

**Labour Colonies for Gentlemen:
Philanthropic Settlements and the Making of
the Social Reformer in London, 1884-1914**

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Statement of Sources

The work presented in this dissertation is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledged in the text. The material has not been submitted, in whole or in part, for a degree at The Australian National University or any other university.

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Abstract

This thesis examines a program of reform that was directed at the gentlemanly philanthropists of London's first two university settlements, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House. Shifting the focus of previous scholarship on the role of the settlements in promoting moral and cultural improvement amongst East London's poor, this study analyses the ways in which Toynbee Hall and Oxford House also sought to shape the social reformers who came to live and work in the urban slums. Residency in London's East End was intended to be a transformative experience that could regenerate Oxbridge men and their West End counterparts, while also providing opportunities and networks for personal development and career advancement.

Both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House embraced a two-fold agenda. This included a systematic effort to elevate the urban poor and to redress social problems in surrounding neighbourhoods, and a more introspective program that was concerned with the improvement or advancement of the 'settlers' themselves. While mainstream historiography on these settlements has focused primarily on their attempts to study, transform and 'improve' East End communities, this study shifts attention away from the campaign aimed directly at the poor in order to explore the 'making' of the social reformer as it occurred within these institutions.

This component of the settlements' mission was widely recognised during the era of their creation. Popular representations of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House as 'settlements', 'colonies' or 'labour refuges' for gentlemen drew upon reformist discourses and practices that were typically directed at the urban poor and colonial subjects during this period. The labour colony was advocated in philanthropic circles as a training centre where the unemployed could reside and receive practical education and moral guidance before finding work in Britain or abroad. Drawing upon the image of a labour colony, this

thesis argues that Toynbee Hall and Oxford House settlers became the subjects of a parallel educational and vocational project, though the nature of that project varied between the settlements in ways that reflected differences between the ethos of each institution. The chapters that follow consider the settlements as sites for the cultivation, training and networking of gentlemen.

This thesis, unlike much of the historiography upon this topic, does not cast Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men primarily as *agents* of reform. It treats them as the *targets* of a settlement program. The task of producing social reformers may appear at first glance to be an auxiliary aspect of the settlement houses, but it was inextricably linked both to the goal of redressing problems in the East End and to a wider project designed to form a new generation of leaders and bureaucrats for Britain and its empire.

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Introduction

He knows that he is thereby not only the giver but the receiver.

Werner Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, 1914¹

In 1875, Arnold Toynbee, an Oxford undergraduate who wanted to understand and to assist the poor of London, spent part of his summer vacation in Whitechapel. There, as the Master of Balliol College, Benjamin Jowett recalled, Toynbee lived in half-furnished lodgings, ‘as far as he could after the manner of workingmen’, joining in their clubs and discussing social and religious issues with them, ‘sometimes in an atmosphere of bad whisky, bad tobacco and bad drainage’.² It was impossible, Toynbee felt, to do any adequate work among the poor without first visiting or residing in the district. Drawing upon his personal experiences of the conditions of urban poverty, he sought to reconcile the extremes of class and wealth. In a lecture to a working-class audience in 1883, he highlighted the need for reform not only among the poor but also within his own social class:

We – the middle classes, I mean, not merely the very rich – we have neglected you; instead of justice we have offered you charity, and instead of sympathy, we have offered you hard and unreal advice, but I think we are changing . . . I think that many of us would spend our lives in your service. You have, I say it clearly and advisedly, you have to forgive us, for we have wronged you; we have sinned against you grievously not knowingly always, but still we have sinned, and let us confess it . . . you must remember that if you will join hands with us, we do intend that we shall as a nation accomplish great things, and seek to redeem what is evil in our past.³

¹ Werner Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914), 2.

² Arnold Toynbee, *Lectures on the industrial revolution of the 18th century in England: Popular addresses, notes and other fragments, together with a short memoir by B. Jowett* (London: Longmans, Green, 1894), xv.

