a trustee. In 1943, Read published *Education Through Art*, where he reconciled the romantic's expressive individual with educational psychology, 'If the art of education is to foster growth, we must first discover the laws of growth; and these are the laws of harmonious progression, of balanced relationships, of achieved pattern'.[5]

Ward made no comment on *Education* when it first appeared. He did, however, concede a glimpse of his feelings on the subject in 'Songsters, Martyrs and … the Penny Teacher' (1951), written to mark the opening of a new museum commemorating Ferrer and the foundation of the Modern School. Reviewing the Spaniard's educational endeavours and their tragic conclusion, he acknowledged that Ferrer's 'criticisms of existing educational institutions are still valid today'. To this he added a 'sidelight'. While Ferrer was launching his modern, scientific curricula in Barcelona, another radical pedagogue appeared in a dingy district of Madrid. Setting up camp in a hovel made of flattened tin cans, he taught the local street children their ABCs, charging them just one penny a month for the privilege. Eventually, the higher authorities felt him to be an incumbrance and jailed him for being an anarchist. He died forgotten in prison. The juxtaposition of the two men — one with a school, the other tin cans; one with a curriculum, the other the ABC — was not subtle, but it made the point.

Progressive Education

The *Freedom* anarchists were not alone in their preoccupation with education. In the decades following the war, few other subjects inspired such intensely contested debates. Education is often used as an indicator of the limitations in the social democratic vision underpinning the welfare state. In the immediate aftermath, despite being one of Beveridge's five pillars, it appeared a poor relation when compared to the energy expended on creating the National Health Service. The 1944 Butler Act was first and foremost a rationalisation and expansion of the existing system, the main effect of which was to make grammar school places free, awarded on merit following the 11+ exam. The remaining children (around 75%) were to be placed in new secondary modern schools and receive a less academic education.

Butler was broadly, although not uncritically, accepted across the benches.[6] Most parliamentary discussion at the time focused on implementation and the need for total administrative reorganisation, followed by a huge programme of school building to address gaping inequalities in educational provision and resources across the country. During the 50s, Bridgewater, Shepheard, and Epstein (BSE), the firm Ward worked for as an assistant, won many of these school building

[4] Judith Suissa, *Anarchism and Education* (Oakland: PM Press, [2006] 2010), 78–82. See also Paul Avrich, *The Modern School Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

[5] Herbert Read, *Education through Art* (London: Routledge, 1943), 232.

[6] See Peter Mandler, *The Crisis of Meritocracy: Britain's Transition to Mass Education since the Second World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 32—33.

commissions, which supplied the raw material for his *Freedom* articles.[7] On the one hand, he was drawn to the progressive ideas of the architects and planners associated with the government's 'Development Group', who applied scientific principles to the design and engineering of educational envi- ronments.[8] On the other, he took equal, perhaps more, delight in the ingenuity of individual teachers such as Alex Bloom and Michael Duane, who, working in the meanest of conditions with little or nothing to help, and only their own person to give, still achieved astonishing effects.

As the 50s wore on, opposition to selective education increased and several local authorities began to 'experiment' with plans for comprehensive education. In 1947, the Labour-controlled London County Council put forward *The London School Plan* proposing 103 new comprehensive schools. Conservative-controlled West Riding in Yorkshire also favoured a switch to a fully comprehensive system, as did Stewart Mason, Director of Education for Leicestershire.[9] Sources for the shift in mood varied. For many on the wider left, education was a vital conduit for social equality whose potential was not being exploited. For others, more pragmatically, middle-class growth was fast outstripping the number of available grammar school places, creating vocal public discontent.

Although the outcome was often the same, there were important differences between seeing education as an expansion of opportunities or as a mechanism of structural social change. Such distinctions bore significant implications for curriculum planning and later dominated debates on in-school streaming and setting. All forms of selection, egalitarian critics argued, grossly underestimated the impact of social factors on young people's capacity to learn. Influential studies like Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden's *Education and the Working*

Class (1962) and JWB Douglas' *The Home and the School* (1964) underlined this by exposing the impact of the home environment on a child's cognitive development.[10]

Not only was the concept of selection faulty, but it also created practical problems. While the grammar schools generally performed well, secondary moderns were ambiguous and variable. There was no clarity on what should be taught or how. Accordingly, the results were fragmentary. By 1959, the Crowther Report into education for young adults condemned the 'wasted potential' as a serious economic loss and recommended that the school leaving age be raised to 16, more practical further education courses be created, and sixth form curricula be revised to accommodate the increasing number of pupils staying on in school until 16.

In 1963, the Newsom Report, *Half Our Future*, focusing on 'average and below' pupils aged 13—16, followed Crowther in condemning the selective model. Creating a 'John Robinson' persona, it projected young Robinson's progress through an indifferent and inadequate education which he left with nothing to show, and into a world of menial, low-paid jobs requiring little intelligence. It also recommended the need for urgent improvements to school environments, especially in slum areas, and the need for research into teaching techniques to support pupils from difficult or impoverished backgrounds. Finally, it commended a full programme of study including the

[7] Colin Ward, 'School Building Crisis', *Freedom*, 16 February 1952.

[8] See Colin Ward, *School Buildings: Designs and Appraisals 1946—1974* (London: Architectural Press, 1976).

[9] Alec Clegg, 'West Riding', in S. Maclure, ed., *Comprehensive Planning* (London: Councils and Education Press, 1965), 75—79. See also Stewart Mason, *The Leicester Experiment* (1957). For an overview see David Crook, 'Local Authorities and Comprehensivisation in England and Wales 1944—1974', *Oxford Review of Education*, 28:2/3 (2002), 247–270.

[10] JWB Douglas, *The Home and the School* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1964). See also, Brian Jackson and Dennis Jackson, *Education and the Working Class* (London: Penguin, 1962).

arts, increased provision of practical subjects, and an induction into the adult world of work and leisure in the final year.

Newsom was an important report but a week later the Robbins Report (1963) into higher and further education appeared, eclipsing it in public discussion. In political eyes, Robbins' focus on the other half of the future, those whose advanced education was an obvious investment in Britain's economic future, made it a more attractive prospect,[11] particularly in the run-up to an election. Labour's 1964 election manifesto, 'The New Britain', promised to prioritise 'the imperative need for a revolution in our education system which will ensure the education of all our citizens in the responsibilities of this scientific age'.[12] Even if this was mostly a case of repackaging old ideas[13] it gave impetus to a major extension of comprehensive education led by Anthony Crossland who, as Minister of Education, exerted pressure on local authorities to convert.

In 1967, the Plowden report *Children and Their Primary Schools* provided a third landmark in post-war British education policy. Adopting a holistic approach that stressed the intersection of school, home, and community, the key outcome of the report was the designation of Educational Priority Areas (EPA) and a programme of action research into education, poverty, and deprivation in urban 'twilight' areas.[14] Pedagogically, Piagetian ideas of children's staged development were influential and informed its promotion of 'discovery learning' through project work and arts subjects. Like Newsom, it stressed the role of the teacher and urged improvements to teacher training provision including an increase in graduate entry routes.

The legitimacy Plowden gave to child-centred pedagogic methods contributed to creating what many now consider to be the 'golden age' of progressive education. In fact, the situation was complex, not least because there was little consensus around what this entailed in terms of methods and goals.[15] Not only did interpretations vary, but implementation was patchy and varied in qual- ity.[16] Furthermore, child-centred pedagogies, no less than traditional teaching methods, did not entirely escape the criticism that they undervalued the impact of social factors, especially class, on learning capacities. As sociologist Basil Bernstein observed, children from working-class families were not so commonly encouraged to use language for reasoning and problem solving as their middleclass peers were; inevitably, this affected the rate at which they were likely to progress 'naturally' through developmental stages.[17] Critiques like this re-

[11] John Nisbet, 'Review: Half Our Futures', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 128:3 (1965), 439–441.

[12] 'The New Britain', Labour manifesto 1964.

[13] Steven Fielding, 'Rethinking Labour's 1964 Campaign', *Contemporary British History*, 21 (2007), 309–324.

[14] AH Halsey, 'Educational Priority: Report of a Research Project Sponsored by the Department of Education and Science and the Social Science Research Council' (HMSO, 1972).

[15] Roy Lowe, 'A Golden Age? The Sixties and Early Seventies', in Lowe, *The Death of Progressive Education; How Teachers Lost Control of the Classroom* (Abington: Routledge, 2007), 40–60; Ken Jones, 'The Practice of Radical Education, from the Welfare State to the Neo-Liberal Order', in Jones and Catherine Burke, eds., *Education, Childhood and Anarchism* (Abington: Routledge, 2014).

[16] See Richard Peters, ed., *Perspectives on Plowden* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012); AH Halsey, 'The Plowden Report Twenty Years On', *Oxford Review of Education*, 13:1 (1987), 3–11; Maurice Kogan, 'The Plowden Report Twenty Years On', *Oxford Review ofEducation*, 13:1 (1987), 13–21; D. Gillard, *Plowden and the Primary Curriculum: Twenty Years On*, www.educationengland.org.uk/articles/04plowden.html [accessed 30 May 2021].

[17] Basil Bernstein, *Class, Codes and Control* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971).

vealed how much classic child-centred thinking still assumed a middle-class bias. As Bernstein commented elsewhere, 'education cannot compensate for society'.[18]

While many educators were willing to take these criticisms on as the basis for further reforms and better teacher training methods, others contended that no amount of reform could ever resolve the problem. Schools, by their nature as social institutions, were inherently repressive, even (sometimes especially) when they aimed at individual well-being or social redress. They proposed instead 'de-schooling' as a radical alternative. Whilst the concept gained its clearest statement from Austrian philosopher Ivan Illich, it figured prominently in the works of Paul Goodman, John Holt, and Everett Reimer. In Britain, publication of these writers' books in the Penguin Educational Specials series, and an attempt at an English version, *Education without Schools* (1971) (to which Ward contributed a chapter, 'The Role of the State'), helped popularise the idea. With various nuances, what de-schoolers called for was a full dispersal of education into the community where children would be constantly exposed to different skills, experiences, and people. This they generally envisaged taking place across a range of public facilities, libraries, museums, galleries, even workplaces, ensuring that educating the young became part of daily life and work.

Even if accepted in principle, de-schooling in practice could only ever have had a very limited application at this time. The infrastructure it required (such as dedicated educational facilities in all public amenities) was simply not in place. Moreover, whilst it might have resolved social stratification if adopted universally, in a restricted form it only perpetuated it. Only those willing to home-school their children could even approximate to anything like it and this required a level of parental commitment, in terms of both time and resources, only affordable for the middle classes.

One compromise came through a renewed interest in community education, an often overlooked but important strand of post-war education policy.[19] Pioneered in the pre-war years by Henry Morris, Chief Director of Education for Cambridgeshire and founder of the 'village colleges' (designed by Maxwell Fry and Walter Gropius) which integrated secondary and community education in rural areas, the concept had declined following the 1994 Education Act with existing colleges reduced to secondary moderns.[20] Plowden, with its holistic view of the educational environment, revitalised at least part of the idea by calling for community primary schools to be trialled in the EPA areas. Although the community school was not quite the village college of Morris, nor quite the exploded school of the de-schoolers, it was certainly an expanded school which envisaged a levelling of class differences through a more generously conceived process of social integration. In practice, matters were, again, complicated. Plowden, some felt, underestimated the complexity of ethnic diversity in inner-city communities and overestimated teachers' capacities to deal with this, resulting in misunderstandings and rising tension.[21]

Debates on progressive education, then, constituted less an orderly exchange of well-defined positions than a convergence of distinct agendas, technocratic, humanist, and critical, each with

[18] Basil Bernstein, 'Education Cannot Compensate for Society', in David Rubinstein and Colin Stoneman, eds., *Education for Democracy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 104–116.

[19] Steve Baron, 'Community and the Limits of Social Democracy: Scenes from Politics', in Anthony Green and Stephen Ball, eds., *Progress and Inequality in Comprehensive Education* (Abington: Routledge, 1988), 82–102. See also Colin Ward, 'Henry Morris and Walter Gropius', *Freedom*, 5 May 1956.

[20] See Harry Ree, *Educator Extraordinaire: The Life and Achievements of Henry Morris* (London: Longman, 1973).

[21] David Winkley, 'From Condescension to Complexity: Post-Plowden Schooling in the Inner City', *Oxford Review of Education*, 13:1 (1987), 45–55.

their own internal nuances. As Roy Lowe observed, this makes it difficult to speak of consensus but, by the end of the decade, progressive ideas, in their different guises, had still gained sufficient momentum to warrant a backlash. In 1969, *The Critical Survey* published the first in a series of 'The Black Papers' attacking the use of education, and children, for, as the contributors saw it, social and political experimentation. Despite including a few surprising figures, like philosopher Iris Murdoch, among their number, the arguments comprised the standard range of objections from the view that progressive education did not prepare people for a real world of selection and failure, or that austere egalitarianism suppressed excellence and fostered mediocrity. Alongside these were more uncomfortable contents relating to 'psychological' theories on IQ, class, and race.[22]

As editor of *Anarchy*, Ward followed these debates intently, devoting 17 special issues to the questions they generated and writing extensively on the topic himself. Unsurprisingly, *Anarchy* writers tended to align with a critical-humanist position but, in keeping with the journal's strenuous resistance towards any suspicion of utopianism, studiously acknowledged the problems that this entailed. Contributors took criticisms of progressive educational ideas seriously and answered them carefully. Articles were of three kinds: (a) analyses of existing institutions, for example, secondary moderns (A21), further education (A53), primary schools (A43), and approved centres (A98); (b) analyses of progressive experiments such as British Adventure Playgrounds (A7), Hawkspur (A15), and Risinghill (A92); and (c) discussions of progressive thinkers and their theories including David Wills (A15), Homer Lane and AS Neil (A39), and Michael Duane of Risinghill (A48).

His strongest affection was for Goodman's educational ideas. Goodman's 60s books, *Growing Up Absurd* (1960), *The Community of Scholars* (1962), and *Compulsory Miseducation* (1964), unleashed a wave of energy through the American student movement with their strident critique of institutionalisation and its deleterious effects on the young. Ward reviewed them for *Anarchy* (11 and 24) appreciatively, but, personally, found the essence of the American's message better captured by a passage from his earlier novel *The Grand Piano* (1942):

'The aim of education', said Mynheer patiently, 'is to make us feel at home here in the Empire City. To make us feel at home because we don't feel that way now. The reason people don't feel at home is that they can't cope with the problems. They're too many and too big and too complicated, so we have to take them in the right doses. This I call Tempering Experience to Our Powers'.[23]

To achieve this, the narrator continued, 'kids must learn two things: skills and sabotage', because any honest service to their home city required 'engaging in sabotage' to keep life from being stamped out under the weight of corporate organisation. Goodman envisaged gangs of children, accompanied by an adult 'shepherd', roving the city in search of experiences to temper to their powers.[24] Good education here was more about better improvising than better planning.

[22] James Wood, 'Upward Mobility, Betrayal and the Black Papers on Education', *Critical Quarterly*, 62:2 (2020), 72–104.

[23] Paul Goodman, *The Grand Piano: Or the Almanac of Alienation* (New York: Colt Press, 1942).

[24] Colin Ward, 'Goodman's Gift', *Bulletin of Environmental Education*, 23 (1973).

Garnett, Godwin, and Wandsworth Tech

In 1964 Ward applied to Garnett College, Roehampton, to train for teaching. Founded in 1946, Garnett was the first college in the UK dedicated to training lecturers for further education (FE). As Ward had left school without A levels, primary or secondary teaching training courses were not open to him, but with his extensive experience in a technical occupation, he was eligible for this route. According to the results of a student-led questionnaire conducted with the 1964/5 cohort, Ward was, in some respects, a typical Garnett student, with many also coming from professional careers. Out of 171 respondees, 22, the highest proportion, came from managerial or administrative positions in industry and commerce. In others, he was more unusual in that he had not experienced further or higher education himself, 81% of those surveyed reported having done so.[25] The course was a one-year intensive requiring students to study full time supported by a basic grant which many, balancing family expenses, found too low. Still, it was a risk worth taking. As with education generally, FE was a growth industry; in 1967/8, 71,000 students were recorded as being in FE, and just three years later that figure had reached 96,000.[26]

While not intentionally radical, Garnett embraced progressive approaches to the education of teachers, partly as a recognition of the maturity and previous experience of most of its students. On arrival, students were arranged into loose subject groupings (Ward and Harriet Unwin were together in 'General Subjects') and after initial preliminaries put on teaching placements during the first three weeks of November which plunged them straight into the practical realities of the classroom. Those that survived (and were not too 'appalled at the quality of the students'[27]) went on to study general educational theory rather than subjectspecific pedagogy.[28]

The assumption behind this was that as mature professionals they had sufficient technical knowledge of their subject and only required a little philosophical reinforcement for their new vocation. This reflected a wider trend in teacher education. As Nanette Whitbread noted, university-trained teachers received rigorous training in pedagogic methods and took jobs in private and grammar schools. Colleges of education, by contrast, who supplied teachers for the working classes, equipped their initiates with vague notions of student-centred learning and 'a missionary approach to the education of the underprivileged'.[29]

A few of the Garnett students agreed, complaining that they left the course feeling unprepared for life in the classroom.[30] Ward, however, flourished, thoroughly enjoying the open atmosphere of ideas, appreciating how *Chalk and Talk*, the college magazine, had no qualms about publishing his 'modest proposal' to repeal the education act altogether in favour of promoting lifelong education instead.[31] He also found a ready use for his talent in instructive anecdotes when, late into the spring term, he won Harriet's affections through demonstrating an environmental studies lesson plan on the biography of a tomato seed which he followed, post-consumption, into the

[25] MJ Ashcroft and DBL Podmore, 'A Survey of Garnett College Students 1964–65', *The Vocational Aspect of Education*, 18 (1966), 17.26.

[26] D. Gillard, 'Further Education', http://www.educationengland.org.uk/history/chapter12.html [last accessed 9 October 2021].

[27] Colin Ward, 'A Modest Proposal for the Repeal of the Education Act', *Anarchy 53*, July 1965.

[28] MJ Ashcroft and DBL Podmore, 'A Survey of Garnett College Students 1964–65'.

[29] Nanette Whitbread, 'The Education of Teachers', in David Rubinstein and Colin Stoneman, eds., *Education for Democracy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 175–182.

[30] MJ Ashcroft and DBL Podmore, 'A Survey of Garnett College Students 1964–65'.

[31] Colin Ward, 'A Modest Proposal for the Repeal of the Education Act', *Chalk and Talk*, Summer, 1965.

sewage system and beyond, a simple but elegant device for demonstrating the entanglement of natural and built environments.[32]

In addition to their placements, reading, and seminars, students had also to complete an independent special study on a thinker or theme of their choice. For his special study, Ward naturally chose an anarchist, but not Tolstoy or Kropotkin, Ferrer, Read, or even Goodman; instead, he plumped for William Godwin. Although better known as a political philosopher, tracking down Godwin's educational writings was worth the effort,[33] not least as they provided an interesting riposte to Jean Jacques Rousseau whose *Emile or On Education* (1762) continued to be influential in the progressive canon.

Emile developed Rousseau's arguments from *A Discourse of the Moral Effects of Arts and Sciences* (1750) and *Discourse on the Origins and Basis of Inequality Among Men* (1754) which, in essence, ran that society, far from being a civilising force for curbing man's natural badness, was corruptive. Great societies were built on the triumph of small groups who contrived to dominate the mass and protect their interests through the development of artificial institutions — religious, legal, and educational — all of which enslaved and distorted true human nature. When free from intervention, human nature contained an innate morality which, when properly nurtured, provided the only solid basis for a genuine social contract. *Emile* modelled an ideal for how this should go.

As fitting an education for naturalness, *Emile* was set in the countryside, where it followed its protagonist through the unfolding stages of his education. The initial focus was sensory; he was encouraged to be explorative and to follow his instincts. At this time, 'the tutor' (Rousseau) remained in the background, intervening invisibly to ensure the child's environment was kept pure. Later, when matters turned to physical dexterity, he matched Emile to the craft skills that suited the aptitudes he had displayed when younger. Only when 'the tutor' believed his character fully formed, and no longer vulnerable to malignant influences, was Emile allowed to read books or travel beyond his home surrounds.[34]

Writing 20 years later, Godwin, who tried his own hand at running a school, found much to admire:

The state of society is incontestably artificial; the power of one man over another must always be derived from convention, or from conquest; by nature we are equal [...] Modern education not only corrupts the heart of our youth, by the rigid slavery to which it condemns them, it also undermines their reason, by the unintelligible jargon with which they are overwhelmed in the first instance.[35]

On the other hand, he rejected Rousseau's anti-intellectualism, considering it entirely contradictory to the goal of independence of mind. In his essay 'Of Learning', while conceding a certain amount of conceit and folly could be found in bookworms, he lamented the recent fashion for 'natural genius':

we have been told that a persevering habit of reading, kills the imagination, and narrows the understanding; that it overloads the intellect with the notions of others and prevents it digesting

[32] Harriet Ward, 'Colin', in Ward et al., *Remembering Colin Ward* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2010), 21.

[33] Colin Ward, *Influences* (Bideford: Resurgence Books, 1991), 13–47.

[34] Jean Jacques Rousseau, tr., Barbara Foxley, *Emile* (London: JM Dent, 1921).

[35] William Godwin, *An Account of the Seminary That Will Be Opened on Monday the Fourth Day of August, at Epsom in Surrey, for the Instruction of Twelve Pupils in the Greek, Latin, French and English Languages* (T Cadell, London: 1783).

them, and, by still stronger reason prevents it from unfolding its native powers that the man who would be original and impressive, must meditate rather than hear, and walk rather than read.

He had stern words for the self-educated[36] who read voraciously but without discrimination ('such persons are often wholly, perhaps always very considerably, deficient in the art of reasoning. There is no sufficient arrangement in their arguments or lucidness in their order') and recommended, instead, a 'true mode of reading'. 'If we mix our reflections with what we read', he explained,

if we dissect the ideas and the arguments of our author [.] if we compare part with part, detect his error, new model his systems, adopt so much of him as is excellent and explain within ourselves the reason for our disapprobation as to what is otherwise based on systematic and method[37]

then we need not fear reading too much. For Godwin, reasoning was a social, not a private, activity, a negotiation between a changing world and a changeable self. Real autonomy lay in training the mind to mediate this process. Confined within an artificially controlled environment, this could not be done with any seriousness.

It was here he considered Rousseau's 'series of tricks' most failed his student. His was 'a puppet-show exhibition of which the master holds the wires, and the scholar is never to imagine that his instructor is wiser than himself', but outside the shelter of the nursery was that sufficient to prepare the child for a world which would frequently resist their will? What scope did it leave for further growth? Moreover, by fixing an ideal of the child, the 'real' young person, with their unique bundle of cares and concerns, was easily overlooked.[38] Rather than commend a particular programme of education, Godwin proposed instead some rules of thumb: education must aim at awakening the mind but also at cultivating certain mental habits including perseverance (as a guard against natural indolence), discrimination, and good memory.

Reclaiming this reputably 'cold' rationalist as an inspired, empathetic educational thinker won the admiration of his Garnett tutors. 'Mr Ward is very intelligent' with a 'rich cultural background', read the principal's report confirming his qualification with distinction in educational theory, further to this he was 'absolutely reliable and very likeable [...] a most acceptable member of any staff- room'.[39] And the staffroom he joined shortly after qualifying was in Wandsworth Technical College where he was charged with directing apprentice engineers in a supplementary programme of liberal studies.

The introduction of Liberal Studies into technical training courses was a response to a 1956 White Paper which reported that the typical FE students lacked general knowledge and the thinking skills necessary for them to adapt to the demands of a fast-changing workplace. Consequently, Circular 323 recommended that courses include project work, free inquiry into the broader implications of a student's chosen trade, and the cultivation of habits of reflection. For many FE lecturers, this did nothing to combat the stigma that technical training was not intellectually rigorous.[40]

[36] Rousseau was an autodidact.

[37] William Godwin, 'Of Learning', *The Enquirer* (1797), 351–367.

[38] William Godwin, 'The Unhappiness of Youth', *The Enquirer*, 166.

[39] 'Garnett College: Report on Colin Ward', Miscellaneous, CWP/ARCH03180, IISH.

[40] Derek Gillard, 'Further Education', www.educationengland.org.uk/history/chapter12.html [last accessed 9 October 2021].

Ward, with his background in architecture, was ideal for such a role, easily able to link engineering to a wider social context. His own dismal memories of formal schooling aroused a natural empathy towards the apprentices which, combined with his patience and good humour, allowed him an easy rapport with them. Wandsworth, as a workplace, also suited him. In later years, describing it as a 'ramshackle organisation' (which from anyone else might have been a criticism, but from Ward was a compliment), and retained great affection for Mr Robertshaw, a former pupil who stayed on, eventually becoming chief technician, and unofficially running the place; 'in the absence of a principal, he signed and wrote all the letters'.[41]

Nevertheless, an uneasy hour of Liberal Studies crudely levered into the week was never going to achieve Morris or Kropotkin's synthesis of brain and manual work. To this end, the job could be frustrating, exacerbated by the fact that after a decade of compulsory schooling, his students seemed to lack even the most basic of practical information.[42] Sticking to his principles, he would ask the students what they wanted to know about, usually receiving the replies: sex, safe drinking, the police and their rights, and sleep. Perhaps they were testing him, but he took them at their word, finding resources and devising activities inspired by their requests. In 'How Does a Householder Hold His House?', for example, he led the class on a walking tour of Roehampton, where most of them lived, to investigate different forms of homeownership, explaining what architectural styles could reveal about ownership patterns in their local area.[43]

Other projects, like his efforts to tackle racist attitudes amongst his students, were more gruelling. In the late 50s, Ward had covered the 1958 Notting Hill race riots for *Freedom* and, following the racially motivated murder of Kelso Cochrane on May 17 1959, he wrote a further series of articles on the topic. In the first, 'Scapegoats of Notting Hill', he argued that the white working-class Teddy Boys blamed as the main perpetrators of racial violence were only symptoms, not sources, of a much deeper national prejudice. Proposals for tougher legislation would do nothing; they would certainly not touch figures like 'Sir' Oswald Mosley who kept their racism within the letter of the law. Nor would it break through the 'appalling silence of the good people'. 'People who are not indifferent', he appealed, 'who do not want to shrug their responsibilities on to the law, the police, or the government, want to find, not scapegoats but solutions. They want not to punish, but to cure'.[44] This, however, required a deeper understanding of the situation than most politicians or public commentators had so far been willing to give it.

He followed this with the 'Collapsing Environment' which switched focus to the role of economic deprivation and environmental decline in fuelling prejudice and racial violence. The following week, 'Cultures of the Gang' examined the teenage gang as an 'unofficial' social institution, a mechanism for those marginalised by mainstream society to regain status. Taken ensemble, these pieces firmly placed the burden of the problem on social factors, poverty, deprivation, and marginalisation.

In making this assessment, Ward followed an influential strand of race-relations sociology, particularly the work of race-relations researchers Kenneth Little, AH Richmond, and Michael

[41] Colin Ward to Godfrey Golzen, 2 September 1986, 'Letters Misc 1980s', CWP/ ARCH03180, IISH.
[42] David Goodway and Colin Ward, *Talking Anarchy* (Oakland: PM Press, 2014), 74.
[43] Colin Ward, 'A Housing Project in Roehampton', *Bulletin of Environmental Education*, November 1973.
[44] Colin Ward, 'The Scapegoats of Notting Hill', *Freedom*, 30 May 1959.

