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## **The Whiteway Anarchists in the Twentieth Century: A Transnational Community in the Cotswolds**

If remembered at all, the Whiteway agrarian commune is recalled as a unique survivor of the land reform projects of the later nineteenth century. Seen as an eccentricity, or frequently as an aberration, the image of the community persists as a product of the bohemianism, decadence and artistic asceticism of the last decade of the nineteenth century. Located in the idyllic Cotswolds, the history of Whiteway sits uneasily alongside images of rural England, traditional village life, and scenic rural tourism that characterize this part of the country. Frequently marginalised, or reduced to the level of exotics and eccentrics, the inhabitants of the Whiteway colony occupy an uneasy place in the history of Gloucestershire. Revisiting many of the traditional accounts of the colony, and drawing on a number of less usual sources relating to it, this article re-examines its relationship to the British anarchist tradition, and to the broader history of British political and cultural dissent. Reclaiming the twentieth century history of Whiteway, this article challenges the view that the colony is merely a hardy survivor of other contemporary land projects of the 1890s, seeking to correct the common perception that the colony has no recognizable post-1900 history. Rather than merely persisting as an oddity, this article suggests that Whiteway occupied an important place in the history of anarchism, as a focus for continuing refugee activity and as a source of anxiety and moral panic for the authorities in the west of England in the inter-war years. This article acknowledges the unique position of Whiteway as a single case-study, throughout. Nevertheless, peeling away notions of the colony as a place of reclusive eccentricity, this

is an article that places the colony in context, and releases its history from its close associations with the conservative traditions of rural Britain.

## I

The Whiteway colony was distinguished by a remarkable longevity, setting it apart from other contemporary land communes.<sup>1</sup> Only the later and much smaller Christian pacifist community at Stapleton near Pontefract, founded in the 1920s, can claim a similar longevity into the recent past.<sup>2</sup> Whiteway is most frequently remembered as an offshoot of the Croydon Brotherhood Church, established by Pastor John Coleman Kenworthy to propagate co-operative ideas, industrial colonies and land reform projects. The Croydon Brotherhood Church was a diffuse congregation of exponents of unconventional religious and anarchist ideas, attracting, in the words of Nellie Shaw, Whiteway's unofficial historian, 'every kind of anti'.<sup>3</sup> Inspired by the writings of Leo Tolstoy, Kenworthy's vision was realized by the foundation of an anarchist commune at Purleigh in Essex in 1896. Following Tolstoy, the Purleigh anarchists advocated a return to the simplicities of rustic life, communal ownership, spiritual retreat, and subsistence farming.<sup>4</sup> Riven by internal dissension from the start, the colony fractured, leading to the secession of a number of its members. As recalled by Nellie Shaw, Whiteway was established by refugees from Purleigh following an exodus from the colony in 1898. Her account established many of the standard features of the history of the experiment. Scouring Gloucestershire on bicycles an advance party located a remote site outside Stroud, purchased with the help of a local Quaker journalist, Samuel Veale Bracher.<sup>5</sup> Once installed, the Whitewayans reaffirmed their commitment to communal living by burning the title deeds of the estate on the end of a pitchfork. Repeated in a number of

versions (some including a ceremonial bonfire), the story of the destruction of the title deeds became emblematic of the community's disregard for convention, and assertion of opposition to established norms.<sup>6</sup> In later years the absence of deeds to the property made individual ownership of the land impossible to establish. The inhabitants bore some similarity to squatters, and laid down the basis for a network of local associations and alliances that set the Whitewayans aside from their near neighbours and the traditional features of rural proprietorship. In the longer term, the story of the establishment of Whiteway created a foundation myth that emphasized the exceptionalism, distinctiveness and outlandish nature of the inhabitants of the community. The gradual collapse of the other communal experiments of the period added to the sense of isolation and internal exile that surrounded the inhabitants of the colony.

More recently, scholarship about the Whiteway experiment has focused almost exclusively on the late nineteenth century context of the colony.<sup>7</sup> Inextricably intertwined with the history of the 1890s, Whiteway is traditionally imbued with all the idiosyncracies and aberrant features of the period.<sup>8</sup> Too often dismissed simply as another manifestation of the millennialism of the closing decade of the nineteenth century, much of the later history of the settlement has been buried under the standard features characteristic of the alternative cultures of that era. For many, Whiteway represented the profound impulse towards social transformations that typified the period. The earliest accounts of the colony emphasized the links between the colonists and the 'simple life', back-to-the-land, and dress reform movements of these years. Called 'life reform' by German scholars, these movements sought an escape from the social constraints and deteriorating physical environment of Britain's towns and cities at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> Often portrayed as the 'lifestyle' choices made by an angst-ridden

intelligentsia, with few wider implications for the period, the simple life agendas are poorly situated within the broader context of 1890s radicalism. Some accounts have seen them as a means whereby middle-class puritans and ascetics sought to escape charges of ‘parasitism’, whilst creating a counterweight to the view of the new socialist agendas as arid and materialistic. In other studies they embody the tense relationship between some strands of social reformism and consumption and mass culture.<sup>10</sup> More recently the impulse behind the establishment of Whiteway and kindred colonies has been located in the crisis of mechanized urban society highlighted by the colonists’ rejection of modernity. With roots in the American transcendentalist movement, romanticism and mysticism, the movement that underpinned the experiment at Whiteway sought answers to the decadence of *fin-de-siècle* urban living through an appeal to the spiritual, primitive and myth-making aspects of human society. It stressed bodily hygiene, a retreat into a cultural and aesthetic minimalism, and proposed the harnessing of imagined cosmic energies in attempts to reinvigorate society.<sup>11</sup> Spanning movements of political and social reform, such agendas recurred across the political and religious spectrum. For Robert Blatchford, it was incumbent upon all social reformers to live simple lives of health and vitality in uncluttered and practical circumstances: ‘The chief ends to health are pure air, pure water, pure and sufficient food, cleanliness, exercise, rest, warmth and ease of mind’.<sup>12</sup>

Typified by the British followers of Tolstoy, ‘life reformers’ saw themselves as a legitimate part of the decade’s response to the end of century urban crisis. Their solution was to propose ruralist solutions to the problems of urban decay. Throwing aside the veneer of urban sophistication they aspired towards ‘the economics of...the Tula peasantry’, embraced by Tolstoy and seen by his acolyte, Aylmer Maude as the subject of

his most important writings.<sup>13</sup> There was a strong secular religiosity about Tolstoyanism, rooted in the movement's notion of a politics based on the 'sermon on the mount'.<sup>14</sup> Intersecting with kindred movements and drawing on imported ideas from abroad, the life reform movement incorporated notions as diverse as vegetarianism, feminism, Buddhism and, at its extreme end, elements of naturism. For critics of these new social ideas they became associated with the artistic bohemianism of the period. Many of the contemporary images of Whiteway bear the imprint of these notions of a bohemian paradise, characterized by sexual and religious experimentation, and underpinned by a rejection of urbanism and dull suburban conformity.<sup>15</sup> An advertisement for the sale of Nellie Shaw's life of her partner, Francis Sedlack, described the settlement as inhabited by 'Tolstoyans, anarchists, Quakers, vegetarians, dress reformers, a Bahaist, a Persian prince, a Somali fireman off a ship, and a Zoroastrian fire-worshipper who arrived with his secretary and a stock of furs in two four-wheeled cabs'.<sup>16</sup> Nellie Shaw noted a combination of these ideas as elements in the outlook of many of the first generation of colonists. Her memoirs include accounts of settlers dressed 'in a bright emerald, flowing cloak, or another in shorts with a bright coloured shirt, open at the neck and with short sleeves', others affected 'a kind of Greek costume'.<sup>17</sup> In the absence of a colony barber, beards and excessive facial hair were also fashionable amongst the men, 'it also fitted in with the cult of naturalness. Man was a hirsute being, why not remain so?'<sup>18</sup> Many of these stories grew in the telling. The more sensationalist and increasingly voyeuristic accounts of the settlement reported the case of a nudist member of the group mowing barley in 'a state of pure nature'.<sup>19</sup>