³ Arnold Toynbee, *Progress and Poverty: A Criticism of Mr. Henry George: Being Two Lectures Delivered*

Toynbee's act of residing in the East End and his critical introspection on the perceived failings of his social class encapsulate a significant aspect of philanthropy in the late nineteenth century. It was concerned not only with the welfare of the poor but also with the character and conduct of the educated elite. As Toynbee suggested in his speech, the benefits of social work as a form of personal reconciliation were not intended to flow in only one direction. It was work that could be recommended for the moralising benefits it provided to social reformers themselves. The Bishop Suffragen for East London, William Walsham How, expressed this notion in the periodical *Eastward Ho!* in 1884: 'Come and try to brighten their lot, and guide them to better, braver, purer, happier modes of life. Come for their sakes. Come mostly for your own.'⁴ This distinctive strand of late Victorian philanthropy was concerned with the making of new social reformers who could address the problems of urban poverty. This endeavour crystallised in the establishment of two university settlements in the East End which form the subject of this study.

This thesis examines a program of reform that was directed at the gentlemanly philanthropists of these first university settlements, Toynbee Hall in Whitechapel and Oxford House in Bethnal Green. In 1884, these two centres of reformist effort were established in London's East End as residential 'colonies' for male university graduates of Oxford and Cambridge. These settlements occupied a significant position in the broader field of Victorian philanthropy, social reform and the evolution of British welfare. Intersecting East and West London, both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House embraced a two-fold agenda. There was a systematic effort to alleviate the distress of the urban poor and an internal program that was concerned with the formation and advancement of the 'settlers' themselves. Shifting the focus of previous scholarship on

in *St. Andrew's Hall, Newman Street, London* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Co., 1883), 53-54.

⁴ 'Eastward Ho!', *Eastward Ho!* 1, no. 1 (May 1884), 2.

the role of the settlements in promoting moral and cultural improvement amongst East London's poor, this study analyses the ways in which Toynbee Hall and Oxford House also sought to shape, reform and in some sense 'make' the social reformers who came to live and work in the urban slums. Residency in London's East End was intended to be a transformative experience that could regenerate Oxbridge men and their West End counterparts, while also providing opportunities and networks for personal development and career advancement.

The settlements' task of producing social reformers was inextricably linked to the goal of improving conditions in London's East End. The late nineteenth century was characterised by a 'preoccupation with the meaning of poverty in the midst of plenty'.⁵ Throughout the early and mid-Victorian period, the problem of poverty had been recognised by philanthropists, novelists and social investigators, and the period from the 1880s has therefore usually been described by historians in terms of a 'rediscovery' of poverty.⁶ R.A. Woods, a social commentator, referred to this decade as a time of 'social awakening' as he recalled 'a very strong agitation' which drew attention to 'the awful condition of the people in the East End'.⁷ A series of studies and exposés of slum life published during this period contributed to the renewal of interest in social reform. Wide currency was given to the graphic descriptions of social explorers and writers such as Andrew Mearns and George Sims.⁸ Charles Booth's extensive survey of London labour and poverty (1886-1903), on the other hand, painstakingly mapped the city's poverty-

⁵ E.P. Hennock, 'Poverty and Social Theory in England: The Experience of the Eighteen-eighties.' *Social History* 1 (1976), 68.

⁶ The phrase 'rediscovery' is used here to refer to the intense interest in philanthropy and social investigation in the late nineteenth century. The 'Condition of England' question had also been raised in the 1840s, but the question was revived during the 1880s. A similar 'rediscovery' took place in the early and mid-1960s. On this subject, see for example, Keith Banting, *Poverty, Politics and Policy: Britain in the 1960s* (London: Macmillan, 1979).

⁷ See Robert A. Woods, 'The Social Awakening in London', *Scribner's Magazine*. 11, no. 4 (April, 1892), 401-424.

⁸ See Andrew Mearns, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* (London: James Clark, 1883); George R. Sims, *How the Poor Live, and Horrible London* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1889).

stricken districts. A ‘string of highly publicised events’ throughout the 1880s ensured that the problem of poverty was kept at the forefront of the public mind, each issue ‘erupting just as the impact of the previous one was beginning to fade’.⁹ This included a downturn in trade and industry between 1883 and 1886, the appointment of a Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes in 1884, a period of severe unemployment in the winter of 1885/6, and the grievances put forward during strikes of match girls and of casual dock labourers between 1888 and 1889.¹⁰ The working conditions of East London’s ‘sweated’ seamstresses and tailors was also a subject of concern. The gruesome Whitechapel murders of autumn 1888 and the threat of Jack the Ripper further exacerbated concerns about the condition of the East End.