Banton.[45] In their respective studies, Richmond and Banton[46] had concluded that difficulties in inter-racial relations were 'not to any significant extent the outgrowth of an irrational force deep down in the individual psyche' and that 'British behaviour towards the immigrants is a rational response to the customary meaning of colour, and that custom can be changed by conscious policy'.[47] While this was the sort of optimistic news community leaders and policy makers wanted to hear, it rather curiously marginalised the issue of race, transforming it, instead, into a matter of insider-outsider relations.[48]

Ward, by quoting these men as authorities on the subject, appeared to share the desire to replace the bewildering irrationality of prejudice for a soluble social puzzle, but he was sceptical of Banton and Richmond's faith in education, the dispelling of myths and systematic instruction of each in the ways of the other, as a tool for successful social assimilation. Not only did this suppose that cultural identities were stable entities that could be easily transmitted, rather than abstractions in states of flux, but, as he argued in his final instalment, 'Walls of Prejudice',

one thing the American experience teaches us is that propaganda has little or no effect. You can't sell tolerance like a soap powder. Moral persuasion is out too. The brotherhood and do-good themes should be avoided. Most people abhor being uplifted.[49]

People did not change their minds without first changing their feelings, and feelings changed slowly, over time, with experience. This, in turn, required interventions at a strictly personal level. Quoting from Italian radical journalist Andrea Caffi, he imagined 'some constructive enterprise carried out in common' through which friendships would be strengthened and community life reconstructed accordingly. In the meantime, he advised, the unprejudiced, 'by discovering their neighbours, can help to liberate [the prejudiced], and may even release the springs of energy and aspiration for social change which prejudice has imprisoned'.[50]

During his time at Wandsworth, tensions resurfaced in response to the Race Relations Acts in 1965 and 1968. Now, as a lecturer, he attempted some of the liberatory practice he had recommended. *Anarchy* 59 ran 'Black Marks in the Classroom' by 'Philip Ward' (a Liberal Studies lecturer in London),[51] recounting his attempt to confront racist attitudes expressed by his students by using the rational inquiry method. Waiting for the topic to emerge of its own accord, which, in the heated atmosphere of mid-60s London, it soon did, he set about probing the prejudicial assumptions which routinely peppered his student's casual talk while, at the same time, listening to *how* his students spoke about different cultures. What sort of 'trouble' did 'Blacks' cause, he asked them, could they be more specific? They could not, but, when confronted, simply repeated stereotypes. What proof had they for asserting that West Indian households were 'dirty'?[52] They had none but insisted that 'everyone knows that'. In fact, all the phrases his stu-

[45] Colin Ward, 'Walls of Prejudice', *Freedom*, 13 June 1959. Kenneth Little, Michael Banton, and AH Richmond are directly referenced in 'Walls of Prejudice', Banton is quoted. See Michael Banton, 'White and Coloured', *The Listener*, 3 April 1959. See also Kenneth Little, *Colour and Common Sense*, Fabian Tract 315 (1958).

[46] AH Richmond, *Colour Prejudice in Britain: A Study of West Indian Workers in Liverpool, 1941—1951* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1954); Michael Banton, *White and Coloured: The Behaviour of British People towards the Coloured Immigrants* (Oxford: Alden Press, 1959).

[47] Michael Banton, *White and Coloured*, 187.

[48] David Mills, *Difficult Folk: A Political History of Anthropology* (Oxford: Berghan Books, 2008), 142–143.

[49] Colin Ward, 'Walls of Prejudice'.

[50] Ibid.

[51] This was probably Colin Ward but I have been unable to confirm this.

[52] Philip Ward, 'Black Marks in the Classroom', *Anarchy* 59, January 1966.

dents used when discussing any ethnic minority group were 'set pieces' with no specificity to them; 'the boy in class who receives the applause of his listeners' he observed, 'is the one who can combine the phrases and the jokes about colour in a witty permutation'.[53]

This was painstaking work which, for all the effort, yielded little. Intense discussion dispelled some misinformation, but neither facts nor reasoning could budge their attitudes. By the age of 17 or 18, he feared,

it may be too late to introduce a new method of evaluating the environment, that is, to replace a largely emotive by a predominantly rational technique. This would be particularly difficult where the phraseology and the thoughts about colour have become so stereotyped and hardened that they form, as suggested earlier, a significant part of a working class folklore and mythology.[54]

Disheartening though it might have been to experience first-hand, it made a good *Anarchy* case study for showing that 'the applicability of observation, hypothesis construction, experimental testing and law making' was more appropriate to the natural sciences, where there was 'no emotional involvement'[55] than to the social ones where there was.

Another experience, private rather than professional this time, also brought home the difficulty of dealing with troubled youth and youth in trouble. In 1970, married and living in Schubert Street with his family, he remained close to Vera's two sons back in Ellerby Street; the eldest was then 20, the younger 18. Life seemed to be blossoming; both had completed schooling, the elder settling into a job as a librarian, the younger 'going steady' with a girlfriend who he hoped to marry and working towards an apprenticeship in carpentry. To the considerable relief of all, Vernon Richards and Peta Edsall had relocated to a smallholding in the Suffolk countryside.

Then, for the younger brother, things started to unravel. He fell out with superiors on the construction site he had been placed on and began to avoid work. He took to drinking heavily with friends in the pub of an evening. Late one night in early spring, he awoke to find himself in hospital badly injured with no memory of how he got there. It transpired that he had stolen a car and, despite being unable to drive, taken it for a joyride. He had crashed into a parked oil tanker, written off the car, and almost killed himself in the process. Even if the court was lenient, the incident, not the first of its kind, meant trouble, the likely loss of his apprenticeship and his hopes for steady employment. Naturally, it was Ward, not his uncle, whom he turned to for help.

Ward did all an affectionate guardian could. He telephoned a firm of solicitors and wrote out the details of the case as far as he could glean them. He arranged a private payment to the car owner and wrote pleading the young man's case to the Chief Medical Officer at the remand centre where he had been transferred. There was no trace of anarchist bravado in this correspondence, no suggestion that the Chief Medical Officer or the courts consider their own delinquency, or that the youth's behaviour was an understandable response to a repressive society. By contrast, he made all possible efforts to stress his respectability in the most conventional terms: the young man came from a solid background; in addition to Ward and Harriet ('my wife'), he had a brother working in a library, and his girlfriend was a 'hard-working girl with an office job'. At school he

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid. His argument about the intractability of aspects in working-class culture picked up on similar themes emphasised in the Newsom report. See Ken Jones, *Beyond Progressive Education* (London: Macmillan Press, 1983), 42–43. The social distinctions between the use of language for rational inquiry and for emotional expression is drawn from Basil Bernstein, *Class Codes and Control* (1971).

[55] Philip Ward, 'Black Marks'.

had been 'a happy and well-behaved child', if not academically gifted, and as an adolescent 'good natured, guileless and extroverted'.[56]

Odd for an anarchist, perhaps, but this was not his future to risk on defiance. Second chances, in the existing system, were rarely forthcoming. The young man did become a carpenter, in the end, although it would not be true to say the incident was the last of its kind. In short, the whole episode was a reminder that no matter how generously interpreted, how contextualised and rationalised, delinquency was frustrating, as hard to deal with for the families as for the individual in question.

Anarchist Schoolbooks

In the late 60s, Ward, now something of a radical elder, found himself sought out for media appearances and new writing opportunities. The younger writers, encountered through the Peace Movement and published in *Anarchy*, were developing their own careers in journalism and publishing and eager to return the favour. Richard Mabey, who had become a commissioning editor for Penguin Education, the newest of Penguin's ventures, asked him to write a textbook for school leavers as part of a new *Connexions* series.

It was an attractive offer; ten years earlier, he had written in *Freedom* lamenting the lack of left-wing children's literature:

If we advocate children's stories with an anarchist or pacifist slant to them we are told that it is somehow improper to expose children to propaganda, as though they were not exposed everyday of their lives to the propaganda of the churches, the advertising agents, the armed forces, the government, and the status quo generally. By all means let them have their inoculative doses of bellicosity, religiosity and uplift of glorification of violence of snobbery of genteel triviality … But what a change it would be to be able to offer them something in which the implicit assumptions and values were those that meant most to us.[57]

Despite this, a textbook, as conventionally understood, might not have seemed the most promising place to start anarchising the young, but then Penguin Education was no conventional venture; it aimed at nothing less than a complete reinvention of the schoolbook.[58]

As the West Drayton Collective explained in their group memoir, 'Penguin Education was the last bold initiative of Allen Lane, the founder of Penguin Books, his aim was "to carry the radical and populist spirit of Pelicans into the schoolbook market"'.[59] Lane, with brothers Richard and John, founded Penguin in 1935 with the modest aim of making serious literature and ideas more accessible to the reading public by printing in paperback books that had already sold well in clothbound editions. In May 1937, the success led the Lanes to launch Pelican, a series of reprints of educational works which included works like Halevy's *History of the English People*, Huxley's *Essays in Popular Science*, even Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*, and then to consequently commission original titles, extending the democratic principle from material form into a distinctive writing style characterised by clear, non-technical prose.

[56] Colin Ward letter to Chief Medical Officer, 'Letters 1960s and 1970s', CWP/ ARCH03180, IISH.

[57] Colin Ward, 'Prejudice towards Roses', *Freedom*, 29 December 1957.

[58] West Drayton Collective, *This Once Was Us: The Life and Death of Penguin Education* (London: The Penguin Collectors Society, 2018).

[59] West Drayton Collective, *This Once Was Us*, 9.

Penguin Education was to do for schoolbooks what Pelicans had done for adult learners, covering everything from project books for classroom use to the Penguin Education Specials, slim volumes bristling with radical theories, experiments, and polemics. The new team, mostly left-leaning graduates and eager to translate the political energy of their student years into their work, embraced their mission enthusiastically.[60] With the transition to comprehensive education firmly on the political agenda, alongside the findings of Newsom and Plowden, progressive approaches to teaching and learning not only had more licence but a ready market of schools and teachers eager for as many resources as possible. The team set out to provide 'those who came from non-bookish backgrounds high quality content'.[61] 'It's hard now to capture the climate of progressive educational ideas in which we worked' former commissioning editor Kathy Henderson reflected, 'or imagine that time before the national curriculum took over. Ideas were humming'.[62]

Ward had long been a Penguin enthusiast.[63] Like the critic Richard Hoggart, a near contemporary, he regarded the 'paperback revolution' as a landmark in the democratisation of British culture.[64] As a print enthusiast, he was fascinated by the practical implications of combining stylish design with mass production, and as an autodidact, another graduate of 'Penguin University',[65] he not only cherished his old *Mutual Aid* Pelican but had learnt the history of his trade through JM Richards' *Introduction to Modern Architecture* and Lionel Brett's *Houses*.[66] Now, as head of liberal studies at Wandsworth, working with young men from 'nonbookish backgrounds', he knew exactly who they were aiming at and a little something about how to hook them.

Over five years, he worked on three books, two for Mabey's *Connexions*, *Violence* (1970) and *Work* (1972), and one for Henderson's *Human Space*, *Utopia* (1974). The *Connexions* series recruited prominent authors and broadcasters to write on topical social issues. Aside from Ward, journalist Kenneth Allsop wrote on the environment, novelist Jackie Gillot on marriage, and *Z-Cars* screenwriter Ray Jenkins on *The Lawbreakers*. Applying student-centred learning principles to the design, the booklets had a magazine quality (a combination of *Jackie* and *Picture Post*[67]), with high visual content. Text was accompanied by photographs, newspaper clippings, extracts from fiction, film stills, adverts, cartoons, and sketches. None of this implied trivialisation. The point was to recognise the different modes of literacy their intended readers had and, by then translating complex arguments into forms familiar to them, give them greater control over the material. Not that the images and extracts were passive heuristics. Sometimes they supplemented the arguments of the main text but at others, they were subversive, suggesting problems, contradictions, or counter ideas. Confronted with such variety and contradiction, the reader was forced to construct their own meaning.[68]

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[60] Jonathan Croall, private communication with author, October 2019.

[61] Francesca Greenoak in West Drayton Collective, *This Once Was Us*, 13.

[62] Ibid., 58.

[63] Colin Ward, '21 Years on Penguin Island', *Freedom*, 18 August 1956.

[64] See Richard Hoggart, 'Allen Lane and Penguins', in Hoggart, *An English Temper* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1982), 119—124.

[65] Ibid., 119.

[66] Colin Ward, '21 Years on Penguin Island'.

[67] West Drayton Collective, *This Once Was Us*, 21.

[68] Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text* (Paris: Editions du Suiell, 1973). This idea corresponds to Barthes' notion of a writerly text as one where the reader takes an active role in the composition of meaning.

Connexions were not, of course, 'Anarchist' propaganda in any *official* sense but it did not take Ward much effort to nudge them towards his anarchist point of view. *Violence*, responding to media hysteria over youth crime, began by explaining that the three most common explanations for violence were that it was (a) 'a law of nature' that nothing could be done about, (b) 'an instinct' that could be controlled, or (c) 'a learned behaviour' which came about through living in a violent world. 'There is plenty of evidence to support each of these points of view', he said dutifully, and then devoted the rest of the book to showing how violence was learned through the imposition of gendered roles in childhood, routinised through corporal punishment in schools, glorified in war and competitive sports, fetishised in movies, and exacerbated by repression and deprivation. 'It would be hypocrisy', he concluded, 'to condemn violence without opposing the conditions that make people take to violence as a solution to their problems or as a reaction to injustice'.[69]

Work, published two years later, was even less ambivalent: 'Is it *natural* for men to work? … *We* don't know, because there is really no such thing as a natural man nor such a thing as human nature'.[70] Ideas about work were always historically conditioned:

The change in ideas about work is known by historians as the rise of the Protestant Work Ethic, because it, and the industrial system, came first in the countries where the Protestant form of Christianity had taken over from the traditional Catholic attitudes.[71]

Beneath the text, a collage of 19th-century proverbs — 'Time Is Money', 'A Stitch in Time Saves Nine' — depicted how this ethic had slipped its original theological moorings to become part of 'common-sense'.

Now, in the 1970s, this ethic was, apparently, on its way out, and, by the time readers reached their 40s:

they will have to be paid a living wage, whether they work or not, and that for the first time in human history ordinary people will have the choice which was available only to the rich and powerful in the past.[72]

To help with that choice, he presented three possible work futures taken from across the ideological spectrum. First, the Communist model which retained compulsory work but eliminated division of labour. Second, the orthodox Liberal model which retained work but offered reduced hours and more leisure time. Both had their attractions, but maintained conventional definitions of work, only attempting to sweeten the deal rather than change it. Neither asked themselves, much less answered, the question of 'why a man, after a hard day's work, went home and enjoyed digging in his garden?'[73] The answer, Ward supplied, was because there he was free, unsupervised, and self-directed; there he was creating something for himself. This brought him to his final, anarchist future of full workers' control which would mean more than doing a variety of jobs or having more holidays but deciding for themselves what should be made and how. Should any readers remain unconvinced, he included a role-play exercise in collective decision making for the workplace.[74]

Utopia, aimed at 11—14-year-olds studying geography, introduced utopia as an expression of private ideals which told you a lot about the people who thought them up. The only problem was

[69] Colin Ward, *Violence* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Education, 1970), 63.
[70] Colin Ward, *Work* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Education, 1972), 4
[71] Ibid., 19.
[72] Ibid., 43.
[73] Ibid., 59.
[74] Ibid., 62.

that they 'usually imagine themselves as the rulers and the rest of us as the ruled'.[75] The trouble really began when those people attempted to put them into practice. From here he moved into a history of city planning, arriving at the contemporary predicament of urban overcrowding, over-expansion, over-consumption, and the domination of the motorcar. The ideal of the people who created this sort of city, he reasoned, invoking the Goodman brothers' *Communitas* (1947), was 'MORE'. By contrast, those horrified by 'MORE' sought imaginative refuge in the countryside. If they had money they bought weekend homes there. If they had influence, they promoted rural conservation to prevent the further encroachment of development. For everyone else that meant rising house prices and fewer jobs, forcing them back towards the overcrowded city. To resolve the impasse, he turned to William Morris, Peter Kropotkin, and Ebenezer Howard, 'three wise utopians of the nineteenth century',[76] who had attempted to combine the best of both worlds, city and country, the industrial and the pastoral, in artisan communities, federated communes, and garden cities.

Despite the neat synthesis, Morris, Kropotkin, and Howard were not the end of this story. In chapter six, 'The do-it-yourself utopia kit', he flipped the issue on its head. 'Our enjoyment of life', he wrote, 'doesn't just depend on where we live, many people, if you asked them to tell you their private dream of a good life would reply, "I just want a chance to do my own thing in my own way"'.[77] His utopia, then, was not about dreaming up an ideal space for everyone (no matter how sensibly planned) but in giving everyone the space to dream for themselves.

Utopia was published just before the axe fell on Penguin Education. Following Lane's death in 1970, Penguin was taken over by Pearson-Longman who identified Penguin Education as one of four 'problematic' divisions. Despite numerous glowing press reviews (even *The Times* welcomed 'the intelligent expression given to progressive ideas'[78]), and even, from 1970, signs of modest profitability,[79] the decision was made to close it down, to integrate the Education Specials and Higher Education books with existing lists, discontinue the schoolbooks, and make the 42 staff redundant. All protests fell on deaf ears. Ward acquired 2,000 copies of the *Human Space* series and distributed them to as many schools as he could.

'Penguins', Hoggart remarked gloomily in 'Allen Lane and Penguins' (1970), his memorial essay to Lane, 'will go down as one of the last expressions of the liberal dream'.[80] He referred to the balance Lane had contrived between social mission and commercial popularity, his faith that it was possible to 'make contact' through clear communication, that 'good popularisation is not a watering down'.[81] This, Hoggart suggested, had been lost with its creator. Certainly, the unpleasant collision between a market-minded management and the politically motivated Penguin Education editors seems to support this reading of division and change. In fact, Penguin, it has been argued, provides an exceptional lens into the breakdown of post-war consensus on social democracy, the collapse of the 'meritocratic moment', and the increasing polarisation between right and left which came to a head in 1979.[82]

[75] Colin Ward, *Utopia* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Education, 1974), 9.
[76] Ibid., 105.
[77] Ibid., 114.
[78] Quoted in West Drayton Collective, *That Once Was Us*, 77.
[79] Ibid., 75.
[80] Richard Hoggart, 'Allen Lane and Penguins', in *An English Temper* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1982), 122.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Dean Blackburn, *Penguin Books and Political Change* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020).

Whether such consensus was always more apparent than actual has long been subject to debate[83] but, especially in the case of Penguin, *appearance* is what mattered. To say that writers of the early Penguin/Pelican Specials (1930s—40s), which included radical socialist thinkers like GDH Cole, HW Nevinson, HN Brailsford, and the Communist MP William Gallagher, were unified in their commitment to 'a gradualist programme of reform'[84] is to conflate a conviction about social change with a way of talking about social change. Arguably, the shift that occurred in the late 60s was rhetorical as much as anything else. Whereas an older generation of authors wrote for a largely adult autodidactic[85] readership and believed in appealing to common values, a younger generation understood their audience to be a swelling population of students, graduates, and young professionals who were receptive to, and even craved, intellectual novelty.

The Penguin Education schoolbooks capture this fusion well. The innovations with form attempted in series like *Connexions* clearly continued the earlier commitment to clear communication, only expanded to take greater account of how their intended readers (young people) already communicated amongst themselves. On the other hand, these were schoolbooks featuring Kropotkin and openly advocating for workers' control, mana for passionate young teachers graduating with BEds post-Plowden and Newsom, their shelves already groaning with the Specials: *School Is Dead*, *Deschooling Society*, and *Education for Democracy*.

There is a close affinity between propaganda and education in that both are acts of persuasive communication, that is, attempts to connect people with values and ideas that they will act upon. In some respects, however, propaganda is the more honest work because there you have a tacit licence to be partisan. This is less clear in education; even if you accept that total objective impartiality is an impossibility, there is still, at the least, a responsibility to declare your position and not to obscure competing ones. When you undertake to educate, you commit to sharing all you know not just the highlights.

Many years later, Ward claimed proudly 'that my *Work* book was the only honest schoolbook about work that by that time had been written'. Still, something played on his mind:

I had a letter from a reader. He had read that book, not as a schoolchild but as an employed adult. It had changed his life, he said, and he had never worked since. Should I have been gratified or horrified? He meant of course, that he had ceased to be employed by somebody else and was working for himself and his family. But suppose he had read it, under some kind of compulsion at school. Writers tend to be resourceful and adaptable. Readers could be anyone. Should the former seek to influence the latter by inciting a course of action which is appropriate for some but could disastrous for others? Or do we all possess a mental filtering device which sifts out suggestions which do not speak to our conditions.[86]

He could never be sure that his readers were all properly trained in the Godwinian method of judicious reading (in the case of *Work* it was unlikely), alert to the hidden construction marks of

[83] Ben Pimlott, Dennis Kavanagh, and Peter Morris, 'Is the Post-War Consensus a Myth?', *Contemporary Record* 2, 6 (1989), 12—15; Harriet Jones and Michael Kandiah, eds., *The Myth of Consensus: New Views on British History 1945—64* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996); Brian Harrison, 'The Rise, Fall and Rise of Political Consensus in Britain since 1940', *History*, 84:274 (1999), 301–324.

[84] Dean Blackburn, 'Penguin and the "Marketplace" of Ideas', in Lawrence Black et al., eds., *Reassessing 1970s Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 234.

[85] Referring, in this case, to those not attending formal education beyond compulsory levels.

[86] Colin Ward, *Influences*, 10.

composition. Simply urging young people to ‘do- it-themselves’, no matter how well intentioned, was not the same as cultivating autonomy as a habit of mind.

10. The Drone's Tale

The Town and Country Planning Association has received grants to launch an environmental education service for schools. Applications are invited for the post of Education Officer whose responsibility will be to determine the precise nature of the service that is required.[1]

It was an ideal match. Given his commitment to maximising individual autonomy in social life, practical environmental education was key. For anarchy to become even remotely a reality, people needed to be able to master their environments, not in the sense of total control (dominance, aside from being repressive, was inefficient, demanding vast amounts of energy to maintain its systems), but in terms of possessing practical and imaginative capacities for adapting to a space. When aimed at resourcefulness rather than forcefulness, environmental education was crucial for social independence. From a propagandist perspective, the job engaged a large non-'Radical' audience. The education unit of the TCPA offered an elegant margin, close to schools, to teachers, and through them to the next generation, but still a healthy distance away from institutionalised education. This, then, was a perfect opportunity for Ward's distinctive DIY anarchy and one particularly well suited to the times.

Environmental Education

The 1970s are often portrayed as a decade under siege, blighted by low economic growth, soaring inflation, public spending cuts, rising unemployment, union militancy, oil crises, angry punks, hooligans, IRA insurgency, and pervasive discontent. Buffeted by disaster, the dream of a British social democracy appeared to be eroding fast, a situation poignantly reflected by the fate of the New Towns during this time. Those built in the first flurry of activity after the 1946 act remained unfinished. With a freeze on further development spending, they seemed condemned to stagnancy, a sad relic of abandoned ambition.

Meanwhile, planning, far from being the lifeblood of progressive development, languished in local government departments. Planners were no longer the harbingers of public improvement but callous bureaucrats, motivated by profit and uninterested in regional planning principles.[2] The problem of inner-city overcrowding was resolved by tower blocks, urban regeneration meant tarmac, concrete, motorways, and out-of-town shopping precincts, leaving old high streets and marketplaces to decay.[3]

But the decade can also be seen as a period of dynamic transition, a fact reflected by the upsurge in left-wing militancy via strong trade unions and burgeoning social movements. It was a point at which many believed the country took its most decisive steps towards a 'post-industrial' future (defined here as an economy no longer rooted in heavy industry and manufacturing), with

[1] *Town and Country Planning Journal* (TCPJ), October-December 1970.

[2] David Eversley, *The Planner in Society: The Changing Role of a Profession* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973).

[3] Gordon Cherry, 'The Consensus Breaks', in Cherry, *Town Planning in Britain since 1900: The Rise and Fall of the Planning Ideal* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 169–189.

all the attendant political, social, and cultural implications that such a change entailed.[4] What that 'post-industrial' future was to look like, however, was subject to debate. Down one path lay business, finance, and the cult of 'enterprise' that would define the Thatcher years. Down another, almost diametrically opposed, a flourishing green politics.

Environmental consciousness was not a new phenomenon. As a critique of unchecked industrialisation (and, with that, alienation from the natural world), it was always half of the modernity's double helix,[5] a continuous thread linking the Romantic poets, later Morris, and on through the simple lifers, mass trespassers, and Soil Association founders of the following century. Now, against the spreading disfigurement of British cities, towns, and countryside, in conjunction with mounting international concern about the long-term impacts of environmental destruction,[6] it assumed a fresh urgency.[7]

In Britain, conservation societies mushroomed. In five years, National Trust membership more than quadrupled.[8] While enthusiasm for heritage was politically pluralist,[9] this did not erase ideological fault-lines so much as entangle them, just as in the early 50s environmental concern had united a Conservative like HJ Massingham with the leftist garden writer Edward Hyams (see Chapter 6). Both men lamented the destruction of the natural world in the name of 'progress' but diverged on the question of remedy. Whereas the former looked back to a preindustrial past and the lost social order it represented, the latter sought to pick and choose, to synthesise the principles of human creativity enshrined in the modern with the values of care and restraint inscribed into the pastoral ideal, anticipating what would now be called 'sustainable development'. In the early 70s, Hyam's synthesising spirit found successors in Richard Mabey's *Unofficial Countryside* (1973) and Nan Fairbrother's *New Lives and Landscapes* (1971), both of whom also found poetry in the margins between rurality and urbanity.

When it came to resisting some species or other of callous development, blunter instruments were required. The newly formed conservation societies, voluntary associations, and community groups had little choice but to lay aside social and political divisions during often protracted battles against developers. There were some palpable successes, a relief road across Christ Church Meadow in Oxford was blocked, as was a tunnel under the centre of Bath. The proposal to locate Britain's third airport in the Bedfordshire village of Cublington was also scotched. While such groups showed promise, even power, they had limitations, not least because their energy, voluntarily given, was often quickly drained through the arduous tussles with bureaucracy. Moreover, the need to continually fight through legislative channels restricted activity to an articulate minority reasonably versed in the intricacies of planning procedures with access to private means

[4] Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton, 'Introduction. The Benighted Decade?', in Black and Pemberton, eds., *Reassessing 1970s Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 17.

[5] Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2000).

[6] The first Earth Day was held in 1970 and the United Nation's first environmental conference was held in Stockholm in 1972. The first International Environmental Education Workshop took place in Belgrade in 1975. In Britain, Barbara Ward published *Spaceship Earth* (1966), and Gordon Rattray Taylor published *The Doomsday Book: Can the World Survive?* (1970). *The Ecologist* magazine launched in 1970. In spring 1971 it published its famous 'Blueprint for Survival' edition.

[7] See Meredith Veldman, *Fantasy, the Bomb, and the Greening of Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[8] David Cannadine, 'The National Trust and the National Heritage', in Cannadine, *In Churchill's Shadow: Confronting the Past in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 224–243.

[9] Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory: The Past in Contemporary Britain* (London: Verso, 1994), 242.

to maintain campaigns. For every community that formed a group, there were many who could only look on in helpless frustration.

For the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), these were interesting, challenging times. On the one hand, their championship of the New Towns now seemed ill-judged with the discreditation of planning in public opinion a further blow for their cause. On the other, increased involvement with conservation and residents' groups was proving fruitful if not lucrative.[10] They were active, for example, on the 'third airport issue', giving evidence to the government committee charged with investigating the proposal.[11] This was, then, a time for rethinking, aided by a change in leadership.