Not explicitly anarchist at this early stage, Whiteway bore some similarities to other communal experiments launched across Europe and North America during this

period that sought an antidote to the ills of industrial civilization through a recourse to voluntary primitivism. Many of the causes that flourished at the settlement were implicitly transnational in nature, notably the major themes that came to define the outlook of the colonists: pacifism, anti-imperialism, and anti-conscription. These connections gave the settlement a strongly cosmopolitan character that mirrored kindred causes transcending national borders.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, many of the settlers were exiles, bringing their own links to other experimental settlements with them. Models of colony-organisation, ranging from Germany and Denmark to the broader empire were assimilated into the outlook, organization and social context of the new communities.<sup>21</sup> Through these interlocking networks, Whiteway attracted considerable attention on the continent, particularly in France where it generated an admiring literature as a ‘cite de refuge’ that provided a sanctuary for the harried and the excluded, fleeing religious or state political persecution.<sup>22</sup> Like others analogous experiments of this nature at Ascona in Switzerland, in the Ruskin colony in rural Tennessee, or in the Stockel colony in Belgium, Whiteway was established as a remote rural enclave thereby seeking to evade surveillance and allowing it to exist on the margins of authority.<sup>23</sup> Filling up with refugees from town and city life, it was characterized by social nonconformism, the unconventional, a tense relationship with modernity, and an amateur and self-taught approach to spade husbandry.<sup>24</sup> One might describe the colony from its beginnings as anarchist by inclination, if not in theory and aims.

## II

The establishment of the colony at Whiteway provided one response to the agricultural depression of the mid-late nineteenth century. In rural Gloucestershire, the hollowing out

of rural society paved the way for a number of such experiments. Declining land prices, dwindling productivity, and a dearth of potential buyers enabled the 40 acres of the estate to be purchased cheaply.<sup>25</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, Whiteway appeared set apart from other contemporary schemes for the regeneration of the countryside. The commune had little affinity with the other projects for the restoration of the English peasantry, the moral regulation of the poor, or the application of unconventional farming methods to fallow pasture and the reclamation of wasteland that blossomed in the 1880s and 1890s.<sup>26</sup> In contrast to the small proprietorship projects favoured by a number of agrarian reformers, Whiteway was constructed around a notion of communal fellowship involving the renunciation of money, and material possessions. Some accounts mentioned a pot of communal money on the mantelpiece of the colony hall, open to use by all.<sup>27</sup> Such ideas never gained support as a serious solution to the emptying out of the countryside, and the emigration of the rural poor to the White settler colonies that preoccupied reformers in the early part of the twentieth century.<sup>28</sup> In contrast to mainstream programmes that sought the nostalgic revival of a yeoman proprietorship, rooted in respectability, hard work, and traditional family values, Whiteway offered up an image of an aberrant community, eschewing the profit motive, feckless in its everyday organization, and propagating ‘free unions’ (or ‘vegetable marriages’ as they were called in Europe) of unmarried partners.<sup>29</sup> For most rural reformers, rather than restoring the traditional village virtues of rural England, Whiteway held out the prospect of a debased community, rooted in a wider set of extended, but dysfunctional, quasi-familial relations. In many accounts it was depicted as merely a sanctuary for tramps, indigents and the work-shy.<sup>30</sup>



Ultimately, Whiteway lacked the charm of village England. The impossibility of establishing formal title to land acreage in the settlement meant that colony members owned only the houses they built at the site. Whiteway's architecture was accordingly spartan and utilitarian. Accommodation was often constructed in a sporadic and ad hoc way: 'the place was not much to look at – just a group of wooden huts' was Malcolm Muggeridge's verdict on the site.<sup>31</sup> Indeed the appearance of the settlement stood in marked contrast to the aims of many social reformers who sought to refine and improve housing, urban design, and traditional dwelling-spaces. Constructed of prefabricated huts, rough wooden cabins and a colonnaded village hall scavenged from the nearby Cranham Sanatorium and reassembled in the colony in 1924, it struck a dissonant note in an area noted for its charm, beauty and picture-postcard villages.<sup>32</sup> Distancing itself from the fashionable handicraft movement of the *beaux arts* period, only functional items like sandals, leather goods and fudge were made in the community for sale outside. In this, Whiteway is distinct from communities like the Oneida settlement of Bible Christians in the U.S. which became renowned for the manufacture of garden furniture and fine silverware.<sup>33</sup> Enjoying close proximity to the Arts and Crafts colony established by C. R. Ashbee at Chipping Camden, it was derided by its neighbors for its failure to embrace the workshop-based craft culture and revived local building traditions of the artisan Guild of Handicrafts located in the area.<sup>34</sup> By the early 1900s Whiteway had become an inverted vision of the elements that contributed to the pristine nature of the Cotswolds as a quaint corner of 'Olde England' and magnet for visitors from the nearby Midlands. It attracted, not respectable visitors, but, rather, the curious, voyeurs, sex tourists, itinerants and foreign exiles. Nellie Shaw talked of 'brakes, full of people driving up to the colony', and remarked: 'On Sundays in particular we were annoyed by vulgar sightseers, who made

themselves a positive nuisance, walking uninvited into the cottage and poking into the very bedrooms. Some of these people would demand to “see the women” as if we were a menagerie’.<sup>35</sup> Many visitors were notable radicals, socialists and reformers, seeking spiritual guidance, or instruction on alternative models for social development. James Connell, author of the socialist anthem, ‘The Red Flag’ was a prominent guest for a short period.<sup>36</sup> Rather than reinforcing its links with the surrounding area, the tourist influx into Whiteway ruptured the settlement’s connection with the region, and augmented a vision of the colony as an emblem of aberrant intrusion into the picturesque neighbouring villages of the Cotswolds.<sup>37</sup>

Whiteway was further marginalized by the increasing visibility of the community in popular fiction. The colony is unusual for the attention it received in the literature of the early part of the twentieth century. The rumours of nudity, sexual promiscuity and ‘free unions’ that dogged the settlement were apparently reaffirmed by the presence of Whiteway as a backdrop for incidental episodes in novels and magazine serialisations that addressed the excesses of the ‘simple life’. Much of this material approached Whiteway with cynicism about the idealism of its founders, and is suffused with a wry humour at the expense of its inhabitants. In tone, it echoed other fiction of the period that highlighted society’s rejection of the apparently preposterous and outlandish politics of the anarchist clubs and societies. Some of these mocked both the attitudes of anarchists themselves, and the overreaction by the state and society against the power and reach of their conspiracies. They feature many of the more sensationalist claims about the intent of anarchism, and its terroristic inclinations in the 1890s.<sup>38</sup> The novels relating to Whiteway tended to satirise the more herbivorous side of anarchism. Events at the colony were particularly recorded by the Hocking dynasty of West Country writers. Salome Hocking,

sister of the Victorian writers, Silas and Joseph Hocking, had resided at the colony for a period with her husband, Andrew Fifield. Here she began a full-length novel of early twentieth-century radical ideas, *Belinda the Backward or the Romance of Modern Idealism*.<sup>39</sup> Whiteway features heavily in the novel with the action transported to a fictional settlement in Dorset, a counterpart of Whiteway, with the satirical name of 'Strangeways'. In it, the colony is a plot device, used to illustrate the excesses of turn of the century radical alternative culture. The novel alludes to the discomfort of life at the colony, 'not a single door or window' fits in the dilapidated cottages, theosophy is widely practised and the colony is riven by disagreements arising from the 'free unions' adopted by some inhabitants.<sup>40</sup> Salome's brother, Joseph, used his sister's anecdotes about the colony to construct a sketch of society there in his novel, *David Baring*, about an aimless and wealthy heir experimenting with the new ideas of the *fin de siècle* period. In it, the daily regime of the colonists is mercilessly mocked:

Each morning, after breakfast, the blackboard was uplifted, on which was written the thoughts of great men, which were to be a guide and an inspiration throughout the day. The writers whose words were most frequently quoted were Epictetes, St. Francis of Assisi, Emerson, Thoreau, Ruskin, Carlyle and Tolstoi. The passages usually selected were finely worded and contained some ennobling thought.

