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EDITORIAL

Anarchist ideas are not currently, and arguably have never been, in the mainstream of political or philosophical thought. And perhaps the majority of people would consider them extreme, foolish, impractical and ill thought out. However, over the 175 years since 1840, when Proudhon first declared himself an Anarchist, there have been many thinkers within the anarchist tradition who were much respected and revered for their ideas. For the nineteenth century names such as Kropotkin, Tucker and Tolstoy spring to mind, while in the 20th century, there were others such as Herbert Read, Marie Louise Berneri, Vernon Richards, Murray Bookchin, Nicholas Walter, and Colin Ward. However, it is Colin Ward who has perhaps been one of the most important figures amongst these. His self declared aim was to give anarchism 'intellectual respectability', demonstrating the reasonableness and practicality of Anarchist ideas, not just to establish its 'intellectual respectability' for its own sake, but also in order to expand its influence and widen the possibilities open to us all in our day to day lives.

Ward was only partially successful in achieving this aim, but in the process of doing so he came to the attention of a large number of people, writers and academics outside of the Anarchist movement. Ward's writing and published works, which first appeared in the journal *Freedom*, then in *Anarchy* magazine, were followed by regular contributions to other journals including *New Society* and later the *New Statesman*. In addition, his numerous published articles and books on a wide range of topics built the case for an 'incremental anarchism', an anarchism which

advocates people making practical step by step changes in their lives and communities and thus breaking down the restricting role of authority and building individual responsibility, community empowerment and positive change.

In his role as editor of the ground breaking journal '*Anarchy*' he gave voice to, and developed this new version of anarchism. It is his vision of anarchism which is being celebrated in this edition of *Anarchist Voices* magazine.

To this end a number of people who knew Colin Ward, and other writers who are particularly interested in his ideas, have been invited to contribute. We are very grateful to Colin's widow Harriet Ward for her reminiscences. Also to David Goodway for his article on Colin Ward's anarchist influences and also to Chris Draper for his thoughts on the use of history to make the case for anarchism. Other writers have contributed articles on topics which were of interest to Colin Ward, including Brian Bamford's critical piece on Ward; Ross Bradshaw's article on Five Leaves Press and Colin Ward's ideas as well as an article from our regular contributor from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, Larry Gambone.

Even though over 40 years have now passed since the publication of *Anarchy in Action* in 1973, it is not really possible to over-emphasise the importance of Colin Ward's ideas to anarchism. It is his approach which can make a difference in the current situation in the British Isles, where ordinary people are facing many challenges and attacks on their living standards and quality of life from a government totally indifferent to the harm it is causing. Practical Anarchist alternatives, of the kind researched and advocated by Colin Ward, can make a real difference, especially when the supporters of the traditional political parties appear helpless to stop the barbarisation of our society. Practical and reasonable anarchist initiatives which help people to build their own networks of support, services and livelihood, building mutual aid and community resilience into our lives, are much needed. This would indeed be '*Anarchy in Action*'.

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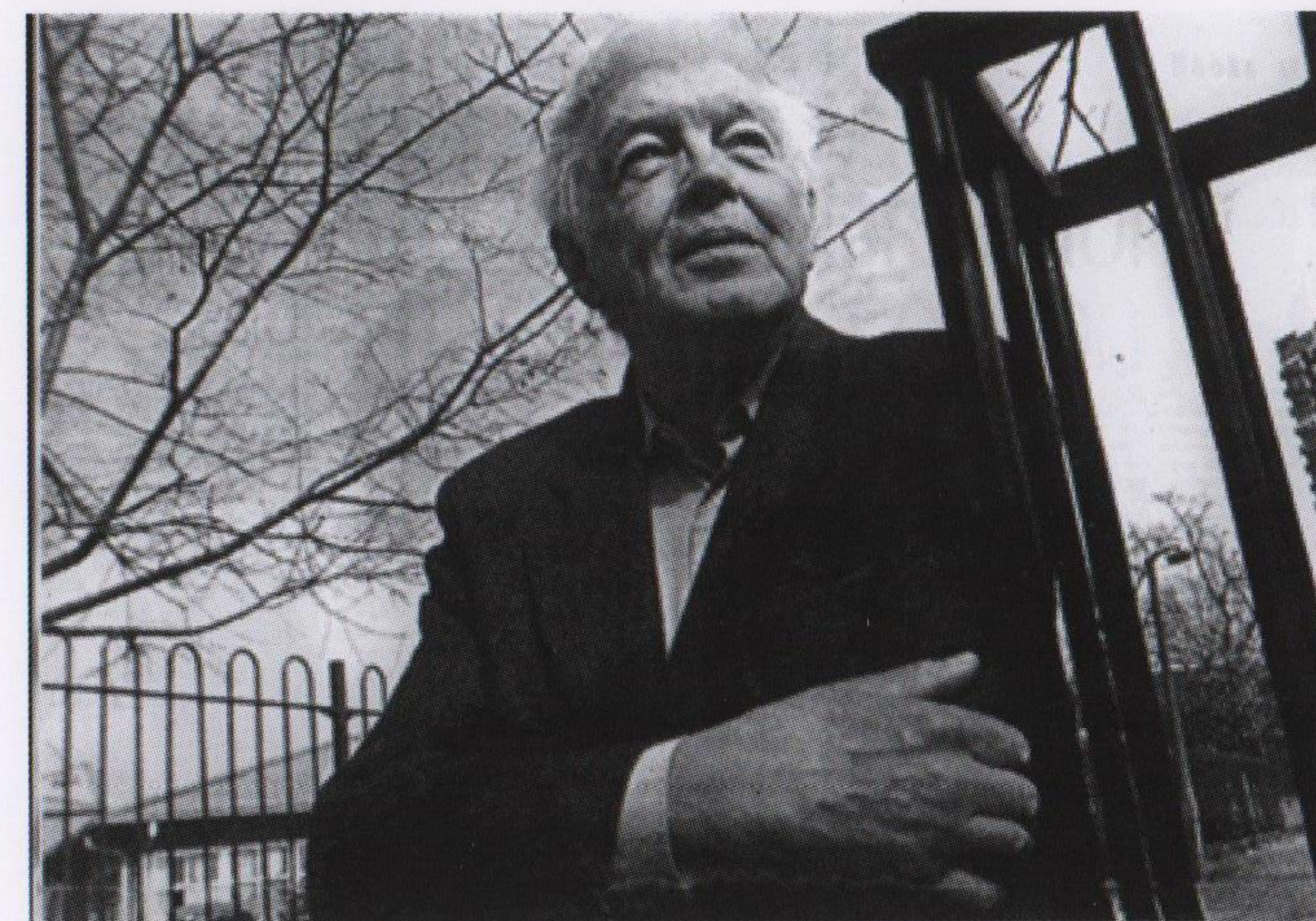
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Colin Ward: A Resourceful Man

When I met Colin in the mid-1960s we were both at a turning-point. After 12 years as an architectural draughtsman – interrupted by his Army service – Colin wanted more spare time to write and solicit other contributions for the journal *Anarchy* he then edited. I had been widowed with two small children and could not return to my previous Civil Service job. For both of us, teaching was the obvious answer, and that's how we came to meet on a one-year training course geared towards the varied sector of Further Education.

Colin had left his salaried employment with meagre savings and little thought for the morrow. Drawing-board work from a former colleague provided him with pocket-money and paid for my first birthday present: a biro pen. But within a year we had found suitable jobs, and a legacy of mine met the down-payment for a house. Colin moved across the Thames from Fulham to Putney, where we lived until we moved to Suffolk in 1980.

Colin's happiest period of employment in London was in the 1970s at the Town and Country Planning Association. But his previous year of teaching at Wandsworth Technical College fulfilled his ideal of being able to walk to work. On his route was a large electrical shop where passers-by could pause to admire the televisions winking away inside. At that time Colin was just becoming a media pundit and one day, a student on his way to Colin's lesson was surprised to see his teacher mouthing unintelligibly on a TV screen in the shop. "What were you talking about, Sir?" "I wasn't talking, I was singing – couldn't you see the conductor?" replied Colin with a straight face. And for all I know, those lads in Mech. Eng. 2 still believe

their Liberal Studies teacher at the Tech was a part-time opera singer.

I'm sure he'd have loved to be an opera singer, for music was Colin's consuming passion. Nothing gave him greater satisfaction than to watch my two sons and our own Ben Ward developing as musicians, which they all pursued into adult life. I well remember an after-work dash from our home in Putney to Aldeburgh in Suffolk, where the older two were taking part in *Noye's Fludde*, by Benjamin Britten, alongside professional musicians. Britten was Colin's favourite contemporary composer, and from an



earlier age, Giuseppe Verdi fed his love of opera.