In 1967, David Hall, formerly the County Map officer for Durham County Council, assumed the role of director.[12] In 1969, Maurice Ash took over as chairman. Ash was an author and experimental organic farmer married to Ruth Elmhirst, the daughter of Dorothy and Leonard Elmhirst of Dartington Hall, the estate the couple had transformed into a progressive school run on Arts and Crafts principles. After becoming a trustee of Dartington, Ash turned the failing school venture into a craft community based around cider production, later providing a site for Schumacher College.[13]

The two men now wrestled with how to situate the organisation in relation to the government and reformulate its public role. In 1969, their cause received a major boost with the publication of the Skeffington report *People and Planning*. The origins of Skeffington lay in *The Future of Development Plans* published by the Planning Advisory group in 1965[14] which, in turn, took its cues from examining post-war planning policy in America which, by focusing on suburban development, critics claimed, had led to chronic urban degeneration and increased social stratification.[15]

In Britain, parallels with the American situation were hard to ignore. Consequently, Skeffington absorbed the advice of the Advisory group and recommended the need for increased public engagement in planning. This received further impetus through the creation of a distinct Department for the Environment in 1970 and the Town and Country Planning Act (1971) which set the recommendations into policy. On both sides of the Atlantic, however, there was considerable ambiguity around the concept, and practice, of participation.[16] Back in America, planner Sherry Arnstein proposed a ladder of planning participation (1969), which was consequently reprinted in Britain.[17] Arnstein's ladder comprised eight rungs with increasing degrees of authenticity: (1) manipulation, (2) therapy, (3) informing, (4) consultation, (5) placation, (6) partnership, (7) delegated power, and, finally, (8) full citizen control.

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[10] Dennis Hardy, 'The End of the Beginning', in Hardy, *From New Towns to Green Politics* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1991), 84–101.

[11] Peter Self, 'The Airport Equation', *TCPJ*, April-June 1969, 146–148.

[12] 'David Hall', *The Times*, 25 February 2006.

[13] 'Maurice Ash', *The Times*, 6 February 2003.

[14] Peter Shapely, 'Introduction', in The Skeffington Committee, ed., *People and Planning: Report of the Committee on Public Participation in Planning* (Abington: Routledge, 2014).

[15] Jane Jacobs, *The Life and Death of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961). Jacobs was an influential critic of post-war American planning. Her book received positive UK reviews in *Town and Planning Review*, 33:2 (1962), 161; and from Malcolm MacEwan, former editor of the RIBA journal, in *New Society*, October 1962.

[16] Sean Damer and Cliff Hague, 'Public Participation in Planning: A Review', *Town Planning Review, 42:3* (1971), 217–232.

[17] Sherry Arnstein, 'Ladder of Public Participation in Planning', *Journal of the Royal Town Planning Institute*, 35:4 (1971), 216–224.

Buoyed by the shift in political mood, the TCPA rebuilt its strategy around the concept of 'People and Planning' along with its existing advocacy in political circles; it now proposed to substantially develop the educational dimension of its work, expanding to include young people through schools and university networks. In one sense, this was a straightforward endorsement of Skeffington but, in another, they made an important distinction on the definition of participation and the implications of this for education. Skeffington too had pressed the case for education, suggesting, for example, that close liaison should be maintained between education and planning departments:

in order that knowledge about the physical planning of the community may be made available as part of the outward-looking curriculum which has been recommended in several reports on education … Lessons on such subjects will come to life most vividly where children feel involved.[18]

But when held against Arnstein's ladder, this view advanced no higher than informing and consultation, rungs three and four. Whilst there was a practical need to demystify planning procedures as they currently operated in the here and now (the TCPA later pursued this for adults through their innovative Planning Aid programme), in the long term, focusing solely on transmitting information about the existing system only reinforced the idea that planning was a specialist occupation. Moreover, it evaded important questions about the *politics* of planning education.

Having anticipated Skeffington's findings at their October conference in 1968, the TCPA soft-launched their offensive in an issue of *Town and Country Planning Journal* (*TCPJ*) on 'Children and Planning'. Keith Wheeler, a senior lecturer in geography at Leicester College of Education, noted that the three key education reports of the last decade — Crowther 1959, Newsom 1963, and Plowden 1967 — had all endorsed environmental education. Lady Plowden herself addressed 'The Plight of the Priority Areas', Peter Willmott from the Institute of Community Studies contributed on 'East End Adolescents and Planning', and former Labour MP Peggy Jay shared the story of the London Adventure Playground Association.[19] The editorial by former Chair and TCPA grandee Frederic Osborn spoke of the radical planner as someone who gave full consideration to community, to human needs and concerns, especially those of the deprived, concluding that what he found most inspiring was

that the children themselves are taking a hand, not in the study of towns and the countryside, but in personal participation in works of improvement, and that so many devoted teachers realise the value of this both as a factor in present education and a promise 'for all our future'.[20]

The issue demonstrated that a wealth of ideas lay scattered across the field of urban education which, if joined up, could form part of a strong counter-lobby against unscrupulous development. Working with Wheeler, Hall devised a plan for a TCPA educational unit, the overall aims of which would be to demystify planning and increase understanding of its principles among young people. To achieve this, it would do three things. Firstly, it would produce a news bulletin aimed specifically at teachers. Secondly, it would support the creation of town trails as an urban equivalent to nature trails. Like their rural counterparts, the trails were intended as tools to challenge and hone perception skills. Alongside incorporating Piagetian ideas that perception altered according to an individual's 'age and stage' (a direct nod to Plowden), they also drew

[18] Skeffington Committee, *People and Planning*.

[19] 'Children and Planning', *TCPJ*, October-December 1968.

[20] Ibid., 430–432.

on American architect Kevin Lynch's approach to cognitive mapping which represented the city according to how its residents experienced it.[21] The final objective was to establish Urban Studies Centres (USCs) across the country which, it was hoped, would provide practical hubs for public engagement with planning inquiries.

Funding for an initial two years was secured from Rowntree Memorial Trust and the Elmgant Trust and in early spring 1971 Ward was appointed as Education Officer. He was joined by Anthony Fyson, a geographer and former teacher, as Assistant, later Deputy, Education Officer, and, later, Rose Tanner who came aboard as secretary, later taking over as Assistant. Ward was to be the main editor of the new bulletin which he nicknamed BEE (the *Bulletin of Environmental Education*), immediately providing the team with a rich source of puns (beelines, bee briefs). Alongside producing the *Bulletin*, he and Fyson were to act as TCPA advocates promoting urban environmental education, town trails, and the USCs at conferences nationally and internationally. In May 1971, with the plan in place and the team assembled, the first edition of BEE rolled off the presses and out to as many schools as the budget would allow.

Crafting the Hive

Hall and Ash devised the unit's remit but left the new team to determine its own course. The TCPA's 'People and Planning' strategy committed them to education for active participation in human-centred planning and development which, as the 'Children and Planning' issue had shown, naturally aligned with the progressive agenda championed in education. Ward's job was to promote this. At the same time, believing, like his educational heroes William Godwin and Paul Goodman, that a progressive education was not always, or even necessarily, a libertarian one, his private challenge was to subtly infuse his anarchist perspective, to (re) present de-schooling ideas from being the fancy of idealists to being a sensible approach to environmental education and the TCPA's goal of a participatory planning system. He reprised his favourite methodology, accentuating common ground while gently pushing at the borders.

Streetwork: The Exploding School (1973), co-authored with Fyson, shows how he worked this manoeuvre. Published at the end of the unit's initial two-year funding period, it was partly a summary of their activities but mostly a manifesto, a book about

ideas of the environment as the educational resource, ideas of the enquiring school, the school without walls, the school as a vehicle of citizen participation in environmental decision, ideas above all about a 'problem- orientated' approach to environmental education.[22]

The two men split the chapters with Ward taking all those set outside of formal school settings. His opener, 'Whose Environment?', was headed with a quote from Rousseau's *Emile*, just at the point where the title character is about to embark on his first solo journey into the world:

I do not know whether all my readers will see whither this suggested inquiry will lead us … if Emile returns from his travels … without a full knowledge of questions of government, public morality, and political philosophy of every kind, we are greatly lacking.[23]

[21] Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960).

[22] Anthony Fyson and Colin Ward, 'Preface', in Fyson and Ward, *Streetwork: The Exploding School* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), vii.

[23] Ibid., 1; Jean Jacques Rousseau, tr., Barbara Foxley, *Emile* (London: JM Dent, 1921).

Streetwork too was a departure, from the school to the wider world, from the country to the city, but above all, it was a break from the carefully choreographed education that *Emile* had helped to establish.

Arthur Razzell's *Juniors* (1969) supplied the perfect anecdote to dramatise the distinction. A conscientious young teacher had planned an educational visit to the Tower of London for her pupils where they would be free to roam around the tower equipped with the age- and stage-appropriate quiz sheets she had prepared to guide their attention. In the event, the children were far more interested in the underground station they used on the way to the Tower. In Razzell's story, the teacher sensibly accepted their choice, laid aside her quiz sheets, and turned the underground into a social studies project. The moral was not subtle: *real* child- centred education had to prioritise empirical children, not the theoretical child. Given that what might excite those children was unpredictable, the learning environment needed to be as varied and unconstrained as possible.

If, he argued, streetwork liberated the child, it also liberated the teacher. Released from inhibitive layers of pedagogic theory, they were free to become people rather than merely professionals:

There is a kind of person who has such an enthusiasm for places and so well-developed a feeling for the factors which differentiate one place from another, that we say of them 'To walk down the street with him is an education in itself.' They are able to generate in us their own sense of wonder and excitement about the town and the townscape, and they include a variety of people with no other common factor than this.[24]

In fact, the examples he gave ofthis sort of captivating persona — George Orwell,[25] John Betjeman,[26] Ian Nairn,[27] and Ray Gosling[28] — were not particularly various. They were all male artists with an affection for a particular type of English landscape. But regardless, how exactly did one *train* ordinary teachers to improvise with the skill, intensity, and lyricism of an Orwell or a Betjeman (without the benefit of their private school education)? One could not, but each teacher could ensure that they prepared themselves with as full a knowledge of their local environment as possible.[29] USCs would help by providing a base camp for young explorers as well as a teachers' training hub, community forum, library, and exhibition centre.[30] In the future, he envisaged that all cultural, industrial, and commercial enterprises would include educational facilities on their premises as a matter of course.

In the final chapter, 'Deadsville Revisited', Ward tried his own speculative pedagogy. Deadsville, destroyed after the coming of an out-of-town shopping centre, was experiencing a rejuvenation. At the heart of this lay a streetwork centre which had morphed into a hub of community industry teaming with small enterprises, working groups, and a printing press, all run by school students and adult community members alike. Most active of all was their futurology group, gathering data to inform development planning that benefited the whole

[24] *Streetwork*, 122, 51.

[25] See George Orwell and Peter Davison, eds., *Orwell's England* (London: Penguin, 2001).

[26] See John Betjeman and Stephen Games, eds., *Betjeman's England* (London: John Murray, 2009).

[27] See Ian Nairn, 'Outrage: On the Disfigurement of Town and Countryside', *Architectural Review* (1955); *Nairn's London* (London: Penguin, 1966); *Britain's Changing Towns* (London: British Broadcasting Company, 1967).

[28] See Ray Gosling, *Sum Total* (London: Faber and Fabner, 1962); 'Robin Hood Rides Again: A Rebel Scene', *Anarchy* 38, April 1964.

[29] Anthony Fyson and Colin Ward, *Streetwork*, 122–136.

[30] Ibid., 81–87; see also *Bulletin of Environment Education* 22 and 23.

community. Emile's education, conducted, unwittingly, in thrall to his tutor, taught him to reject urban corruption by retreating into his 'original nature'. The students of Deadsville, by contrast, acted with genuine independence to co-create the town they wanted to live in.[31]

The philosophy of *Streetwork* was deceptively simple: to cultivate an authentic politics of participation it was necessary to concede the practice of it, not merely appear to. Behind the 'hallowed assumption that we learn by doing', he urged, must lie the 'knowledge that by demystifying the manipulation of the environment we are changing the politics of environmental decision making'.[32] This meant including all the tensions and resistances that co-existing with other people always produced rather than hiding or denying them. Teachers, then, had to relinquish control of the learning environment and nurture their own resourcefulness to equip them for any scenario they might encounter with their students.[33]

Appropriately, BEE practised what it preached, championing its philosophy in material form as much as preaching it in content. On the front cover of the first edition, it advised its readers to: 'Pull out the staples, punch it, put in an A4 folder, and BEE becomes your build-it-yourself month by month up-to-date guide to sources and resources for learning about teaching about the environ- ment'.[34] Such a note could have been slipped discreetly into the inside cover but, by making such instructions into a cover design, it set the tone for itself. True to its word, inside was a jumble of articles, project reports, notices, and reviews, colour coded to aid easy harvesting. No detail was missed, even the margins were generous to ease tearing out.

The pair sent the first *Bulletin* out to every school in the country and soon acquired enough subscriptions to sustain production (although not to cover the team's salaries). The interest owed much to timing. Alongside the gathering momentum around environmental education,[35] the raising of the school leaving age to 16 in 1973 left schools facing an extra year of provision for students who did not want to be there. As Ward wrote in his essay for the *Education Without Schools* (1973) collection, this alone was a powerful argument for change:

What will happen when this army of also-rans, no longer cowed by threats, no longer amenable to cajolery, no longer to be bludgeoned by physical violence into sullen acquiescence, grows large enough to prevent the traditional school from functioning with even the semblance of efficiency? […] The crisis of authority in education will make de-schoolers of us all, teachers and classes alike, united in the demand to be somewhere else.[36]

At the same time, left to the organs of state authority, opportunities for deschooling would dwindle to little more than expedients for ridding schools of troublemakers, thus aiding 'the task of grooming the more docile students for their place in the certificated meritocracy'.[37] This made

[31] Anthony Fyson and Colin Ward, *Streetwork*, 114–121.

[32] Colin Ward, 'Education for Mastery of the Environment', *Spazio e Societa*, 4, December 1978.

[33] Colin Ward, 'Education for Resourcefulness: Keynote Lecture, "Education As If People Matter", 4 April 1992', in Wardm *Talking Schools* (London: Freedom Press, 1995), 118. See also, Myrna Margulies Breitbart, 'Inciting Desire, Ignoring Boundaries and Making Space: Colin Ward's Considerable Contribution to Radical Pedagogy, Planning and Social Change', in Catherine Burke and Jen Jones, eds., *Education, Childhood and Anarchism* (Abington: Routledge, 2014).

[34] BEE 1.

[35] William Scott and Paul Vare, *Learning Environment and Sustainable Development: A History of Ideas* (London: Taylor and Francis Group, 2020).

[36] Colin Ward, 'The Role of the State', in Peter Buckman, ed., *Education without Schools* (London: Souvenir Press, 1973), 47.

[37] Ibid., 48.

the role of external, independent groups like the TCPA essential. Here, activity-led, problem-based learning was considered neither politically toothless, nor a soft option to mollify the educational underclass. It was pragmatic *and* intellectually rigorous.

As editor, Ward used his position to make visible the connections between different interest groups and subjects. His main means of doing this was by selecting and arranging the monthly content which, alongside original writing, included relevant pieces that either he or Fyson read in specialist journals (on, for example, planning, architecture, building, or engineering) or official reports, material that schoolteachers were not likely to come across easily. In his own writing, he used his introductory 'COMMENT' column to guide his readers' opinions:

Ought we not [.] be planning for a major proportion of every child's education to take place outside of the confines of the school building? The environmentally conscious teacher will answer with a resounding yes and will find sustenance in several outstanding articles in this issue.[38]

Or occasionally to tick them off a bit. On a Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) summer workshop that never happened:

We think it a shame that when a professional institution, for once, set out to take serious its educative responsibilities to the young [.] the event had to be cancelled for lack of support. The RIBA intends to have another try later this year: watch out for announcements — and respond![39]

He signed these off 'DRONE', a pseudonym which afforded a private smile: the stingless, undervalued little bee devoted to producing the next generation.

He wrote relatively few original articles for BEE himself (he was writing more regularly for TCPJ and the *Architect's Journal*), but among those he did produce were accounts from his own teaching practice at Wandsworth which he used to showcase the streetwork teacher in action. In 'A Housing Study in Roehampton', for example, he described how 'the topic of housing was one of several options offered at the beginning of the year and was high on most students' list of preferences'. This way, he casually let it be known how, as a matter of routine, he involved his students in setting their courses of study. Following a series of discussions on the different types of tenancy, the students began 'volunteering the experiences of their own families'. Given the sensitivities surrounding housing and social class, he advised that teachers allowed confidences to emerge naturally. When they did, he added, 'the actual experience of classmates, coming from their own lips, is usually a more effective teaching aid than the teacher's theoretical presentation'.[40]

The fieldwork component was conducted in Roehampton because that was the borough where most of the students lived and wanted to know about. They made no plan, just walked about pausing over what interested them. Most of their time was spent examining local architecture to discover the hidden patterns of ownership in the area, a topic which Ward's extensive professional knowledge was easily able to furnish. The story, deliberately understated and free of 'theoretical presentation', nevertheless provided an exemplary model of participatory pedagogy (a term he would never have used). Starting from his students' interests and personal experiences, he had guided them in connecting these to the wider socio-political contexts they related to:

Earlier very many members of the class were most keenly interested in the mechanics of house purchase [...] but as the calculations built up on the board made it all too clear that they

[38] Colin Ward, 'Comment', *Bulletin of Environmental Education* 11, 1972.
[39] Colin Ward, 'Comment', *Bulletin of Environmental Education* 28/29, 1973.
[40] Colin Ward, 'A Housing Study in Roehampton', *Bulletin of Environmental Education* 31, 1973.

would be very lucky indeed if their prospective earnings as young adults would put them in the mortgage-fodder section of the population, interest switched to their actual prospects.

Although happy to share his teaching experiences, and being much more theoretically adept than he chose to acknowledge, Ward did not consider himself an educational researcher. He preferred to draw on the work of the unit's network of academic educators like Wheeler, Brain Goodey (Oxford Polytechnic), and Jeff Bishop (Kingston Polytechnic). Ward promoted their work through his lectures and articles, especially when it supported points he wanted to make himself. In 'Childhood and the Perceived City', an article discussing perception theories and their relation to urban studies, he referenced a project conducted by Bishop in which groups of children were asked to draw maps of their hometown from memory. Analysing their work, he noticed that social factors (where they lived, how they travelled to and from school, the relative freedom they had at home) rather than age alone informed the level of sophistication shown in their drawings. While this did not refute Piagetian notions of developmental stages, Bishop argued, it clearly demonstrated the impact of environmental factors on a child's intellectual growth. Ward, with his resistance to any over-determined account of human nature, was only too pleased to quote the study repeatedly.[41]

Outside of the journal, he and Fyson, along with other BEE regulars, like Wheeler and Goodey, maintained a punishing regime of advocacy both nationally and internationally. Looking back over 100 issues, Goodey considered they had had striking success:

BEE clearly reaches places where other journals cannot reach … after articles on the journal I have received letters from geography teachers, planners, architects, museum directors and mums and dads who are somehow in touch with the limited circulation network. People talk about BEE and critically evaluate its proposals.

Although fearing Ward would not appreciate the sentiment, he nevertheless believed that

one of BEE's biggest successes has been in encouraging and directing the development of environmental education in Europe, for this has been achieved through the offices of the Council of Europe and UNESCO, multi-national cultural agencies seldom recognised for their progressive views or efficiency.[42]

Ward, always a reluctant foreign traveller and long-term sceptic of agencies like UNESCO, happily conceded most of the trips abroad to Fyson and the others.

Aside from the travelling, Ward enjoyed the job immensely, which was further validation that the greater the level of workplace autonomy, the higher the level of personal satisfaction. As the monthly deadline began to approach, excitement would mount, and the mood would hum with industrious urgency. Ward, smoking continuously, typewriter clattering, would occasionally break off, turn to his colleagues, slap both hands on both knees and exclaim with a beam: 'all good stuff!'[43]

[41] See Colin Ward, 'Childhood and the Perceived City', *Bulletin of Environmental Education* 48, 1975; *Child in the City* (London: Architectural Press, 1978), 22–31; 'Education for the Mastery of the Environment', *Spazio e Societa*, 4 December 1978.

[42] Brian Goodey, 'Unfinished Business in Environmental Education: The Next 100 Issues of BEE', *Bulletin of Environmental Education* 100–101, 1979.

[43] Anthony Fyson, 'Colin at Work', in Harriet Ward et al., *Remembering Colin Ward* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2010), 31–34.

Every Possible Compromise?

BEE was 'all good stuff', but it had limitations. The most obvious problem to modern eyes was the lack of diversity in terms of class, gender, and ethnicity among its inner editorial group and close networks. Of the 62 founding members of the CUSC, a quarter were teachers or lecturers of education, the rest a mixture of MPs, officers from local government or national bodies, and representatives of professional organisations in planning and architecture. The founding council had only one woman, the Countess of Dartmouth, the executive chair of the European Heritage Year.

Naturally, the *Bulletin* was a product of its times, reflective of the social composition in the fields of architecture and planning, educational administration, politics, and TCPA membership. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that, in most cases, when young people were mentioned, it was most often Newsom's 'John Robinson', the young white, working-class, non-academic boy-persona flagged as a political priority, that, consciously or not, it had in mind. Ward, in his book *The Child and the City* (1978), acknowledged the lack of detailed knowledge on the very different urban experiences for girls or for children from migrant families and attempted some redress. Although done with sensitivity, the results were tentative, generalised, reliant on a small number of core sources,[44] and thickly padded with tenuous links from newspaper reports and stock favourites, like Goodman and Kropotkin, reinterpreted through the prisms of gender and race.[45]

The presentation of youth was another issue. Like *Anarchy*, BEE spoke endlessly about taking young people seriously and yet in its own pages, they were more often the subjects of commentary by intelligent adults and only rarely the authors. In two of the few instances where young people did write, they happened to be his children.[46] While it was happy to report on what happened when children became architects or planners, there was less curiosity about what might happen if children became BEE editors or reviewers of the resources and games their well-meaning teachers plied them with.

Then there were the usual, inevitable, problems of applying liberatory approaches in institutional settings. Teachers at primary or secondary level wishing to take classes on field trips had to present work plans to their Heads and gain permission, which slightly dampened spontaneity. In schools this was to be expected, but there were also constraints for those USCs which managed to secure the necessary funding to get off the drawing board. Chris Webb, a former teacher who had become the leader of the Notting Dale centre, writing in 1976, described the situation in which a USC was forced to adopt a 'neutral' position to retain local authority funding as 'schizophrenic'. If this was not addressed:

[44] Specialist literature in 'The girl in the background': Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber, 'Girls and Subcultures: An Exploration', in Stuart Hall et al., eds., *Resistance through Rituals* (London: Hutchinson, 1976). Specialist literature in 'At school in the alien city': Bernard Coard, *How the West Indian Child Is Made Educationally Subnormal in the British School System* (London: New Beacon Books, 1971); David Milner, *Children and Race* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1975).

[45] In 'The girl in the background': Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution* (London: Allen Lane, 1974). In 'At school in the alien city': Paul Goodman, *Growing Up Absurd* (New York: Random House, 1960).

[46] See *Bulletin Environmental Education,* 45, 1975; 100—101, 1979.

the dead hand of Socratic dialogue, that peculiar Liberal thirsting after Consensus and the issue-packaging industry will dominate, firmly condemning Urban Study Centres into a pseudo-professional role.[47]

It was not just external bodies. As autonomous as the education unit was, it still had to align to the TCPA's organisational aims which meant that on some matters, Ward *had* to compromise. The TCPA was not an 'Anarchist' organisation and given that, at this time, it still believed in the importance of influencing government, it would not have benefited from claiming to be. Never an ideological purist, committed to every possible compromise where common values were at stake, he generally found the accommodations between his views and their aims with the aid of only a few minor adjustments.

The USCs are an example of this. In his writing he angled them as the sort of open-ended resource centres imagined by the de-schoolers, promoting Webb's work at Notting Dale as an ideal-type example as it involved children in conducting research for use in real planning inquiries.[48] But, as the minutes of the first meeting of the CUSC show, other council members held more structured views on what centres should be, how they should function, and how they should account for themselves:

Lady Dartmouth (Chairman of Executive European Architectural Heritage Year 1975): emphasised that the centres that might develop could be instrumental in furthering the aims of European Architectural Heritage Year.

Mr A Hammersley (St Katherine's College, Liverpool): emphasised the potential of Teachers' Centres for the development of urban studies facilities.

Brian Goodey (Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, Birmingham University): emphasis on catering for young people who have recently left school. Adult education was looking for 'environmental' lines of advance.

Mr S Carson (Hertfordshire County Council): the basic support for the urban studies centres would be likely to come from the 5*th* and 6*th* formers and from students in further and higher education [...] where it can be shown that what is learnt is relevant to a recognised examination syllabus.

Mr M McEwan (Royal Institute of British Architects): might well be that an interpretation centre and an urban studies centre could profitably make use of the same building sharing many facilities.

Mr M Storm (Berkshire College of Education): how might we measure the success or failure of the educational work undertaken from an urban studies centre. Should we judge by examination results? By the successes of exhibitions and displays?

Mr K Wheeler: teachers operating in urban studies centres might need some kind of special training.[49]

In the 'COMMENT' column introducing the issue carrying the minutes, DRONE simply wrote:

In our view CUSC, like urban studies centres themselves, can have a number of functions — particularly as a promoter of the urban studies centre concept and as consultant to bodies wishing to start their own centres, as well as initiator of its own centres.

[47] Chris Webb, 'The Danger of Being Neutered', *Bulletin of Environmental Education* 64/5, 1976.

[48] Colin Ward, 'Four Exemplary Enterprises', in Ward, *The Child in the City* (London: Architectural Press, 1978), 198–201.

[49] Colin Ward, 'News of CusC: Council for Urban Studies Centres', *Bulletin of Environmental Education* 23, 1973.

Quietly but firmly, he cut the council's role to size so deftly that no one could object they had been misrepresented.

The School's Council 'Art and the Built Environment' project emerged from another sort of compromise, the need to take on consultancy work to fund the unit's work after the initial funding dried up. The School's Council, established in 1965, 'on the wave of the curriculum reform movement', was a government- funded advisory body mostly comprised of teachers, in the manner of a professional guild, and charged with developing schemes of work for students staying on after the raising of the school leaving age.[50] Although broadly welcomed, not least as a symbol of teachers' professional autonomy, some, like philosopher John

White, worried that its 'low-grade' proposals for the 'less able child' (typically working class) aimed at getting the ordinary child to 'accept his lot in life as inevitable'.[51]

BEE had featured previous Council projects, such as 'Geography for School Leavers', and been generally warm but selective ('we reproduce … one item from THE PROJECT in SCHOOLS . because it illustrates several themes which are dear to us'[52]). For Ward, sympathy blended with apprehension. On the positive side, the Council itself had echoes of workers' control over it. Their work tended to focus on a comparatively neglected cohort (the non-academic adolescent) and usually favoured practical, active forms of learning. They had some degree of influence with the Ministry of Education (how much is contested). On the other hand, as White suggested, the general tone of the Council's outlook could be uncomfortable. Working group themes such as 'working with the *low ability* pupil' and 'new geography and the *less able* pupil' reinforced prejudices that active learning methods were less intellectually demanding. Furthermore, the automatic faith placed in curricula and examinations as tokens of educational progression was problematic, eroding, as it did, the scope for creativity and spontaneity amongst fellow teachers, let alone their students.