Certainly their mental pabulum was of a very high order; if lofty ideals expressed in good English would ennoble a community, the Brotherhood Settlement would have attained to a high standard. Nearly all the maxims poured scorn on wealth, and on the comforts which men believe that wealth provides. In fact, David was not long in discerning that civilization, as it is usually understood, was regarded as

a curse, and they held that the nearer they could get to primitive standards, so much would it be better for them.<sup>41</sup>

These images of a closed and outlandish community, immune to the true interests of the country lingered on in popular fiction. In Grant Allen's *The Type-Writer Girl*, a satirical treatment of the simple life movement, an imagined colony near Pinfold in Sussex stands as a proxy for Whiteway. Here the settlement is represented as an expression of introverted enclavism and as a sanctuary for refugees and of alternative faiths. The heroine remarks: 'Then they began to instruct me in the doctrines of their sect. I was sworn to eternal friendship with all and sundry. The intricate Eleusinian mysteries of anarchism were explained to me, as catechumen, in Alsatian French and Bohemian German. I answered in such dialects of either tongue as I had at (my) command.'<sup>42</sup>

### III

The enthusiasms of the Whiteway settlers, the tourist industry that grew up around them, and the sensationalist early accounts of the settlement have obscured the strong anarchist impulses that underpinned the colony, and the sense of righteous justice that impelled the Whitewayans' occupation of the site. A combination of factors has marginalized the inhabitants of the community and obscured the settlement's strong contribution to the anarchist movement in Britain. After an initial period of notoriety, Whiteway's unconventional answer to the land question allowed it to slip from popular memory. By the middle 1930s, Nellie Shaw lamented its drift into obscurity, and feared that 'the self-sacrifice, courage and devotion to high ideals [of its inhabitants] should be forgotten'; others who visited the colony in the 1930s were unaware of its previous history.<sup>43</sup> The

amnesia that closed over it, persisted into the 1970s, when, despite its considerable longevity, it failed to register in the literature relating to communes and contemporary models of alternative living.<sup>44</sup> Rather than focusing on the subversive content of the experiment, the Whiteway colonists are frequently portrayed merely as primitive, eccentric, spiritual back-to-the-landers. Here the political content of their outlook has been underplayed, or relegated to a minor aspect of their activities.<sup>45</sup> This reading has created the impression that Whiteway flourished only briefly as a radical, dissonant community, with an essential character that did not survive into the twentieth century. A number of significant accounts either draw the history of the colony to a premature close in 1900, or appear unaware of its survival into the recent past.<sup>46</sup> Few histories acknowledge its continuing existence between the wars; its inhabitants are conspicuously absent from David Goodway's recent attempt at retrieval of the left/libertarian lineage in British political thought.<sup>47</sup>

An overly narrow concentration on this misleading chronology has allowed much of the literature on the colony to marginalize the settlement still further. Moreover, a tradition runs through many accounts of Whiteway that underplays the political content of the Tolstoyan movement, emphasizing bohemian kinship and pastoralist agrarian philosophies over the anti-state and anti-authority elements of the community. This has usually had the effect of highlighting the more sensationalist side of Tolstoyanism. Tolstoyans were emblematic of the 'simple-lifers, fresh-air cranks, banana-biters, milk-drinkers, male suffragettes, free-lovers, dress-reformers (who wore the ugliest kind of clothing), anti-God fanatics, all sorts of intellectual, moral and political fungi' who were frequently dismissed within the broader popular culture of socialism.<sup>48</sup> In the social democratic press rumours circulated about the excesses and sexual experimentation that

allegedly thrived at the colony. Traditionally, Whiteway stands for the gradual and permanent exile of these ideas to the fringes, and a purging of such notions from mainstream progressive politics in the early twentieth century. The Puritan instincts that increasingly characterized the outlook of the infant Labour party were a reaction against the forms of hedonism, unconstrained excess and bucolic sexuality typified by life at the colony. Ramsay MacDonald made a plea for an ideal and committed crusading labour type who ‘has to serve an apprenticeship in mental and moral discipline’.<sup>49</sup> Other Labour pioneers prided themselves on their strong moral codes. Fenner Brockway wrote of the Bermondsey MP, Alfred Salter, from a Plymouth Brethren background, that ‘he was still essentially a Puritan and the Bohemian behavior of the “bright young things” who worshipped at the shrine of Bernard Shaw shocked him.’<sup>50</sup> In relation to the more constrained nature of official labourism, Ross McKibbin has depicted the story of the evolution of the Labour Party as a move away from the narrative of popular fraternity and communal culture into a more narrow ‘economism’, with that process accelerating after the general election defeats of 1931 and 1935. Here the ostracism of the ‘simple lifers’ is a proxy for the modernization of labour. In conventional accounts, once relegated to the margins, it allowed the Labour Party to flourish and assume some of the features of a serious parliamentary contender for power.<sup>51</sup>

The commune-dwellers at Whiteway, however, were never as remote from the mainstream of radical history as is often suggested. Recent reassessments of popular politics have moored community and community-building much more emphatically within the British radical tradition.<sup>52</sup> Usually overlooked is the colonists’ sense that they represented the culmination of a long history of agrarian dissent, validated by previous movements of reform, and drawing on an alternative and highly radical recollection of

unjust land expropriation preserved in British historical memory. The mythology and lore of a disinherited peasantry survived in Whiteway's communal traditions, albeit mediated through middle-class sensibilities. Nellie Shaw located the foundation of the community in a broader struggle for 'free land' and in opposition to landlordism.<sup>53</sup> The absence of title deeds to the land at the colony meant that the settlers inherited the character of the marginal and peripheral elements within rural society who traditionally asserted their rights to the commonlands and waste of Britain's remoter areas.<sup>54</sup> Despite protestations by the colonists to the contrary, this factor and the activities of the inhabitants injected a dissonant note into a hitherto stable rural region.<sup>55</sup> The presence of the colony subverted structures of power and authority in rural Gloucestershire, leading to tensions with local social and clerical notables. These tensions mirror the hostility experienced by other similar colonies in Europe and in the U.S, where the inhabitants were widely suspected of smuggling, or offended local opinion by playing organized sports on the Sabbath.<sup>56</sup> At Whiteway, nudity and inappropriate dress caused conflict with the local parson; neighbouring small farmers launched raids against their potato crop, or rustled colony sheep; collecting firewood led to tension with landowners and their gamekeepers.<sup>57</sup> Such confrontations emphasized the sense, present in a number of anarchist journals, that the movement in late nineteenth-century Britain appealed to and sought a reaffirmation of long-standing communal obligations to the land, discarded after the growth of commerce, urbanization, and bureaucracy, but staunchly defended by peasant rebels like Wat Tyler and Jack Cade.<sup>58</sup> In many ways the inhabitants of Whiteway saw themselves as new Diggers, dedicated to the purification of the commonwealth and to a restoration of lost ancestral rights removed by the Normans. Such ideas circulated widely in the 1880s; in 1886 the Fabian Society was addressed by a

‘Fifth Monarchy Man’ advocating the creation of a community in the United States under the Presidency of the ‘Son of God’.<sup>59</sup> These images of the Commonwealth cohered around the settlers at both Purleigh and Whiteway. Traditional Diggers’ songs by Gerrard Winstanley celebrating the St. George’s Hill commune in Surrey were unearthed by the journal, *The New Order* and republished for circulation among the commune movement’s members.<sup>60</sup> A deep sense of Britain’s past, and the part of the Tolstoyans within it, is present in the autobiography of co-operator, radical and visitor to Purleigh, Percy Redfern. He described the Tolstoyan group he joined in Manchester as ‘Lollards, Levellers and Diggers of the time.....perhaps remote descendants of Piers Plowman we were.’<sup>61</sup> For many Christian anarchists the move away from the Saxon folk-moots into kingship, military leadership and formalised legal systems established the foundations of the state and signaled the end to independent village institutions. They regarded the re-establishment of parish councils in the late nineteenth century as a mere ‘shadow’ of these Anglo-Saxon communal gatherings.<sup>62</sup> In line with hostility to imported and apparently ‘alien’ Prussian statism that suffused early labourism, the Whitewayans believed that they were working with the grain of long-standing and indigenous notions of decentralization, and community tradition.<sup>63</sup> As Carissa Honeywell has pointed out, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the beginnings of a raucous dialogue between statist and libertarian forms of socialism; a reassessment of Whiteway reaffirms the importance and vigour of that debate, thereby re-inserting the community back into the political mainstream.<sup>64</sup> Here the Whitewayans kept company with diverse groups ranging from guild socialists to Anglo-Catholics and co-operators. Anti-statism at the colony manifested itself in opposition to registering births and deaths, paying taxes, or using the postal service.<sup>65</sup> In this there were similarities with other ideal communities of



the period: at Stapleton near Pontefract there were similar refusals to pay tithes, obey planning laws, or to register for the census (the latter was a position shared with militant suffragettes).<sup>66</sup>