I was the driver in our household. Colin had never learned to drive and had a naive reverence for anyone who could. During his time in the Army, spent in the Orkney Islands, he had been taught to drive a dumper truck but only managed to ditch it off a pier into the sea. In the 1970s, on a pilgrimage to re-visit places that interested him, we took an inter-island flight to the island of Hoy. We landed in a field of cow-pats in drizzly rain. Hoy was in fact the site of the legendary dumper truck incident, which we duly inspected before Colin strode off to see Melsetter House 4 miles away. This was one of the few private houses built by the Arts and Crafts architect W R Lethaby, whose work Colin greatly admired. The owners invited him to look around indoors, and he returned to us glowing with pleasure.

In a filmed interview many years later* Colin explained how he came to spend his Army years in Orkney. His first posting was to Glasgow, where he was shocked to see poverty unknown to him in the South of England. In his spare time he enjoyed the perorations of street orators, in particular the anarchist Frank Lynch, whose anti-war diatribes led to his arrest and incarceration (such disaffection in wartime was a serious offence). Colin always suspected that it was his visit to Lynch in Barlinnie Gaol, in uniform – he had no other clothes to wear – that explained his sudden transfer to the Orkney Islands.

Most people would have hated the isolation of the Islands, especially in wartime, and the wind-swept scenery is not to everyone's taste. But for Colin it was bliss. He wangled himself the job of boiler-man at a camp for WRENs (the Women's Royal Navy) and having stoked up the boilers for the day he would take himself off with a pile of books under his arm to Scara Brae, an ancient Pictish settlement on the West coast of Mainland. This onetime habitation had been roofed over with glass by the National Trust (as it isn't now) and there Colin sat for hour after hour, learning about anarchism.

Through Frank Lynch and a Glasgow bookshop Colin had made contact with Freedom Press in London, where Lilian Woolf, whose association with the Press went back to the First World War, would send him a regular supply of literature. He soon became friends with the editorial collective of *Freedom* – Vernon Richards, John Hewetson and Philip Sansom – and himself became a regular contributor and later editor of the journal. Thus began his lifetime of anarchist journalism, supplemented over the years by some 30 books on a variety of topics – not all with an explicit anarchist theme, but all written from an anarchist viewpoint. The last of these was *A Very Short Introduction to Anarchism* (OUP, 2004).

Despite the originality of his writing, in producing it Colin was behind the times. When a publisher required a piece 'on disk' in the 1970s, we had to find and pay a technician to produce one from Colin's typescript. He never embraced the computer and would not learn to use mine. Every piece was thumped out on a series of Olivetti typewriters, each reluctantly replaced when the keys began to stick beyond his endurance. The finished product was a palimpsest of pasted-over strips of words which he would take to the nearest photocopier to reproduce.

Colin's literary legacy is explored in other contributions to this issue. Here I would just like to emphasise two aspects of his thinking that were fundamental to his character: *mutuality* and *localism*. As a listener, his favourite form of music was the string quartet: he loved to watch the way players signalled to each other with a raised eyebrow or the flick of a bow to produce the mellifluous sound he relished. Similarly in politics, it was the interplay within groups and the give-and-take of cooperation that appealed to him, rather than the boastful achievements of individuals.

Observing national and international politics was a kind of spectator sport for Colin. He was well aware of the effects of what went on, of course, and did his best to influence policies in

housing and other areas of his expertise through his writing and lecturing. His watchword was a phrase that now has a wide currency (though he did not invent it!) – 'Think globally, act locally'. Wherever we lived, he would apprise himself of local issues – for example the vexed question of affordable housing in affluent Suffolk. But as a family man free-lancing for a living, he could give only verbal support to local activists against the Nimbys. Similarly, in the making of a film about allotments, Colin was ashamed when the interviewer looked round at our neglected garden. As he ruefully admitted on another occasion, 'Like most of us, I don't practise what I preach'.

In truth it was economic necessity and his own inner drive that kept him at his desk day after day. And a great many people in his lifetime and thereafter are glad he spent so much time there.

Harriet Ward

* In 2003 the film-maker Mike Dibb recorded a 2-hour conversation between Colin and his friend and neighbour the late Roger Deakin. A DVD of this film is available by mail order from Harriet Ward, 1, Church Cottages, Cross Green, Debenham, Suffolk IP14 6QF, price £12.50 including P&P.



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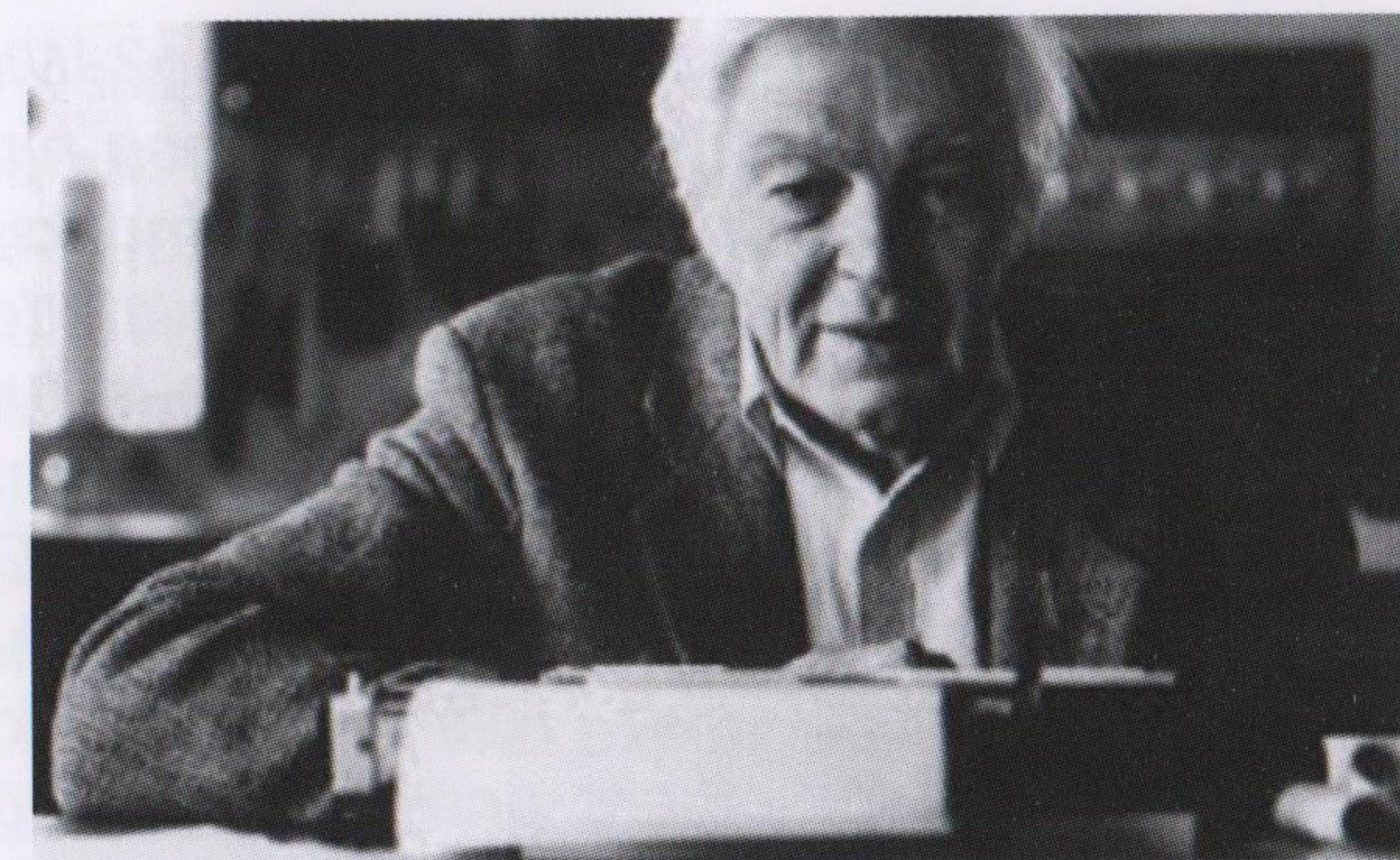
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Colin Ward's Influences

How did Ward come to espouse his extremely distinctive anarchism? Who are the thinkers and which are the traditions responsible for shaping his outlook? Some would argue that there is no originality in Wardian anarchism since it is all anticipated by Peter Kropotkin and Gustav Landauer. There is indeed no denying Ward's very considerable debt to Kropotkin. He names Kropotkin as his economic influence in the appealing *Influences: Voices of Creative Dissent* (1991); described himself as 'an anarchist-communist, in the Kropotkin tradition'; and, regarding *Fields, Factories and Workshops* as 'one of those great prophetic works of the nineteenth century whose hour is yet to come', brought it up to date as *Fields, Factories and Workshops Tomorrow* (1974) (1). It is also the case that Kropotkin in his great *Mutual Aid* demonstrates that co-operation is pervasive within both the animal and the human worlds, in his concluding chapter giving contemporary clubs and voluntary societies, such as the Lifeboat Association, as examples. Ward, with typical modesty, writes that in a sense his *Anarchy in Action* is 'simply an extended, updating footnote to Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*' (2). Yet Kropotkin prepared for a bloody social revolution; and Ward also goes far beyond him in the types of co-operative groups he identifies in modern societies and the centrality he accords to them in anarchist transformation.