Nevertheless, a major gain was the opportunity to work with Eileen Adams,[53] a former art teacher and director of the 'Front Door' project. Designed by Ken Baynes, head of design education at the Royal College of Art, 'Front Door' addressed the lack of architectural education in schools. While stressing the importance of involving professional architects and designers alongside teachers, the project made clear its purpose was not to dictate a particular style or inculcate some definition of 'good taste', but to encourage an interrogation of what style and taste meant. Ward, who had already co-authored two articles urging an extension of the participatory planning approach to architecture education,[54] supported it from the start,[55] calling on funders to invest and schools to get involved. In the event, Pimlico, where Adams had worked as deputy head of art (and where two of Ward's children attended as pupils) took on the pilot which BEE followed through its two-year life span.[56]

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[50] Brian Simon, *Education and the Social Order 1940—1990* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1991), 314. See also, Robert Bell and William Prescott, eds., *The Schools Council: A Second Look* (London: Ward Lock Educational, 1975); Maurice Plaskow, ed., *Life and Death of the Schools Council* (Lewes: Falmer P, 1985).

[51] John White, 'Instruction or Obedience?', in Robert Bell and William Prescott, eds., *The Schools Council,* 56–64.

[52] 'Schools Council: Geography for School Leavers', *Bulletin of Environmental Education* 23, 1973.

[53] David Goodway and Colin Ward, *Talking Anarchy* (Oakland: PM Press, 2014), 67.

[54] Malcolm MacEwan and Colin Ward, 'Architecture in Schools', *RIBAJ,* May 1973; Frank Chippendale and Colin Ward, 'Architecture and Education', in Keith Wheeler and George Chatwin, eds., *Insights in Environmental Education* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1975).

[55] See *Bulletin of Environmental Education* 34, 1974; 70, 1977.

[56] *Bulletin of Environmental Education* 45, 1975.

The success of projects like 'Front Door' encouraged the Schools' Council to commission 'Art and the Built Environment', a more extensive look at the role of art departments in secondary level environmental education. The key aim was to develop curricula ideas for cultivating skills in the aesthetic appreciation of the environment. Ward took charge with Adams named as Project Officer and responsible for the delivery side. Several of the BEE stalwarts, Wheeler, Bishop, and Goody, were recruited to contribute, joined by Baynes and Keith Gretton, a mural artist and former teacher.[57]

'Art and the Built Environment' was an ideal opportunity to reinforce the anarchist ideal of integral education but there was still a delicate path to tread. Something of this tension can be seen in his treatment of Herbert Read's *Education through Art* (1943) (*Education*). As he later explained, Read and this book were important 'not for themselves, but for giving a climate or respectability to teachers I met, fighting on their own for the recognition of the role of the arts in education', adding that, given the derision routinely shown towards the arts by the education establishment, 'this was very valuable to me at the time'.[58]

In *Education*, Read took up Plato's thesis that art should be the basis for all education because it furnished individuals with the self-knowledge necessary to develop and flourish. The role of the art teacher was not to dictate but to unlock this expression and interpret it. Scholars, he complained, had largely neglected this, Plato's most passionate ideal, 'but though there were earlier anticipations of many of its features, freedom as the guiding principle of education was first established by Rousseau',[59] who gave the true purpose of education its clearest annunciation: 'to foster the growth of what is individual in each human being, at the same time harmonizing the individuality thus educed with the organic unity of the social group to which the individual belongs'.[60]

For the rest, he offered 'a long footnote' in psychological theory as a supplement to the Platonic ideal. In a very short chapter on 'Environment', he remarked briefly and vaguely that the school setting should stimulate individual expression: 'Rousseau's Emile seems to have been taught in a well-furnished country house, surrounded by a well-cultivated garden … That may be the ideal environment for unfolding sensibility of a child — personally I believe it is'.[61] This comment aside, Read offered no further remark on the impact of the environment on children's learning.

Unsurprisingly, Ward had reservations about such an individualistic psychological reading, indicative, he believed, of other inconsistencies in Read's thought. In an article on Read's contribution to art education, he remarked how

in the same book he could praise the machine aesthetic of modern car design and at the same time point out that the masses in industrialised societies had been brought to a state of 'mental sickness'.[62]

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[57] Eileen Adams, 'Art and the Built Environment — An Introduction', *Bulletin of Environmental Education* 70, 1977; 'Schools Council Project Art and the Built Environment 16–19', *Studies in Design Education Craft and Technology*, 11:2 (2009), 76–81.

[58] David Goodway and Colin Ward, *Talking Anarchy*, 50.

[59] Herbert Read, *Education through Art* (London: Faber and Faber, 1943), 6.

[60] Ibid., 8.

[61] Ibid., 297.

[62] Colin Ward, 'Herbert Read and Environmental Education', *Bulletin of Environmental Education* 50, 1975.

Nor, in this piece, did he quote from *Education* (a sure sign of his disapprobation). When he did refer to it, it was with levity. Read had

latched Art to the rising science of psycho-analysis. His doctrine made for riotous success in the Infant's Department; but it almost made it impossible for Art to survive as a subject in the cold hard world dominated by the three Rs.

Ward preferred, instead, to rifle Read's old *Freedom* pamphlets for all those quotes he liked better (those which most echoed Kropotkin): 'sensibility can only be awakened when meaning is restored to his daily work and he is allowed to create his own culture' or 'Build cities that are not too big but spacious with traffic flowing freely through their leafy avenues, and children playing safely in their green and flowery parks, with people living happily in their bright and efficient houses'.[63]

In this sense, little had changed since the 'Future of Anarchism' debate in 1947. He shared Read's commitment to education but found the critic's concept of the individual too static. He bristled at the idea that an individual 'thus educed' could be 'harmonized' within the 'organic unity of the group', as if both individual and group were pre-ordained and had only to be revealed to one another. Instead, he saw dynamism in how people, groups, and places constantly modified each other. His preferred view of art was not what the product of it revealed about the person, but how the process of making it moved between an individual's imagination and the wider material world. Nevertheless, he was never above taking and using quotes he liked, not least when they promoted common ground with an audience.

Selectivity was fine to apply to his own writings but difficult in an official project with reporting requirements. 'Art and the Built Environment' ran from 1976 to 1980 at the TCPA and 1980—1982 at the Royal College of Art. The various sub-projects were delivered with a mixture of A-level and fifth form students from schools across the country, typically studying either art, design, or general studies. Regular newsletters in BEE kept readers abreast of the activities and, on its conclusion in 1982, the full report was published as a book. As director,[64] Ward had primary responsibility for presenting the 'findings' that were supposed to inform the curricula development recommendations requested in the original Schools Council brief. The introduction, however, showed that the team had interpreted this liberally, in line with the streetwork philosophy:

The Project has not concentrated on the production of learning material for pupils. Instead it has concerned itself with teachers' attitudes and how they think about their job.[65]

If 'Art and the Built Environment' emphasised the attitude of the teacher over curriculum recommendations it did not elaborate on the implications of this for teacher training. Despite Ward's claim in the introduction, the bulk of the report *was* a tremendous display of learning resources including detailed descriptions of project plans and plenty of prototype worksheets. In fact, the sheer range of activities presented made for less a 'report' than a compendium. Aside from a generalised point about how the project demonstrated such a wealth of possibility in the topic which only the 'inflexibility' and 'self-imposed limitations'[66] of the art teacher could limit, they made no case for how to address this. There was a passing mention that some of

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ward left the TCPA in 1979 before the project had concluded but continued as Project Director.

[65] Eileen Adams and Colin Ward, *Art and the Built Environment* (London: Longmans, 1982), 9.

[66] Ibid., 154.

the participant teachers had changed their views over the course of the project,[67] and a vague suggestion that in-service working parties, 'on the self-help model', could be established.[68] These were not, however, developed into more substantial proposals for reforming the existing training process. Nevertheless, the project was so rich that no one could seriously complain that the letter of the brief had not *technically* been met. Besides, the cash had been spent and the times were changing.

In 1976, Labour Prime Minister James Callaghan's Ruskin Speech sounded a warning to the progressive agenda: 'I am concerned to find complaints from industry that new recruits from the schools sometimes do not have the basic tools to do the job that is required'.[69] He was, he told the assembled crowd, inclined to support calls for a national curriculum. For extra-educational units like the TCPA, this meant a future of ever-diminishing funding, more pressure to take on consultancy contracts, and more careful compromise work with the new regulations. Ward, who always knew to leave before staleness set in, made the leap, not just the TCPA but London, moving to live full time in the Suffolk house he and Harriet had bought in 1977.

Child in the City (1978) is often considered to be Ward's most eloquent statement on childhood, the built environment, and the implications for environmental education. In fact, it began life as another commission. Godfrey Golzen, publishing director at the Architectural Press, conceived of the project after publishing *Vandalism* (1973), a collection of essays by architects and sociologists addressing the topic, edited by Ward. In the closing chapter, 'Creative Vandalism', Ward reserved for himself the 'editorial privilege' of presenting 'a ragbag of speculations about, quotations upon, and interpretations of aspects of the themes which have not been emphasised elsewhere in the book'.[70] Borrowing from Paul Goodman, Alex Comfort, John Hewetson, and Tony Gibson, along with the *Anarchy* criminologists (several of whom had contributed to the book), he made the case for youth vandalism as an expression of resistance against restrictive social and physical conditions. Ironically, then, wanton destruction was, for these children, a mode of environmental mastery. *Vandalism* was received so positively by reviewers that Golzen asked Ward to develop his inquiry into the child's experience of the city where it would join other classics of the genre, like Iona and Peter Opie's *Children's Games in Street and Playground* (1969). Ward agreed and was joined in the venture by Ann Golzen, a professional photographer, who provided most of the 200 original images.

Child was always more of a poetic inquiry rather than a scholarly one; 'this book is not the product of interviews in depth with a random sample of a thousand children in a hundred cities', he almost boasted in the introduction. People who tried to meet the needs of city children were not motivated by statistical surveys, 'but from empathy, their own and other people's recollections, and from sympathetic observation of what children actually do'.[71] He offered instead a meditative essay constructed from bits of *Anarchy* and BEE along with other old favourites as well as new finds across popular sociology, psychology, history, and literature, read in pursuit of the city child from past to present, at home, on the move, at work, at play, and adrift.

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[67] Ibid., 14.

[68] Ibid., 155.

[69] James Callaghan, 'Ruskin Speech', 18 October 1976, uploaded by Derek Gillard, 31 March 20210, www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/speeches/1976ruskin.html [last accessed 9 October 2021].

[70] Colin Ward, ed., *Vandalism* (London: Architectural Press, 1973), 22.

[71] Colin Ward, *Child in the City* (London: Architectural Press, 1978), vii.

Reconsidering it in a lecture some 20 years later, he confessed his surprise that readers had taken it as 'one more catalogue of urban deprivations' when he had intended it as a 'tribute to the way in which children find methods of adapting the city to their needs'.[72] He was even more bemused to find himself considered an 'expert' on childhood and sought out for comment. Looking at the book, however, this is not astonishing. In many respects, it was a critique of how the modern city had become ever more enclosed and inaccessible to children which, he made clear, stemmed from short-sighted, commercially driven planning which prioritised the motor car and dealt with inner-city crowding by building dreary suburbs, bleak tenements, and greens which prohibited ball games to protect private property. More subtle was the inference that 'good' intentions were also partly to blame, those who banned children from working, kept them ever longer in schools, and feared for every moment they were unsupervised.

Given that the book's primary readership was mostly those already critical of the status quo and invested in social change, it is little wonder that they focused on the first of his causes. For these readers, chapter 19, 'Four Exemplary Enterprises' (three from Britain, including Notting Dale USC, and one from Hungary), was of particular interest, offering, as it did, inspiration for the sort of positive interventions for urban children that they too might design and implement. Yet, even as he praised them, in another sense, it was clear he *almost* wished them unnecessary. This finally broke through in the last chapter:

In the United States the playground enthusiasts, landscape architects and environmental psychologists with a concern for the needs of the child in the city, keep in touch with each other through a valuable newsletter called Childhood City, and it is tempting to use their title to draw together the threads of evidence and observation collected together in this book.

But then:

I don't want a Childhood City. I want a city where children live in the same world as I do. If we seek a shared city, rather than a city where unwanted patches are set aside to contain children and their activities, our priorities are not quite the same as those of the crusaders for the child.[73]

He continued, why shouldn't children work, 'why shouldn't *they* be employed to maintain the parks and the playgrounds?'[74] 'There is', he went on, 'an ultimate paradox about the lives of city children'. His readers, he suspected, had all seen television documentaries about some social evil and had the disconcerting experience of

contrasting the solemn words of the Social Problems Industry with the evidence of the cameraman … throughout this book you read about the deprivations of the city child, but you see through the eyes of the photographers how children colonise every last inch of left-over urban space for their own purposes . the words spell deprivation, the pictures spell joy.[75]

Ward was always mindful that there were *two* ways of imposing on children: under-care and over-care. Both were to be avoided because in either case, the result was perpetual infantilisation. Children became adults by learning to manipulate their environments; when this experience was denied to them, restricted, or, equally, controlled for them, they froze or were forced to find other means, like vandalism, to resist.

[72] Colin Ward, 'Child in the City Reconsidered', Naples 1997, CW Lectures, CWP/ ARCH 03180, IISH.

[73] Colin Ward, *Child in the City*, 204.

[74] Ibid., 206.

[75] Ibid. See also Alison Ravetz, 'Child in the City: Review', *Built Environment*, 15, 1990. In Ravetz's review of a new edition of the book, published by Bedford in 1990, she noted, regretfully, that the pictures had been removed.

The problem, as with all his educational work, was that the people listening most appreciatively often heard the first cause because it resonated with their existing views. They did not always heed the other, much less recognise themselves in it. Yet, for all his claims to have responded to the child as they really were, observed in their 'natural habitats', going about their 'natural business', his observations, as he had admitted in his introduction, had not extended beyond his own 'eye', directed according to *his* own taste. No less than Rousseau, he presented an ideal child in *Child*, but instead of a docile *Emile*, gently massaged towards his true nature, he preferred a *Huckleberry Finn*, the 'favourite novel of his lifetime',[76] making his nature up along the way. But, while many might also find Huck Finn more appealing than Emile, few would be quite so happy to see their own children similarly adrift in the city, motor cars or not.

[76] David Goodway and Colin Ward, *Talking Anarchy*, 155. See also Colin Ward, 'Introduction', in Mark Twain and Colin Ward, ed., *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (London: Folio Society Press, 1993), xiv.

11. Ramshackle Independence

'It's passionately interesting for me', Margaret Thatcher told journalists waiting outside Number 10 after her Party's 1979 victory, 'that the things I learned in a small town, in a very modest home, are just the things I believe have won the election'.[1] As Thatcher reflected on small-town values, Ward continued thinking about the value of small towns. Having left the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) for the precarious freedom of full-time writing, he had time to pursue these ideas in greater depth. Writing to mark his departure, Maurice Ash, TCPA executive chairman, penned a brief but heartfelt tribute to a man whose impact on the association he considered 'entirely beneficial':

I suspect Colin Ward never had much difficulty in reconciling his point of view with that ofthe TCPA. He discovered our roots … in Ebenezer Howard's ultimate concern for the personal development of every human being.[2]

As Ash acknowledged, Ward created a thriving education unit placing the Association at the forefront of urban environmental education. By infusing his style of participatory planning, he had also reinforced their commitment to 'bottom up' planning.

Nevertheless, times were changing. The new political climate seemed inauspicious for those on the left and yet, at the same time, things were more complex than they first appeared. Over the next ten years, a fierce struggle over ideas of self-help, autonomy, and individual enterprise played out, not least on the matter of housing.

Doing It Himself

Although no longer a full-time employee, Ward continued to oversee the 'Art and the Built Environment' project, kept up a regular column in the *Town and Country Planning Journal*, and remained on hand to observe the developments of his proposal for a Do-It-Yourself New Town. The story of the DIY New Towns began at the Garden Cities/New Towns Forum held in Welwyn City, 22 October 1975, where he argued that prospective residents should be directly involved in planning, designing, and building their own neighbourhoods. The role of local authorities, he suggested, should be limited to site provision and installing basic services (road and public transport, water supplies and sewage systems, electricity and phone lines).[3] The interest was instant; within weeks he was interviewed on three different BBC programmes on the theme, and his paper had been reprinted in nine different newspapers and journals.[4]

[1] Margaret Thatcher, 'Margaret Thatcher Speaks with the Press about Winning the General Election', [[http://www.youtube.com][www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZPqBNc4wmw [last accessed 9 October 2021].

[2] Maurice Ash, 'Ward's Work', *TCPJ*, October 1979, 241.

[3] See Colin Ward, 'The DIY New Town', in Ward, *Talking Houses* (London: Freedom Press, 1990), 7–36.

[4] *The Guardian*, *The Evening News*, *The Evening Standard*, *The Architect's Journal*, *The RIBA Journal*, *Building Design*, *The Ecologist*, *The Municipal Review*, *Municipal Engineering*.

Alerted to the attention on their Education Officer, the TCPA's executive council invited him to explain his idea at their spring meeting. This was a delicate time for the organisation. In the new political and economic climate, there was unlikely to be a new round of New Towns; development on the existing ones had stalled and their influence in government had waned. In other respects, however, the Association was in better shape than ever with a dynamic workforce and larger membership than ever before. It was primed for new ideas.

When it came to public speaking, Ward preferred the principle of spontaneity to the practice of it. He wrote out his notes for the council meeting in full. 'I am sure that it was this unexpected interest that led David Hall to suggest that I should talk to you about this paper', he began defensively:

as it isn't everyday that your staff's opinions are so avidly sought after, and I suppose what you have to consider is to what extent, if at all, the matter I raise should become some sort of campaigning issue for the Association. I ought to say that I won't be offended if you dismiss the whole thing as a bit of headline-catching gimmickry because my employment and standing with the Association rests on something quite different.

He then set out his case: 'my paper was in fact a rag bag of a whole assortment of ideas and though to my mind they all hang together, it may be as well to separate them'.[5]

It began, he explained, when, at the Welwyn City forum, he had found himself following David Eversley's devastating attack on the New Towns for winning success at the expense of the inner-city poor and on the Association for overlooking this fact. Eversley, once a New Town supporter,[6] now argued that they mostly benefited the upwardly mobile, those with regular employment or readily transferable skills who were generally less dependent on extended family networks for survival. Concentrating investment into the New Towns, then, had diverted resources away from the city's poorest inhabitants, exacerbating urban poverty.

This argument was not novel but had become 'fashionable' amongst several urban commentators.[7] Eversley was a strong speaker, and his case subdued the Welwyn crowd. Faced with a despondent audience, Ward went for a disarming tactic. There was, he had urged, nothing intrinsic to the New Town *concept* that made this inevitable; in fact, he went on, Howard, its founding father, had more in common with social anarchist thinkers than he had ever had with government policy makers. 'This was a strange conclusion for most people', he admitted, 'but I provided evidence and no one was able to contradict me'.[8]

Howard had drawn direct inspiration from Kropotkin. There were, of course, plenty of other non-anarchist tributaries to his scheme,[9] but in some respects, Garden Cities could be considered as an attempt at realising Kropotkin's *Fields, Factories and Workshops* (1899) through a process of gradual evolution rather than revolution. Arguing that Victorian cities, with their appalling conditions, squandered human and economic resources, Howard proposed dispersal as both a mechanism for relieving the inner cities and a means of increasing overall productive potential. Residents would each be allocated a plot within neighbourhood units, their rent would be split into three parts covering land purchase, building costs, and the last third directed towards com-

[5] Colin Ward, 'The DIY New Town Paper', Journalism-1970-1979-MISC, CWP/ ARCH03180, IISH.

[6] Dennis Hardy, *From New Towns to Green Politics* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1991), 56.

[7] See David Donnison and David Eversley, eds., *London Urban Patterns, Problems and Policies* (London: Heinemann, 1973).

[8] Colin Ward, 'The DIY New Town Paper'.

[9] Including the model industrial villages in Port Sunlight Liverpool and Bournville in Cadbury.

munity development. Keeping population levels capped at 32,000 (reaching this figure would trigger a new settlement to be built), ensured the optimum figure required to sustain productivity long term but also to generate enough profit for reinvestment back into the city, making it, in effect, self-contained or, in other words, requiring no further external investment to satisfy its basic needs.

The beauty of the scheme (but also its fatal flaw) lay in the integration of the economic and moral case. Optimising and sustaining productivity relied on self-containment which, in turn, required that the town prosper economically to maintain community services. As the town prospered, land value increased and with it the value of each individual plot and community-owned asset. In the long term, this amounted to a stealthy redistribution of land value back to the residents. In terms of implementation, Howard conceived the venture as a private enterprise, envisaging a co-operative of well-placed, radically inclined investors who would band together to form a Garden City Company through which initial capital would be raised.[10] These investors, however, had not proved so forthcoming.

In principle the reasoning behind Garden Cities, and, later, the New Towns that grew out of them, was sound. They generated opportunities for those able or willing to go out to them and removed competition for resources and employment for those who remained. In theory, this should have led to an overall increase in well-being and productivity. The real problem, Ward surmised, had lain in the various botched methods of implementation. The creation of New Town Development Corporations, for example, demonstrated the rigidity of the bureaucratic imagination. He lamented 'the tragedy that Fabian and Labour Party thinking had never advanced organisationally'[11] beyond creating giant public corporations and placing (too much) confidence in the expert. What he left unsaid (but must have hung in the meeting room all the same) was the role that Frederic Osborn, TCPA director during this period of intense activity, had played in placing the New Towns at the heart of state-directed social welfare policy, a significant departure from Howard with his notorious distrust for bureaucracy and preference for private means.[12]

Osborn, a practical man, had made the move to escape the precarity of private investment which had ultimately undermined Howard. In the mid-70s, however, this was no longer a reasonable expectation. Was there a realistic alternative to state funding that avoided Howard's dilemma? In answer, Ward turned to the work of architect John Turner, an old anarchist comrade, who had spent much of the last 20 years working in Peruvian barricadas. The fruit of this work, *Housing by People* (1976), which Ward introduced, recounted how, when forced back on local resources after World Bank funding for state housing ceased, Turner had found himself looking afresh at the makeshift shantytowns that sprang up around the edges of the major cities. Suddenly, instead of ragged squalor, he perceived in them dignity and creative ingenuity. Rather than clear these 'slums' away, he determined to help residents to develop them into fully serviced

[10] Colin Ward, 'Say It Again Ben', *Bulletin of Environmental Education*, 43, 1974; Peter Hall and Colin Ward, *Sociable Cities* (London: Wiley, 1998), 26—28.

[11] Colin Ward, 'The DIY New Towns Paper'.

[12] Mervyn Miller, 'Viewpoint: Tomorrow Today a Centennial Perspective', *Town Planning Review* 69:3 (1998), iii—vii.

suburbs.[13] But that was in the 'third world', surely it was not applicable to modern Britain? Not so, said Ward,

My sixth point was that as unlikely as it may seem, we had an example of site-and-no-services housing in our own New Town history in the shanty development in Pitsea and Laindon in Essex which were the reason to site Basildon New Town there. I gave a lot of picturesque detail there about the evolution of the substandard housing into properly serviced dwellings.[14]

In fact, the evolution had not been quite so organic. He did not add how the Basildon Development Corporation (BDC) had persistently worked on individuals to sell, nor added anything about management's private attitudes to the entrepreneurial spirit of the plotholders. 'Of course it is a beautiful spot', Charles Boniface, the BDC's General Manager wrote to one resident in 1966, 'but it will be made more beautiful in the hands of skilled Corporation planning than left as it is at present — steadily deteriorating with hawthorn scrub creeping in like the Quatermass Experiment over the whole land'.[15]

Next, Ward told the council, came the question of timing. At the turn of the century, Howard's idea had chimed with a forward-looking spirit of endeavour. Similarly, the post-war New Towns had caught a political and public imagination hungry for change. Now too was right for a new venture. Again, this account was selective. Howard's *Garden Cities of To-Morrow* (1902) had been popular reading, eventually, but hardly popular practice. He had formed his Garden City Company with comparative ease but raising the capital to build a prototype city had been another matter. Wealthy radicals were not as numerous as he had hoped. He had been forced, instead, into the worlds of Edwardian company boardrooms and gentleman's clubs[16] whose inhabitants were receptive to increasing productivity but not to the redistribution to land value.

Similarly, after the War, people were, arguably, more exhausted by suffering and craving relief than they were hungry for change. Each cycle of New Town building (1946–1950, 1961–1966, 1967–1970) had encountered strong resistance from residents in several of the proposed sites, such as Stevenage, which he had reported on in *Freedom* at the time (noting gleefully that the signs at Stevenage railway had been changed to read 'Silkingrad' after the chief planner Lord Silkin)[17] and, as Michael Young and Peter Willmott's famous study *Family and Kinship in East London* (1957) demonstrated, from several of those relocated into them.

His case for the present and, beyond that, the future, was on safer ground. Successive government housing policies had forced a duopoly of building society-sponsored owner-occupation or municipal tenancy which, for a growing number of people, was simply inadequate. The moratorium on public spending forced the issue of finding solutions that were not reliant on major state investment. In another light, reduction was also a key theme in addressing escalating environmental concerns. Popular interest in alternative lifestyles was growing. In America, Murray Bookchin's Revolutionary Ecology Movement was attracting attention for its non-hierarchical community designs integrating ecological and individual well-being.[18] In Britain too, he urged,

[13] John FC Turner, 'Uncontrolled Urban Settlements: Problems and Policies', Report for UN, 1967. See also John FC Turner with Robert Fichter, *Freedom to Build: Dweller Control of the Housing Process* (London: Collier Macmillan, 1972); with Colin Ward, *Housing by People* (London: Marion Boyers, 1976).

[14] Colin Ward, 'The DIY New Towns Paper'.

[15] Deanna Walker, *Basildon Plotlands: The Londoner's Rural Retreat* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2001), 109.

[16] Dennis Hardy, *From Garden Cities to New Towns*, 47.

[17] Colin Ward, 'From Silkingrad to Missileville', *Freedom*, 11 July 1959.

[18] See Colin Ward, 'Anarchist Cities', *Undercurrents*, 10 (1975), 38—40.

there was a revitalised interest in self-sufficiency and self-build schemes. The Centre for Alternative Technology had opened its doors to the public in Wales. The Campbell report, chaired by Harold Campbell, a leading figure in the Co-Operative Party, had received official endorsement for its recommendation of co-operative housing schemes.

For the audience listening in Welwyn Garden City, and consequently the TCPA council, Ward's argument massaged their existing values and offered an exciting prospect to build on. At the same time, on close examination, his case was also contradictory. On the one hand, he affirmed Howard's original ideals — self-contained settlements, kept vigorous through self-generated activity on the behalf of residents — and lamented the frustration of this goal, first by the self-interest of a small elite of investors, later by centralist methods of implementation. He further argued that the consequent neglect of the self-generating principle could account for most of the criticisms routinely levelled at New Towns: aesthetic dreariness was the result of imposing architectural uniformity, lack of urban quality was the result of stagnant bureaucratic inertia blocking development.

But while Howard had drawn up a clever plan, it was still a plan. All its meticulous calculations, diagrams, and charts gave shape and form to the decentralist social design favoured by anarchists like Kropotkin, but it was not anarchistic in ethos. For all the talk of self-sufficiency, there could be no deviation from the force fields of Howard's magnets. Scope for individual initiative and spontaneity had also to fall within its perimeters. As an anarchist, Ward believed that unfree means, no matter how gradual and reasonable, were unlikely to produce genuinely free ends. As he had commented in his *Utopia* schoolbook,

our enjoyment of life doesn't just depend on where we live. You can be just as unhappy in someone else's utopia come true, as in a place where nobody ever stopped to ask the question, 'how do I want to live?'[19]

So, even as he praised Howard's ideas, when, in the very next breath, he spoke of the Peruvian *barricadas* or Basildon shanty town shacks, he also inverted them. His friend Turner had worked in the other direction, augmenting what had already been done through individual initiative rather than designing the conditions for generating (and controlling) that initiative.