#### IV

At the end of the Great War, even anarchists needed to be reminded of the existence of the Whiteway settlement.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, against the disorientating and dislocating background of World War I and the re-emergence of debates around the land question and the enhanced role of the state in wartime, there was an efflorescence of agendas relating to land nationalization and communal living experiments.<sup>68</sup> During this period the necessity for a return to the land was restated by a new generation of anarchists, notably in the works of Ethel Mannin.<sup>69</sup> The intermittent and sometimes only partially successful post-1919 council house building programmes kept the issue of settlement and exploitation of the land before the public in the inter-war period. Prior to the introduction of planning legislation in 1947, an uncertain political climate, returning veterans, and the decline of some of the larger aristocratic estates, created opportunities for the construction of makeshift and transient communities. In the Shetlands there were armed land occupations by demobilized former soldiers.<sup>70</sup> Recession in the 1920s also created British 'hooverilles', shanty-towns known as 'plot lands' with poor sanitation and transient populations.<sup>71</sup> Whiteway stood as an alternative to such ad hoc housing developments. The foundation of a Christian anarchist community at Stapleton near Pontefract in 1921 on a more modest scale than the Whiteway experiment, showed that there was still energy behind the commune movement. Moreover the population of

Whiteway stabilized in the early twentieth century. During this period the colony attained a balance between older and newer inhabitants. It was reinvigorated by an influx of European anarchist exiles at the beginning of the Great War, and, later, refugees from the Spanish Civil War.<sup>72</sup> This made the link between continental anarchist theory and the strong sense of English peasant dispossession from the land that infused the Whiteway experiment more explicit. A strengthened, revived and politically militant population, the presence of long-standing community members resident in the colony from its foundation, and supportive kinship networks, existing both inside and outside the settlement, enabled Whiteway to survive into the mid-twentieth century. There is ample evidence that Whiteway in this period was more overtly anarchist than its predecessor at Purleigh and more homogenous than at any other time since its foundation. Nellie Shaw recorded of the attitude of the new intake that ‘objection was taken to officialdom in any shape or form.’<sup>73</sup>

The decline of popular interest in Whiteway was matched by an increase in official and governmental concern about affairs at the settlement. During the middle years of the twentieth century, increasing surveillance of colony members and intrusion by the security agencies into the affairs of the community became apparent. Traditionally, the history of anarchism was intertwined with this broader narrative of international espionage and domestic spy scandals.<sup>74</sup> Salome Hocking noted the shadowy presence of informers and *agents provocateurs* in her fictionalized account of the Purleigh and Whiteway settlements, suspecting penetration of the Tolstoyan communities by Tsarist agents.<sup>75</sup> After 1919, however, increasing fears about the scale and reach of Bolshevik conspiracies led to a closer interest by MI5 in potential subversives resident in Britain. The new Director of Intelligence, Major-General Sir Wyndham Childs, was dubious

about the threat posed by the Communist Party of Great Britain to the patriotic and devout British public, but feared the terrorist potential of continental anarchism. For him, this represented the real danger that was ‘merely the Anarchist in a new suit of clothes’.<sup>76</sup> During a period of transnational ‘red scares’ prompting legislative and political responses against Bolshevism by governments, Whiteway became a place that aroused concern in line with press suspicion about potential ‘red’ insurgency.<sup>77</sup> Although long an object of scrutiny by the local Gloucestershire police force, the monitoring of Whiteway intensified in the inter-war years. Foreign emigres resident at the colony in particular became a subject of close interest. Previously unused Home Office files relating to Whiteway, consulted here for the first time, show a high level of governmental scrutiny of the inhabitants of the colony, notably at the time of the General Strike, and following the exposure of the Soviet bank, Arcos, as the front for a Bolshevik spy ring in 1927. A number of agents were inserted into the colony, and additional information gleaned from malcontents within the settlement.<sup>78</sup> Meetings of the Home Office Committee on aliens resident in Britain categorised Whiteway as ‘a rendezvous for the disaffected, not only of this, but also of other countries’, advising that ‘secret agents living in the colony itself offer the only chance of keeping some useful supervision over it.’<sup>79</sup> In private correspondence with the Home Office, the Chief Constable of Gloucestershire cautioned: ‘I have no hesitation in saying that politically the colony is potentially dangerous, and that, during periods of internal unrest, diplomatic tension with other countries and so forth, it would be found that the majority of the colony would give active assistance in every way possible to the enemies of their country.’<sup>80</sup> A secondary consideration related to the perceived morality governing the community. Whilst acknowledging that there was nothing to the charge that abortions were performed at the site, contamination of the

morals of local youth was feared and the community labeled ‘a plague spot of morality’ in Home Office minutes.<sup>81</sup> The movement of dissidents and anarchists in and out of the colony was also tracked and the presence of known agitators speaking at social events recorded. It was these lectures by radicals in the colony clubhouse that aroused the interest of writers and dissidents in the area, notably Laurie Lee, in the politics of the Spanish Civil War a decade later.<sup>82</sup> Emma Goldman’s visit to the colony to celebrate May Day in 1926 was reported in detail by plainclothes policemen, and links with local Labour Party and Esperanto groups recorded.<sup>83</sup>

The vision of the colonists as unpatriotic and untrustworthy was reinforced by the activity on behalf of the pacifist movement that took place within the colony. Opposition to militarism, and international warfare was a thread that linked the Tolstoyan movement of the 1890s at Whiteway with the more integrated anarchist community of the 1920s. Francis Sedlack, Nellie Shaw’s partner and the community’s most famous resident, was a former soldier in the pre-1914 Austro-Hungarian army who wrote a number of pacifist tracts and recorded his disgust at the constraints and indignities of military life.<sup>84</sup> His thoughts on military service intersected with anarchist ideas about opposition to the state and the erosion of personal freedom and individualism in the face of coercive military enrolment: ‘I must obey blindly, and, therefore, am practically a droll, a thing, an automaton, less even than a beast...in my opinion militarism is a survival of barbarism, a shame to human intelligence’.<sup>85</sup> Moreover in the mystical and spiritual context of Whiteway, where experimental philosophies were widely adopted, Buddhist and Hindu doctrines of humanitarianism and passive resistance circulated freely.<sup>86</sup> By the 1920s, suffused with Gandhian notions of non-resistance, and non-violent solutions to conflict

situations, the settlement had become a beacon for members of the emergent inter-war pacifist associations.<sup>87</sup>

Merged with the notions of residual West Country liberalism and Quakerism, conspicuous in the backgrounds of a number of prominent inter-war pacifists, Whiteway's anti-war movement spanned the range of absolute pacifist/pacifist, libertarian and anarchopacifist positions.<sup>88</sup> Unsurprisingly, early meetings of the Peace Pledge Union in Gloucestershire were held at Whiteway.<sup>89</sup> Drawing initially on revulsion against human suffering and misery, pacifists were particularly galvanised by opposition to conscription. In both the Great War and the Second World War, this brought them into direct conflict with the state. The presence of Tom Keell and Lilian Wolfe, anarchist anti-war agitators, in the colony from 1928, linked the anti-conscription movement of 1915-18, and the emergent opposition to a renewal of conflict in Europe from 1935.<sup>90</sup> As the last pre-1939 editor of the anarchist paper *Freedom*, Keell's possession of the former printing presses of the newspaper enabled the couple to publish a stream of pro-peace and pro-anarchist pamphlets from Whiteway until Keell's death there in 1938.<sup>91</sup> During the Great War deserters and conscientious objectors were given refuge at the settlement, confirming the colony's reputation for subversive non-compliance with the state and local authorities. Fake documents and passports also circulated at the colony. The Home Office detected a move from passive to active opposition to the government in such acts: 'This attitude changed to one of active opposition to the law through the introduction of aliens, especially during the war, when the colony became a harbour for those, both British and alien, who sought escape from military service. Success in this direction evidently confirmed the colony in its opposition to all law and has advertised it until it seems to be known all over the world as the model of a community living outside the law'.<sup>92</sup>