Ward is still closer to the remarkable Landauer. He even goes so far as to say that his 'is not a new version of anarchism. Gustav Landauer saw it, not as the founding of something new, "but as the actualization and reconstitution of something that has always been present, which exists alongside the state, albeit buried and laid waste."' And one of Ward's favourite quotations, which he rightly regards as 'a profound and simple contribution to the analysis of the state and society in one sentence' derives from a book by Landauer of 1910: 'The state is not something

which can be destroyed by a revolution, but is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of human behaviour; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently'(3). What this led Landauer to advocate was the formation of producers' and consumers' co-operatives, but especially of agrarian communes; and his emphasis is substantially different to Ward's exploration of anarchist solutions' to 'immediate issues in which people are actually likely to get involved' (4). In any case, for many years Ward only knew of Landauer through a chapter in Martin Buber's *Paths in Utopia* (1949); and it is Buber, who had been Landauer's friend, executor and editor and shared similar views concerning the relationship between society and the State but, although sympathetic, was not an anarchist himself, whom Ward acknowledges as his influence with respect to 'society'. He was deeply impressed by 'Society and the State' – a lecture of 1950 that he perpetually cited – in which Buber distinguishes between 'the social principle', exemplified by all spontaneous human associations built around shared needs or interests, such as the family, informal groups, co-ops of all kinds, trade unions and communities, as opposed to 'the political principle', manifested in authority, power, hierarchy and, of course, the State. Buber maintained: 'All forms of government have this in common: each possesses more power than is required by the given conditions; in fact, this excess in the capacity for making dispositions is actually what we understand by political power. The measure of this excess ... represents the exact difference between Administration and Government. I call it the 'political surplus'. Its justification derives from the external and internal instability, from the latent state of crisis between nations and within every nation...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'.

Ward comments that these words 'cut the rhetoric of politics down to size' and that ever since he first read them he has 'found Buber's terminology far more valuable as an explanation of events in the real world ... than a dozen lectures on political theory or on sociology' (5). In 'The Unwritten Handbook', a remarkable manifesto of 1958, he himself wrote that a power vacuum, '...created by the organisational requirements of society in a period of rapid population growth and industrialisation at a time when unrestricted exploitation had to yield to a growing extent to the demands of the exploited, has been filled by the State, because of the weakness, inadequacy or incompleteness of

libertarian alternatives. Thus the State, in its role as a form of social organisation rather than in its basic function as an instrument of internal and external coercion, is not so much the villain of the piece as the result of the inadequacy of the other answers to social needs (6).

Wardian anarchism was nurtured within a Freedom Press Group whose other members were looking back to the workers' and soldiers' councils of the Russian and German Revolutions and the collectives of the Spanish Revolution. Yet he never believed in an imminent revolution:

'That's just not my view of anarchism. I think it's unhistorical....I don't think you'll ever see any of my writings in Freedom which are remotely demanding revolution next week.'

When he tried to interest his comrades in the late 1940s in a pamphlet on the squatters' movement – to give them the idea he had even pasted his articles up – he recalled that 'it wasn't thought that this is somehow relevant to anarchism'(7). Although they deserve great credit for allowing him to go his own way with *Anarchy*, it was not until after the success of *Tenants Take Over*, published by the Architectural Press in 1974, that Freedom Press suggested he write a book for them. The result was *Housing: An Anarchist Approach*, which, to some extent, did recycle his *War Commentary* and *Freedom* pieces on postwar squatting.

Ward's difference of emphasis is, in part, to be explained by the fact that he was approaching anarchism from a background of architecture, town planning, the Garden City movement – 'You could see the links between Ebenezer Howard and Kropotkin' – and regional planning (8). He was considerably influenced by Patrick Geddes (who is acknowledged accordingly in *Influences*), Lewis Mumford and the regionalist approach. William Morris was also important – 'As the decades roll by, it becomes more and more evident that the truly creative socialist thinker of the nineteenth century was not Karl Marx, but William Morris' – but not for his political lectures, which were not to Ward's taste, but rather as mediated by the Arts and Crafts Movement (his early architect employer, Sidney Caulfield, had actually known Morris) and, in particular by W.G. Lethaby (whom Ward identifies as an architectural 'influence') (9)

It is Alexander Herzen, though not an anarchist, whom he regards as his principal political influence, repeatedly quoting – just as with Buber's paragraph from 'Society and the State' – the same passage from *From the Other Shore*, praising it as 'a splendidly-phrased political message for every twentieth-century zealot, prepared to sacrifice his generation for the sake of his version of the future':...*If progress*

is the goal, for whom then are we working? Who is this Moloch who, as the toilers approach him, instead of rewarding them, draws back, and as a consolation to the exhausted multitudes shouting, 'We, who are about to die, salute thee!', can only give the mocking answer that after their death all will be beautiful on earth. Do you really wish to condemn human beings alive today to the mere sad role of caryatids supporting a floor for others one day to dance upon? Of wretched galley slaves who, up to their knees in mud, drag a barge with the humble words 'Future Progress' on its flag.

A goal which is infinitely remote is not a goal at all, it is a deception. A goal must be closer – at the very least the labourer's wage or pleasure in the work performed. Each epoch, each generation, each life has had, and has, its own experience, and en route new demands grow, new methods.

Herzen's conclusion is that 'the end of each generation must be itself' (10). By extension another influence on Ward is Herzen's outstanding expositor in English, Isaiah Berlin, whose major liberal statements, *Historical Inevitability* and *Two Concepts of Liberty*, he also prized. Yet he was familiar with Herzen long before Berlin's 'A Marvellous Decade', George Woodcock having published an article on him in *Politics*, whose editor, Dwight Macdonald, was another Herzen aficionado. Berlin was to decline Ward's invitation to write a piece on Zeno of Citium, on whom he was due to speak to the Oxford Anarchist Group, although asserting that he had 'every sympathy' with *Anarchy*: 'I am very sorry, I should like to oblige' (11). George Orwell and his 'pretty anarchical' version of socialism also needs to be mentioned; and in 1955 Ward published 'Orwell and Anarchism', a persuasively argued series of five articles, in *Freedom*.

From across the Atlantic two periodicals, which were available from Freedom Bookshop, were important. *Politics* (1944–49), edited by Dwight Macdonald in the course of his transition from Marxism to a pacifist anarchism, Ward considered 'my ideal of a political journal', admiring its 'breadth, sophistication, dryness'. *Why?* (1942–7), later *Resistance* (1947–54), was edited by a group which included David Wieck and Paul Goodman. Goodman, who also contributed to *Politics*, was another principle influence, firstly and always, for *Communitas* (1947), the planning classic he wrote with his brother Percival, but also for the very similar anarchism to Ward's he began to expound from 'The May Pamphlet', included in his *Art and Social Nature* (1946), onwards. Goodman became a frequent contributor to *Anarchy* and *Anarchy in Action* is dedicated to his memory. In

an issue of *Anarchy* celebrating the work of Alex Comfort, Ward drew attention to the similarities between Goodman and Comfort, and the Comfort of *Authority and Delinquency in the Modern State* (1950) and *Delinquency* (1951), in which he calls for anarchism to become a libertarian action sociology, is the final significant influence on Ward's anarchism.

In total, as he explained in 'The Unwritten Handbook': 'To my mind the most striking feature of the unwritten handbook of twentieth-century anarchism is not in its rejection of the insights of the classical anarchist thinkers, Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, but its widening and deepening of them. But it is selective, it rejects perfectionism, utopian fantasy, conspiratorial romanticism, revolutionary optimism; it draws from the classical anarchists their most valid, not their most questionable ideas. And it adds to them the subtler contribution of later (and neglected because untranslated) thinkers like Landauer and Malatesta. It also adds the evidence provided in this century by the social sciences, by psychology and anthropology, and by technical change'.

David Goodway

Footnotes

1. Richard Boston, 'Conversation about Anarchism' *Anarchy* No.85 (March 1968). Pg 65; Peter Kropotkin, *Fields, Factories and Workshops Tomorrow*, ed, Colin Ward (London:Freedom Press, 2nd edition, 1985, p.iv.
2. Colin Ward, *Anarchy in Action* (London Freedom Press, 2nd edition, 1996), p.8.
3. Colin Ward, *Anarchy in Action*, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1973) pages 11,19.
4. Colin Ward (ed.), *A Decade of Anarchy, 1961-1970: Selections from the Monthly Journal 'Anarchy'* (London: Freedom Press 1987), p. 279.
5. Colin Ward, *Influences: Voices of Creative Dissent* (Hartland, Devon: Green Books, 1991, p.89.
6. *Freedom*, 28 June 1958
7. Interview with Colin ward, 29 June 1997
8. *Ibid*
9. William Morris, *a Factory as it might be*; Colin Ward, *The Factory We Never Had* (Nottingham: Mushroom Bookshop 1994), p.21.
10. Cited in full in Colin Ward, *Anarchism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.32. A shorter version, from which the differing wording of the conclusion is drawn, appears in *Anarchy in Action* (1973 edition) page 136.
11. Letter from Berlin to Ward, 10 January (1964)
12. Interview with Colin Ward 'Orwell and Anarchism' has been reprinted (Vernon Richards Ed.) *George Orwell at Home* (and among the Anarchists): *Essays and Photographs* (London: Freedom Press 1998).
13. Interview with CW.