Toynbee Hall and Oxford House were founded within this context and in response to a new social and reforming spirit at Oxford from the 1870s that promoted philanthropic initiatives among young university men. Alfred Milner, an early resident of Toynbee Hall, described a change of mood in Oxford between 1873 and 1883, which ‘gave new impulse to philanthropy’.¹¹ A broad social conscience and a prevailing philosophy of personal service evident in the university was nurtured in young men by leading thinkers and particularly by the philosophical idealism of Thomas Hill (T.H.) Green, Professor of Moral Philosophy at Oxford, and the example of John Ruskin, Slade Professor of Fine Art in the 1870s and 1880s. Arnold Toynbee, who became a Balliol tutor and economic historian, epitomised for his contemporaries the socially active university man of his generation. His residency in East London, described above, encapsulates the personalised tone of social work in this period that achieved direct contact with the urban poor. The ‘personal touch of life on life’¹² was arguably *the* driving force for late Victorian social

⁹ Hennock, ‘Poverty and Social Theory in England: The Experience of the Eighteen-eighties’, 67.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Alfred Milner, *Arnold Toynbee: A Reminiscence* (London: E. Arnold, 1895), 49.

¹² Will Reason, ed., *Our Industrial Outcasts* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1905), 52.

work, sustained by a sense that the wealthy had an obligation to be aware of the conditions of the poor and to have a personal connection with the lived experience of poverty.¹³ Toynbee pursued the cause of social reform despite persistent ill health. After his early death in 1883, he was upheld as a heroic ideal of personal activism. Alfred Milner, one of Toynbee's close friends, later reminisced that 'it was a distinguishing mark of those who came under Toynbee's influence that they were filled with an enthusiasm for social equality, which led them to aim at bridging the gulf between the educated and the wage-earning class'.¹⁴ Despite having died so young, Toynbee inspired Oxford men to live among the poor, sharing their knowledge and experience in a process of mutual education and improvement.

Labour Colonies for Gentlemen

The idea of establishing a university settlement or 'colony' for the purpose of cross-class exchange was put forward by Samuel Barnett (see Figure 1), an Anglican clergyman, in a speech at St John's College in Oxford on the 17th of November 1883. To ameliorate the huge inequalities that existed between East and West London, he proposed a scheme for a settlement or colony in the East End where university men would labour amongst the poor. At this time, Barnett was the vicar of St Jude's parish in Whitechapel, one of East London's poorest districts. His wife, Henrietta, recorded that Barnett's idea of a settlement came to him in June 1883 when he responded to an appeal from a Cambridge undergraduate to suggest a better way to serve the poor than joining a college mission. Barnett conceived the idea of settling in the slums, 'suggesting that men might hire a

¹³ The importance that was placed on personal contact with the poor was not an innovation of the 1880s. It had, for example, been central to the ethos of the visiting movement throughout the nineteenth century. Charitable relief officers, case workers, board school attendance inspectors, among others, were sent as visitors into poor districts to administer charitable resources to those deemed 'deserving'. See Alan Kidd, *State, Society and the Poor in Nineteenth-century England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 79-84.

¹⁴ Milner, *Arnold Toynbee*, 27.