Subsequently, in the 1920s the security services kept close watch on the individuals deemed responsible. George Barker, resident in Clifton was part of a chain smuggling conscientious objectors from Whiteway out of the country. He is recorded as having ‘passed on hundreds of men, keeping them hidden in the house until they could be sent on to Ireland’.<sup>93</sup> Pacifist convictions were still evident at Whiteway into the Second World War. Oral memories persist of the continuing pacifist activity there, providing the basis for the recent children’s adventure story by Barbara Mitchelhill, *Run, Rabbit Run*.<sup>94</sup> The peace tradition at Whiteway is reaffirmed by the career of international peace activist Martin Murray. The son of conscientious objectors during the Great War, he was brought up at Whiteway and campaigned on behalf of displaced children in Europe after 1945.<sup>95</sup>

The internationalist and anti-militaristic outlook revealed by the Whitewayans cemented the colony’s reputation as a place of dissent from the values of cottage, throne and empire. Moreover, the proliferation of Eastern and Oriental belief systems like Buddhism and Taoism at the site accentuated the view of the colonists as disloyal, and overly sympathetic to indigenous beliefs, customs and religions. Such notions arising from a yearning for spirituality, and a renewed interest in non-doctrinaire, hybrid-religious movements had an established presence among radicals and reformers from the mid-nineteenth-century onwards.<sup>96</sup> Immersion in these ideas and the new emphasis on Hindu textual knowledge, which percolated throughout the ranks of British anti-colonial intellectuals, had radicalized Gandhi and other campaigners for Indian Home Rule on their visits to London in the early part of the twentieth-century.<sup>97</sup> Theosophy, which encouraged the study of Eastern esoteric writings, and inspired a reinvigoration in traditional belief systems and spirituality amongst Indian nationalists, still lingered on at Whiteway into the inter-war years and remained a presence elsewhere in the West

Country.<sup>98</sup> The apostate Communist Douglas Hyde noted that in nearby Bristol in the 1920s the secretary of the Commonwealth of India League which supported dominion status for India ‘was a theosophist girl with a knowledge and love of the religions of the east which was shared by a number of the other active members’.<sup>99</sup> It was the ‘un-English’ nature of the inhabitants of Whiteway typified by these ideas that was highlighted in the accounts of many casual visitors. During the period 1919-1939 a visit to Whiteway became part of the itinerary of the international community of peripatetic refugees from Fascism and US domestic intolerance who gained increasing prominence in Left circles. The presence of non-Europeans in the settlement added to the exoticism of the experience of visiting the community, or inflamed anxieties about racial miscegenation in this most English of regions. Visiting in the 1930s, Byford-Jones was struck by the presence in the colony of ‘a beautiful young West Indian half-caste’ woman.<sup>100</sup> Racial ‘otherness’ added to the sense of Whiteway as a place of potential racial danger, providing possible sanctuary for violent separatist enemies of the empire. Monitoring the long-term colony resident, Eugenie Gaspard Marin, on a trip to the Dordogne with some hiking enthusiasts, an MI5 tail recorded his contacts with Chinese reformers who hoped to remain in the colony ‘for about two years’. The same report notes the colony member Sudbury Protheroe’s marriage to ‘a “Darkie” from Jamaica....her family are “big people” in Jamaica causing trouble there’.<sup>101</sup> In other reports Marin, a former member of the Belgium ideal community at Stockel, who toured world trouble spots promoting peace by bicycle, was said to be stoking the resentment of separatist Riffs in Morocco.<sup>102</sup> The transnationalism of Whiteway’s inhabitants evoked concerns that the group of European agitators in the settlement had developed formal links with other colonial separatist and extreme nationalist organizations. The clothes worn by the inhabitants, often including

non-European costume and decoration from sandals to orientalist robes, further suggested sartorial sympathies for colonial separatism nurtured at the settlement.<sup>103</sup> Prominent anti-colonial nationalists had indeed visited the colony in the early years of the twentieth century; Gandhi left an account of a trip there in 1909.<sup>104</sup> Fears about the anti-colonial element at Whiteway were reinforced by the presence of the Irish anarchist, Captain Jack White, the renegade scion of an Irish Ascendency family at the community. White appeared as a physical embodiment of anxieties about a fragmenting imperial order after the Great War. Prior to 1916 he used his military training in the Boer War to establish and to drill the Irish Citizens' Army that took part in the 1916 rising.<sup>105</sup> His vision of a yeoman society of integrated, armed volunteers operating without a hierarchy of command was very much in line with conventional anarchist thinking of the period.

The anarchist credentials of Whiteway were reaffirmed by the educational initiatives at the site which brought the community within the mainstream of anarchist ideas on non-traditional education. Free, non-doctrinaire education, organized apart from state intervention and control was a long-standing feature of anarchism. Such ideas were associated particularly with the name of Francis Ferrer, the Spanish anarchist and educational theorist executed in 1909 in the aftermath of a general strike in Barcelona. Ferrer's ideas were formed against the background of an absence of democracy in Bourbon Spain, in a society in which the Catholic Church retained most responsibility for education.<sup>106</sup> There survived in his polemics the traditional Enlightenment hostility to religion that had characterized campaigns by progressives for more secular educational instruction throughout the nineteenth century. The anarchist Modern School Movement emerged in Europe and North America against this background. In its teachings students were educated to distinguish between knowledge and superstition, to reject piety and



adoration of divinity, and ‘to honour their own bodies’.<sup>107</sup> The French émigré Communard Louise Michel set up the first such school in Britain in London in 1890. Established largely to teach the children of political refugees, it was raided by police after the discovery of a cache of bombs there. A subsequent school existed in Liverpool, and a further offshoot emerged in London in 1913.<sup>108</sup> Thereafter these ideas were often incubated inside the British commune movement. Edward Carpenter wrote tracts on the subject of non-traditional education from his ideal colony of Milthorpe outside Sheffield.<sup>109</sup> Whiteway had a school inspired by the Modern School movement from 1920, with a curriculum reflective of the freethinking ethos of the colony: it advocated a rejection of commercialism and embraced co-operation under a regime run without punishment and rewards.<sup>110</sup> This brought it into line with radical anarchist practice as a means of advocacy for social and political change. The school was free to the children of colonists and survived until 1934 through subsidies levied on non-residents who attended. MI5 agents in the colony detected the influence of the school in the irreligious and irreverent attitudes that coloured the outlook of the settlement. The ‘absence of any religious teaching whatever’ at Whiteway was singled out for special mention in one report, contributing to the apparent social dissolution, moral decay and promiscuity that flourished in the community.<sup>111</sup> For Paul Avrich, writing about anarchist education in the United States, the presence of a Modern School in Whiteway made the settlement ‘the British counterpart of Stelton’, an innovative educational reform and ideal community experiment located in New Jersey that became the headquarters of the Modern School Movement in the United States. The ethos at Whiteway was consonant with the declared intention of the Stelton educational pioneers to reject the inculcation of ‘a slave morality’ in the minds of children, and to ‘create...an atmosphere of love, liberty and solidarity’.<sup>112</sup>

As Avrich points out, there were strong links between the two sites: the Principal of the Stelton School in 1919 was John W. Edelman who had grown up at Whiteway.<sup>113</sup>