Colin Ward on Anarchism

Everyone has their own definition of anarchism. One I find generally useful is the first three paragraphs of the article Peter Kropotkin was asked to write for the 11th edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica in 1905. This is the collection of volumes which (however repugnant we now find its sales techniques) is the place we look for a working definition of most things.

Kropotkin's first paragraph said that: **Anarchism** (from the Greek, contrary to authority), is the name given to a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government — harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements concluded between the various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilised being.

That's his first paragraph, and of course he has the usual problem of anyone writing an encyclopaedia definition - he has to be concise, but at the same time, to bring everything in. So his second paragraph goes: "In a society developed on these lines, the voluntary associations which already now begin to cover all the fields of human activity would take a still greater extension so as to substitute themselves for the State in all its functions. They would represent an interwoven network, composed of an infinite variety of groups and federations of all sizes and degrees; local, regional, national and international — temporary or more or less permanent — for all possible purposes: production, consumption and exchange, communications, sanitary arrangements, education, mutual protection, defence of the territory, and so on; and, on the other side, for the satisfaction of an ever increasing number of scientific, artistic, literary and sociable needs."

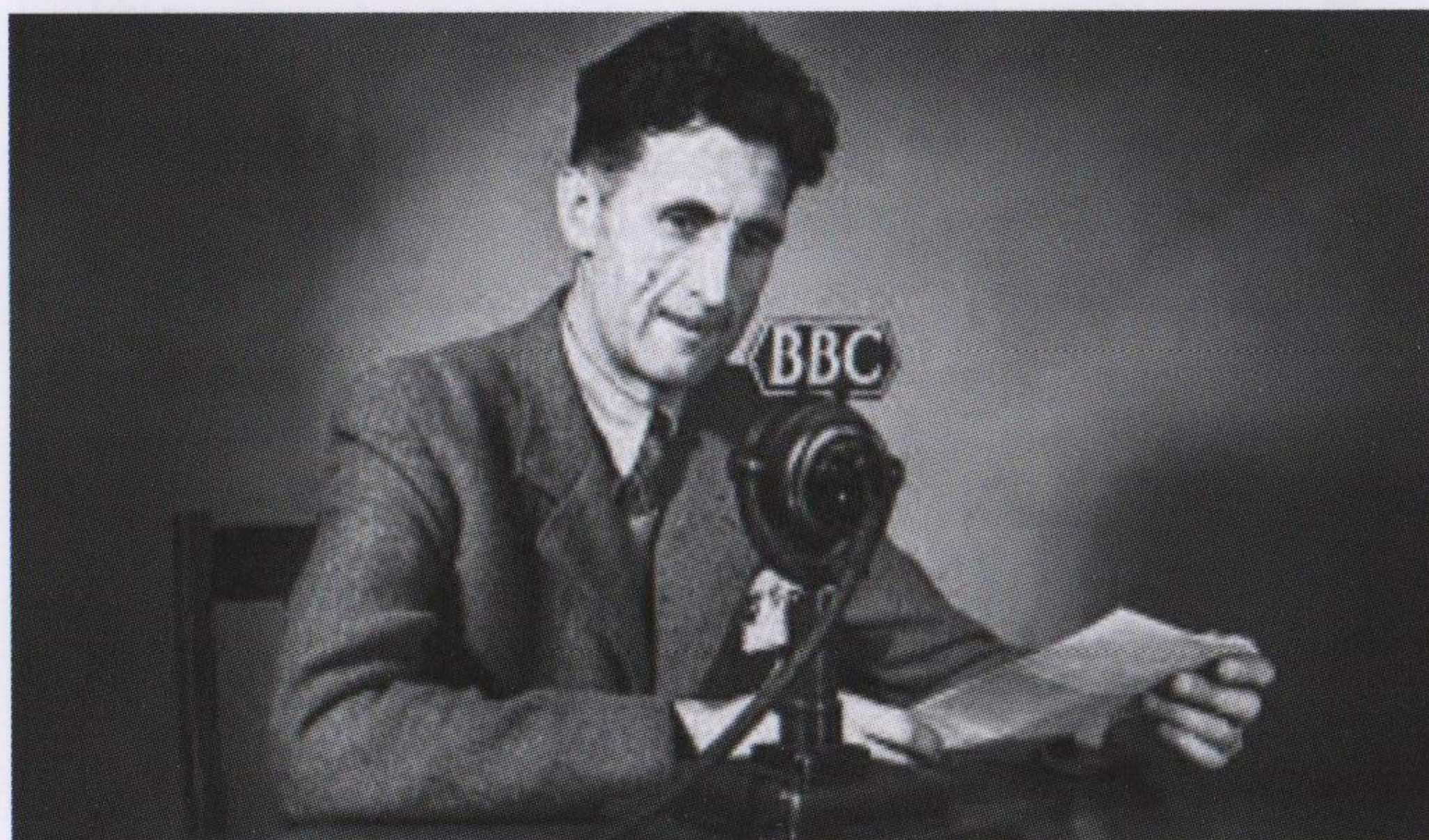
Kropotkin was a scientist, a physical geographer in origin, and his third paragraph drew an analogy from physics and from biology, and you might even claim from structural mechanics and music. For he claimed that: "Moreover, such a society would represent nothing immutable. On the contrary — as is seen in organic life at large — harmony would (it is contended) result from an ever-changing adjustment and readjustment of equilibrium between the multitudes of forces and influences, and this adjustment would be the easier to obtain as none of the forces would enjoy a special protection from the State".

These opening remarks express the kernel of his argument for society as opposed to the State, and for the community as opposed to the government.

Colin Ward

Quoted from 'Anarchy in Milton Keynes'

War is Peace - Freedom is Slavery - Ignorance is Strength



During a radio interview broadcast in January 1968 Colin Ward posed the rhetorical question; "If you've got a point of view considered to be way out, do you act up to it, or do you lean over backwards to show how normal and practical your ideas are?" Unfortunately, too many comrades attracted by the virility of the former approach, insist Colin is not composed of pure revolutionary "Kropotkinite" but merely a weak compound of pacifism and liberalism. Unsurprisingly, anarchism remains ridiculous to most people and we continue to lose the battle of ideas. Colin knew it's easy to lead horses to water but difficult to push them in. Changing minds is near impossible but if you're imaginative enough you can create a forum for people to at least reconsider received opinions.

A Butler of One's Own?

I recently handed a friend of mine a copy of *Northern Voices* magazine to read. Eyeing it up suspiciously; "Is this anarchist?" he enquired, demanding reassurance before even accepting it as a freebie. That's what we're up against in the real world. Down in Angel Alley or at anarchist bookfairs they can wave their "Black Flags" to their heart's content but back in normal life our neighbours aren't interested in anarchism but they do enjoy Downton Abbey and Poldark. That's how most people learn their politics, from films, TV and newspapers – from popular culture. Assimilated depictions of the past continuously condition our opinions of future possibilities, for as Winston Smith came to realise, "Who controls the past controls the future."

Anarchy-on-Sea

History offers a way in to raising anarchist ideas for as Colin, and Monty Python, observed

ordinary people in the past almost inevitably experienced the central state as an unwelcome, alien, exploitative intrusion into their everyday lives. If you get evicted from the common by the Lord of the Manor whose soldiers then proceed to demolish your house and steal your livestock you don't need Bakunin to point out the injustice. Like many places, my home town, Llandudno has a long-established local history society (ours began in 1906) whose core activity is providing monthly public lectures. This is a good start and I've delivered a few myself but the structure isn't essentially libertarian. The model is basically top down with the lecturer as expert and the audience uninformed consumers. Of course, you can introduce radical topics and sometimes face challenging questions but there's another way.

Challenging History

A couple of years ago I suggested to the History Society Committee that in the interval between monthly lectures I could organise an open discussion meeting. The title would be, "Challenging History" and each discussion would be initiated by a speaker who delivered a short provocative speech challenging the traditional interpretation of an aspect of history or a specific historic event. I offered to kick off the first series at the beginning of 2014 with the topically challenging claim that, "Britain Should Not Have Declared War on Germany in 1914".

I'd already sorted out possible venues, costs, advertising etc and the committee readily agreed to support an initial six month series as an experiment. As a non-commercial group we could hire a room in the central library for only £10 per two hour session so it didn't threaten the Society's finances. Anyone can just turn up and take part without it costing them anything but as it's turned out the discussions bring in new people and some decide to join the Society as paying members.