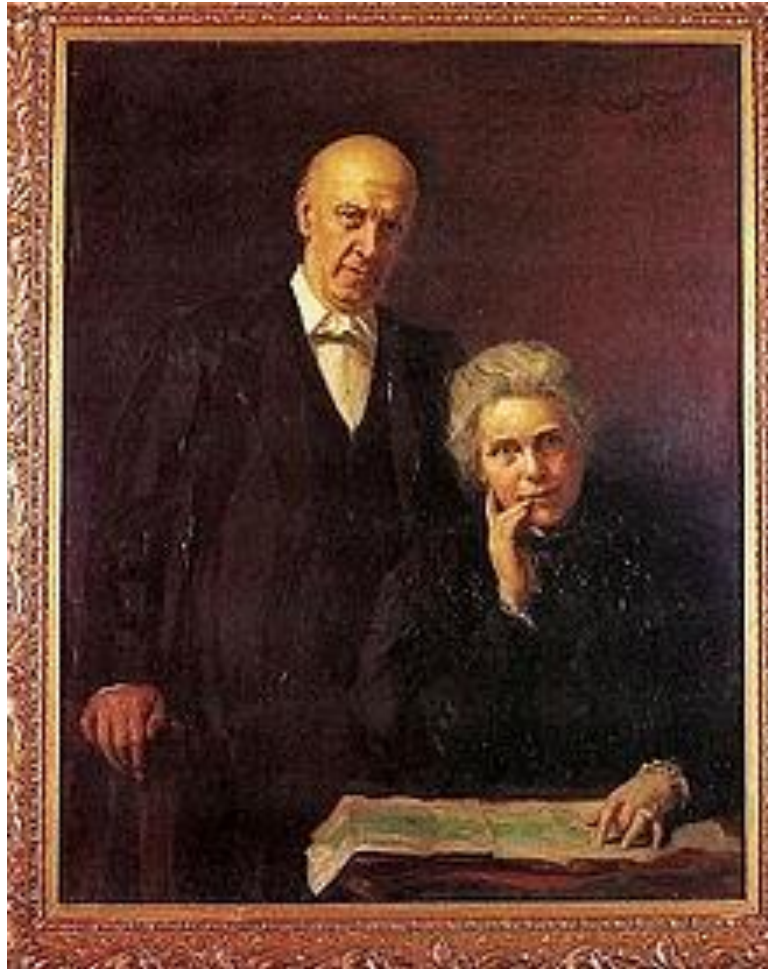


Figure 1: Portrait of Samuel Barnett and his wife Henrietta by Hubert von Herkomer, 1908

house' and by 'living in an industrial quarter' could 'learn to "sup sorrow with the poor"'.¹⁵ In November, Samuel Barnett was invited by a group of Oxford students, called the 'Inner Ring',¹⁶ to share his proposal for 'University Settlements in Great Towns'. His speech at Oxford is well known to historians.¹⁷ Announcing that London's East End was suffering from the absence of a cultured 'resident gentry', Barnett appealed to his audience to settle in poor districts and 'share' in the lives of the poor. 'Something', he said, 'must be done to share with the poor the best gifts'. Young Oxbridge graduates who were employed in London could, he suggested, live together in poverty-stricken areas and work in the slums during their leisure time. Barnett's proposal inaugurated the settlement house movement in London.

The settlement houses' personalised approach to poverty marked a significant moment in the history of urban philanthropy. Before their establishment, the universities had generally relied on college missions to assist the poor. Colleges would appoint a clergyman to work in an impoverished district. These clergymen would regularly visit the universities to report on their progress.¹⁸ Samuel Barnett argued that this type of mission was limited because the clergymen acted as the only link between the college and the poor. A mission, he noted, was 'a churchman's effort'. From the university student, it

¹⁵ Henrietta Barnett, *Canon Barnett: His Life, Work, and Friends by his Wife in Two Volumes with Thirty-Nine Illustrations* (London: John Murray, 1918), 1:308-309.

¹⁶ The 'Inner Ring' was a group of young undergraduates and college fellows who were concerned with social and economic questions. The group was led by Arthur Acland and included Hubert Llewellyn Smith, John Alfred Spender, Leonard Hobhouse and Michael Sadler. The ring met regularly at Acland's home to discuss contemporary issues.

¹⁷ An early draft of Barnett's speech can be found in the Lambeth Palace Library: Canon Barnett, 'Modern Monasteries: A Suggestion for a Mission', c.1883, MS.1466, ff.34-41, Barnett Papers, Lambeth Palace Library. The first publication of the speech was Samuel Barnett, 'Universities and the Poor', *Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review* 15 (1883), 255-261. The speech was reprinted in Samuel and Henrietta Barnett's *Practicable Socialism: Essays on Social Reform* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1895), 165-174. In 1884, it was also published as 'Settlements of University Men in Great Towns' by the Chronicle Company in Oxford.