Rich, full, human lives could not be given, they had to be built up from the existing tendencies, from the common sense, that emerged through people responding to shared circumstances. If Howard's design offered one means of achieving this, it was by no means the only way. 'When it comes to making a policy out of this assemblage of notions', he said, returning to the business at hand:

I think there are two ways of looking at it. One is the run-down districts of the inner city — Dockland or central Liverpool. The other is the New Towns themselves. Imagine a hard-pressed New Town where the restrictions of Treasury funds had inhibited development, precisely because development was geared to the flow of cash from the treasury. It would be immensely to the advantage of a New Town corporation in this situation to lobby with the local authority, and the Department of the Environment. If the planning requirements, the building regulations and the demands of the regional water authorities were to be waived to permit every kind of experimental dwelling.[20]

[19] Colin Ward, *Utopia* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), 114.
[20] Colin Ward, 'The DIY New Towns Paper'.

His ‘two ways of looking at it’ were practical, based on the only viable opportunities open to them. At the same time, they posed a crossroads for the Association. The first, renovating run-down districts of the inner city, would take them into direct dialogue with critics like Eversley, providing a chance to show how certain New Town principles could be fruitfully applied to empower, rather than exclude, poorer communities. The second option, working within an existing New Town, took Howard at his word; with the town infrastructure fundamentally in place, groups of individuals could then pursue development independently.

The case hit its mark, the council was keen, but, as he had suspected, uncertain how to transform it into a well-defined campaigning issue, which was another matter. What most caught their imagination was the link to sustainability as an attractive thread connecting Howard and his condemnation of the smoke- choked Victorian cities to the mounting environmental concerns in the present. Moreover, the holism afforded by ecological thinking was intellectually attractive to an Association thickly populated with planners and geographers, the idea that everything might be satisfyingly interconnected legitimised the imaginative extension of planning beyond the physical landscape into social, cultural, and psychological ‘topographies’.

A working party, the Ecology and Development Group (EDG), was convened to progress the idea. Through Ash, with his background in organic farming and craft industry at Dartington, it quickly connected with a rich network of environmental groups including the Friends of the Earth and Green Alliance.[21] In 1978 the New Communities Committee was formed and charged with reporting on ‘any matters relating to the planning and development of new communities, with particular reference to New Towns and settlements in the present and future, and to the appropriate types of development agency for building them’.[22]

It was not, however, until the spring of 1978 that momentum really gathered pace. At the Annual General Meeting in May, Lord Campbell of Eskan, Chairman of the Milton Keynes Development Corporation, issued a direct challenge:

Is not one of the tasks facing the TCPA to recapture the public’s imagination and demonstrate how the ‘Garden City’ … is a civilising and civilised form of settlement, in which the quality of life that be enjoyed will give shape to the resent confusion of economic, intellectual and even spiritual forces that surround us at present? I should have thought the time was ripe for a new programme of action by the Association.[23]

Campbell suggested that Milton Keynes Development Corporation (MKDC) be approached to provide around 500 acres of undeveloped land for such an experiment, to be named Greentown. Don Ritson, assistant general manager of MKDC, and, fortuitously, the winner of a previous TCPA competition to design a new community, proposed a site that, since his win, he too had been considering as viable for such a scheme. In 1979, following further promotion of the idea at the Comtek festival of alternative lifestyles held in the town, a Greentown Group of potential residents was formed.

Meanwhile, the TCPA published a full prospectus for a Third Garden City the following year, setting out a comprehensive vision that illustrated ‘the kind of Garden City the Association itself would wish to promote in association with the MKDC, if that approach is to be taken further’. ‘The object’, the introduction to the prospectus continued,

[21] Denis Hardy, *From New Towns to Green Politics*, 173—177.

[22] TCPA AGM Report, May1978.

[23] Ibid.

is to show that a different kind of human settlement can be made with the tools already to hand and which, in the Associations view, will be more appropriate to the needs of the 1980s.[24]

Despite the modesty of this objective, the sheer comprehensiveness was daunting, encompassing everything from size, tenure structures, energy, waste, employment, farming, and transport to community facilities, education, and health and the selection process for community members.

The Third Garden City would uphold the main features of Howard's legacy, updated to accommodate the latest sustainability research. Energy conservation would be prioritised in the design with plenty of scope afforded to experiments in renewable energy sources where possible. The settlement would be no less than 100 acres and not less than 10,000 people (anything less would be energy inefficient), self-employment and small craft industry would be encouraged, as would small scale farming and market gardening. All amenities would be situated within reasonable walking or cycling distances, schools and health centres would be community owned, as would other facilities such as theatres and swimming pools. When it came to selecting community members they imagined 'the town having to advertise carefully for certain types of people/enterprises'; there would be 'a need to make clear to all newcomers what sort of town it is at that time intended to be, on the basis that the kind of place it is should be a sufficient regulator'.[25]

For all that the prospectus claimed to be speculative, the proposed time plan for the project was clearly defined. From the launch of the prospectus in autumn 1979, they envisaged a brief window for feedback from the various implicated stakeholders and a final decision on the TCPA's role by December of that year. From there it forecast that the spring of 1980 would be dedicated to forming management groups and the summer to confirming the funding programme. Only by spring 1981 did they believe that the time would be right for public consultation. They allocated only three months to this. By summer 1981 they believed the project would be underway.

The timeline was wildly optimistic and in early 1980 they were still at the stage of publishing the feedback, which was positive if guarded. Dennis Hardy, a social science lecturer at Middlesex, related the scheme to a tradition of English utopian community experiments[26] and observed that, as these predecessors showed, attempting to live differently from, and in opposition to, wider society often led to isolation. Still, he added, 'the consistent message from past ventures is that, win or lose, they have rarely failed to express more widely-held views as to what is wrong with society at a particular time and how it may be put right'.[27] Peter Hall, then Professor of Planning at the University of Reading, also sounded a note of pragmatism, while he welcomed it as timely, 'coming as it does in a period when both the right-wing free enterprise and left-wing anarchist philosophies are rejecting the notion of large-scale planning'; he added 'that the whole thing would be an extremely good marriage with one of [Michael] Heseltine's Dockland development corporations which clearly are destined to be based on the same principles as the TCPA's garden city'.[28]

Eversley, however, was unsympathetic.

Good luck with the project, it doesn't interest me because I am concerned with those two million families who have, so far, been ineligible for good modern housing, in suburbs or new

[24] 'Prospectus for a Third Garden City', *TCPJ*, October 1979.

[25] Ibid.

[26] See Dennis Hardy, *Alternative Communities in Nineteenth Century England* (London: Longman, 1979); and consequently, *Utopian England: Community Experiments 1900— 1945* (London: E&FN Spon, 2000).

[27] Dennis Hardy, 'Letter', *TCPJ*, January 1980, 35—36.

[28] Peter Hall, 'Letter', *TCPJ*, January 1980, 35.

towns, whose members are discriminated against on the job market, in education, in health; who have no access to recreation, and who live in areas where voluntary community services do not exist. They are householders not generally headed by people able to participate in self-build schemes, dig their cabbage patch or make themselves heard at PTA meetings. I doubt if they'd get a look-in even if you located your garden city in Docklands … I shall be interested to see who can recruit from their existing satisfactory environment to join you in the third garden city; for those who are not satisfied will not be useful recruits.[29]

This rehearsed a standard critique of green politics, that, with its roots deep in a romantic critique of the mass culture modern industrial world, it was based on middle-class values and dependent on middle-class expertise, enacted and gained at the expense of society's poorest members. Arguably, this was an uncharitably narrow view of the capacities to be found amongst the inner-city working classes. It had not been the middle classes that built the *barricadas* in Peru or the early Basildon shacks. But it was not unfair to suppose that the 'certain types of people/enterprises' that would be called for were unlikely to come from the very poor, the chronically ill, or long-term disabled, who would also be less equipped to craft the polite proposal letters required for application.

Eversley's comments were never going to sour the mounting enthusiasm. Undeterred, work on the project continued under the management of Kelvin MacDonald, then the TCPA Deputy Director. Nine working groups were formed to discuss the various components — housing, utilities, farming, employment, education, and so on — in more detail, involving over 100 people. Group membership, MacDonald insisted, was wide-ranging; 'very few are local authority planners and only one is a civil servant. Members come from business, statutory undertakers, community groups, universities, and consultancies. There is a member of the Greentown Group in each of the nine working groups'.[30] Moreover, they were industrious; just under two rounds of meetings produced 70 working papers. It was hard to avoid entirely the impression that one group of experts had only been replaced with another, or that one sole representative from the resident's group could not really count as active public participation, or that the whole project was quickly becoming another intellectual exercise in utopia building.

In the event, the Milton Keynes experiment failed. There were several reasons for this. Despite the support of Campbell as chairman and Ritson as general manager, there were tensions within the MKDC from the beginning, several of whom did not share the chairman or assistant manager's enthusiasm for a 'hippie's ghetto' in their midst.[31] There were also tensions between the Greentown group and the TCPA, the former suspecting the latter of trying to seize too much decision making control from them.[32] For over a decade negotiations struggled on forcing more and more concessions, 500 acres dwindled to 23 and, in the end, the whole project was abandoned.

Other smaller 'neighbourhood' experiments did emerge. Lightmoor took the 23 acres salvaged from the Greentown project and, working slowly, painfully, through each obstacle posed by the planning system, managed to realise a small community of 14 families who each built their own houses on half-acre plots. Here they kept livestock, grew vegetables, or set up home-based enterprises to sustain themselves. In an ironic twist, their success upgraded the projected land value

[29] David Eversley, 'Letter', *TCPJ*, January 1980, 36.

[30] Kelvin MacDonald, 'The Shape of Things to Come', *TCPJ*, 50, June 1981, 176.

[31] Dennis Hardy, *From New Towns to Green Politics*, 178.

[32] Ibid., 179.

so much they were forced to devise an elaborate company structure distinctly more corporate than communitarian in nature.[33]

Conway was different. It was not a greenfield site but one of the run-down inner-city districts Ward spoke of near Liverpool. Seizing the chance to apply the community-building principles inscribed into the New Towns, the TCPA supported as much resident involvement as possible. Such a project could never operate on the scale of Greentown or even Lightmoor. Its aims were modest: the redevelopment of a derelict Victorian building at the heart of the area, which, after consultation with the community,[34] it was decided should become an activity centre. In 1984, several artists, along with a small enterprise team, took up residency in the building and in 1986, the project won recognition and a cash prize, awarded by an admiring Prince of Wales, at *The Times*/RIBA awards. Shortly after, dry rot was discovered in the building and all activities hastily dispersed.[35] Both cases fell far short of Howard's optimum figures for efficiency or sustainability, but they were still important, not least in demonstrating that, firstly, there was a popular appetite to pioneer new ways of living, secondly, in the case of Conway, this was not solely a middle-class activity, and thirdly, it was possible to wrench free *some* small gains from the gargantuan planning system.

Throughout this activity, with its occasional highs, frequent losses, and gruelling ennui, Ward remained on the edges. Never much of a committee man, he contributed occasionally to the working groups or through conversation with his ex-TCPA colleagues and others closely involved. Perhaps surprisingly, he got on well with Lord Campbell,[36] even assimilating an anecdote told by the latter into his personal stock of direct action case studies. On becoming the managing director of a sugar company in the British colony of Guiana in the 1930s, Campbell had been shocked to discover the appalling housing conditions of his workers, a legacy of slave-owning and indentured labour. 'Unable' to afford to build proper housing himself, he had divided the space into building plots, providing basic materials and an interest-free loan to each family of £250. The scheme, he considered, had been successful, with each family fashioning a home to their personal tastes.[37]

It is easy to see Ward's attraction to the tale but to modern eyes it is problematic. The story left unanswered the question of whether the loan, although interest free, was extracted directly from the workers' wages in a form of bonded labour. Ward did not seem sensitive to this; the idea of personal initiative flowing from the powerful few to the disempowered many was simply more attractive to him than the use of the state as an impersonal mechanism for redistribution. The incident recalled Rita Milton's barbed remark in the *Freedom* 'Parish Pump' debate (1952), 'CW will continue to kow-tow to his local dignitaries'.[38]

He was, however, at his best when a sympathetic, but independent, observer. In this guise, he was invited to write and present a BBC documentary on

New Town Home Town, part of the BBC's 'Where We Live Now' series, first broadcast in 1979. The programme made a tour of Harlow, Peterlee, Runcorn, and Milton Keynes with Ward as a

[33] Ibid., 182–189.

[34] Education for Neighbourhood Change and the Jubilee Enterprise Trust Association, 'Making the Most of Local Resources: Self-Help Feasibility Study of the Conway Area of Birkenhead', Nottingham University, 1983.

[35] Hardy, *From New Towns to Green Politics,* 189–192.

[36] Dennis Hardy, private communication with author.

[37] TCPA AGM Report, May 1978; Ward, *New Town Home Town* (London: Calouste Gulbenkian, 1993), 127–128.

[38] RM, 'Leaning on the Parish Pump', *Freedom*, 31 May 1952.

genial guide. Most important was the space the film afforded to voices; of the planners, architects, development corporation workers, but above all the residents. One couple, for example, the O'Briens, were interviewed in their Harlow sitting room. Originally from Islington in London, they had followed Mr O'Brien's firm out to the area, lured by the temptation of an affordable three-bedroomed family house. Asked how she had first felt on moving with two young children, Mrs O'Brien replied 'I felt lost — very lonely', adding that she had 'spent most my time going back to London to me Mum's for the first two years'.[39] Then, however, things changed; 'I wouldn't go back to London', she said resolutely, Harlow had a 'different pace, everything's slower', which was better for the children who could play out safely. Mr O'Brien disagreed; 'I would go back tomorrow', he said, adding 'London has so much more to offer, variety, so much to see there'.[40] Ward made no comment but let the balance hang; the woman had been able to create for herself a satisfying domestic life, but the man found the local social and cultural life confined.

Fourteen years later, his book *New Towns Home Towns* (1993) revisited the topic but now as a memorial. The last of the New Town Development Corporations had closed on 31 March 1992, reopening the next day charged with selling off the assets. 'Did the New Towns matter?' he asked, 'Were they a success? Should we repeat the experiment?'[41] As in his documentary, he could only report that the picture was mixed. Had they fostered a sense of community? Sometimes, when people had been able to form groups based on shared interests. Had they created jobs? Sometimes, when a diverse range of employment opportunities had been accommodated. Were they accessible to residents? Sometimes, when pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport were well supported. Had they paid for themselves? In the short term, no, but in the long-term work of supporting social mobility, easing pressure on inner cities, and slowing urban sprawl? It was still too early to tell.

The more relevant question to ask in 1993 was *could* the experiment be repeated or did it belong, in vision and viability, to a time now irretrievably lost. Dutifully he recorded the latest twists and turns in the New Town saga (such as the new connections with the sustainability movement and the DIY New Town enterprises) but found little of substance to report. He had also to concede that 'the government is unlikely to designate a new round of New Town development corporations, and if it does, the model will be that of the market-oriented Urban Development Corporations'.[42] But Ward was no fatalist. Experiments often fail but are not necessarily *failures* as a result. The very purpose of them is to increase understanding. If the forms were defunct, the ideals were not, and the future for Howard's principles lay in dispersal into new forms tested in more experiments, which could, perhaps, bring them closer to their original formulation.

As Hall anticipated in his letter on the Third Garden City, the Urban Development Corporation (UDC) model was used in the regeneration of

London Docklands. Moreover, Michael Heseltine, then—Secretary of State for the Environment, reduced planning controls in 'Enterprise Zones' and granted UDCs power to usurp local authorities, the same sort of flexibility which, if granted, would have made Greentown viable. Here then was an interesting, government-supported prototype; the only problem was that Heseltine's UDCs included no remit for social housing or commitment to any wider social responsi-

[39] Colin Ward, 'Where We Live Now: New Town Home Town', BBC, first broadcast 21 February 1979.
[40] Ibid., 21 mins.
[41] Colin Ward, *New Town Home Town*, 6.
[42] Ibid., 148.

bility. Nevertheless, there were just one of several points of contradictory convergence between Ward and Thatcher's conservatives.

(Excess) Property Is Theft

Another decade, another anarchist journal. The young editors of Americanbased *Our Generation*, hoping to rejuvenate the international anarchist movement for contemporary times, naturally began their campaign by approaching all the old hands for contributions. In a letter to George Woodcock in Canada, early in 1985, Ward explained his reluctance to comply. Not only was he busy with work, but he was not sure what was new about the project:

The real trouble is, as you have known for years, that there is no one doing all that urgent anarchist rethinking, to meet the world of the new right — Reagan, Thatcher, and the popular support that politicians like them have, as well as the collapse of the old left.[43]

Woodcock sympathised, replying:

Indeed, until OG takes on a new direction, if it does, it's not really an easy paper for a writer like me to be inspired by ideas that might fit in. Looking at the Graduate School essays that flourish there, I keep feeling this is a world I've long rejected, and yet I feel a kind of duty to help in getting a decent anarchist review going there.[44]

In the mid-80s, the left, across both sides of the Atlantic, appeared in retreat, paralysed by the aggressive right-wing advance in their respective nations. As Woodcock's comment suggested, the academy offered one refuge. Here, the intellectually inclined could continue to argue, mostly amongst themselves, on ever finer points of theory. Across the activist arms, the struggle to reconcile traditional class politics with the impact of affluence *and* the challenges posed by race, gender, and sexuality perspectives proved factious.

In Britain, 'legend' has it that Michael Foot's Labour took a romanticised socialism to the polls in 1983 and lost, signalling the final demise of the 'old left'. In fact, this was more apparent than actual. Read closely, their manifesto, *Labour's Plan: The New Hope for Britain*, was more moderate than commonly perceived, far less ambitious in its call for the nationalisation of key industries and services than their winning manifesto in 1974. But appearance played its part.

Against the supreme confidence of Thatcher, fresh from victory in the Falklands, Labour and their staunch commitment to unilateralism looked inglorious.

As for many leftist radicals, several of the *Freedom* anarchists found the spectacle of waving union jacks and crowds cheering the Falklands victory galling, proof that practical, 'revisionist' solutions were impotent. They resorted back to furious polemic bordering, in some places, on self-parody. The paper, then buffeting chaotically from fortnightly paper to monthly review and besieged by the usual array of internal tensions, resurrected the old case for anarcho-syndicalism, the old debates on anarchism and pacificism, the old resentments with the unions (still, they believed, ridden with Marxists), and looked wistfully back to Spain.

This was not what Ward had in mind when he had spoken of rethinking. What he meant was something closer to *recognising*. The uncomfortable truth was that Thatcher was a successful populist playing to many of the same values and instincts that were important to the anarchists.[45]

[43] Colin Ward to George Woodcock, 13 February 1985, Letters 1980–89, CWP/ ARCH03180, IISH.

[44] George Woodcock to Colin Ward, 10 March 1985, Letters 1980–89, CWP/ ARCH03180, IISH.

[45] Raphael Samuel, 'The History Woman', *The Times*, 4 July 1991.

As one commentator put it, 'citizens and new right philosophers appear thus to be at one in their demands for greater individual autonomy, and more reliance on self-correcting mechanisms rather than regulation'[46] (quite which citizens this referred to was unclear). The failure to fully confront this tangle with their own beliefs not only limited the impact of the anarchist's critique it also kept them as alienated from ordinary people as the rest of the left. As such, they missed an opportunity to make gains in the spaces Thatcher had inadvertently cleared for them, not least on the matter of property ownership.

The Housing Act 1980 (which legislated Right to Buy), has become synonymous with Thatcher but long predated her premiership and was deeply entangled in tenure debates reaching back before the war. The Conservatives had long favoured a property-owning democracy model, only accepting municipal housing as an expediency necessitated by the war. Macmillan, when Minister for Housing, restricted local authorities to slum clearance and encouraged private enterprise to meet his 300,000 a year target.[47] Nor was this peculiar to the Conservatives; in the early 60s, Labour, although reluctant, gave 'general consent' to the sale of council houses. Take-up was low until, at the end of the decade, Conservative councils in Birmingham enjoyed a sudden flurry of success. Momentum gathered during the 1970s, 90–000 houses sold between 1974 and 1979. In 1977, Labour's housing policy review came down in favour of home ownership.[48]

What differed post-1980 was the intensity of government support which, when combined with the ongoing freeze on public housing building and Thatcher's personal enthusiasm for the policy, made thin the line between encouragement and pressure on local authorities to sell and tenants to buy. In some respects, 'Right to Buy' perfect encapsulated the uneasy cocktail of old and new ideas characteristic of the Thatcher administration.[49] On the one hand, as noted above, the notion of a property-owning democracy had formed part of the Conservative strategy since the 20s. Property ownership, the theory went, meant a stake in the country. People with a stake made responsible (conservative) decisions at the ballot box and did not gamble the country's future on wild (socialist) schemes.

At the same time, the idea of a nation of 'stakeholders' fitted with an emergent vision of free-market ideology: property was, after all, for most people, a major capital asset.

The peak in sales came between 1979 and 1982. Typical right-to-buyers were mature families headed by adults in their 40s to 50s. Aside from that, the pattern of sales varied across the country, reflecting, in part, one of the major problems: it was a lottery. For tenants in a good area with a good house, who could reasonably expect a strong return on resale, it was a shrewd investment. Tenants buying in a bad area or occupying a poor property risked being stuck with a house that would make little on resale if it sold at all. As the best houses in the best areas were bought up, the gap increased between those who could afford to buy and those who could not, with the latter

[46] Patsy Healey, *Planning for the 1990s*, Working Paper Series, 7, Department of Town and Country Planning, University of Newcastle (1989).

[47] Harriet Jones, 'This Is Magnificent! 300 000 Houses a Year and the Tory Revival after 1945', *Contemporary British History*, 14:1 (2000), 99–121; Aled Davies, '"Right to Buy": The Development of a Conservative Housing Policy, 1945–1980', *Contemporary British History*, 27:4 (2013), 421–444.

[48] See Colin Jones and Alan Murie, *The Right to Buy* (Chichester: Wiley, 2008), 5–31; Alan Murie, *The Right to Buy: Selling off Public and Social Housing* (London: Polity Press, 2016), 9–30.

[49] Stephen Evans, 'The Not So Odd Couple: Margaret Thatcher and One-Nation Conservatism', *Contemporary British History*, 23:1 (2009), 101–121.

condemned to poorer-quality housing as the best properties entered the private market and no new ones replaced them.[50]

Labour's *New Hope* manifesto did not retreat from the right to buy but sought to curb the inequities by repositioning local authorities in a mediating role. On gaining office, they promised, Labour would 'empower public landlords to repurchase homes sold under the Tories at first resale and provide that future voluntary agreed sales will be at market value', then followed several other proposals for committing support to low-income earners to buy first homes by increasing council mortgage lending services, encouraging councils to provide a house purchase service, and promoting tenants' participation and housing co-operatives. In essence, anyone looking to get ahead or make a quick profit would be curbed.[51]

Ward watched the ideological struggles with something like exasperation. The Conservatives took the language of the libertarian left, self-help and mutual aid, and distorted it. Labour, meanwhile, had fallen back on paternalistic state intervention as the arbiter of fair play (and were reduced to just 148 MPs for their efforts). His personal response came in *When We Build Again* (1985), a slim volume commissioned and published by Pluto Press. *Build Again* was the latest rehearsal of his views on housing. It followed on from the 'Tenants Take Over' article in A4, and the book-length version *Tenants Take Over* (1973). As he confided to Woodcock, 'this is a seam I have worked out really, though it's all good anarchist material',[52] not least because it provided an opportunity to weigh in on the current debate.

As usual, Ward's writing style registered the changing political climate. Whenever Labour was in power, or likely to be, his projects — *Anarchy,* BEE — tended to assume a technicality characterised by dense documentation. This was not, or not only, because he believed his proposals might be taken up and implemented in some form, but because in many respects arguing among the left was an altogether more anxious business. As he explained to one journal editor, whose request for a book review he was inclined to turn down,

I am plagued by other people's ideologies … A whole series of writers, George Orwell, Colin MacInnes, or Dora Russell have complained that they could say what they like in the uncommitted or even right-wing press. Only when they wrote for nothing in the left-wing press were they bullied into toeing someone else's line.[53]

Sure enough, when writing under (and against) the Tories, he tended to assume a jocularity that was more entertaining if less precise.

Tenants, for example, bristled with charts and tables. Additional appendices covered 'alternative financial strategies', outlined 'the democratic process', or detailed 'the Harlow Report of 1969' to supplement the case. The introduction was phrased with cautious formality: '*Tenants Take Over* argues the case for a transfer of municipal housing from the council to its tenants'.[54] In places, it was even rather passive: 'others would insist, rightly in my opinion, that we do not have a housing problem: simply a problem of poverty and inequitable distribution of property'.

[50] Colin Jones and Alan Murie, *The Right to Buy*, 51–76.

[51] Labour Party, *Labour's Plan: The New Hope for Britain*, http://labour-party.org.uk/manifestos/1983/1983-labour-manifesto.shtml [accessed 19 June 2021].

[52] Colin Ward to George Woodcock, 13 February 1985.

[53] Colin Ward to David Pepper (Editor of *Contemporary Issues)* 15 December 1987, Letters 1980–89, CWP/ARCH 03180, IISH.

[54] Colin Ward, *Tenants Take Over* (London: Architectural Press, 1974), 8.

Build Again, by contrast, resumed the cavalier tone first perfected in the late 1950s, boldly swinging against the claims made by the right *and* the left. There was confidence in the opening statement that the book addressed 'the capacity of poor people to house themselves if helped rather than hindered'.[55] Nor, this time, did he defer to the insistence of 'others', asserting instead a 'glance in the window of any estate agent in any high streets shows that we don't have a housing shortage, just a poverty problem' and casually pronouncing that this was the result of 'confusing paternalistic authoritarianism with socialism and social responsibility'.[56]

Change of style aside, his case was consistent. Primarily, it was an attack on the left for their failure to learn on the matter of housing. Firstly, sounding almost conservative himself, he rejected as mythical the idea that municipal housing represented the apotheosis of progressive advance. In war-battered Britain, it had been a necessity:

when in times of scarcity government provides the basic necessities of life, through, for example, a rationing system in times of war or natural disaster, we call it a siege economy; when it is a matter of governmentally imposed economic priorities, a command economy.[57]

Secondly, he ridiculed the left's claim that the desire to own one's home reflected a pathological desire for ownership. People wanted control over their own lives and municipal tenancy had a demeaning, infantilising effect. Thirdly, he pointed to the inconsistencies between the official Labour line and the proof provided by experience. Reporting on an address given by David Blunkett MP, Labour Councillor and leader of Sheffield Council, just months after the election loss, he noted how Blunkett attacked the Conservative government and condemned the desire for home ownership as 'socially divisive individualism' in one breath but in the next conceded that 'welfarism has degenerated into paternalism'.[58]

This did not, however, amount to support for the Thatcher government's 'piratical' divide and rule but a call to restate the problem and pose a different kind of socialist response. It was not, he believed, the damage to a chimerical collective consciousness that was really at stake in Right to Buy, but the weakening effect the policy, in its current form, had on local decision-making capacity, leading to an overall diminishment of Kropotkin's 'social principle' in favour of the centralised political one. The left needed to be more creative, to pay attention to the alternatives to be found in the histories of the mutual aid societies or the pre-war plotlands (an account of which, *Arcadia for All* [1984], he had just published with Dennis Hardy), or those already in their midst: the *barricadas* in Peru or the housing co-operative movement, widespread in Scandinavia, but almost negligible in Britain.