No Such Thing as Society

If you've got a local Society it's an obvious place to start but if not, it's worth starting one, although a "Challenging History" group can stand on its own, or even operate as part of an existing U3A or WEA group. The essential point is the "challenge" aspect and the modest level of expertise required to initiate a discussion. I

started off by enlisting a few opinionated friends to begin the series but as new people arrived I encouraged them to initiate talks on their own particular "bees in the bonnet". Barry wasn't initially a Society member but recently argued, "William Morris – More than Just Wallpaper!"

Local newspapers provide free publicity and often expand our submitted email pieces into interesting extended articles. We generally get around 15 to 20 people turn up, which is ideal to ensure lively, varied debate. We arrange the tables into a big square and face each other, seated around the periphery. I generally chair and introduce the speaker and aim to encourage everyone to both listen and argue, with a determined effort to encourage reluctant contributors.

Anarchy in Action

A most debilitating result of societal conditioning is to turn us from creators to consumers. Challenging History isn't difficult for people to do as everyone's got some strongly held opinions on the past. Later in the year, Linda will insist; "The Middle Ages – More Fashionable than Today". But what is fashion? Is it a good thing? Who decides? Whatever the topic it's sure to raise profound political issues in an approachable way. Nobody's threatened but everyone's challenged and amused and entertained.

My own next presentation is, "Who Invented the Queen?" and who did? As soon as one begins to research and reflect, profound political points are raised and there's never any problem keeping the discussion going. We have a 20-minute break after an hour for teas and toilets and informal socialising and possibly come to some shared conclusions in the final session, but most often not. The very interchange of ideas is sound in itself as far as I'm concerned in these atomised times where most people are lucky to even exchange emails.

And the Romans

Roy's talk on the Romans was a cracker. He's the Chair of the History Society and Llandudno Museum and he reckons we were ignorant, mud-covered savages until the Romans brought civilisation. I offered an alternative interpretation of pre-Roman, decentralised Celtic largely self-sufficient, rural village communities who didn't appreciate being invaded by fascists. Admittedly, there's oversimplification and exaggeration to make a point but it's a debate central to anarchist politics that animated both Colin and Kropotkin. A lot of local people debated the issues who would never have turned up to hear a talk about

Kropotkin (who?).

Sadly, we haven't yet planned the revolution or established an anarchist utopia but like Colin, I'm happy to uncover a few seeds beneath the snow and leave self-proclaimed, "revolutionary, class-struggle" comrades to promise magic beans.

Christopher Draper

Society or the State

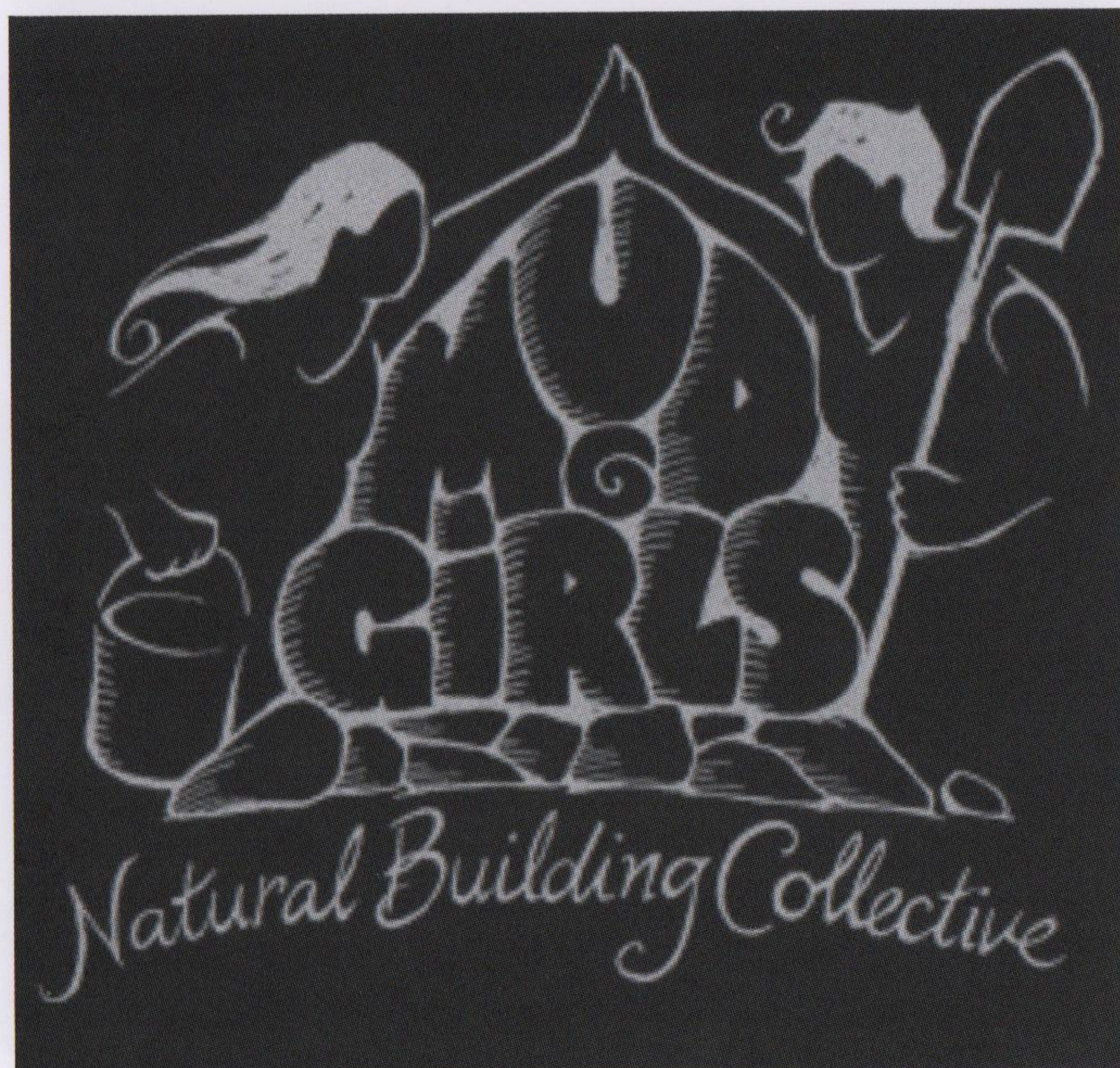
"Martin Buber.....wasn't an anarchist, although he had strong anarchist connections. He was the friend and executor of a German anarchist Gustav Landauer, who made a very profound remark, which I quote from Buber's book *Paths in Utopia* (Routledge, 49). "The state", said Landauer, "is not something which can be destroyed by a revolution, but is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of human behaviour; we destroy it contracting other relationships, by behaving differently." Buber wrote a brilliant essay called 'Society and the State' which was printed in English in the long-dead journal *World Review* in 1951, and printed in a book of his called *Pointing the Way*.

Buber begins by making a clear distinction between the social principle and the political principle, pointing out that "it is inherent in social structures that people either find themselves already linked with one another in an association based on a common need or a common interest, or that they band themselves together for such a purpose, whether in an existing or a newly-formed society." And he then goes on to stress his agreement with the American sociologist Robert MacIver, that "to identify the social with the political is to be guilty of the grossest of all confusions, which completely bars any understanding of either society or the state...."

Colin Ward

(Reprinted from *Anarchy* in Milton Keynes)





The Mud Girls

The Mud Girls would have surely delighted Colin Ward. They are a collective of women on or near Vancouver Island dedicated to building with cob. Now the first time I heard of the use of cob I was a bit sceptical. After all, it is a kind of adobe and that is fine for the desert but in a climate that has a six month (or more) rainy season? Well, the "Girls" know exactly what they are doing. With a high stone foundation, a clay-based plaster and deeply overhanging eaves, it can pour day and night without harming the structure.

They specialise in building with natural, local and recycled materials and encourage the DIY spirit. They charge only \$17 an hour for a project, but encourage people to involve themselves in the production. They do work shops in cob building to spread the technique far and wide. People from Mexico, the USA and Tibet have asked their advice on building. While charging for their labour, wherever possible they try to use barter to stand outside of the money economy. They build everything from benches and ovens to full size houses.

The collective began in the Spring of 2006 when 22 women organised a boot camp at Lasqueti Island that lasted 10 days. They taught each other cob construction, developed a work plan that included childcare and created a consensus model for doing business. According to Chelsey Braham, spokesperson for the Mud Girls, their focus was to, "Work out a non-hierarchical way to work together and distribute

work evenly... It's an empowerment thing. We all share the desire to be able to build our own shelters; shelters that are born from the immediate environment. We want to contribute to our families on all levels."

Branching out from Lasqueti Island, Mud Girls can be found in at least half a dozen communities on Canada's West Coast.

Mud Girls Mission Statement

Our Mission is to Empower ourselves and others through sharing skills and knowledge that promote healing and living in harmony with the Earth.