## V

Traditionally the history of Whiteway has been disaggregated from the broader history of radicalism in Britain. Its inhabitants are often seen as expelled or alienated from this apparently more ‘mainstream’ tradition. In this, it follows George Woodcock’s broader judgment that anarchism in Britain is ‘a chorus of voices crying in the wilderness.’<sup>114</sup> Recent literature on anarchism in the twentieth century has not included any significant reappraisal of Whiteway, reinforcing the conventional view that it was an isolated oddity.<sup>115</sup> This article has attempted to reclaim the history of the colony and to situate it in a long-standing tradition of dissent. Whiteway was never simply a refuge for impractical dreamers from social and political struggle, but, rather, provided an active political environment and lived utopian experience. Home Office scrutiny of the colony, whilst reflecting the red scare agendas of the 1920s, reveals the extent of the transnational networks and associations into which the inhabitants of the Whiteway colony were integrated, enabling them to draw on kindred foreign and domestic precedents. In addition a number of radicals, bohemians, authors, and prominent reformers passed through the colony at some stage in its development and were influenced by its ideas. Community experiments like Whiteway are an important element within collectivist socialism and in anarchist theory constitute a stage on the road towards a self-realised libertarian society. The small-scale, self-governing, face-to-face community constitutes the anarchist alternative to centralized authority; it was perceived as a means of

disengaging from the state. Here Whiteway, like anarchist communities elsewhere in Europe and North America, propagated ideas concerning the relationship between human, social and material environments and emphasized a consequent focus on the intentional planning of human communities. These ideas were also currents within radicalism and socialism, and are reflected in the political and community traditions emphasized by reformers at the beginning of the twentieth century. These too featured at Whiteway, demonstrating the colony's intersections with other political traditions of the period. The history of Whiteway, like that of anarchism itself, is one that has tended to be measured through the visions of its detractors. This article has attempted to provide a corrective to such views, to normalize the history of the colony, and to restore the 'lost' community legacy of the Whiteway settlement.

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<sup>1</sup> For other contemporary colonies, like that at Clousden Hill Farm, near Newcastle, and the communes at Leeds, Blackburn and Starnthwaite near Kendal, see the *Blackburn Times*, 15 July 1899, *The Co-operative News*, 25 November 1899, p. 1283, *The Labour Annual*, 1898, pp. 93-4, *Land and Labour*, 1 March 1896, pp. 12-13, *The New Order*, 1 May 1898, pp. 42-3, 1 October 1898, p. 98, 1 August 1899, pp. 106 and 115-16, 1 November 1899, p. 167, and Percy Redfern, *Journey to Understanding* (London, 1946), pp. 96-7.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. Higgins, *A History of the Brotherhood Church* (Stapleton, Pontefract, 1982), pp. 55-67.

<sup>3</sup> Nellie Shaw, *Whiteway: A Colony in the Cotswolds* (London, 1935), p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> The history of the Croydon and Purleigh Tolstoyans is outlined in W. H. G. Armytage, *Heavens Below: Utopian Experiments in England, 1560-1960* (London, 1961), pp. 346-7, M. J. De K. Holman, 'The Purleigh colony: Tolstoyan togetherness in the 1890s', in Malcolm Jones (ed.), *New Essays in Tolstoy* (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 194-211, and in *The New Order*, 1 April 1897, p. 29, 1 August 1897, p. 62, 1 September 1897, p. 71, 1 December 1897, p. 94, 1 April 1898, p. 18, 1 July 1898, p. 67, 1 August 1898, p. 73, 1 September 1898, p. 90, 1 October 1898, p. 100, 1 November 1898, p. 115, 1 February 1899, p. 28, 1 May 1899, p. 74 and 1 October 1899, p. 145 and *Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly*, 2 July 1904, p. 5.

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<sup>5</sup> Shaw, *Whiteway: A Colony in the Cotswolds*, pp. 29-43, *The Labour Annual*, 1900, p. 115, and A.G. Higgins – A. Maxfield, 16 December 1984, Papers of Alan Maxfield, Gloucestershire Record Office. There is a review of Nellie Shaw's book in the *New Statesman*, 27 July 1935, p. 134.

<sup>6</sup> *The New Order*, 1 June 1899, p. 88 and Peter Latouche, *Anarchy! An Authentic Exposition of the Methods of Anarchists and the Aims of Anarchism* (London, 1908), p. 136.

<sup>7</sup> See for the most recent accounts of the formation of the colony, Dennis Hardy, *Utopian England: Community Experiments, 1900-1945* (London, 2000), pp. 176-180. The only complete history of the colony remains, Joy Thacker, *Whiteway Colony: the Social History of a Tolstoyan Community* (Stroud, 1993), pp. 3-7.

<sup>8</sup> See Karl Beckson, *London in the 1890s: A Cultural History* (New York, 1992), chs. 1-2.

<sup>9</sup> Jan Marsh, *Back to the Land: The Pastoral Impulse in England, 1880-1914* (London, 1982), ch. 6, Sheila Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter: A Life of Liberty and Love* (Verso, 2008), ch. 5 and John Williams, *Turning to Nature in Germany: Hiking, Nudism and Conservation, 1900-1940* (Stanford, 2007), pp. 11-12.

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<sup>10</sup> Chris Waters, *British Socialists and the Politics of Popular Culture, 1884-1914* (Stanford, 1990), ch. 1 and Stephen Yeo, 'A new life: the religion of socialism in Britain, 1880-1896', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 4 (1977), 5-56.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Linehan, *Modernism and British Socialism* (London, 2012), chs. 2-3 and John Field, *Working Men's Bodies: Work Camps in Britain, 1880-1940* (Manchester, 2013), ch. 4.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Blatchford, *Merrie England* (London, 1893 [1908]), p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> Aylmer Maude, 'Editor's Note', Leo Tolstoy, *What Then Must We Do?* (Oxford, 1935), p. vii.

<sup>14</sup> *The New Order*, 1 July 1899, pp. 115-16.

<sup>15</sup> For bohemianism in this period, see Virginia Nicholson, *Among the Bohemians: Experiments in Living, 1900-1939* (London, 2002), chs. 5 and 8.

<sup>16</sup> Endpapers to Nellie Shaw, *A Czech Philosopher on the Cotswolds: Being an Account of the Life and Work of Francis Sedlack* (London, 1940).

<sup>17</sup> Shaw, *Whiteway*, pp. 110-11. Innovation in dress was a significant aspect of the life reform movement of the 1890s, breaking down the barriers between the sexes and

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drawing on new, more healthy fabrics often used in sport and hunting: see Gustav Jaeger, *Health Culture* (London, 1902), pp. 151-99.

<sup>18</sup> Shaw, *A Czech Philosopher on the Cotswolds*, p. 106.

<sup>19</sup> Captain Jack White, *Misfit: An Autobiography* (London, 1930), p. 146.

<sup>20</sup> See Marcel Van Der Linden, *Transnational Labour History* (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 11-21, Neville Kirk, "Transnational labour history: promise and perils" in Leon Fink (ed.), *Workers across the Americas: The Transnational Turn in Labour History* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 18-22, and Shelton Stromquist, "Rethinking working-class politics in comparative transnational context" in Donna T. Haverty-Stacke and Daniel T. Walkowitz (eds), *Rethinking U.S. Labor History: Essays on the Working-Class Experience, 1756-2009* (London, 2009), pp. 82-110.

<sup>21</sup> Field, *Working-men's Bodies*, pp. 9-21.

<sup>22</sup> T. Combe, *Whiteway: Un Coin de Terre Heureux* (Paris, 1904), pp. 1-6.

<sup>23</sup> See for Ascona, Martin Green, *Mountain of Truth: The Counterculture Begins, 1900-1920* (Brandeis, 1986), pp. 119-140, for the Ruskin colony, W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *A Socialist Utopia in the New South: The Ruskin Colonies in Tennessee and Georgia* (Chicago, 1996), chs. 2-3 and for Stockel in Belgium, Victor Serge, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary, 1901-1941* (Oxford, 1975 [1945]), pp. 12-13. For communitarianism more generally in the United States in this period, see Robert S. Fogarty, *All Things New: American Communes and Utopian Movements 1880-1914* (Chicago, 1990), ch. 1.

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<sup>24</sup> On occasion their lack of farming experience meant that the colonists suffered food shortages during the winter months, see *Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly*, 5 November 1904, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> W.H.G. Armytage, 'J.C. Kenworthy and the Tolstoyan communities in England', *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 16 (1957), pp. 391-404.

<sup>26</sup> See Paul Readman, *Land and Nation in England: Pastoralism, National Identity and the Politics of Land, 1880-1914* (Woodbridge, 2008), chs 1 and 5.