¹⁸ Barnett and Barnett, *Practicable Socialism*, 97-98. For a discussion of college missions, see J.W. Dickie, 'College Missions and Settlements in South London, 1870-1920', (B. Lit Thesis, University of Oxford, 1976). Nigel Scotland outlines Barnett's criticisms of college missions in his *Squires in the Slums: Settlements and Missions in Late Victorian Britain* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 13-19.

required ‘little more than an annual guinea subscription’.¹⁹ Barnett put forward the idea of a settlement house which was communal and residential in nature.²⁰ Settling required a greater commitment on the part of social reformers than other philanthropic institutions at the time. Significantly, it was also a style of philanthropy that placed university graduates under the close supervision and guidance of their mentors and peers. This enabled them to receive a greater level of instruction and pastoral care.

This thesis argues that Toynbee Hall and Oxford House ‘settlers’ became the subjects of an educational and vocational project. Historians have tended to study Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men primarily as agents of reform rather than as the targets of an educational program. While previous scholarship has recognised benefits that could be derived from settling, it has not fully explored the pedagogical techniques employed in the making of the social reformer as it occurred within these institutions. The task of creating and nurturing social reformers was linked both to the goal of redressing problems in the East End and to a wider project designed to form a new generation of leaders and bureaucrats for Britain and its empire. Significantly, it was the military commander, Lord Methuen, who informed an Oxford audience that the settlements ‘were not only bringing honour to the university, but doing lasting good to the empire’.²¹

The component of the settlements’ mission that focused on the formation of the residents themselves was widely recognised during the time of their creation. Canon Henry Scott Holland, Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford and an early supporter of Oxford House, described the settlement houses in East London as ‘labour refuges’ or ‘shelters’ for educated gentlemen. In a satirical account of the foundation of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House, Holland highlighted a key aim of both settlements – to rescue the idle

¹⁹ Ibid, 168.

²⁰ Samuel Barnett suggested having residential quarters for philanthropists to accommodate them on a more permanent basis. Previous college missions had not been residential.

²¹ *Oxford House Chronicle* 17, no.6 (June 1903), 1.

male elite from the ‘congested’ districts of the West End. He wrote:

What was to be done with them? They had a way of accumulating in congested districts, and swarming together in schools like herrings. One of the districts where they accumulated, and which was terribly congested, was the West End, round about Piccadilly. . . They sat idling in their clubs, or mooned and caged up and down Piccadilly, and many of them were wholly unemployed [so that] . . . they got submerged [laughter] . . . So it was partly with a view to deal with this problem that labour refuges or shelters for congested gentlemen had been established at the East End. One was Toynbee Hall, another Oxford House. They would bring these poor unfortunate gentlemen under the healthy influence of contact with working men and the poor . . . they would be surprised to see how it would improve their moral tone, so that they might hope to make them fit to be safely transferred to labour farms, which were sometimes called country seats or country livings.²²

Holland’s reference to ‘labour refuges or shelters’ for ‘submerged’ gentlemen was a facetious allusion to reformist efforts at this time to train the poor, or the ‘submerged tenth’, on British farm colonies. Such colonies were an alternative to the workhouse or a corrective institution for those unwilling or unable to find employment. These labour colonies were conceived as places where the unemployed could reside and receive both practical training and moral instruction. Men who demonstrated an aptitude for agricultural work could subsequently work as farm labourers in England or could emigrate to British colonies to find employment.²³ The analogy Holland drew is apt, however, in the sense that men on farm colonies and in the settlement houses were gainfully put to work to improve their skills and career opportunities. The stark difference was that the residents of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House were not from a struggling underclass but privileged ‘gentlemen’, many of whom were destined for political

²² Anonymous, *The Oxford House in Bethnal Green: Report of Meeting Held at the Mansion House in Support of an Appeal for the Building Fund on Wednesday, 21st Jan., 1891*, 9-10; quotation also cited in Lucinda Matthews-Jones, ‘St Francis of Assisi and the Making of Settlement Masculinity, 1883-1914’, *What is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World*, edited by John H. Arnold and Sean Brady (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 291.