Our Guiding Principles

- We work with unprocessed natural and recycled materials to create beautiful and healthy structures that are earth friendly.
- We are a women's collective and seek to empower ourselves with employment and the skills to build homes.
- We are a collective that is human friendly: recreating our concepts of work to prioritise respect and care for our hearts, our bodies and our children while we work together. We create a work environment that nurtures us.
- All our events are child and mother friendly with quality childcare always provided.
- We seek to do our business in a non-capitalist spirit. We keep the cost of natural building affordable by keeping our wages low, offering our workshop for barter, building for people with low-income as much as we can.
- We are structured non-hierarchically. Each member is equally valued and has equal say in decision making.
- We use the teachings of Non-Violent Communication to create a peaceful, mutually respectful and revolutionary harmonious group process.
- We work together to make this up as we go, nurturing a creative, inventive and courageous spirit in us all!

The Mud Girls can be contacted at <https://mudgirls.wordpress.com/>

Larry Gambone

"Never let a politician grant you a favour.
They will only want to
Control you forever."

Bob Marley

Dig where you stand



Roger Ball addressing the Unofficial History Group at the Manchester Metropolitan University this May said that the methodology of the Bristol Radical History Group, which he had helped to found, was based upon the original 1930's Swedish idea of **'Dig where you stand'**. This concept, which can be used as a sociological as well as an historical method, is what distinguishes Colin Ward's practical school of anarchist thinking from that of some of the more exotic expectations and fanciful approaches of the dramatic anarchists around these days.

'Don't be dazzled' said the philosopher Wittgenstein, and in the last century Harold Garfinkel among the ethnomethodologists, urged us to study the mundane aspects of everyday life.

The problem is that dramatic **'revolutionary'** anarchists in this country are seemingly so ill-equipped in their debating skills that on the current evidence Colin Ward's will never be seriously challenged inside the so-called anarchist movement. Take, as an example, Colin's case for allotments as anarchism in action; the voice of dramatic anarchism has been one of shallow ridicule, and point-scoring rhetoric: summed-up as **'reeking of allotments'**.

Meanwhile, it was left to someone who is not an anarchist, Les May, who in **Northern Voices No.14** questioned some of the practical consequences of Colin Ward's recommendations. In an essay titled **'Rochdale's Weeds Beneath the Snow'**, Mr May noted: *'Ward's philosophy stressed the importance of self-managed, non-hierarchical forms of social organisation (and) he believed that in such small face-to-face groups, the bureaucratising and hierarchical tendencies inherent in organisations have the least*

opportunity to develop.'

Mr May then claims that Colin Ward's 'seed' can *'prove to be an orchid to be admired or a Japanese knot-weed eager to take root anywhere it can get a toehold.'* In Mr May's view, Ward's philosophy can lead to voluntary bodies that, in his own local experience, *'can be unelected, unrepresentative, less accountable and less transparent than local authorities ... and are inclined to lose sight of their aims and purposes being more concerned with perpetuating their own existence.'*

And yet, several anarchists who have in the past edited **Freedom** have been involved in growing things: Vernon Richards, of Italian descent, I understand grew specialist vegetables which he sold to the London restaurant trade, and Peter Turner, the carpenter, member of UCATT, and **Freedom** editor in the 1960s and 1970s, had an allotment in Fulham growing tomatoes and vegetables until he became too ill with asbestosis in the late 1990s.

Richard Hoggart in his book **'The Uses of Literacy'** (1957) wrote: *'There may be mentioned here, too, the persistence of the desire to grow things, in window-boxes and on patches of sour soil in backyards, which are often well-tended; and on allotments - behind hoardings in the main street or on the edge of the permanent way, or on strips of three hundred square yards let at a nominal rent under the provisions of the 1922 Allotment Act.'*



Les May is aware, in a way that Colin Ward either glosses over or is blissfully unaware, of the bitter rivalry, the conflict, and even the authoritarianism that prevails on neighbourhood allotments. Peter Turner told me that on his allotment in Fulham the allotment committee had banned the growing of raspberries both because they were an easy crop to grow and because they tended to spread. After some initial investment fruit growing often involves less labour than dealing with vegetables: Once following some complaints to the Council that I was not spending enough time on my allotment

and therefore, producing too many weeds and not cropping properly; I had great delight in dumping heaps of potatoes, plums, raspberries and other produce on the office desks of functionaries at the Department of Leisure Services in Rochdale.

Animal husbandry among the English working-class is something else that Hoggart claims was increasing in the 1950s:

'...interest in breeding animals and birds not only survives but in some branches is increasing. Whippet and greyhound breeding seems almost dead except in a few mining areas or for commercial purposes; canary-breeding is not increasing, but there is a growing interest in some forms of cage-bird, notably of budgerigars. The Hulton survey suggests that bird-fancying [pigeons etc] is more popular with the working-class people than any others.'

Quite apart from the fact that all this animal husbandry may distract the working-class from the class struggle; as with the problems of fruit and vegetable growing there are practical problems with the breeding and raising of animals. Rachel Whitaker is an anarchist and vegetarian who breeds goats in Ireland, yet I still don't know how she solves the **'Billy goat'** problem. With the breeding of goats, as with anything else, there is a 50-50 chance of getting a Billy rather than a Nanny goat: a Billy goat becomes fit to service the Nanny at about 10-weeks-old. Thus precautions must be taken to keep the Billys away from the Nannys, otherwise in-breeding will be the result. A Nanny ought not to come into season until about November and there on be ready to service every 3-weeks until the Spring, but there is no way of guaranteeing this because most Billys are persistent and the Nanny can come into season earlier. Experience tells me that the best way of solving this problem is either to sell the Billy or take him for an early trip to the slaughter house.

George Orwell, who reared goats and grew vegetables, even when he was in Morocco in the 1930s, readily described these difficulties in letters to friends and in diaries, but Colin Ward rarely seems to go beyond the theory of the political implications of people co-operating in the management of allotments. Colin does this in the hope that these ways of people coming together over growing vegetables and husbanding animals will form the basis for a more decent system of social arrangements.

Brian Bamford

(Brian Bamford is editor of Northern Voices)



Tribute: Rory Bowskill 1964 – 2015

Hardly an issue of Anarchist Voices goes by without hearing of the death of a friend or comrade. Rory Bowskill was both these to me. I remember him as a warm and enthusiastic individual with a natural artistic talent which found numerous outlets during his all too short life.

I first met Rory in the early days of Red Rambles, the monthly radical walking group established by Mike Hamilton and myself in the early 1990s. Rory would turn up on his motorcycle, usually having travelled from Cotgrave, Notts for a lift with Mike and myself to the designated starting point for the walk.

The walks gave us all a chance to talk and Rory was not short of ideas. These soon found their expression in a series of leaflets which we co-produced on a variety of topics arguing the case for anarchism. Rory also contributed a number of articles to the East Midlands Anarchist Bulletin (EMAB) and 3 articles to the early editions of Total Liberty. Rory moved to Norwich in 1996 to study at the University of East Anglia, but continued to send articles to EMAB and took over as editor for the last editions before the group came to an end.

Rory also joined in when the group were holding the Height Gate gatherings near Hebden Bridge. Rory's artistic flair came to the fore when EMAB organised a Green Fair in Belper in 2002. Rory had produced a number of screen printed T-Shirts with the slogan 'My allotment is and anarchist plot' screen printed on the front, they sold well! At my request Rory also produced a large black flag with a celtic style circle and red letter 'A' in the middle. This was used on a number of occasions when our group had stalls at the Loughborough Green Fair. The flag can be seen in the picture at the top of this column and

Rory is the person kneeling on the left. Rory turned more to painting when living in Norwich and also became involved with the 'Steam Punk' artistic movement. His untimely passing has prompted me to re-read the pieces he contributed to EMAB and Total Liberty magazine and one of these, 'All in the mind' is reproduced below. He was a creative and independent person. He will be much missed by family, friends and comrades.

Jonathan Simcock



All in the mind

Are we, as anarchists, dreamers? In one sense undoubtedly yes! We dream of an alternative to the hierarchical capitalist state. But what takes us beyond the realm of futile fantasy is that having begun to dream of such a society we do not stop there, as some do, but rather progress to the next step which is to actively desire that which we have seen in our dreams and then act towards its realisation.

Everything begins with imagining. Whether good or not, the state and exchange system that we call money exist only insofar as people imagine them to exist. Both, like all else, are dependant upon the confidence of people in their reality and although they are able to exert a dramatic influence on people's lives, if this confidence is removed they collapse like the hollow shell without substance that they are. So vulnerable are they to the influence of confidence that one or two large investors can bring down a bank or even a national economy at a whim, Bill Gates could do this instantaneously to several countries at once, and there have been instances of panic when banks have not held sufficient funds to cover themselves for major periods of withdrawals such as sales.

