Remembering Howard Clark

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Michael Randle charts the course of Howard Clark's life and career in peace activism and research, including his time working with Clark on the Alternative Defence Commission during the 1980s. In his politics and personality, Clark committed himself to building networks and coalitions.

Howard Clark made an outstanding contribution to the theory and practice of nonviolent action - to the latter by way of years of activism in the British and international peace movement, to the former through academic work informed by that experience. April Carter has written in tribute to Howard's scholarly contribution [1]; I will focus on Howard the person, outlining his involvement in peace activism and research, and my collaboration with him over many years.

Howard's involvement in peace activism began in 1968 at the age of 18, shortly before going to the University of East Anglia (UEA). There he became an enthusiastic reader and distributor of Peace News, and a frequent contributor to it. His father was a Methodist Minister, and, like English socialism in the nineteenth century, his commitment to such causes as pacifism, feminism, and the environment owed more to Methodism than to Marx. He remained indeed sceptical of the more dogmatic versions of Marxism and his political orientation was rooted in the anarcho-pacifist tradition. However, he was not dogmatic in either his anarchism or pacifism, and always emphasised the need to build networks and coalitions.

While at university he fell in love with, and married Penny Strange whose father had been a conscientious objector in World War II. It was discussions with him that finally decided him to become a pacifist. He set up the UEA Peace Group, joined the Christian-based pacifist movement, the Fellowship of Reconciliation and was elected to its National Council. Subsequently his involvement was more with the secular peace movement, particularly its direct action wing.

In 1972 he become a co-editor of Peace News and in the same year attended the triennial conference in Sheffield of War Resisters International (WRI), an organization in which he was to play a major role in later years. In an interview [2] in June 2013 he recorded his excitement at meeting people at that conference from many parts of the world who had been involved in movements such as the Civil Rights and anti-Vietnam war movements in the US, and the nonviolent campaign of Vietnamese Buddhists who opposed both the war and the repressive regime in South Vietnam.

He remained co-editor of Peace News until 1976 and during this period helped launch a number of campaigns and organizations including London Greenpeace, the British Withdrawal from Northern Ireland Campaign and the Campaign Against the Arms Trade.

After leaving Peace News, he moved to York and devoted his energies to grassroots campaigning for safe (non-nuclear) energy, anti-fascism and anti-sexism. In 1979 he co-ordinated nonviolent training for the occupation of the Torness nuclear power site in Scotland and followed that up with a cycle tour round all the UK nuclear power plants, visiting on the way local peace and anti-nuclear groups.

He moved to Bradford in 1980 to work on his M.Phil thesis at Bradford University on alternatives to nuclear energy, and to join me as a researcher for the Alternative Defence Commission. The Commission published two book-length reports on non–nuclear defence options for Britain and Western Europe, *Defence without the Bomb* (Taylor & Francis 1983) and *The Politics of Alternative Defence* (Paladin, 1987). Howard was an invaluable colleague and was mainly responsible for drafting a condensed version of the first report. He was also a valued fellow member of two follow-up study groups based at Bradford University, the *Social Defence Project* and the *Nonviolent Resistance Research Project.*

In 1987 he took up the position of WRI coordinator, where his first assignment was to organize a Triennial conference in India. In preparation for it he visited South Africa and was particularly pleased to have persuaded the End Conscription Campaign and the women's Black Sash movement to send representatives to it. Among other participants at the conference was the US civil rights campaigner Bayard Rustin who had coordinated the March on Washington in 1963.

Howard played an important role in expanding the outreach of WRI and organizing Triennial conferences in Brazil (1994), India (2010) and South Africa (2014), though he did not live to take part in the last of these. He also cultivated WRI's links with human rights and peace groups in Eastern Europe, notably with the Wolnosc i Pokoj (Freedom & Peace) in Poland, a country he first visited in 1986 with his then partner of Polish extraction, Lisa Zychowicz. In the early 1990s, as Yugoslavia began to break up he built up WRI's relationships with anti-war groups in Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Kosovo, and worked with Christina Schweitzer, now Chair of WRI, to establish the Balkan Peace Team project that sent its first group of volunteers to Croatia in 1994. The work in Kosovo led to his major study, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo* and a number of monographs and articles which April Carter discusses in her tribute [1], together with accounts of some of his other writings and organizational work. He was a co-compiler with April and me of the bibliography on nonviolent action, *People Power and Protest since 1945* and Volume 1 of an updated version of it published just days after his sudden death. In 2007 he set up the website www.civilresistance.info [3] which includes the first edition of the bibliography and is currently being updated to add Volume 1 of the updated version.

Howard moved to Madrid in 1997 with his partner Yolanda Juarros Barcenilla where their two children, Ismail and Violeta were born in 2000 and 2002. He soon became involved in the neighbourhood community group and in grassroots campaigns, as well as maintaining his links with British and International movements. In 2006 he became Chair of WRI and last year, shortly before his death, he visited South Africa to make arrangements for the Triennial conference there in July.

I loved working with Howard. He had a great and at times wicked sense of humour, liked nothing better than a good gossip and was an acute judge of people's character and motives. He also had a phenomenal memory for names and faces, which was invaluable in his coordinating work for WRI.

He had a wide range of interests and some of my happiest memories of him are of the occasions when we, with friends and partners, went cycling and camping together in the Yorkshire Dales in the 1980s. He was a fanatical supporter of Manchester United Football Club, and a member of his local community choir in Madrid which performed some of his favourite songs when friends from many parts of the world came there last February to remember him and celebrate his life.

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