²³ For contemporary discussions of these schemes, see *The Toynbee Record*, December 1903, 42 and William Booth, ‘Our Emigration Plans’, *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute* 37 (1905-1906), 137-154. Also see John Brown, ‘Charles Booth and Labour Colonies, 1889-1905’, *The Economic History Review* 21, no.2 (1968), 349-360.

leadership in Britain and abroad.

The tone of Holland's remark, the laughter that greeted his reference to 'submerged gentlemen' and his wry depiction of country estates as upper-class labour farms all suggest that these comparisons were made in good humour. However, Holland's description of the settlement houses as labour colonies was not merely rhetorical. It referred to a key role that the settlement houses could play in the personal development of young, privileged gentlemen. Residency in Toynbee Hall and Oxford House could be the 'making' of such men. Certainly, Francis Fletcher Vane, a military officer and Toynbee Hall settler, agreed with Holland that spending time in East London was more 'instructive than always loafing in well-known clubs'.²⁴

Settlement House Historiography

As evidenced by Holland in 1891, there was early recognition of the settlements' dual concerns with both the privileged settler and the underprivileged poor. The notion that the settlers could be reformed through participation in the settlement movement is also constantly reiterated in Henrietta Barnett's biography of her husband.²⁵ Historians, however, have been much more interested in the components of the settlements' programs that targeted the urban poor. They have differed in their evaluations of the politics and the efficacy of this project, but much less attention has been given to the formation and education of the settlers themselves.

Commemorative studies of the settlements' foundation and development usually presented Toynbee Hall and Oxford House as an integral part of a broader campaign to

²⁴ Francis Fletcher Vane, *Agin the Governments: Memories and Adventures of Sir Francis Fletcher Vane, Bt.* (London: S. Low, Marston and Co., 1929), 57.

²⁵ Henrietta Barnett, *Canon Barnett: His Life, Work and Friends*. 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1918).

alleviate poverty in London and highlighted their achievements in this regard.²⁶ There was little or no evaluation or analysis of the success or otherwise of the programs aimed at the settlers who were engaged in these efforts.

From the 1960s and 1970s, a new generation of historians, influenced by Marxism and new-left politics, cast a more critical eye over the houses but again with a sustained focus on the settlements' intervention into the lives of the urban poor. This scholarship highlighted the strained relations between the classes and argued that the settlement houses sought not only to aid the underprivileged, but also to regulate their behaviour. In his seminal work, *Outcast London*, Gareth Stedman Jones argued that charitable activity in London was both 'a mode of interpreting the behaviour of the poor' and 'a means of attempting to control them'.²⁷ This notion animates Standish Meacham's 1987 history of Toynbee Hall in which he characterises the settlement as authoritarian, paternalistic and hierarchical. Meacham argued that settlers acted as 'teachers and – at least for the foreseeable future – as governors'.²⁸ More recent historiography has acknowledged these critiques but greater emphasis has been placed on the tensions and political complexities within the houses, the differences between them and their changing character over time. Throughout the evolution of this scholarship, however, there has been a persistent concern with the settlements' philanthropic actions in the East End with little attention paid to the process of making social reformers within the settlements.

²⁶ Werner Picht, a German resident of Toynbee Hall for several months in 1912, produced a study of Toynbee Hall and the English settlement movement in 1914. See Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*. The Toynbee Hall settler, John Alfred Ralph Pimlott, wrote a narrative history of the settlement during his residency to mark its fiftieth anniversary in 1934. See John Alfred Ralph (J.A.R.) Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress 1884-1934, with a Preface by His Grace the Archbishop* (London: Dent, 1935). Asa Briggs and Anne Macartney's commemorative study of Toynbee Hall was one of the earliest narrative accounts produced by historians. See Asa Briggs and Anne Macartney, *Toynbee Hall: The First Hundred Years* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984). Two short pamphlets were written for Oxford House's centenary in 1984. See Mandy Ashworth, *The Oxford House in Bethnal Green: 100 Years of Work in the Community* (London: Oxford House, 1984) and Ian Bradley, *Oxford House* (London: Oxford House, 1984).