Similarly the state exists primarily in the imagination of those who believe it to exist; it needs to be perceived as legitimate in order to claim the right both to extort funds from its population as taxes, and control their lives through its laws, police and judiciary. When people see through this illusion of reality they begin to question the claim to a 'legitimate' monopoly of the use of coercion which the state makes. At the least such events lead to the position of multiple sovereignty where, according to Weber's definition of the state, the state ceases and another entity is created which often takes the form of other states, but need not always.

If the idea exists within people's minds that sovereignty resides with the population as individuals who can freely federate together in communities and networks by free association then what is to prevent an alternative outcome?

An anarchist society is likely to have its birth by such a process rather than by a violent revolution, but to achieve this it is necessary to help people to use their imagination. In a seminar about whether the nation state was a failed historical experiment I asked the question "Can you imagine and describe what you would like to see replace the nation state?" None of the dozen or so people in the room could give any answer except myself. The reason that we do not yet have a truly free society is not a failure of the concept, but a failure to even begin to imagine the idea of such a society even when there have been many attempts at achieving it.



This shows the degree of power wielded by the supporters of authoritarianism, as the most perfect exercise of power, according to Lukes, is when it doesn't need to be used because any alternative is 'unthinkable'. That is when those in power are at their strongest but at all times their power is subject to the acceptance of those who it is exercised over. Once a slave begins to imagine being free they will begin to desire it and then to seek it. To prevent such thoughts it would be necessary to actively change the language which would risk alerting people to the idea they

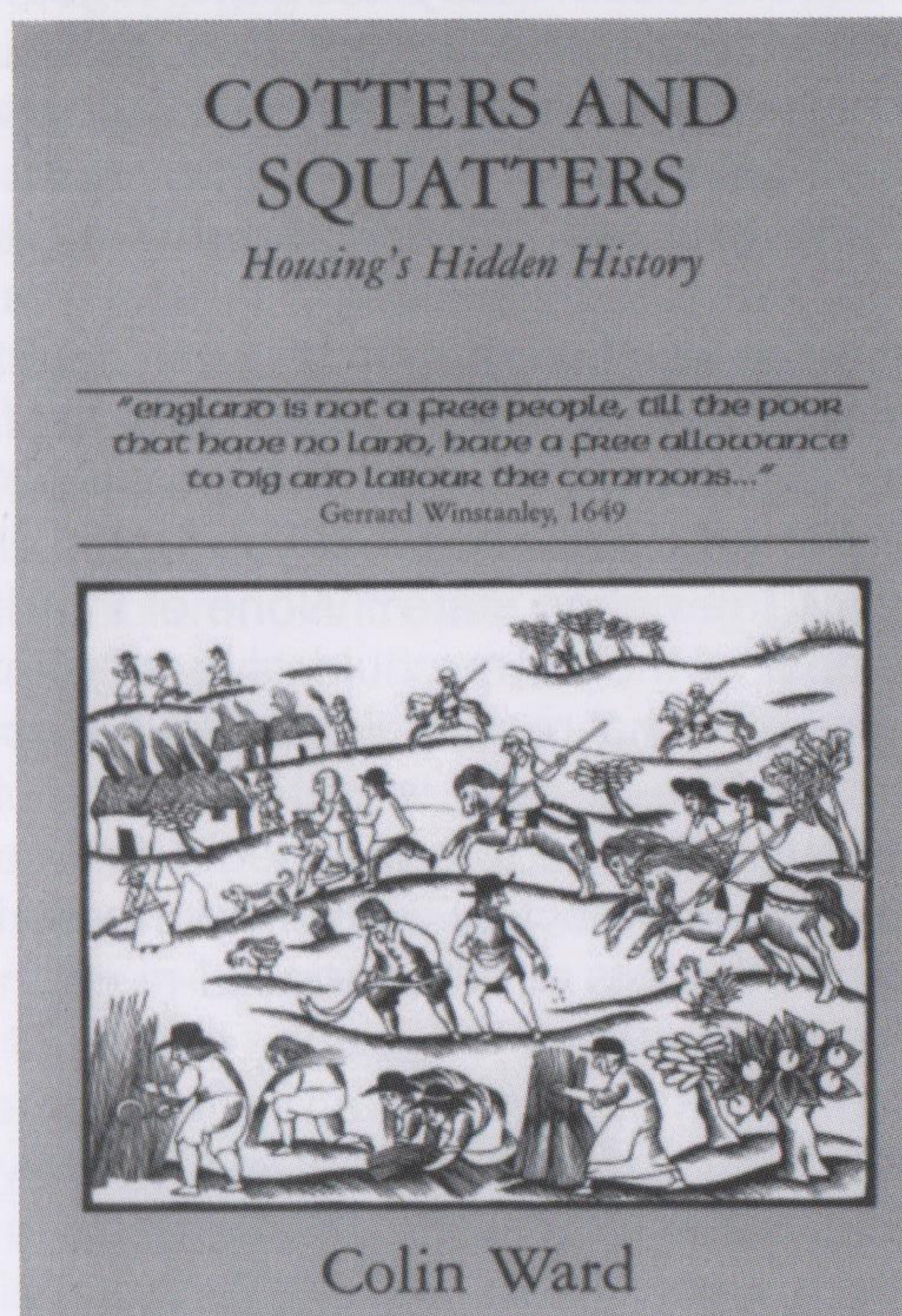
were trying to prevent. Those who hold power are thus in an extremely vulnerable position, as any attempt to use their power risks weakening the perception of legitimacy which they enjoy. This perception is their weakness and where our efforts can probably be best directed to create something different.

The lesson of Spain in the 1930's is not that with more guns we could have built a free society but rather that people relate more closely and identify with lived experience and felt aspirations than dry theories of the inevitability of history. That is why the Spanish anarchists were able to achieve anything. There were people who could imagine a different world and desired it; unfortunately for humanity there were others

whose imaginings took a darker path and included a 'new world order' which would have no Jews in Europe.

History is the manifestation of the interaction of the imagined worlds of different people, it is not fixed but flows and eddies so that no one can know the outcome of an action but they can at least imagine and desire an end which is better than the start. This may be why the arts have been a factor in Anarchism and other attempts at liberation; not only do they allow messages to be given almost covertly but they, by their very nature, encourage the use of imagination and so start the process.

Rory Bowskill



Five Leaves Press and Colin Ward

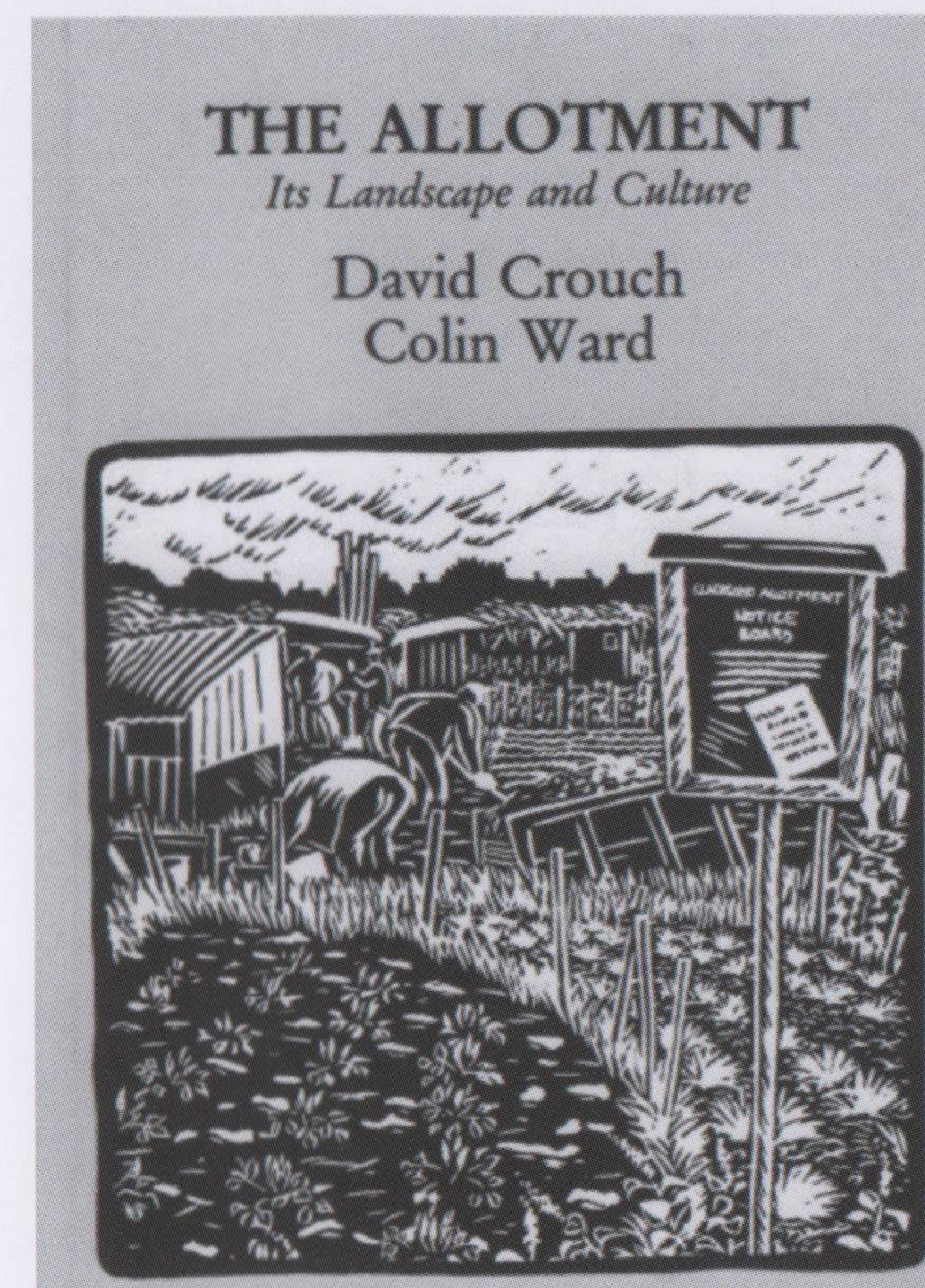
I started reading Colin Ward in, I think, 1973, at Aberdeen People's Press. APP was a magazine with its own print-shop, one of many such papers throughout the country such as *Leeds Other Paper* and *Rochdale Alternative Paper*. One table at APP was devoted to "swaps", magazines exchanged with APP, and some national magazines for sale or reference. It was there I came across *Peace News*, which I hooked up with for many years, and *Freedom*. The latter listed many local anarchist groups across the country and, tantalisingly, its appeal fund often listed significant donations collected at