These were all well-trodden commonplaces for Ward but *Build Again* allowed him to update his casebook with the tale of the Lewisham Self-Build Housing Association and instate his friend Walter Segal into his collection of 'Good Examples'. Segal was born in Switzerland, in 1907, to Jewish parents, and raised in an anarchist commune of artists and freethinkers. From a young age, he developed a fascination with engineering and construction which, on leaving to study architecture in Berlin, he carried forward with him. In 1936, forced to flee Hitler's Germany, he moved to London and set up a small architectural practice. Disillusioned with much of the culture in professional architecture, he eked a precarious living from one-off projects and bits of teaching

[55] Colin Ward, *When We Build Again* (London: Pluto Press, 1985), 9.
[56] Ibid., 10.
[57] Ibid., 19.
[58] Ibid., 47.

at the Architectural Association school where he was adored by students and largely ignored by the profession's hierarchy.

Early in the 1970s, he devised a simple but high-quality house design made from timber frames[59] that could be easily assembled and adapted by any reasonably able person cheaply and quickly, ideal for a self-build project. He consequently developed the 'Segal building method' to accompany it. Seized by the potential of his design and method, he presented them both to a meeting of the Dweller's Control group (set up by Ward's old friend John Turner, in 1974), announcing his intention to find a local authority prepared to back a self-build project. Ward, on hearing his proposal, grasped immediately both its rich possibilities and the pitfalls in finding the support needed for it. Gently he guided Segal away from his first inclination, Camden (controlled by Labour ideologists), towards Lewisham where Brian Richardson, another old friend and fellow anarchist, worked as deputy architect, and arranged for the two to meet at a party.[60]

With Richardson able to press the case from the inside, the decision to proceed was passed by one vote and the scheme easily recruited 14 families from the council's housing waiting and transfer lists. A group of ordinary Londoners formed an association which would be contracted to build the houses for the council, which would grant them 99-year leaseholds and 50% mortgages. The other 50% of the house would be rented but available for purchase in instalments at a rate offset by the value of their labour. Despite Lewisham's support, it took another two and half years to inch the scheme through the various hurdles presented by the Department of the Environment and the Inland Revenue, neither of whom had policies or procedures in place to accommodate such a unique arrangement and found it perplexing to force them into their existing ones. Undeterred, the would-be builders spent the time well studying the Segal building method at an informal evening school. Finally, the project got underway resulting in 14 houses, built collaboratively by the association but with each individual family taking advantage of Segal's endlessly flexible design to customise to their personal tastes.[61] Not all were impressed; on visiting to inspect the completed project, a Labour Councillor from another council sniffed 'we're not going to turn *our* tenants into little capitalists'.[62]

The Lewisham Self-Builder's story had all the ingredients for a classic anarchist anecdote on multiple levels. Segal was an ideal Wardian hero, irascible and idiosyncratic. With his practical understanding of construction principles and emphasis on function over form, he was an architect in the Lethaby vein, freeing others to determine 'the poetry' for themselves. He also blurred 'the expected roles of architect, building worker and client'.[63] His life story was also important; raised as 'An Anarchist' in a utopian community, he had appreciated its freedoms but bucked against it, craving ordinariness, cultivating his taste for engineering as a mild protest against his parents'

[59] Walter Segal, 'Timber Framed Houses', *The RIBA Journal*, July 1977, 284–295.

[60] John McKean, *Learning from Segal* (Basel: Birkhauser Verlag, 1989), 164–176. See also Walter Segal, 'View from a Lifetime', *The RIBA Transactions*, 1:1 (1981), 7–14. Alice Grahame and John McKean, *Walter Segal Self Built Architect: Life Work and Legacy* (London: Lund Humphries Publishing, 2020).

[61] Architect's journal 1980; Ken Atkins, *Bulletin of Environmental Education*, October 1983; Charlotte Ellis, 'Walter's Way', *Architectural Review*, March 1987, 72–81; Nicholas Taylor, 'Learning the Lewisham Way', *The Architect's Journal*, 18 May (1988), 87.

[62] Colin Ward, *Build Again*, 84.

[63] Colin Ward, *Influences* (Bideford: Resurgence Books, 1991), 80; 'Walter Segal: Community Architect', *Diggers and Dreamers: A Directory of Alternative Living*, can be accessed here: [[http://www.segalselfbuild.co.uk][www.segalself build.co.uk/news/waltersegalbycol.html [last accessed, 19 June 2021].

flamboyancy.[64] But working alongside the Lewisham self-builders, encountering first-hand the creative abilities of unpretentious, working people, he had, so the story went, experienced an almost mystical sense of joy. In short, he had only become truly *anarchist* when applying its principles in action (which Ward likened to Kropotkin's experience amongst working people in the Jura[65]).

Beyond the figure of Segal, the project itself offered a physical validation of a plausible 'social individualism': each individual participant had gained greater control of their lives but *only* through their participation within the association making the two, individual and association, simultaneously distinct *and* mutually dependent. On this, one of the self-builders, Ken Atkins, a floor layer by trade, was useful to Ward for his ability to put such anarchist truths into vernacular forms, such as when he spoke of 'the indescribable feeling that you finally have control over what you are doing'.[66] Finally, like all good stories, Lewisham had vanquished villains. The elegant flexibility of the self-build solution to housing supply and affordable home ownership contrasted perfectly against the lumbering, myopic bureaucracy that frustrated their every step. Similarly, the community spirit of the pioneer builders was put into sharp relief against the mean-spirited Labour councillor.

Ward's answer to the owner-occupation riddle, then, was more Segal and less Thatcher. But not all were convinced by his arguments; his own side suspected a slide into conservatism or, worse, holy liberalism where one dabbed vaguely at the status quo with moralistic platitudes. Writing in the May *Freedom* 1989, Arthur Moyse, a *Freedom* contributor of many decades, acknowledged his comrade's longstanding advocacy of dwellers' control but wondered if he had not missed the mark on the 'Right to Buy' policy. Council house sales reduced the nation's housing stock, making fewer houses available for the working classes whose taxes and labour had been used to build them.[67]

Replying to Moyse privately to put the record straight, Ward was testy:

I can't help thinking you've been swept along by your own rhetoric [...] I'm a traditional anarchist, and I see the nation's stock of houses as the number of houses in the country, just as Kropotkin did a century ago in The Conquest of Bread: the stock waiting to be shared out according to need when the revolution comes. It hasn't actually come but that's not our fault is it?[68]

He went on, quoting from *Conquest* to show Kropotkin's division between property and excess property. On the one hand, there was the 'poor fellow who by dint of privation has contrived to buy a house just large enough to hold his family', but on the other, 'suppose he lets lodgings, suppose he has empty rooms in his house; then the people will let the lodger understand that he need not pay his former landlord any more rent'.[69] Ward drew a similar distinction in *Build Again* using Proudhon who, although better known for his famous dictum 'Property Is Theft', had also distinguished between property used exploitatively, 'Naked Property',[70] and property 'as "possession", the right of a man to control his dwelling and the land and tools he needs to live', which

[64] John McKean, *Learning from Segal*, 20.
[65] Colin Ward, 'Walter Segal: Community Architect'.
[66] Colin Ward, *Build Again*, 71.
[67] Arthur Moyse, *Freedom*, May 1989.
[68] Colin Ward to Arthur Moyse, Letters 1980–89, CWP/ARCH 03180, IISH.
[69] See Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread* (London: Penguin, [1913] 2015), 84.
[70] PJ Proudhon and JA Langlois (tr.), *What Is Property?* (Auckland: The Floating Press, [1840] 2010), 84.

was 'the cornerstone of lib- erty'.[71] Besides, he concluded to Moyse, owner-occupiers tended not to destroy their houses, unlike several councils who had been forced to blow up several of the tenements which 17 years earlier had won architectural prizes and had since been deemed unfit for human habitation. Was that not a waste of working-class taxes and labour?

The exchange with Moyse was minor, involving the sort of doctrinal wrangling he usually avoided, but it highlighted two points, one philosophical, the other personal. Philosophically, it showed how the concept of property was important but problematic in both classical and 'new' anarchist thinking. Proudhon and, with greater qualification, Kropotkin shared with liberal thinkers of their age, and prior, some equation between private property and autonomous personhood.[72] At the same time, they distinguished between property sufficient to meet basic needs (shelter, security, clothes, food, tools), and unchecked acquisition on the part of the able few (usually at the cost of the less able many). They agreed that protecting and regulating property was a crucial component of social cooperation but rejected the view that government and legal systems were *necessary* to enforce this. Indeed, both men considered that they generally created more conflict than they ameliorated. As Kropotkin explained:

We do not deny that there are plenty of egotistic instincts in isolated individuals. We are quite aware of it. But we contend that the very way to revive and nourish these instincts would be to confine such questions as the housing of the people to any board of committee, in fact to the tender mercies of officialism in any shape or form. Then indeed all the evil passions spring up.[73]

With socialists, Proudhon and Kropotkin shared the critique of uneven distribution, the belief that a common share of resources was a basic right, and agreed on the need for restraints on acquisitive capacity to maintain balance. At the same time, they could not countenance this at the cost or even deferral of individual liberty, the point of bitterest dispute between them and the wider left. Proudhon was famously attacked by Marx for privileging smallscale ownership (of an artisanal yeomanry style) in his thinking, a flaw, the German charged, which fatally undermined his entire philosophy.[74] For Marx, private ownership at any scale would *inevitably* result in hierarchy and stratification; only the complete elimination of private ownership through communism was rationally consistent with the attainment of total equality. On this matter Kropotkin agreed with Marx, in principle, but, as Ward pointed out to Moyse, passages in his work showed flexibility, even ambiguity on this matter.

Both men, in different ways, attempted a reconciliation. In their efforts to restore balance, each made an appeal to the idea of sufficiency-without-surplus, no scope, in other words, to put property to exploitative uses. Here they ran into problems. Where was the line between enough and too much, and who was to draw it? Who were Kropotkin, or Proudhon, to say whether a spare room was excessive? The Lewisham self-builders may have been perfectly content with their small alterations in design and decor at first but if, later, one wished to build an elaborate extension which made their house more valuable than the others and then sold at profit to wealthy buyers with no interest in community life, what then?

Ward's answer was simply that sufficiency and balance were not qualities possible to calculate in advance. They were principles to be considered in relation to each situation and judged case by case. Besides, it was for the community to direct themselves; the best that he or any other

[71] Colin Ward, *Build Again*, 112.

[72] See John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government* (1689).

[73] Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, 83.

[74] Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847).

anarchist could do was to propagate the success of the scheme (at least for now) and to support efforts towards replicating it elsewhere. This stance did not, of course, satisfy critics like Moyse, which leads to the second point, the personal. The exchange with Moyse provides a reminder of how beleaguered his position amongst the 'Anarchists' could be at times, never more so than in the heightened tension of the late 80s. Both considered the other in retreat. He considered their increasing self-enclosure, intensive factional disputes, and reprisal of the slogans and truisms of a lost revolutionary past overly romantic, a refusal to confront reality. In turn, they saw his concessions and compromise as disillusioned defeatism.

Despite his confession to Woodcock in 1985 that housing and dweller's control was a seam he had worked out, *Build Again* was not his last word on the subject. Following on from that book, and the previous 9, he wrote a further 12 dealing directly with different aspects of housing, architecture, planning, and environmental education from an anarchist perspective. In part, this came down to what publishers were interested in commissioning or funding bodies willing to finance. There was, it seemed, a growing appetite for ideas on self-build, dweller's control, sustainable cities, and decentralisation (not that this was always reflected in sales).

Welcome Thinner Cities: Urban Survival for the 1990s (1989) resumed the themes of dweller control and participation in inner-city regeneration but, to the horror (and perhaps secret triumph) of his fellow anarchists, it also made the unexpected concession that 'this enabling has to be a matter of public policy. I do not trust the government but neither do I trust market forces'.[75] *Undermining the Central Line* (1989), co-written with novelist Ruth Rendall, set out a lively polemic for the potential social, cultural, and economic vitality of the provinces as opposed to the constant focus on London. *Freedom to Go* (1991) revised and updated his *Freedom* series on 'The Motor Age'.[76] *Sociable Cities* (1998), co-written with Peter Hall, was an intellectual history of progressive planning in the 20th century.

The books were only the tip of the iceberg. Alongside these came articles tipping into the thousands. Alongside regular writing for the *TCPJ*, *The Architect's Journal*, *The Times Educational Supplement*, *New Society*, and later (following the merger in 1988) *New Society and Statesman*, there were hundreds of occasional pieces for the mainstream media (typically *The Guardian* and *The Independent*) and the radical presses including a flourishing green media such as *New Internationalist*, *Undercurrents*, *Resurgence*, and *The Ecologist*. On top of these came lectures and talks to professional societies (TCPA, RIBA, and once for the Zoological Society), policy think tanks (Demos), charities and social organisations (Shelter, Dartington Society, Segal Trust, Leicester Heritage Society), universities (including Bartlett School of Architecture, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Durham, Essex, Edinburgh, Hull, London School of Economics, London Institute of Education, Middlesex, Oxford Polytechnic, and the Royal College of Art to name only a handful).[77] There were also research and lecture tours in Italy and America.

It was a prodigious output but, unlike Paul Goodman's frank admission that he spread himself too thinly across too many subjects, Ward had 'learnt his metier', and he stuck to it. As a result, the themes, argument sequences, and selection of case studies remained much the same (carefully recombined and rearranged to suit the audience or occasion) but the content was not actually the main point. In this case, quantity really did matter, that and the breadth of reach. Granted,

[75] Colin Ward, *Welcome Thinner Cities* (London: Bedford Square, 1989), 4.

[76] Colin Ward, 'The Motor Age Series', *Freedom*, 22 March, 29 March, 5 April, 12 April, 19 April, 26 April 1958.

[77] Several of these were collected up in *Talking Houses* (1990), *Talking Schools* (1995), *Talking to Architects* (1996), *Talking Green* (2012).

only a very few of these outlets could be easily described as mainstream, heavily concentrated, as they were, around the fringes of left-leaning academia; still, it went far beyond the confines of the exclusively 'Anarchist' press.

For Ward, this approach permitted a much fuller realisation of his propagandist philosophy, and indeed of his anarchism, than the alternative:

My personal policy has been to be a genuine anarchist propagandist. If I say something on a particular topic it should be respected by an ordinary specialist audience as much as with my fellow anarchists. So when a now-forgotten Secretary of State for the Environment made a public appeal for comments on housing policy I responded with the same open letter printed in Freedom (9 November 1974) as in the Architect's Journal (13 November 1974). If I was just talking anarchist nonsense, someone would have found me out.[78]

For the last 25 years of his life, writing his style of 'genuine' anarchist propaganda became his profession, providing him with an anarchistic way of life compatible with his definition: creative craft work (writing) done more or less to his taste, and, more or less according to his own standards, on matters he knew well and still, even after much repetition, cared about, that allowed him the freedom of self-employment. Depending on one's point of view, this was either rather poetic or faintly ironic.

[78] Colin Ward, 'Notes towards "Wee Wee Frees" Article', Journalism-Various 70s-90s, CWP/ARCH03180, IISH.

12. Categorically Ward

'I had hoped to make a living by writing', Ward wrote in reply to a former *Anarchy* contributor seeking guidance on the writer's life, 'but of course my books aren't the kind that make any money'.

My advice to anyone, whether of my age or younger, is to watch in The Guardian for the ads from the grant-giving trusts, usually in August to November, and apply for everything on offer. I am talking about Leverhulme, Rowntree, Gulbenkian, the ESRC etc. Even I, leaving school at 15 in 1939, have won cash from some of these.[1]

Exchanging city and salary for rural life and self-employment was exhilarating but meant several difficult years. The Suffolk move had been long in the planning. Several of the *Freedom* group had already been enticed. Vernon Richards and Peta Edsall left London in 1968, setting up 'The Golden Pightle', a smallholding and market garden enterprise. John Hewetson and Philip Sansom also left the city for Boxford and Polstead, nearby villages, in the 1970s.

In 1977, Richards, on hearing that a neighbouring property, the Old Mill House, was for sale, determined it should be acquired for the anarchist cause. Having explored but abandoned the idea of turning it into an anarchist summer retreat, he urged Ward and Harriet to take it on, which they did. The Old Mill was in disrepair, the garden was overgrown, and it was remote, three miles from the nearest shops with little public transport. Still, it was charming, its attractions enhanced by the fact that it sat on what had once been common land which had somehow escaped enclosure.[2] The Ward family visited for holidays and weekends until making the permanent move in 1980. Harriet assumed the role of the family driver.

Retreating to the country in search of self-sufficiency was a long-standing, radical trope. Before Richards, Sansom, and Hewetson, FP stalwarts Tom Keell and Lilian Wolfe had been members of Whiteway, the Tolstoyan community in Gloucestershire which had moved and impressed Gandhi on his visit in 1909.[3] Woodcock too had spent three months at Langham (describing the experience as one of 'hope and disillusionment'[4]). The Wards, however, were not joining an official-unofficial community devoted to prefiguring an ideal anarchist society, nor did they wish to. They moved for space, privacy, and affordability for a selfemployed writer.

Asked by fellow *Freedom* anarchist Tony Gibson about the influence of anarchism on his general lifestyle, and vice versa, Ward replied 'hardly I think, as I think I told you, I live the life of a down-at-heel intellectual, and pay my taxes on time, if that's what you call a lifestyle',

[1] Colin Ward to John Pilgrim, 14 February 1988, Letters 1980–89, CWP/ARCH03180, IISH. The research grant and book he refers to is *Thinner Cities* which was awarded £15,000 from *The Times* Charles Home Douglas competition for research projects into urban regeneration.

[2] Colin Ward, 'Fringe Benefits', *New Statesman and Society*, 23 August 1991.

[3] Joy Thacker, *Whiteway Colony: A Social History of a Tolstoyan Community* (Stroud: J. Thacker, 1993). Dennis Hardy, *Utopian England: Community Experiments 1900—1945* (London: E &FN Spon, 2000), 171–182.

[4] George Woodcock, *Letters to the Past*, 227. See also Dennis Hardy, 'A Wartime Refuge', *Utopian England*, 41–54. Hardy acknowledges Ward's assistance with the research for this chapter.

adding that 'there is a superficial but automatic anarchism in our family and it pleases me'.[5] In part this was just an admission that he had never attempted to live out the Kropotkinian ideals he advocated in full. In the absence of a fully anarchistic culture, even approximate authenticity was only possible by shutting out the outside world. The pressure of isolation meant that communities, as Woodcock observed at Langham, often descended into internal conflict, contradicting the very principles of individuality and voluntarism they endorsed.

At the same time, when asked if he had ever doubted the soundness of anarchist ideas, Ward could confidently answer 'no' because: 'I am not a utopian anarchist — I look for day-to-day anarchist solutions'.[6] If the utopian pursued anarchism as an entire social design, the latter took it as a multi-purpose gadget for loosening restraints in everyday life. As a propagandist, he championed the designs but, by personal and intellectual conviction, he was a gadget man, presenting ideas as resources to be picked over for the bits that could be used in the present.

In this spirit, small-scale self-employment was something he felt resonated with the anarchist ideal of workers' control but could be achieved in society as it was (albeit with compromise). He was fascinated by the psychology of selfemployment and especially admired jack-of-all-trades—type characters for their versatility and resourcefulness. On this score at least, Richards was a model example. Although a qualified civil engineer, he had, during his imprisonment in 1945, vowed against pursuing a 'career' and, on his release, turned his hand to many occupations from running the King Bomba grocery store after his father's death to stints as a photographer, tour operator to Franco's Spain and the Soviet Union (he thought tourism might help raise public awareness about fascism), and finally to the market garden, which he supplemented with a Sunday paper round to cover the cost of running a car but which also allowed him to drum up business for vegetable sales while providing free access to the weekly press.[7] At the same time, despite several promises to retire, he remained a dominant figure in British anarchist propaganda.

For those not blessed with Richards' natural pugnacity, the reality of selfemployment was hard. Despite a healthy reputation as a pundit and writer, Ward found converting this into cash no mean feat. Books and journalism simply did not pay. The discipline of daily reading and writing was no problem. More challenging was the need to keep vigilant for opportunities and push himself forward when they came, while also remaining prudent about what he committed to and what he did not. All this brought out a certain steeliness. For example, turning down one request for a talk:

For the last five years I have operated a one man boycott of Oxford polytechnic… because of the county treasurer who deducted both Income Tax and an NI contribution from my pathetic little fee . I wrote several times to protest that I am self employed, taxed under schedule E and paying NI under Class 2. The county treasurer neither replied nor repaid.[8]

Although obliged to hunt down research grants, chase cheques from errant editors, and pursue county treasurers for every pound, there were certain lines he would not cross, such as his objection to intrusive editing. As he wrote to one editor, rejecting a request for a book review that would be subject to peer review:

The habit of 'refereeing' arises from American academic life where you have to publish or not get promoted . That this nasty aspect of the academic rat-race should invade a small radical

[5] Tony Gibson, 'Interview with Colin Ward', TGP/ARCH0515, IISH.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Colin Ward and David Goodway, *Talking Anarchy* (Oakland: PM Books, 2014), 71–72.

[8] Colin Ward Letter to 'Geoffrey', 17 August 1985, 'Letters 1980–1989', CWP/ ARCH03180, IISH.

magazine like Contemporary Issues in Geography and Education is absolutely odious to someone like me .

This is an important point which has especial implications for someone like me, writing for a living, and with a whole series of useful but uneconomic books to get published.[9]

Fortunately, Harriet gained part-time teaching work in history and, for several years, hurtled around Suffolk taking evening classes for the Workers' Educational Association. When that dried up, she undertook an annual 'marathon' of exam marking and wrote school history textbooks. This took some pressure off but the need to generate income was ever-present. It was this, then, which partly informed his academic collaborations with geographers Dennis Hardy, *Arcadia for All* (1984) and *Goodnight Campers!* (1986), and David Crouch, *The Allotment* (1988). But, for all the practical benefits of these projects, they were, nonetheless, happy, and successful unions of interests, ideals, and convenience.

Arcadian Plots

Dennis Hardy, a former town planning officer at Middlesex County Council, had, in the late 1960s, exchanged the 'stultifying atmosphere of local government' for a lectureship in the Social Sciences programme at Enfield College of Technology. The flexible, interdisciplinary nature of the course suited him well, allowing him to indulge his interests in figures like Robert Owen, William Morris, and Peter Kropotkin as well on themes like decentralisation and com- munitarianism.[10] The fruit of this was his book *Alternative Communities in the Nineteenth Century* (1979), an account of the 'Back to Land' movement, which, following the agricultural depression in the late 1870s, had set out to revitalise rural areas decimated by cheap grain imports which bankrupted farmers, unable to compete on either price or quantity, had abandoned.

Already kindly disposed to alternative communities, and regularly leading student field trips to Peacehaven in East Lewes, Sussex, Hardy sensed scope for a more probing investigation into plotland settlements. On winning a grant from the Social Science Research Council, he advertised for an assistant and was astonished when Ward (known to him as the innovative anarchist Education Officer at the TCPA) applied for the job. Ward arrived at the interview with a bag bulging with books and articles he had already written on the topic. Despite the College Dean fearing that someone of this stature might take over the project as his own, Hardy knew that his experience could only lift the research.[11]

Ward did not commandeer the project, but of course he influenced it. He had, after all, been championing the plotland sites as an example of 'anarchy in action' for some years and, following the publicity surrounding his DIY New Town paper, which featured the Basildon plotlands, he received an unexpected boon. Hearing him speak about them on the Jimmy Young show (BBC Radio 2) in 1976, Elizabeth Granger, one of the plotland pioneers, got in touch to share the full story of how, having borrowed a pound to put down for deposit, she and her first husband had eventually built two bungalows on the site.[12] The 'borrowed pound' joined his stock of anarchist parables. Integrating stories like this, from and about the real plotlanders, alongside formal

[9] Colin Ward to David Pepper, 2 August 1987, 'Letters 1980–89', CWP/ARCH03180, IISH.

[10] Dennis Hardy, Private Communication with author, June 2019.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Elizabeth Granger, 'A Borrowed Pound', *Bulletin of Environmental Education*, 63/4, 1976; Colin Ward letter to Mr Thomas, 24 October 1984, 'CW Plotlands', CWP/ ARCH03180, IISH.

records and old newspaper stories did more than add colour to stiff prose, it challenged the negative perceptions of plotlands as 'gimcrack civilisations',[13] and plotlanders as either mercenary or slovenly. As such, *Arcadia* contributed to a flourishing of interest in 'history from below' or people's history.

As British historian Raphael Samuel observed, 'People's History' was always political. By placing stress on human experience, it rejected the dehumanised 'masses' of modern industrial culture and revolted against 'dry as dust scholarship', abstract theorisation, and the cult of the expert which either singled out a select few historical actors or denied human agency altogether.[14] Samuel's own venture, the pioneering History Workshop movement (Ruskin College, Oxford, 1963—1979), became synonymous with densely detailed studies of everyday working-class community life. At their best, these not only addressed the absence of ordinary people from the official historical record, but they also altered the record itself by exposing problems with exclusively 'macro' accounts of social processes. When, for example, industrialisation was examined through the eyes of working-class women, children, the elderly, migrants, and itinerant labourers, it appeared far less even and systematic than often portrayed.[15] This, in turn, opened new avenues for further research.

At the same time, people's history democratised history *making* by dispersing expertise and the authority of the official record, formal archive, or theory more widely. On this score, oral history, supported by advances in portable recording technology, now excited interest. If treated carefully, spoken testimonies not only made those aspects of life absent from the documents visible, or audible,[16] they went some way towards recognising people as their own historians, active agents in constructing meaning from and about the past.[17] The most important British figure here was historian Paul Thompson, founder of the Oral History Society (1969) and *Oral History Journal* (1970). Thompson, a former peace activist whose previous work included a history of the London Socialist movement and a biography of William Morris, joined the University of Essex as a lecturer in sociology under Peter Townsend (formerly of the Institute of Community Studies). He made his name with the *The Edwardians: The Remaking of British Society* (1975), based on 450 interviews conducted over three years, which transformed understanding of social and working life in early 20th-century Britain. Building on this material, he went on to research fishing communities in East Anglia and Shetland in the early 1980s, later conducting comparative research on car workers in the deindustrialised cities of Turin and Coventry.[18]

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[13] Howard Marshall, 'A Rake's Progress', in C. William-Ellis, ed., *Britain and the Beast* (London: J.M. Dent, 1937), 166.

[14] Raphael Samuel, 'People's History', in Samuel, ed., *People's History and Socialist Theory* (London: Kegan and Routledge Paul, 1981), xx.

[15] See for example: Raphael Samuel, ed., *Village Life and Labour* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975); *Miners, Quarrymen and Salt Workers* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977).

[16] The Oral History Society in Britain was formed in 1969, *The Oral History Journal* launched in 1970. For commentaries see: Raphael Samuel, 'Perils of the Transcript', *Oral History*, 1:2 (1971), 19–22; 'The Interview in Social History: A General Discussion', *Oral History*, 1:4 (1972), 126–128; Raphael Samuel, 'Local History and Oral History', *History Workshop Journal*, 1 (1976), 191–208.

[17] Raphael Samuel, 'Introduction', in Samuel, *Theatres of Memory* (London: Verso, 1994), x.

[18] See Paul Thompson, 'Second Interview with Paul Thompson', in *Pioneers of Social Research, 1996—2018*, UK Data Service [distributor], 8 April 2019, https://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-6226-6][https:// doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-6226-6 [accessed 23 June 2021]. https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk//QualiBank/Document/?id=q-dbbe7607-3144-4395-9bf3-f65c7e4a7066.