²⁷ Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 240.

²⁸ Standish Meacham, *Toynbee Hall and Social Reform, 1880-1914: The Search for Community* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), x.

To date, the settlement movement has been variously characterised as a cultural, moral, ‘spiritual’ or state-sanctioned project to improve social conditions and to assist the urban poor. Both Seth Koven and Geoff Ginn, for example, examined an effort to impart culture to the poor. In his 1987 thesis on the London settlement movement, Koven explored how theories of culture, which were articulated by Victorian thinkers such as Matthew Arnold, T.H. Green, John Ruskin and Thomas Carlyle, were applied by philanthropists in the London slums.²⁹ Subsequently, Geoff Ginn’s 2001 doctoral thesis on cultural philanthropy in Victorian London examined a moralising mission ‘pursued by active elements of the late-Victorian middle class and directed at the urban labouring poor’.³⁰ In doing so, he rejected the social control model, arguing that the breadth and depth of social reform is ‘brutally ignored if seen in these terms alone’.³¹ Due to their contribution to social investigation and reform, the settlement houses have also been regarded as precursors to the emergence of the British welfare state. In her 1969 doctoral thesis, Emily Abel examined Toynbee Hall’s evolution into a centre for social welfare.³² Katharine Bradley, too, has explored the relationship between the university settlements and East London communities, particularly as they adapted to the growth of state welfare in the interwar period and beyond.³³

Undoubtedly, the settlement houses were established as class-bridging institutions which sought to alleviate social problems and assist the urban poor. This study does not challenge the settlements’ place within this broader philanthropic enterprise, nor does it

²⁹ Seth Koven, ‘Culture and Poverty: The London Settlement House Movement, 1870-1914’, (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1987).

³⁰ Geoff Ginn, ‘Gifts of Culture, Centres of Light: Cultural Philanthropy in the Late Victorian East End’, (PhD diss., University of Queensland, 2001), 23.

³¹ Ibid, 29.

³² Emily Abel, ‘Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall’, (PhD diss., University of London, 1969).

³³ Katharine Bradley, ‘Poverty and Philanthropy in East London, 1918-1959: The University Settlements and the Urban Working Classes’, (PhD diss., University of London, 2006). Also see Katharine Bradley, *Poverty, Philanthropy and the State: Charities and the Working Classes in London, 1918-1979* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2009).

dispute the claim that they promoted elite intervention into the lives of the underprivileged. Rather, it seeks to highlight that the settlements were also sites for making and pedagogically shaping a section of the emergent British elite. Personal contact across the social divide was intended to enrich the social reformers as well as the poor.

Despite their primary focus on the settlements' outward projects to uplift the poor, existing scholarship has recognised that the settlement houses' purposes and functions were multifaceted. That is, scholars have acknowledged the settlements' vision of philanthropy as a reciprocal relationship. Drawing upon wider discussions about the significance of social work for philanthropists themselves, historians have recognised that settling could contribute to the formation of a socially-conscious middle class and extend opportunities for women.³⁴ To date, however, there has not been a sustained analysis of the programs specifically aimed at settlers and their remaking within Toynbee Hall and Oxford House. Partial exceptions to this are Seth Koven and Lucinda Matthews-Jones. In his 2004 study on 'slumming' in Victorian London, Koven examined the settlements as sites where residents could explore their sexual identities, particularly homosexuality.³⁵ He provides valuable insights into the significance of altruism for middle-class men by presenting the slums as 'spaces free from the inhibitions and prohibitions of middle-class domesticity and conjugality' where new social and sexual relations could be created.³⁶ In doing so, Koven focuses on a use of settlement space which was outside the mainstream reformist agenda examined in this thesis. His study illustrates that the East End became a

³⁴ Gertrude Himmelfarb, for example, notes that Toynbee Hall men were expected to 'become better acquainted with the poor', 'understand and sympathise with them' and 'serve them in whatever way they could'. See *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 240. Katharine Bradley writes that women's settlements 'had an important role to play in helping women to further careers in social work, medicine and local government when opportunities for women outside the home were limited'. See Bradley, 'Poverty and Philanthropy in East London, 1918-1959: The University Settlements and the Urban Working Classes', 13.