<sup>27</sup> W. C. Hart, *Confessions of an Anarchist* (London, 1906), 80 and J. Spargo, 'My visit to the Tolstoyan Colony at Whiteway', *The Social Democrat*, 5 (1901), pp. 272-5. There are debates about the abolition of money in *The New Order*, 1 March 1899, p. 40, 1 April 1899, pp. 53-4, and 1 May 1899, p. 70.

<sup>28</sup> See Matthew Cragoe and Paul Readman, 'Introduction' in Matthew Cragoe and Paul Readman (eds), *The Land Question in Britain, 1750-1950* (London, 2010), pp. 1-18.

<sup>29</sup> For debate about 'free unions' in the sexual politics of the 1890s, see Sheila Rowbotham, *Dreamers of a New Day* (London, 2010), ch. 3 and for 'vegetable marriages' see Green, *Mountain of Truth*, p. 124.

<sup>30</sup> Latouche, *Anarchy!*, pp. 136-8.



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<sup>31</sup> Malcolm Muggeridge, *Chronicles of Wasted Time* (2 vols., London, 1972), I, p. 41.

<sup>32</sup> The origins of the village hall are discussed in Valerie Grove, *Laurie Lee: The Well-Loved Stranger* (London, 1999), p. 26.

<sup>33</sup> See W. Byford-Jones, *Both Sides of the Severn* (Birmingham, 1932), p. 5 and Segal, *Utopias*, p. 27.

<sup>34</sup> Fiona MacCarthy, *The Simple Life: C.R. Ashbee in the Cotswolds* (London, 1981), pp. 99-100.

<sup>35</sup> Shaw, *Whiteway*, p. 81.

<sup>36</sup> Shaw, *Whiteway*, p. 118 and Nigel Todd, *Roses and Revolutionists: The Story of the Clousden Farm Free Communist and Co-operative Colony, 1894-1902* (London, 1986), p. 37.

<sup>37</sup> Postcards of the more exotic and colourful members of the colony were on sale in neighbouring Stroud for tourist consumption well into the twentieth century; see Muggeridge, *Chronicles of Wasted Time*, I, p. 44.

<sup>38</sup> Bernard Porter, *Plots and Paranoia: A History of Political Espionage in Britain, 1790-1988* (London, 1992), pp. 114-15.

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<sup>39</sup> Alan M. Kent, *Pulp Methodism: The Lives and Literature of Silas, Joseph and Salome Hocking* (St. Austell, 2002), ch. 4.

<sup>40</sup> Salome Hocking, *Belinda the Backward or the Romance of Modern Idealism* (Memphis, 2010 [1905]), pp. 53, 61-2 and 71-4

<sup>41</sup> Joseph Hocking, *David Baring* (London, 1900), p. 154.

<sup>42</sup> Grant Allen, *The Type-Writer Girl* (London, 2004 [1897]), p. 48.

<sup>43</sup> Shaw, *Whiteway*, p. 7 and Byford-Jones, *Both Sides of the Severn*, p. 4.

<sup>44</sup> Andrew Rigby, *Alternative Realities: A Study of Communes and their Members* (London, 1974), pp. 38-9.

<sup>45</sup> Ernest S. Wooster, *Communities of the Past and Present* (Newllano, 1924), p. 45 and *The Social Democrat*, 1 June 1901, p. 179 and 1 November 1900, p. 325. A highly skeptical view of utopian communes was also articulated in *Freedom*, 1 October 1917, p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> Dennis Hardy, *Alternative Communities in Nineteenth-Century England* (London, 1979), pp. 199-205.

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<sup>47</sup> David Goodway *Anarchist Seeds Beneath the Snow: Left-Libertarian Thought and British Writers from William Morris to Colin Ward* (Liverpool, 2006), ch. 2.

<sup>48</sup> Bonar Thompson, *Hyde Park Orator: Autobiographical Reminiscences* (London, 1934), p. 163.

<sup>49</sup> J. Ramsay MacDonald, 'A plea for puritanism', *The Socialist Review*, 8 (1912), 425.  
See for debates about Puritanism amongst reformers and the Labour Party more broadly, Raphael Samuel, *Island Stories: Unravelling Britain* (London, 1998), pp. 276-322.

<sup>50</sup> Fenner Brockway, *Bermondsey Story: The Life of Alfred Salter* (London, 1949), p. 7.

<sup>51</sup> For 'The English Road to Socialism' see Ross McKibbin, *Parties and People: England 1914-1951* (Oxford, 2011), ch.5.

<sup>52</sup> Craig Calhoun, *The Roots of Radicalism: Tradition, the Public Sphere and Early Nineteenth-Century Social Movements* (Chicago, 2012), pp. 262-271.

<sup>53</sup> Shaw, *Whiteway*, pp. 219-20.

<sup>54</sup> The fullest treatment of the communal tradition in nineteenth-century land reform movements remains: Alun Howkins, 'From Diggers to Dongas: the land in English radicalism, 1649-2000', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 54 (2002), pp. 1-23.

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<sup>55</sup> Shaw, *Whiteway*, pp. 112-13.

<sup>56</sup> Green, *Mountain of Truth*, p. 165 and Fitzhugh Brundage, *A Socialist Utopia in the New South*, p. 128.

<sup>57</sup> *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 26 August 1900, p. 1, John Quail, *The Slow-Burning Fuse: the Lost History of the British Anarchists* (London: Granada, 1978), p. 228, Grove, *Laurie Lee*, pp. 25-6, Shaw, *Whiteway*, p. 118, Latouche, *Anarchy!*, p. 136 and White, *Misfit*, p. 146. See for the tradition of anticlericalism in the countryside before 1914, Hugh McLeod, 'Varieties of anticlericalism in later Victorian and Edwardian England', in Nigel Aston and Matthew Cragoe (eds), *Anticlericalism in Britain c.1500-1914* (Stroud: 2000), pp. 198-220.

<sup>58</sup> *The Commonweal*, 27 April 1889, p. 129.

<sup>59</sup> Edward R. Pease, *The History of the Fabian Society* (London, 1925), p. 65.

<sup>60</sup> *The New Order*, 1 December 1897, p. 94. The seventeenth century Quaker militant, James Nayler, who campaigned against enclosure, was also lauded in the publication: see *The New Order*, 1 June 1897, p. 47.

<sup>61</sup> Redfern, *Journey to Understanding*, p. 23.

<sup>62</sup> *The Free Commune*, 1 October 1898, p. 5.

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<sup>63</sup> For indigenous English communitarianism see Brian Harrison, ‘Civil society by accident? Paradoxes of voluntarism and pluralism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries’ in Jose Harris (ed.), *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities, Institutions*, (Oxford: 2005), pp. 79-96 and Nicholas Deakin and Justin Davis Smith, ‘Labour, charity and voluntary action: The myth of hostility’ in Matthew Hilton and James McKay (eds), *The Ages of Voluntarism: How We Got to the Big Society* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 69-93.

<sup>64</sup> Carissa Honeywell, *A British Anarchist Tradition: Herbert Read, Alex Comfort and Colin Ward* (London, 2011), pp. 1-28.

<sup>65</sup> *The New Order*, 1 June 1899, p. 86, *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, 9 September 1900, p. 1 and White, *Misfit*, p. 146.

<sup>66</sup> Higgins, *A History of the Brotherhood Church*, pp. 55-67.

<sup>67</sup> *Freedom*, 1 May 1918, p. 25.

<sup>68</sup> For post-1919 Labour Party agendas on the land issue, see Clare Griffiths, ‘Socialism and the land question: public ownership and control in Labour party policy, 1918-1950s’ in Cragoe and Readman (eds), *The Land Question in Britain*, pp. 237-56.

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<sup>69</sup> Ethel Mannin, *Bread and Roses: An Utopian Survey and Blue-Print* (London, 1944), ch. 8.

<sup>70</sup> *The Commonweal*, 1 May 1920, p. 2.

<sup>71</sup> Dennis Hardy and Colin Ward, *Arcadia for All: The Legacy of a Makeshift Landscape* (London, 1984), pp. 76-91.

<sup>72</sup> Thacker, *Whiteway Colony*, p. 132, and Benjamin Franks, *Rebel Alliances: The Means and Ends of Contemporary British Anarchism* (Edinburgh, 2006), p. 50.