Given their many mutual connections and shared interests (William Morris, Arts and Crafts, the Peace Movement, Italy, and Community Studies) it is unsurprising that Ward and Thompson became friends. Thompson was a regular reference in Ward's later work, especially for his Shetland insights which helpfully updated, and domesticated, the tribal life anecdotes used, by anarchists, to support the case for open families and needs-based economies.

In the Shetlands in particular [...] there is a very special way of bringing up children, which instead of emphasising control and physical discipline, encourages reasoning and discussion. Children are brought up from a very early age to be part of adult society [.] It is my belief that this exception family and community culture explains how ordinary working families, who fifty years ago had a standard of living little above an elementary subsistence level, have since the last war shown a striking technical inventiveness and adaptability in taking up new ways of fishing.[19]

People's history infiltrated the social sciences too. While Hardy and Ward were excavating southern English plotland culture, another friend, Ray Pahl,[20] a sociologist at the University of Kent, was working on the Isle of Sheppey. Pahl, a contemporary of the London School of Economics 'New Criminologists', who Ward had published in *Anarchy*, shared similar frustrations with the narrowness of positivist empiricism on the one hand and the excessive abstraction of Marxism on the other.[21] In Sheppey's research, for example, he focused on the 'informal economy' to demonstrate limitations in both Liberal and Socialist definitions of labour (as something typically defined by and contained within a workplace), exposing how much both of these overlooked the importance of 'peripheral' work — casual self-employment, household work and barter — in sustaining fragile economies.[22] To capture this invisible seam of life, he too combined open-ended interviews with field observations, yielding rich results.[23]

Arcadia and Pahl's *Divisions of Labour* appeared at roughly the same time and there was much mutual admiration. 'Needless to say', Ward wrote to Pahl,

I am very excited about your book: breadth, depth, scope and so on. It is bound to become a classic that will help to keep you in your old age. Or would if it was possible to make a living from books.[24]

Like Thompson in the Shetlands and Pahl on Sheppey, Hardy and Ward had their own piece of iconoclasm to perform in rescuing the plotlands from 'the enormous condescension of posterity'.[25] The project involved a tremendous amount of work across sites in Sussex, Kent, Essex, and Suffolk, combining archival research with field observations and extensive interviews. It was during the interviews, Hardy recalled, that Ward came into his own, putting to good use his ability to speak freely with anyone, regardless of social background (which was fortunate as ex-plotlanders were an exceptionally 'rainbow' group). Regardless, Ward soon had them putting on the kettle

[19] From Paul Thompson with Tony Wailey and Trevor Lumis, *Living the Fishing* (London: Routledge Paul, 1983). Quoted in Colin Ward, 'Education for Resourcefulness', in Ward, *Talking Schools* (London: Freedom Press, 1995), 108–119.

[20] Following their respective British studies in the early 80s, Ray Pahl and Paul Thompson collaborated on oral research in Soviet Russia. See 'Meanings, Myths and Mystifications in Soviet Russia Life Narratives', in CM Hann, ed., *When History Accelerates: Essays on Rapid Social Change, Complexity and Creativity* (London: Athlone Press, 1994), 130–160.

[21] Ray Pahl, 'Introduction', in Pahl, *Divisions of Labour* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 3.

[22] Ibid., 11–12.

[23] Ibid., 12–14.

[24] Colin Ward to Ray Pahl, 5 October 1984, 'Letters 1980s-89', Colin Ward Archive.

[25] EP Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1963).

and fetching down the family albums. His knowledge of construction elicited tremendous detail about building and design.[26]

Arcadia stands out in Ward's oeuvre. The topic, the inter-war plotlands, was personal. Several of the case studies were taken from his 'home patch' on the outskirts of Essex, first discovered during his summer cycle rides as a teenager. Thirty years on, there was also an echo of his own recent flee from the city for an ad-lib rural existence. More than this, the plotlands, as much, if not more, than the mass squatting movement in 1947, captured his ideals nicely. Here was a concrete, relatively recent example of popular initiative, showcasing the combination of individual resourcefulness and collective endeavour which he most prized. The project also satisfied him as a writer. *Arcadia* showed the difference between the 'primary colours' and spacious suggestion of an anarchist parable, and the complex detail possible in a piece of fully realised anarchist ethnography. Looking back wistfully, he considered it to be 'a beautiful piece of research', because, with the generous funding that accompanied it, every lead could be followed.[27]

For all the layers of nuance and detail, much of the basic parable structure remained intact. The opening chapters, 'Property and Freedom' and 'Property and Control', set the scene and introduced readers to the heroes and villains of the piece. There were, they are argued, three main practical drivers behind the plotlands phenomenon: agricultural depression making land cheap, the expansion of the railways and cheap fares, and increased leisure time and the expansion of tourism to the lower social classes. As for motivation, this aligned with two deep cultural currents, pastoralism and agrarianism, both tributaries flowing from the idea of the 'freeborn Englishman' as an essentially rural character with a 'right to land'.[28]

What underpinned this national preoccupation with land rights, translated, now, into 15-by-60-foot plots of underwhelming ex-farming land?

One view of the plotlands is that they represent no more than a colourful, but in other ways conventional, contribution to an emergent idea of a 'property-owning democracy'.[29]

Writing against the backdrop of the emotive 'Right to Buy' debates, the authors had to acknowledge the argument that the plotlands were the only accessible ways for an aspirational poor to get a toehold on the property market. While accepting that plotlands appeared to epitomise 'a basic spirit of liberal endeav- our',[30] there was, they believed, an alternative view:

the association of plot ownership with freedom rests less on the material fact of ownership as an end in itself, and more on opportunities to create a small world of one's own choosing.[31]

Adding that 'what was sought, perhaps, was not individualism in the liberal sense of one person matched against another, but one's own wholeness'.[32] In concluding the chapter they noted that 'As an expression of libertarian ideals, there is much to be found in the plotlands' (especially when one was looking for it), continuing that even if they fell far short of 'how utopians envisaged Arcadia' it had been 'for many people the best that was available at the time'.

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[26] Dennis Hardy, Private Communication to author, June 2019. See also, Colin Ward and Dennis Hardy, 'The Plotlanders', *Oral History*, 13:2 (1985), 57–70.

[27] Colin Ward and David Goodway, ed., *Talking Anarchy*, 92–93.

[28] See Christopher Hill, 'The Norman Yoke', in John Saville, ed., *Democracy and the Labour Movement: Essays in Honour of Dona Torr* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1954), 11–67.

[29] Dennis Hardy and Colin Ward, *Arcadia for All: The Legacy of a Makeshift Environment* (London: Mansell, 1984), 25.

[30] Ibid., 27.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

If 'Property and Freedom' made the case for applying a left-libertarian perspective to the plotlands, 'Property and Control' outlined the book's narrative drama,

The historic tussle between, on the one hand, individual rights of property and freedom of action and, on the other hand, growing State involvement in the public interest, was fought afresh on the unlikely battlegrounds of makeshift landscapes.[33]

From one direction, the political right-wing, now assuming the garb of the 'preservationist lobby', lamented the wanton destruction of traditional rural landscapes (and, with them, a social order where everyone knew their place). But even these stalwarts of feudal villainy knew their days of wielding power were over. They had now to work through the legislative apparatus which had been slowly expanding with each new Urban Reform Act. Mobilising this apparatus was best done on economic grounds: the expense of patchy service provision and the restrictions on future development prospects by straggly, unsightly plotlands that blocked off access ways or diminished land value by association. From the 1930s, a welter of piecemeal legislation emerged to curb plotland sprawl, most of which proved ineffective. After the war, however, the 1946 and 1947 Town Planning Acts allowed for more comprehensive control of both urban and rural areas.

Arcadia traced these 'David and Goliath' struggles as they occurred across the different case studies. Sites without running water, drainage, or roads, hostility from local authorities and existing residents, court cases, fines, exclusion, and discrimination were all met with perseverance and resilience through voluntary association, assisting one another with house building and coping with life on un-serviced sites. Across the chapters, a host of colourful characters burst forth. Alongside Mrs Granger were the Syretts, the Biggs, and the Nichols, all cast as the enterprising, ad-hoc architects of much-loved patchwork homes.

For all this, 'the people' remained slightly two-dimensional representatives of 'individual endeavour'. Those who emerged as really interesting, complicated individuals were the entrepreneurs, like Frank Stedman, the Jaywick Sands developer, who, readers were reassured, had not simply been on the make but 'had a strong philanthropic streak. As soon as money came his way he dispersed it all over the place'.[34] More surprising still, perhaps, was the sympathetic depiction of Charles Neville, the developer of Peacehaven. Essentially a speculative builder, Neville had started by swindling prospective plotholders at three guineas a head.[35] Although clearly a rogue, he was an enterprising one who surged ahead with plot building after the First World War, while the government failed to deliver the promised homes for heroes.[36] Promoting Peacehaven as the Garden City by the sea, Neville sold the dream of tranquillity and the simple life, ignoring or defying all attempts at local authority intervention.[37] Profiteering (and occasional negligence) bracketed, both men emerged as Ebenezer Howard alter- egos, albeit of a slightly crumpled kind.

Howard, or more specifically his prodigy, the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), was a ghostly presence amidst all this and a conflicted one. The New Towns were partly intended to resolve the tensions that the plotlands exemplified between the freedoms sought in rural life and the need for more controlled development. In practice, when it came to the plotlands, this had been, at best, partial (Basildon providing the one example of at

[33] Dennis Hardy and Colin Ward, *Arcadia*, 33.
[34] Ibid., 139.
[35] Ibid., 74–76.
[36] Ibid., 78.
[37] Ibid., 77.

least temporary synthesis between plotlands and new towns) which the book documented in extensive 'afterwords', tracing the larger legal actions taken against plotlanders during the post-war period. The implicit critique of Ward's former employers was clear, it was, after all, Osborn who, in the late 30s, had allied with the same preservationist bodies to bolster the case for centralised planning and the New Towns. His mistake had been to believe that the central and local government bureaucracy was a juggernaut that could be controlled.

Arcadia was fastidiously researched, amply documented, but its politics were never far from the surface; as Ward wrote to Woodcock, 'Some reviewers saw this as an anarchist book which was gratifying'.[38] The plotland story was not only anarchist because it told a story of grassroots action but also because it disrupted two dominant historical narratives. Firstly, it problematised the idea of any steadily advancing social progress culminating in the Welfare State. On the matter of housing, for example, plotland entrepreneurs had succeeded where government promises had failed. Centralised provision had, consequently, been used as a pretext to sweep away or bring under control their efforts (just as it had in the case of the Peckham health centre). Secondly, it challenged the notion that mass culture meant cultural decline. The plotlanders benefited from the expansion of tourism, especially the increased accessibility of railway travel, but still acted as independent, creative individuals. Instead of the continuous trajectories offered by either progressive or declinist accounts, *Arcadia* presented a patchwork of localised struggles and an uneven score chart of gains and losses. Here, then, was a model for non-utopian anarchist historiography in which the social principle, although usually overwhelmed by the political principle in the end, proved stubbornly resilient.

For all this, Ward retained the same soft note of irony towards history that he kept for the social sciences. Replying to an inquiry from a friend about *Akenfield*, Ronald Blythe's fictionalised account of a Suffolk village (drawn from oral testimonies from elderly villagers), he referred his correspondent to an essay of Thompson's criticising the book 'as a piece of oral history worked up into a work of art'. 'I don't share this purist view', he added; the boundaries between art and 'reality' were always porous and need not be jealously defended.[39] Writing to Thompson to congratulate him on a paper, 'Playing at Being Skilled Men', fruit from the Turin/Coventry motor industry project, he recalled a discussion with his apprentice engineer students in Wandsworth. The class concluded that the best time to join any industry was at the beginning, after that all else was an anti-climax followed by a descent into a routine. 'Maybe you have had the same kind of adventure in the oral history industry?'[40] he teased, referring to the flood of local community studies which, by the late 1980s, poured out of university social studies departments.

Ward collaborated with Hardy again on *Goodnight Campers* (1986) which grew out of the *Arcadia* research. Later came *The Allotment: Its Landscape and Culture* with David Crouch, a lecturer in environmental planning, then at the Essex Institute for Higher Education. On meeting Crouch (through talks on the *Arcadia* project) and learning of his interest in gardening and allotments, Ward sensed scope for another pleasant, and fundable, project.[41] Indeed, the book was the first to take seriously allotments as a compelling margin where social, cultural, political, and, of course, environmental forces converged in interesting and often conflicting patterns. On the one hand,

[38] Colin Ward to George Woodcock, 13 February 1985, Letters 1980–1989, CWP/ ARCH03180.
[39] Colin Ward to Taylor Stoehr, 1 October 1981, Letters 1980–1989, CWP/ARCH03180, IISH.
[40] Colin Ward to Paul Thompson, 11 April 1988, Letters 1980–1989, CWP/ ARCH03180, IISH.
[41] David Crouch, private communication with author, June 2019.

allotments nourished a vital wellspring of self-reliant culture. On the other, their very existence stood testament to the desiccation of common lands and of the people they had once supported.

Like *Arcadia*, *Allotment* was demanding, Ward and Crouch scoured the country (and beyond) collecting their case studies but, unlike *Arcadia*, it adopted a less formal approach (befitting, perhaps, the novelty of the subject matter). Alongside the interviews and observations, it wove its case from fragments gleaned from local myths and folklore. This jubilant 'rag-bag' method reached greater heights still in Ward's last major book, *Cotters and Squatters: The Hidden History of Housing* (2002). Of all his oeuvre, none was more 'categorically Ward' than *Cotters*. Not only was the subject a truly personal passion, 50 years in the nursing, but, as a solo venture, free from any academic framework, he could take his taste for bricolage even further. What *Cotters* lacked in systematic analysis or contextual precision, it made up for in the extraordinary assemblage of material which he begged, borrowed, and salvaged.

'The community of scholars really exists',[42] he wrote warmly of all the public librarians, local archivists, family historians, antiquarians, amateur collectors, and voluntary societies who had eagerly shared their 'nuggets of information' with him. To this he added other cultural pickings, even finding space for the contemporary rave scene when noting the perennial draw of woodland camps for the socially marginalised.[43] Published by Five Leaves, an independent publishing enterprise in Nottingham, who, alone, were willing to take a risk on this unconventional subject, the blurb on the back described Ward as 'the chronicler of popular and unofficial uses of the environment'. He was not only their chronicler, he was also their artist.

Columns

Just to pay the rates and the electricity bills I write THE PERSONAL VIEW column in New Society every five weeks, THE PRIVATE VIEW column in The Architect's Journal at about the same intervals, as well as PEOPLE AND IDEAS column in TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING every month (for which I get £30 a time),

Ward told the aspiring writer seeking his advice in early 1988. 'I have this fantasy', he went on, 'that our financial worries would be over if someone would pay me to produce a column every week'.[44] Shortly after, he got his wish and 'Fringe Benefits' burst into print, an unexpected beneficiary of the *New Statesman* and *New Society* merger.

Like *Anarchy, New Society* (NS) (1962—1988) emerged from currents which began in the 50s but came of age in the optimistic atmosphere of the early 1960s. Launched as the social science equivalent of *New Scientist*, it promised fresh thinking on the most topical social issues of the day. For the main, the mood was empirical, the sociological imagination applied as a 'reasoned sympathy',[45] which was not to say it was not innovative. The 'Arts in Society' feature took seriously the study of popular culture although, again, the typical approach was the common-sense ethnography a la Orwell or Hoggart.

[42] See Paul Goodman, *The Community of Scholars* (New York: Random House, 1962).

[43] Colin Ward, *Cotters and Squatters: The Hidden History of Housing* (Nottingham: Five Leaves Publications, 2002), 164.

[44] Colin Ward letter to John Pilgrim, 14 February 1988, Letters 1980–89, CWP/ ARCH03180, IISH.

[45] Simon Frith, 'Speaking Volumes: New Society (1962–1987)', *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 30 January 1995; Mike Savage, 'Revisiting New Society', *Discover Society*, 1 October 2013, https://archive.discoversociety.org/2013/10/01/revisiting-new-society/ [accessed 29 June 2021].

In 1968, Paul Barker, formerly an NS staff writer and deputy editor, assumed the chief editorship, making his mark on the journal with the notorious 'NonPlan' edition (20 March 1969). 'Non-Plan', inspired by his hostility to modern planning, proposed the idea of a 'planning holiday' to be applied to 'test patches' of the UK. This was extended into a fully-fledged thought experiment with the aid of planning academic Peter Hall and architects Cedric Price and Rayner Banham. Unsurprisingly, 'Non-Plan' delighted Ward,[46] capturing, as it did, the same blend of seriousness and satire as the Goodman brothers' *Communitas*.

Beyond special editions like 'Non-Plan', Ward was an NS supporter from the start. When Barker asked him in 1990 to contribute to a piece on NS's influence, he sent back a list of his own books and the foreword to *A Decade of Anarchy* explaining that 'they sound like a contents list for NEW SOCIETY, and plenty of them have sentences and paragraphs, even whole chapters which were tried out in your pages'.

[T] he impulses that made me start ANARCHY were just the same as those that made Tim Raison start NEW SOCIETY: the realisation that we were in a world that didn't fit the accepted 'facts.' Suez/Hungary/Look Back in Anger/the new social analysts of the 50s like Townsend and Abel-Smith etc, and the new sociologists of deviance, Cohen, the Taylors and David Downes.[47]

In addition, there was direct traffic between the two in terms of themes covered and contributors. NS regulars Colin MacInnes, Ray Gosling, and Tony Parker were all 'bullied' into writing for *Anarchy*. Barker's review of Kes was reprinted in a special on education (A107, 1970). Ward too became a frequent NS contributor throughout the 1970s and a semi-regular columnist in the early 1980s.

But by the 1980s, both the moment and the niche NS had carved for itself had eroded. As another former NS regular described, the serious study of popular culture established a firmer academic footing whilst the journalistic trend drifted towards 'cultural analysis by personal testimony'. 'Smart rational pop criticism (the magazine's original forte) was squeezed out from both directions'.[48] The journal's circulation began to wane; Barker lost the editorship in 1986, replaced by Stuart Weir. In 1988 NS merged with the *New Statesman* to form *New Statesman and Society* (NSS), which, although billed as a rescue, was in the eyes of many, an end of an era. Ward, attending a meeting of NS contributors to discuss the merger was told that 'the readership of the *New Statesman* is older and easily shocked by both heresy and sexual explicitness, whereas the readership of *New Society* is younger and unshockable'.[49] In the tumult that followed, Ward expected to lose his semi-regular 'Personal View' despite lobbying Weir to let him have a regular 'rural column'. To his surprise, he got his way and 'Fringe Benefits' was born.

At heart, Ward was always first and foremost a columnist and a virtuoso one at that. Not only did they complement his natural style of writing but columns, as brief, self-contained episodes, proved a convivial vehicle for his picaresque style of anarchism. 'Fringes' suited particularly well because, other than requiring some tangential link to rural matters, it offered an almost limitless remit and a chance to revisit the whimsical, anecdotal mode perfected in the early 1950s. So, although it seemed as though his commission represented the shift to 'cultural analysis as

[46] Colin Ward, 'Anarchy and Architecture: A Personal Record', in Jonathan Hughes and Simon Sadler, eds., *Non Plan: Essays on Freedom Participation and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism* (London: Architectural Press, 2000), 44–51.

[47] Colin Ward to Paul Barker, 23 October 1990, Letters 1990–99, CWP/ARCH03180, IISH.

[48] Simon Frith, 'Speaking Volumes'.

[49] Colin Ward letter to Jonathan Steinberg, 14 May 1988, Letters 1980—89, CWP/ ARCH03180, IISH.

personal testimony' exactly, there was no one better equipped to turn the genial personal column into an effective, if stealthy, political tool.

Style was important. The NSS column gave him a platform before a general, intelligent readership. What he said had to be immediately accessible without being bland or trivial. NSS readers enjoyed columns for the idiosyncrasy of the columnist. Like Shakespearean fools, they had a licence to provoke while entertaining. Moreover, he had been commissioned precisely because of his reputation as an anarchist pundit; it was expected that he would peddle his usual wares: decentralisation of government and communitarian politics, regionalism in planning, self-sufficiency in food production, informal economies, workers' control in industry, dwellers' control in housing, the arts in education, exploding schools. Over the seven-year life span of the column, he covered each of these topics dozens of times from every conceivable angle and here, it really was the method that mattered most.

There was a range of techniques he applied to the task. As implied by the genre, his columns were always 'personal testimonies' triggered by various prompts. Sometimes these could be quite general, an event in the news that week, the publication of a book, a radio broadcast or even, occasionally, a television programme. Then there were those inspired by some apparently mundane occurrence in his home life or local village that he could then spin into a parable of domesticated anarchism. The story of the broken pianola was typical of this. John, 'a neighbour' with a talent for amateur mechanics, was given the damaged instrument by his daughter. Initially stumped by its complexity, he sought help from 'three wise men', an aeronautical engineer, a chemist, and a civil engineer, all of whom offered advice from their own specialist fields, none of which helped. John, blissfully unburdened by professional knowledge, eventually improvised an adequate solution.[50]

Another method was to perform anarchic archaeology. In a pair of columns, published 23 and 30 August 1991, he told the story of his summer spent re-doing the kitchen floor in Mill House, a process which proved to be 'an incidental last rite', bringing him into tangible contact with the sediments of the past. In the first column, he introduced Nobby Clark, an ex-sailor who had escaped Navy life in 1919 for pastoral tranquillity with his wife. Clark, another handy sort of fellow, had specialised in the labour-intensive technique of 'graining', where grain patterns were hand painted onto salvaged wood to mimic expensive flooring (the same he was now pulling up). There were other clues to the Clarks' frugal but resourceful life: five flat irons left from Mrs Clark's laundry days, her outside tripod for hanging puddings to steam, a precarious chimney stack propped against the old shed outside. The second column picked up the story with the next pair of residents, Miss H and Miss C, who had lived there during the 40s and 50s. The two friends had paid their rates through arduous farm work and, for the rest, eked a precarious living from what they could grow and forage.

Scattered amidst the two accounts were flecks of his own family's life linking him to the ghosts of the past. Of his 'summer task', reflooring the kitchen, he explained 'most of our time is spent in that room', chiming with the cottage's earliest days when it had only consisted of the kitchen and an attic to sleep in. On his hopes of finding more of Nobby's secrets under the floor: 'the only momento to turn up was a sixpenny packet that once contained ten Cravern A cigarettes', the same brand that he smoked. The was a fleeting encounter with Miss H in the 1970s,

[50] Colin Ward, 'Fringe Benefits', *New Statesman and Society*, 15 December 1989.

by then a very elderly 'tiny, sharp-eyed, nut-brown woman', to whom he could only apologise, embarrassed, for the decline of the garden.[51]

These intimate rural fragments, rich in suggestion, had an almost Chekhovian[52] quality. The Clarks' story was about the care and creativity two poor people had lavished on simple things but hanging in the spaces was Nobby's hasty retreat to the peace of the country following a traumatic war service at sea. Locally, Miss H and Miss C 'were known as the "boy-girls"' for their manual work but also, it was heavily implied, for other reasons too. Their lives had been hard, 'almost outside the money economy, relying on making-do and neighbourly exchange' without electricity or running water, washing in rainwater collected in the old steel drums left by Nobby, yet, although toughened by circumstance, rambler roses and clusters of bulbs gave away how 'the pair of them celebrated their patch of land'.[53] Holding together these partial and broken remains was Mill House itself which, built on its slither of common land, preserved from the greed of landowners, stood as an architectural testament to human endurance.

It was not just the domesticity of his subject choices. Ward's narrative persona in 'Fringe' (as elsewhere) also worked for the cause. He was careful to present himself as the archetypal 'Everyman', someone who stood for 'Anyone'. 'Anyone' shared their readers' times, culture, and concerns: relationships, parenthood, home ownership, making a living, and paying taxes. 'Anyone' was not an intellectual or expert, but lived by common sense which, in this case, meant reflecting on experience, their own and others', immediate and inherited, to better grasp their situation. Every week, Ward as 'Anyone', guided by this commonsense compass, looked about him for some tit-bit from the world and made the comments on it that 'Anyone-else', provided they were sensible and observant, might also make. This performance was expertly reinforced by the even rhythm of his writing, paced at a leisurely stroll, and the perfect balance of each little story, as much as by the content.

He also encouraged his readers to see themselves that way too. Through the peppery good humour of his tone, he assumed with them an air of intimacy and complicity, exchanging metaphorical knowing looks, as if to say, 'we all know absurdity when we see or hear of it'. By the same token, his solutions, decentralisation, dispersal, worker and dweller control, and community education, were packaged as plain good sense applied rather than the modish ideas of an anarchist radical. While appealing to common understanding was always his favourite technique, in the late-1980s and 1990s, this assumed even greater importance. As critical social analysis lost its popular market and retreated into an expanding university sector, the more obscure it became in the public eye. Later, weighed down by layers of cultural theory, and subject to (for the outside world) incomprehensible academic struggles, it could come across as ponderous, even ridiculous, remote from reality.

Ward's 'Anyone' persona faced inwards as well as outwards. Loyally, he kept up his connection to *Freedom* with a regular 'Anarchist Notebook' which he used to update his greatest hits,[54] but as a venerable anarchist elder, he also used the space for some gentle grumbling. What struck him most was how little the paper had really changed. It looked more contemporary, with the

[51] Colin Ward, 'Fringe Benefits', *New Statesman and Society*, 30 August 1991.

[52] Russian author and playwright Anton Chekhov (1860—1904).

[53] Colin Ward, 'Fringe Benefits', *New Statesman and Society*, 30 August 1991.

[54] See for example: Colin Ward, 'Edward Hyams', *Freedom*, 27 May 1995; 'The Parish Pump Revisited', *Freedom*, 24 June 1994; 'The Spanish Anarchists', *Freedom*, 7 August 1993; 'Huckleberry Finn', 21 Aug 1993; 'Urban Childhood', 5 March 1994.

attractive fonts and spacious layout that computers permitted, but in the essentials of content and tone, it was much as it had ever been. Although Attlee, Churchill, Eden, and Macmillan had become Thatcher, Major, and Blair, the harangues on national and international government remained the focus. Important although these were, they came at the expense of proactive engagement with emergent groups, such as those affiliated with the Green Movement, who were trying to define themselves outside of conventional political forms and for whom anarchism could have been intuitive.

Meanwhile, the columns filled with the same old doctrinal fights, now verging on self-parody. 'We have become', Ward noted to himself, 'a journal of record', a curious survival of the anarchist recent past.[55] Publicly he expressed his amazement

that people who spend a lifetime's effort to propagating anarchism seldom pause to think about the nature of effective propaganda … I … mean a consideration of what repels the outside population from anarchist ideas and what wins sympathetic consideration . I always shudder when I see that some anarchists think it important to denigrate other anarchists.[56]

Even now, some of his old comrades could not be reconciled to his conciliatory stance. In the early 1990s, Richards told his old friend that he had been 'a Labour party fellow traveller in the 50s, a revisionist in the 60s, had hobnobbed with government ministers in the 70s and was disillusioned in the 80s'.[57] Never a true 'Anarchist'.

If Ward was stung by these attitudes from those he counted as friends, he was also unapologetic, deflecting it with humour:

As a punishment for being the kind of anarchist that would rather address the outside world, when I have the chance, than argue with other anarchists, I get sought out for a 60-second comment on a variety of issues. I serve, however unworthily as a token anarchist in the same sense that others have to serve as the token woman, black or disabled person, and have the same dilemma of finding the right few short sentences that will win a sympathetic hearing.[58]

Not all the old comrades were ungracious. Sansom, although different in outlook himself, came, in later years, to admire how Ward had 'gone for the small ways in which people can do things for themselves', seeing it as a 'real application of self-reliance, self-belief, self-respect'.[59]

In the end, 'Fringe' was the most effective regular outlet he had for getting small anarchist ways, compressed into even smaller forms, to an outside world.