anarchist picnics in America, sometimes from groups with foreign language names. For a young man living in the north east of Scotland in those pre-internet days this was heady stuff.

Freedom was respected (and criticised) for being the journal of record of the anarchist movement, the paper of "official anarchism". There were brasher papers, with more exciting layout, but often with only brief lives. With *Freedom* you got tradition and continuity and you had access to the work of Vernon Richards, the scarily pedantic historian Nicolas Walter and, the subject of this magazine, Colin Ward. I found some copies of Colin Ward's *Anarchy* which, though it closed in 1970, was still thought relevant, certainly more so than the second series produced by the group that succeeded him as editor. I've spent years trying to complete the set of 116 issues he edited.

Over the years I got to know Colin's work, starting with a wonderful series of books on work, on vandalism and on utopia for Penguin Education and of course his *Anarchy in Action*. This is still the book I recommend to people wanting to understand what anarchism is all about. *Anarchy in Action* remains in print from Freedom Press, even if the Freedom empire no longer really reflects Colin's view of anarchism.

I got to know Colin – he spoke at one or two meetings in my later and current hometown in Nottingham – and found him as good company in person as his books were to read. The long defunct Old Hammond Press published pamphlets by him on housing and on William Morris and, in 1995, I became a "proper" publisher when Mushroom Bookshop published his *The Allotment: its landscape and culture* (jointly written with David Crouch), buying paperback rights from Faber. Typically, Colin said he did not want any royalties, simply being glad the book was again available. *The Allotment* kept



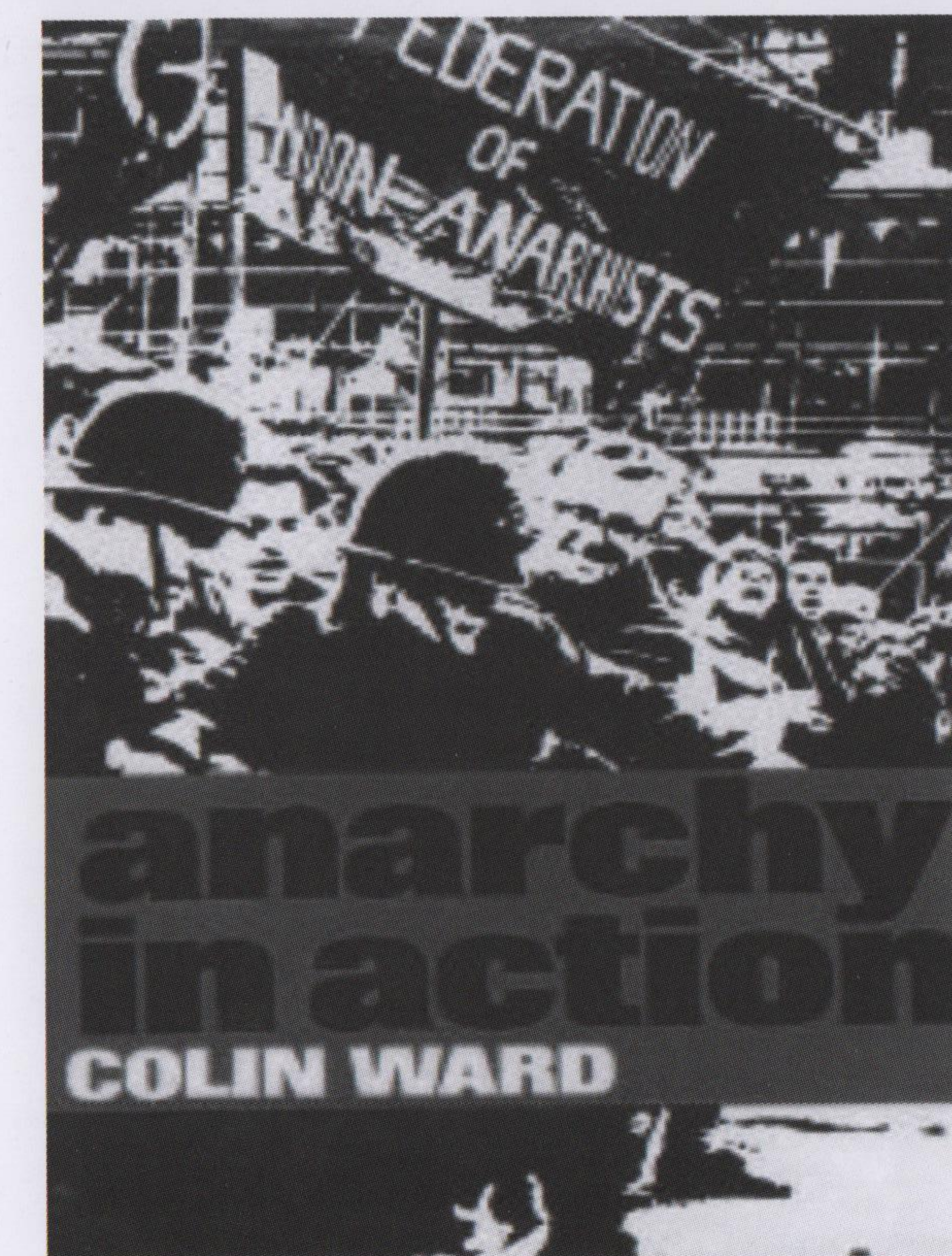
Five Leaves Publications afloat for many years after we took over Mushroom's publishing side. We reissued several of his other books including *Arcadia for All*, a new title *Cotters and Squatters* and a selection of his essays, *Talking Green*. Colin preferred to emphasise the positive, with no time for "tittle tattle" about the anarchist movement. The nearest he came to that was the extended interview with David Goodway, *Talking Anarchy*, which we published and is now with PM Press.

Unfortunately the last few years of Colin's life were not kind to him. He was unable to complete his last commission, to edit a set of essays by other writers whose ideas chimed with his. I last saw Colin at the relaunch of *Anarchy in Action* at Housmans Bookshop in London. I'd been asked to speak and was proud to do so. My guess is that everyone at the launch already had the book, but everyone wanted to see Colin again and to honour one of British anarchism's most influential figures. It was, I think, his last public appearance.

Our last Colin Ward publication was *Colin Ward Remembered*, a collection of the speeches given at his memorial meeting – funded by those who generously chipped in to hire Conway Hall for the event. People sent so much money we were able to publish the memorial volume from the surplus.

The meeting was attended by hundreds of people Colin had influenced. In my own case the Five Leaves publishing firm and the more recent Five Leaves Bookshop would not have happened without his early encouragement and his infectious belief in doing positive things, not just damning what is wrong with the world.

Ross Bradshaw
Five Leaves Press



"The anarchist conclusion is that every kind of human activity should begin from what is local and immediate, should link in a network with no centre and no directing agency, hiving off new cells as the original grows."

Colin Ward *Anarchy in Action*

"The important question is, therefore, not whether anarchism is possible or not, but whether we can so enlarge the scope and influence of libertarian methods that they become the normal way in which human beings organise their society."

Colin Ward *Anarchy in Action*

"Anarchism does not demand the changing of the labels on the layers, it doesn't want different people on top, it wants us to clamber out from underneath."

Colin Ward *Anarchy in Action*

"Every state protects the privileges of the powerful."

Colin Ward *Anarchism: A Very Short Introduction*

"the ideal of a self-organising society based on voluntary cooperation rather than upon coercion is irrepressible."

Colin Ward *Anarchism: A Very Short Introduction*