<sup>73</sup> Shaw, *Whiteway*, p. 103.

<sup>74</sup> See Alex Butterworth, *The World that Never Was: The True Story of Dreamers, Schemers, Anarchists and Secret Agents* (London, 2010), chs. 8 and 16.

<sup>75</sup> Hocking, *Belinda the Backward*, p. 28.

<sup>76</sup> Porter, *Plots and Paranoia*, p. 159.

<sup>77</sup> Laura Beers, *Your Britain: Media and the Making of the Labour Party* (Cambridge, Mass., 2010), pp. 58-65.

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<sup>78</sup> The National Archives, Public Record Office, Kew, Disturbance Books and Aliens (H.O. 144/6633), Chief Constable of Gloucestershire – Major H. Stanley, 11 July 1925.

<sup>79</sup> TNA, PRO, Minutes of Disturbance and Aliens Committee, (H.O. 144/6633), ‘The Whiteway Colony: Alien Residents’, 15 November 1925.

<sup>80</sup> TNA, PRO, Disturbance Books and Aliens (H.O. 144/6633), Chief Constable of Gloucestershire – Major H. Stanley, 11 July 1925.

<sup>81</sup> TNA, PRO, Minutes of Disturbance and Aliens Committee, (H.O. 144/6633), ‘The Whiteway Colony: Alien Residents’, 15 November 1925.

<sup>82</sup> Grove, *Laurie Lee*, p. 26. Billiards and the purchase of plants were also activities undertaken at the social club: see ‘Daybook of the Whiteway Social Club, 1936-1938’, pp. 3-4 and 49, Freedom Archive, annex 532, International Institute for the Study of Social History, Amsterdam.

<sup>83</sup> TNA, PRO, Disturbance Books and Aliens (H.O. 144/6633), Sergeant Dennis Powell, ‘Police Report on Whiteway’, 25 May 1926. For Emma Goldman’s exile in Britain in the 1920s, see Reginald Reynolds, *My Life and Crimes* (London, 1956), 153-7.

<sup>84</sup> Shaw, *A Czech Philosopher on the Cotswolds*, pp. 140-86.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, p. 140.

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid, p. 66.

<sup>87</sup> For Gandhi-worship, see Antony Kozhuvanal, ‘Gandhi’s *satyagraha* and its roots in India’s past’ in Peter Brock and Thomas P. Socknat (eds), *Challenge to Mars: Essays on Pacifism from 1918-1945* (Toronto, 1999), pp. 440-453.

<sup>88</sup> See for West Country liberalism and pacifism, Reginald Reynolds, *My Life and Crimes* (London, 1956), pp. 12-30, and Garry Tregidga, *The Liberal Party in South-West Britain before 1918* (Exeter, 2000), p. 70, for pacifism and pacificism, Martin Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain, 1914- 1945* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 13-15, 60-61 and 101-16, and for anarchopacifism, Herman Noordegraaf, ‘The anarchpacifism of Bart de Ligt’ in Brock and Socknat (eds), *Challenge to Mars*, pp. 89-100.

<sup>89</sup> Thacker, *Whiteway Colony*, p. 129. For the history of the pacifist Peace Pledge Union, see Sybil Morrison, *I Renounce War* (London, 1962), chs. 1-2 and Andrew Rigby, ‘The Peace Pledge Union: from peace to war, 1936-1945’, in Brock and Socknat (eds), *Challenge to Mars*, pp. 169-185.

<sup>90</sup> For Tom Keell see George Cross, *Personal Reminiscences of an Anarchist Past* (London, 1992), p. 12. For Lilian Wolfe’s peace activities see, Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Voices* (Stirling, 2006), p. 512. Lilian Wolfe’s presence in the colony led to a brief visit by George Orwell who left his adopted son Richard with Lilian during his final illness at



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nearby Cranham Sanatorium: see Bernard Crick, *George Orwell: A Life* (London, 1980), p. 557.

<sup>91</sup> *Freedom*, 1 May 1930, p. 2. Guy Aldred was scathing about the tensions within the *Freedom* group that led Tom Keell to take the former *Freedom* presses to Whiteway, he remarked: ‘Much dispute occurred about property between those folk who did not believe in property, the property consisting of old type, broken-down printing press, and a great deal of general junk’. See Guy A. Aldred, *Dogmas Discarded: An Autobiography of Thought, 1886-1908* (2 vols, Glasgow, 1940), ii, pp. 69 and 75.

<sup>92</sup> TNA, PRO, Minutes of Disturbance and Aliens Committee, (H.O. 144/6633), ‘The Whiteway Colony: Alien Residents’, 15 November 1925. Conscientious objectors resident in the colony were forced to undertake ‘land work’; see Shaw, *Whiteway*, p. 104.

<sup>93</sup> TNA, PRO, Disturbance Books and Aliens (H.O 144/6633), Sergeant Dennis Powell, ‘Police Report on Whiteway’, 25 May 1926.

<sup>94</sup> Barbara Mitchelhill, *Run, Rabbit, Run* (London, 2011), pp. 17-19.

<sup>95</sup> See the obituary of Martin Murray in *The Guardian*, 2 July 2009.

<sup>96</sup> See Logie Barrow, *Independent Spirits: Spiritualism and English Plebeians, 1850-1910* (London, 1986), ch. 8.

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<sup>97</sup> See Kathryn Tidrick, *Gandhi: A Political and Spiritual Life* (London, 2007), pp. 2-22.

<sup>98</sup> See Mark Bevir, 'Annie Besant's quest for truth: christianity, secularism and new age thought', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 50 (1999), pp. 62-93 and Bevir, 'Theosophy as a political movement', in Anthony Copley (eds), *Gurus and Their Followers: New Religious Reform Movements in Colonial India* (Delhi, 2000), pp. 159-205.

<sup>99</sup> Douglas Hyde, *I Believed* (London, 1951), p. 22.

<sup>100</sup> Byford-Jones, *Both Sides of the Severn*, p. 5.

<sup>101</sup> TNA, PRO, Disturbance Books and Aliens (H.O 144/6633), Sergeant Dennis Powell, 'Police Report on Whiteway', 30 October 1925.

<sup>102</sup> TNA, PRO, Disturbance Books and Aliens, (H.O 144/6633), Secretary of State, Memo, 1 April 1925, pp. 3-5. For Marin, see *The Stroud News*, 22 July 1938.

<sup>103</sup> Sandals, famously modeled on those worn by Indian peasant farmers and popularized by Edward Carpenter, were a standard item of dress at the settlement. For their design see 'Sandal Templates', Carpenter Papers, XI/1-9, May 1891-March 1895, Sheffield Archives.

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<sup>104</sup> Mohandas K, Gandhi (ed.), *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, (9 vols., Delhi: 1958-84), IX, p. 369.

<sup>105</sup> White, *Misfit*, pp. 154, and 261-5.

<sup>106</sup> For Ferrer see *The Voltairine de Cleyre Reader*, ed. A. J. Brigati (Edinburgh, 2004), pp. 73-91 and Paul Avrich, *The Modern School Movement: Anarchism and Education in the United States* (Edinburgh, 2006 [1980]), ch. 1.

<sup>107</sup> *Freedom*, 1 October 1918, p. 58.

<sup>108</sup> Edith Thomas, *Louise Michel* (Montreal, 1971), pp. 318-20, Avrich, *The Modern School Movement*, pp. 262-5 and *Freedom*, 1 January 1913, p. 7.

<sup>109</sup> Lineham, *Modernism and British Socialism*, pp. 108-9.

<sup>110</sup> Thacker, *Whiteway Colony*, p. 87.

<sup>111</sup> Hardy, *Utopian England*, pp. 178 and for comments on the irreverent attitudes prevailing at Whiteway, Chief Constable of Gloucestershire – Major H. Stanley, 11 July 1925, Disturbance Books and Aliens (H.O. 144/6633)

<sup>112</sup> Harry Kelly, *The Ferrer Modern School* (Stelton, New Jersey, 1920), pp. 5-7.

<sup>113</sup> Avrich, *The Modern School Movement*, pp. 262, 274.

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<sup>114</sup> George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (London, 1963), p. 370.

<sup>115</sup> See especially Franks, *Rebel Alliances*, p. 30.