Weir, the NSS editor, was delighted: 'I can't tell you how exhilarated I was to find your first column and to be able to put it straight in', he wrote to Ward, 'I thought it was splendid and have been equally impressed by the pieces you have done since'.[60] Even so, despite his talent for edgy personal comment, he regretted the loss of that space for popular-critical social analysis that NS and *Anarchy* had embodied. He missed the seriousness that had once informed not just subject matter and tone, but the entire approach to production like 'those readable summaries, giving sources, of innumerable research reports from the social sciences'. 'Boring journalism, perhaps, even from your point of view', he told Barker, 'but absolutely missing from the press today'.

[55] Colin Ward, 'Unpublished Notes', Journalism 1990-99-*Freedom*, CWP/ARCH03180, IISH.

[56] Colin Ward, 'Anarchist Notebook', *Freedom*, 11 March 1994.

[57] Colin Ward, 'Wee Wee Frees', Journalism-Various 1970s-1990s, CWP/ARCH03180, IISH.

[58] Colin Ward, 'Unpublished Notes', Journalism 1980-89-*Freedom*.

[59] Tony Gibson, 'Interview with Philip Sansom', TGP/ARCH0515, IISH.

[60] Stuart Weir to Colin Ward, 21 July 1988, Journalism 1980-89-*New Statesman and Society*, CWP/ARCH03180, IISH.

What had taken their place, he feared, was a certain 'metropolitan trendiness and the Labour Party in-fighting and all those things that weren't in *New Society*'.[61] Still, at least his rates were covered.

The 'Everyday Anarchist' was a stylised persona for the columns, but it was not so far removed from the truth; he could not have sustained it if it had been. Contrary to what he told Gibson, he did live his life according to *his* interpretation of anarchist principles: as much autonomy as could be had through common sense, compromise, and contentment with the here and now. In this way, he avoided the fate of so many a 'disappointed' radical; he *enjoyed* his life, in so far as enjoyment aligned with his favourite quote from William Lethaby about the wealth that modest desires could yield: 'what I meant by riches was learning and beauty and music and art, coffee and omelettes'.[62]

Ward's working life was committed to the first in this list, and to its promotion. His complaints about books that did not sell or receive due attention owed something to the need for money, combined with a slight dash of writerly conceit, but were mostly because as a propagandist he genuinely wished to circulate ideas as widely as possible. This was why, despite the occasional spats with editors, he remained a regular reviewer and promoter of other people's books (especially when written by his friends or showcasing some particular anarchist principle or other) and why, despite his dislike of travel and ambivalence towards public speaking, he gave talks and lectures across the country, on the radio, and occasionally television.

Personally, music always remained his passion and he was delighted when his three boys all proved to be talented musicians. More broadly, although content in Suffolk seclusion, he kept in touch with friends from all the walks of his life — architecture, the TCPA, education, and the plotlands research — writing warm letters, as sparkling with gossipy good humour, ideas, and reading suggestions as his columns were. He stayed close with all the *Freedom* group — Hewetson, Sansom, Woodcock — for as long as each lived, even with Richards, who fell out with just about everyone else, and kept abreast with the extended anarchist network attending the first international anarchist meeting in Venice, 1984,[63] where he was reunited with Italian friends, including architect Giancarlo di Carlo, 32 years after their first meeting.

Above all, he enjoyed family life and made for an enviably (even annoyingly) serene partner and father. He and Harriet were a loving partnership, close to the three children, and proud of the way each found their own niche on the fringes of the music industry, gaining independence and gratification if not fame and fortune. Eventually, partners were added to the family circle, later grandchildren. Of the two Balfour boys, the elder kept in regular touch, still turning to his former guardian for advice and visiting at Christmas (which was also his birthday). The younger grew more distant, which Ward always regretted.

There was, of course, the usual array of troubles and tragedies: illness and death, maintaining the house and paying the rates. One problem, perhaps more unique to their household, was how best for children encouraged in free expression at home to make their way in a world that little valued it. For Ben, the youngest, this was especially hard. Like his father, he was underwhelmed by formal schooling and proposed, instead, to study on a more vocational course, Music Performance at Leeds College of Music. Loyally, his parents supported the decision and fought to get

[61] Colin Ward to Paul Barker, 23 October 1990.

[62] ARN Roberts, ed., *William Richard Lethaby 1857—1931* (London: County Council Central School of Arts and Crafts, 1957).

[63] Colin Ward, 'Anarchy Rules', *The Guardian*, 1 October 1984.

him accepted onto the course without the 'usual' entry requirements, and then fought to have him funded by the local education authority who were reluctant (it being different from the pathways laid out in their existing policies). Using every means of persuasion and cajolement at their disposal, they eventually won their case and Ben took his place.

Just one year in, the same despondency crept back in. He found the curriculum narrow. The lecturers did not share or encourage his style of musical imagination. In the first summer break, he announced his intention to leave. Ward, attempting to pick a delicate path between respect for his son's point of view and, as he saw it, the necessity of dealing with an imperfect world as best you could, proposed a solution:

Can you see yourself, battering your way through the limitations of your course, but at the same time bashing out tunes and lyrics and shoving in … social criticism in the local press which is crying out for local writers.

It's a wonderful future for the next couple of years . but the important question is: can I survive for two more years at Leeds?

I am sure that the right answer is: Yes, I'll go through the course and I'll get the diploma, but at the same I'll compose, sing, perform, and I'll write about anything that takes my fancy, and will actually send it into the magazines, journals and papers.

Honestly, after thinking about the alternatives, this is the best advice I 64 can give.[64]

Many a parent has written this sort of letter in the same reasonable tone, while privately knowing the likely outcome. Yet, in this very ordinary exchange lay the nub of Ward's anarchism, as clear as it was in Nobby's carefully hand-painted floorboards or Mrs Granger's borrowed pound. His *anarchistic* solution to the problem was to create free spaces within the situation rather than abandon it altogether in the hope that some other configuration of conditions would put all to rights. In other words, an enduring state of liberty did not depend on possessing certain circumstances but on a certain self-possession in all circumstances. '*I am the revolution in my own person*'.[65]

In the short term, his propaganda failed. Ben quit the course and returned home. In the long term, however, he did become a musician, one in his own style, on his own terms. If he chose not to take his father's advice in that instance, he nevertheless kept it in mind for future use.

[64] Colin Ward to Ben Ward, undated, Letters 1980–89, CWP/ARCH03180, IISH.

[65] From the papers of Sapper Ward, December 1944, seized by Captain E. Davies, Royal Engineers, Millfield Camp, Stromness, Orkney Islands, in 'War Commentary and Freedom Press', 347/14/29, National Archives.

Afterword: the Everyday Anarchist

In the end came another introduction. As the 21st century dawned, Ward was commissioned by Oxford University Press (OUP) to write on anarchism for their 'Very Short Introduction' (VSI) series. Given his commitment to making anarchism accessible to non-anarchists, compiling a potted survey of the movement's protean strands for the uninitiated was a fitting finale. 'My task has been one of selection', he wrote, 'simply an attempt to introduce the reader to anarchist ideas in a very few words and to point to further sources'.[1] The ten tiny chapters, taking up no more than 100 pages in total, moved efficiently from ancestors and historical moments, theories of state, religion and civil religion, crime and work, education, the tensions between anarchism as lifestyle choice and theory of social organisation, and finally to the Green Movement and the future.

This affirmation of respectability (an OUP VSI) was double-edged. In one sense, it gratified Ward's life-long aim: acceptance of anarchism as a serious topic for consideration made accessible to a large audience. Practically speaking, it was also the only one of his books that generated anything like royalties years after first publication. In another sense, however, did this absorption of anarchism into a body of liberal learning confirm its depoliticisation? To put the question another way, did Ward and his everyday anarchism represent the movement's maturity or retirement?

When Tony Gibson asked about his view of the contemporary movement and his role within it, his response was ambiguous. He accepted that 'Anarchism', as a proper noun for a historical phenomenon, had failed because it had been unable to influence the outside world, condemning itself to life as a 'tiny insignificant minority'.[2] It was this, he went on, he had tried to 'remedy' through *Anarchy*:

you could say it was a confidence trick, by making the reader believe that anarchism was not a way-out notion, but was an aspect of everyday life, one of the currents of contemporary thought, and therefore had to be taken seriously … I wanted Anarchy not to appear like the internal journal of this sectarian group of anarchists, but to present anarchism as though it really was one of the currents of ideas in society.[3]

This confession presented his practical anarchism as primarily strategic, a clever repackaging to revive the movement by persuading sceptical people over to it. Similarly, it suggested that his objections to doctrinal debates, factional disputes, and the excesses of utopianism were not just down to his tolerant disposition (or secret conservatism) but were prudent tactics for maintaining an attractive public image. And yet, if he was playing a 'confidence trick', it was not an especially cynical one. Even if he was making a purely pragmatic calculation about what would get anarchism a hearing, this still upheld the principle of anarchy as spontaneous action. What mattered most was that people discovered anarchist ideas and applied them in their own way.

[1] Colin Ward, *A Very Short Introduction to Anarchism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), x.

[2] Tony Gibson, 'Interview with Colin Ward', TGP/ARCH0515, IISH.

[3] Ibid.

That, in the end, was more important than whether he truly believed anarchism to be a natural extension of existing liberal tendencies, such as self-help or free association, or whether he was a revolutionary using covert radicalisation techniques.

As to the official 'Anarchist Movement', on this he was quite assured. Personally, he told Gibson, he had made little contribution to either theory or organisation. With regards to the latter, he felt credit was entirely due to Vernon Richards, 'the man of the hour that blew new life into what little smouldering fire there was left over . he ensured the continuity of the publishing house and the stock of books and pamphlets and the journal', adding that 'the full time dedication to this one single objective of keeping a publishing house going applies absolutely and pre-eminently to Vero Richards' but also accepting that this was 'a different thing from talking about a movement in society'.[4] Arguably, though of course he did not say it, it was in this second sense, of a movement in society, that credit was due 'absolutely and pre-eminently' to *him* for equal dedication to changing the way anarchist ideas entered and circulated in the public sphere.

Ward tells us that what anarchism *is* or *should* be matters less than what it *can* or *could* be, but does that help to move beyond the paradox inherited from classical (19th-century) social anarchism; the need to reconcile the liberty of individuals with social designs that extend individual liberty to all? Following other progressive traditions, social anarchists have traditionally appealed to direct democracy for a resolution to this tension. In doing so, they too reframe the idea of individual autonomy from the mere gratification of private desires to full participation in public life. At this point, however, they part company from other direct democracy theorists, repelled by notions of the 'General Will', ideal-type city-states or commune councils, anything, in short, where ideals might petrify into permanence and prescription. Instead, they promote the idea of a fissiparous society, continually re-inventing itself according to its changing needs. As a pattern of life, they argue, this aligns with natural tendencies observable in all complex eco-systems. As a theory of organisation, it offers the only sensible design to accommodate the complexity of modern societies. Whether the emphasis falls on syndicates, guilds, co-operatives or communities as the key social units for realising this flexible design, the principles for it, dynamism and dispersion, remain constant.

In the struggle to convince a sceptical public of these claims, much anarchist energy has gone into refining hypothetical models to demonstrate the potential of their ideas in practice, and here the paradox resurfaces. Given the goal of accommodating complexity, plans, inevitably, become elaborate and, when they do, open themselves to contest.[5] Ironically, the more they are clarified, the more detailed the answers supplied to objectors, the more constraints are imposed. The other option, to simply trust that these designs are somehow instinctive and only require 'awakening' in people, risks political paralysis and the charge of naive optimism that the ethical ought will become the practical is.

This tension between stimulating states of mind in the present and presenting intelligent social designs that would ensure such stimulation in the future was evident throughout Ward's work. On the one hand, he was excited by experimental architectural principles in school buildings, but then he also asserted that a single free-thinking teacher was more important than any spacial layout.[6] He championed Urban Study Centres, town trails, and BEE's pull-out lesson plans,

[4] Ibid.

[5] Cf with GDH Cole, *The Next Ten Years in British Socialism* (Abington: Routledge, 2017 [1929]), viii-ix.

[6] Colin Ward, 'The School Building Crisis', *Freedom*, 15 February 1952.

and then wrote a book-length paean to semi-feral urban children colonising every unpromising crevice without direction. He masterminded the 'Do It Yourself' (DIY) New Town with its development concessions and adverts for the right sort of people, but equally cherished the motley collection of squatters and plotlanders for their irascible improvisation on the windy side of the law.

Can you champion anarchism as a theory of social design *and* an attitudinal disposition *and* remain in good faith? Does it undermine Ward that he prevaricated between the two? It is important to recall again his insistence that he was a propagandist, not a theorist. Unlike Kropotkin, or, to a lesser extent, figures like Herbert Read, he was not a systematic thinker and content not to be; he did not see anarchism as a systematic theory, more a jumble of associated ideas that it was self-defeating to over-organise. To this end, propaganda was never a secondary intellectual activity. In his hands, it was an anarchist epistemology in action. Referring to his ideas as 'rag bags' (which he frequently did) was not selfdepreciation, only a further application of the DIY ethic that infused anarchism as he understood it. Ideas, to him, were assemblages, made from pieces gleaned from all manner of sources, re-fused and imbued with fresh meaning, easily taken apart when no longer fit for purpose.

In this way, he enacted the anarchist dynamics he advocated. The only way to reconcile the social and individual claims in anarchism was to accept that they need not be fully integrated once and for all, only held in balance. As such, Ward simply adapted his emphasis according to the demands, as he saw them, of the situation, and the audiences he was trying to reach. 'People and Ideas', the title of his iconic *Freedom* column (later revived for *Town and Country Planning Journal*) conveyed this well. Sometimes the 'and' was connective, linking people to ideas, at other times it was distinctive, rescuing people from the ideas that others had of, or for, them. Teachers needed lesson plans, but children craved respect, housing co-ops required financial schemes, but squatters longed for dignity. Although not identifying as an 'Anarchist Thinker' in any formal sense, he certainly thought anarchistically. That said, while attracted to a good idea constructed on sound rational principles, his sympathies usually came down on the people side of the equation.

Assessing him on his own terms, how did he compose his picture of everyday anarchism and how effective was it? In the first part of the question, two distinct strategies can be discerned across his work, a realist anarchism and a comic anarchism. Realist anarchism was serious, it worked in a fine grain, rich in nuance, celebrating rather than concealing difficulties and imperfection. *Anarchy* journal is the most sustained example of this strategy. He deliberately aimed the journal towards students on the fringes of CND and at a burgeoning generation of new social researchers. He understood that the former was already convinced by the need for change and eager to know how to do it. The latter were people suspicious of simplicity; their sympathies were best roused by rational inquiry and an acknowledgement of imperfection.[7]

As a general rule, realist anarchism coincided with Labour in office. Partly, this was optimistic; post-war Labour presented itself as the Party of planned development and open, in theory, to an argument by reason and evidence. At the same time, the same quality made them a more formidable enemy, able to dismiss as 'utopian' anything that simply did not appeal. Anarchists had to make their cases more watertight to offset this. Comic anarchism, by contrast,

[7] His educational work for the TCPA also followed in this vein as here too he spoke for and to specialists in planning, architecture, and education.

was more concerned with affect, with generating or fostering sympathy where it was flagging or non-existent. This strategy he favoured during the Conservative epochs and was most evident in the columns, his ones for *Freedom* in the mid- to-late-1950s, and those for *New Statesman and Society* from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s. Comedy was threatening to elites, deflating their power with a snort.

Ward moved between these two poles, realist and comic (or puritan and pagan), but never mechanically. It was always more a matter of emphasis. In the collaborations, for example, like *Arcadia* or *The Allotment*, the blend was quite even. The historical research was robust enough to satisfy the most rigorous of empiricists, and yet the affection lavished upon these miniature worlds, the obvious satisfaction in their small gains, the sadness when they were finally swept away, all told another story.

But was his propaganda effective? His own view on this varied. He would cheerfully refer to himself as an 'unsuccessful propagandist',[8] a pleasantry in a public lecture perhaps, but only half a joke. He was always disappointed that *Anarchy* had never exceeded 2,800 subscriptions. But looking back over his work, he remarked,

they recognise that what I am doing in the topics I write about is applying an anarchist approach, and in that my books are mostly published through ordinary publishers that get into public libraries and bookshops, I think this is something valuable.[9]

True, although none of his books, until the VSI, achieved particularly large circulations.

His personal assessment privileged the books and omitted mention of his work as the 'token anarchist' who knew how to make the most, and best, of his 60 seconds and slender word counts. Admittedly, quantifying the reach, let alone impact, of this is impossible, but from the late 1960s until the turn of the century it is fair to say that he did more than anyone to raise the profile of anarchism in Britain through his spots on the radio, television, and pieces in the mainstream newspapers and magazines. Undoubtedly, and uncomfortably for him, this meant compromise and compression, less detail than the books allowed, but still, it provided at least some public airing for writing that might otherwise have languished, unchecked, in a public library.

This is not to say that the longer works were unimportant. His recuperations of popular libertarian tendencies in English history were, if not widely read, then closely read, especially by intellectuals dissatisfied with both liberalism positivism and cultural Marxist theory and seeking renewal in people's history and popular ethnography. Such efforts to speak of and to an indigenous alternative culture gave an undeniable Anglo-centrism to his output. English landscapes, from south-eastern plotlands to New Towns, predominated. His heroes, modest, practical, and industrious people, were pen portraits of a familiar English stereotype. When added to his persistent avocation of the human scale, community, and localism, this did invite charges of Little Englandism, placing him in the politically ambiguous company of both an Orwell *and* a Thatcher. Even when he did look elsewhere, to Glaswegian squatters, Orkney fisherfolk, Peruvian shantytowns, American junkyard communities, or the folkish corners of Europe, especially Italy, it was usually with an eye for transferable analogues to England rather than the differences.

This did not equate to a conscious cultural chauvinism; in fact, he was outspokenly critical of an unreflective 'Englishness'.[10] There was no one image he promoted for these communities,

[8] Colin Ward, 'The Green Personality', Leicester Secular Society, 21 March 1999, in *Talking Green* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2012), 111.

[9] Colin Ward to George Woodcock, 13 February 1985, Letters 1980–1989, CWP/ ARCH03180, IISH.

[10] Colin Ward, 'Pride and Prejudice', *The New Statesman and Society*, 24 February 1995, 35–37.

after all, the whole case for dispersal and human scale in political economy rested on the greater variability it allowed over a centralised 'mass'. In fact, an important commentary on diversity runs throughout his work, especially during the London years. His analyses on the Notting Hill riots (1959) showed more sophistication than the mainstream discourse on race relations at the time, as did his frank account of the limits of rational discussion in tackling prejudice when this was unaccompanied by the practical experience of co-creating an integrated common life (A50, 1966). Still, the question remains of just how many different sorts of people could really picture themselves comfortably clustered around his notorious 'parish pump'.

Another problem was simply that familiarity bred contempt or at least complacency. Massaging anarchism into the myth of the free-born Englishman or the more prosaic affairs of local politics had value, perhaps even an accumulative effectiveness, but it was of an imperceptible kind. One could feel a sensation of (vaguely patriotic) pride about the heroic efforts of past rebels without being moved to replicate their exploits (or aware of the need to). Equally, one could read the detailed advice for setting up a housing co-op and feel stunned by the overwhelming amount of energy and time required to pick a path through such a blistering array of bureaucratic hurdles.

Among the 'Anarchists', as discussed above, he felt his impact fairly negligible and his, conciliatory, 'human scale' style slightly at odds. The people who wanted to read, let alone write, for an 'Anarchist' paper did so principally to escape from an everyday world they considered corrupt beyond any meaningful reform. *Anarchy* was a different matter and provided a fruitful link to the CND and the New Left, especially after 1962 when the initial generation of that movement dispersed. He was also instrumental in encouraging figures like Nicholas Walter, perhaps one of the most subtle anarchist thinkers of post-war times, towards the movement. *Anarchy* also gave an early British airing to Murray Bookchin's social ecology and a platform to writers like Richard Mabey, Stanley Cohen, and David Downes who, while not necessarily adopting the label 'Anarchist', incorporated key ideas from it into their later work all the same.

Undoubtedly, his most practical and direct impact lay within his own fields of architecture, planning, and education. These were the areas where he formed the most extensive networks, and friendships, where he had best access to what we might now call 'influencers' (trade journalists, community organisers, teachers, planning officers, and so on), and where he could prompt projects into action. The DIY New Town experiment, although technically a failure at the time, provided insights for smaller-scale applications (which were successful) for years afterwards. Walter Segal's Lewisham self-building project came through his intervention and continues to be lauded by architects and planners alike.[11] Through BEE and projects like 'Art and the Built Environment' (1980), he reached hundreds of teachers and, through them, perhaps thousands of children. If the ideas and plans he promoted were not all his own, and he never claimed that they were, he gave them a vibrancy that continues to inspire.[12] Although this sort of patchwork of persuasion could never generate the public profile Bookchin commanded (and Noam Chomsky continues to command), it fit Ward well (though not financially), applying, as it did, the dispersal principle to the job of influencing people; 'I would like an anarchist movement with a lot of specialists',[13] he told Gibson.

[11] Philip Isaac, 'MyMacEwan: Walter's Way and the Self Build Revolution', 9 November

[12] Ken Jones and Cathy Burke, eds., *Talking Colin Ward: Anarchism and Education* (Abington: Routledge, 2014).

[13] Tony Gibson, 'Interview with Colin Ward'.

In terms of his enduring legacy, one advantage of closely reading his times was that so many of his ideas, in so far as they responded to those times, retain all their original relevance, and have even gained a bit more. Embryonic problems in the 1950s did not dissolve but developed over the intervening decades. There is still a housing crisis,[14] a city crisis, a country crisis,[15] more relevance than ever to notions of New Towns, self-build, and housing co-operatives. Mass compulsory education has not closed the gap between the rich and the poor in wealthy nations,[16] no matter how many times it is extended. These are all troubles emerging from late-capitalist economies which, although moderated by centralised welfare systems, failed to substantially redistribute either economic or political power or to fully comprehend the implications of affluence on either the global economy or the physical planet.

By far the most fertile affiliation for contemporary anarchism lies with the Green Movement. As Ward argued in the VSI, the two have been long entwined and mutually referential — from Kropotkin's plea 'for a new economy in the energies used in supplying the needs of human life, since these needs are increasing and the energies are not inexhaustible',[17] to Bookchin's robust arguments for appropriate technology and social ecology first rehearsed in the pages of *Anarchy*. In Ward's own life, although he was never explicitly a 'Green', it was a consistent thread throughout his work. From his early exposure to the Arts and Crafts' reverence for the natural world and vernacular architecture to Woodcock and Hewetson's post-war writings on food sufficiency and land use, later his editing of Kropotkin's proposals for sustainable agriculture in *Fields, Factories and Workshops* ([1899] 1973).

The most direct engagement came through his work with the TCPA where he was quick to emphasise the synergy between Kropotkin's vision and Howard's garden cities, also designed to maximise efficiencies in terms of natural, social, and human resources.[18] His proposal for a DIY New Town aligned with the wider discussions on urban sustainability by stressing the low consumption patterns of communities able to house, service, employ, and feed themselves at a subsistence level, without needing to drain immense sums from central or local government, commute, or import commodities across large distances.[19]

In this current moment of accelerating environmental catastrophe, social anarchism, with its stress on the links between social and environmental health, has never been more relevant nor the prophetic quality of Kropotkin more haunting. Moreover, it is undeniable that both environmental destruction and its possible prevention are profoundly *political* issues. If we end up with a world where human life is dependent on technology and/or subject to punitive legislation ensuring certain behaviours, liberty becomes an inevitable casualty. Power will belong exclusively to those who own the patents, horde the materials, and control the means of enforcement: the legislative or the military. When we fight for the environment, we also fight for the commons in the broadest sense, for a planet that can support human life without needing ever more elaborate

[14] National Federation of Housing Report 2020, www.housing.org.uk/resources/people-in-housing-need/ [accessed 30 June 2021].

[15] See David Rudlin and Shruti Hemani, *Climax City: Masterplanning and the Complexity of Urban Growth* (London: RIBA Publishing, 2019).

[16] UNICEF, 'Unfair Start: Inequality in Children's Education in Rich Countries', October 2018, [[http://www.unicef.org][www.unicef.org/reports/unfair-start [accessed 30 June 2021].

[17] Peter Kropotkin and Colin Ward, eds., *Fields, Factories and Workshops* (London: Allen and Unwin, [1899] 1973), 17.

[18] Colin Ward, 'Say It Again Ben', *Bulletin of Environmental Education*, November 1974.

[19] Colin Ward, *New Town, Home Town* (London: Calouste Galbenkian, 1993), 126.

apparatus. With each extinction and loss in biodiversity — the variables that regenerate life and create new possibilities — we concede more and more of our own freedom. Everything connects.

If freedom is at stake in this situation, it is also a possible antidote to the pending disaster. Climate change will affect everyone but affect everyone differently. Centralised models of control will be unable to respond with the required speed and local nuance. We need, then, to disperse political and intellectual responsibility at community levels, not (or not only) as a utopian ideal, but as a practical solution. Moreover, the sheer scale of the challenge involved in reimagining and rebuilding sustainable lives makes the synthesis of mind and practical work another pragmatic necessity. That vocational stratum of people who Ward most privileged — architects, planners, builders, statutory undertakers, food producers, community leaders, educators, and so on — stand on the frontline of change. With every political delay, hypocrisy, and platitude, they grow more frustrated, more anarchist.

All this Ward, and the thinkers he promoted and quoted, would have recognised only too well. Yet there is something further he would have added, a reminder that, for all the urgency, we can never compromise on compromise. 'I would be very sorry', he said in a lecture on Green politics, 'if I found that green ideologists were creating yet another god called Gaia'.[20] We would do well to take heed. As the clamour of voices seized with the apocalyptic consequences of the situation increases, we risk producing anxiety so intense that liberty is too readily traded for security, responsibly deferred to the 'experts' with their models for salvation. But designs for liberty are just that, designs, and can, as history shows us, become tyrannical quickly.

It matters, then, how we talk about green issues and here Ward continues to prove a helpful guide. We should not, he tells us, be too quick to condemnation; 'our fellow-citizens, enjoying lives of conspicuous consumption … will say, like Shakespeare's Sir Toby, "D'ost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?"' Instead, 'our propaganda has to be sharp and subtle, making the culture of Land-Rovers, People-Carriers, Global Cruisers and the rest of the big spending pattern ridiculous, and the do-it- yourself culture alluring and rewarding'.[21] As such, without trivialising, we must not sacrifice humour. Laughter reconnects people to one another, to the world, and gives them the confidence to imagine things differently; after all, the words 'revel' and 'rebel' stem from the same source.[22] If we are to build truly sustainable lives for ourselves on this planet, there must always be space for oddities and experiments, for margins and makeshifts, for plotters and cotters and squatters.

2018, www.ribaj.com/buildings/my-macewen-scale-rule-walter-segal-close-lewisham-london-1970s-self-build-method.

[20] Colin Ward, 'The Green Personality', *Talking Ecology*, 115.

[21] Colin Ward, 'The Green Personality', 113.

[22] Anglo-French *reveler*, literally, to rebel, from the Latin *rebellare*. http://www.merriam-wester.com/dictionary/revel.

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