³⁵ Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004).

³⁶ *Ibid*, 185.

space where conventional ideas of gender, class and sexuality could be transgressed, but the men who did so were not responding to a settlement program or ethos promoted within either Toynbee Hall or Oxford House. In her study of the settlements' 'spiritual imagination', Matthews-Jones too, examined the settlements as spaces for both settlers and East Enders. She presented them as 'centres of spiritual brightness' in the East End where Oxbridge men could explore their religious selves in ways that may not have been possible at the universities.³⁷ However, like Koven, Matthews-Jones does not relate her key themes to a broader vision and program within Toynbee Hall and Oxford House. Neither account explores in detail the internally-directed components of the settlements' programs, particularly the techniques employed within Toynbee Hall and Oxford House to educate, train and otherwise advance the settlers. In examining the internal life and character of the settlement, scholars have routinely focused on the *effects* of settling (on both settlers and the urban poor), eliding the *processes* of making the social reformer within the settlement itself. Building upon previous scholarship, this study examines these processes in order to illuminate a key aspect of the settlements' long-term orientation and internal functioning.

This thesis explores a pedagogical program aimed at a select cohort of Britain's male social elite. It focuses on the articulation and implementation of this program, its operation in practice and the understandings and responses it evoked. The ethical formation, education, training and career making of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men were conceived as a preliminary and necessary part of the project to reform the East End. As residential institutions, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House's work depended on the recruitment and 'making' of effective social reformers. Settlers have generally been cast as the agents of reform with a focus on their philanthropic ideas, their social writings,

³⁷ Lucinda Matthews-Jones, 'Centres of Brightness: The Spiritual Imagination of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House, 1880-1914', (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 2009).

their achievements and their participation in settlement programs and activities. They were certainly agents in all of these things. However, in this study, they are primarily considered in their capacities as students and apprentices rather than in relation to their work as social reformers, teachers and leaders. The discussion will address issues of empire, gender and cross-class relationships as these played a significant part in shaping the ethos of British social reformers whose lives were touched by the two houses, but emphasis will be given continually to the settlers themselves. The settlements may have often reinforced traditional binaries of a 'civilised' or moral philanthropist seeking to reform the irreligious or uncultured poor, but they also functioned as sites for the moral reform, personal development and career advancement of university men.

With 'gentlemen' as its subject, this thesis is related to a broader body of scholarship that has explored the place of gender in late Victorian philanthropy and slum work. Scholars, notably Lynda Nead, Deborah Nord, Ellen Ross and Judith Walkowitz, have shown that the London slums were spaces in which middle-class women could create a new sense of identity.³⁸ Martha Vicinus highlights the freedom charitable work afforded women, while Walkowitz writes that they were able to travel 'into different regions of the city in search of adventure and self discovery'.³⁹ In her study of 'lady explorers' in the London slums, Ellen Ross presents slumming as an outlet for 'excruciating boredom' and as an opportunity for women to 'enlarge their world'.⁴⁰ Historians have also 'unpacked philanthropic women's position at the nexus of cultural webs to explore complexities of class, gender and empire'.⁴¹ Antoinette Burton and Susan

³⁸ Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Deborah Epstein Nord, *Walking the Victorian Street: Women, Representation and the City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Ellen Ross, ed., *Slum Travellers: Ladies and London Poverty, 1860-1920* (Berkeley: California University Press, 2007); Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late Victorian London* (London: Virago, 1992).

³⁹ Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920* (London: Virago, 1985), 220; Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 52.

⁴⁰ Ross, *Slum Travellers: Ladies and London Poverty, 1860-1920*, 21, 29.

⁴¹ Clare Midgley, Alison Twells and Julie Carlier, *Women in Transnational History: Connecting the Local*

Thorne, for example, have ‘explored women’s missionary philanthropic activities through the lens of “imperial feminism” and “missionary imperialism”’, while Alison Twells has considered the role played by domestic and foreign philanthropy ‘in the making of the middle class’.⁴²

By focusing on the making of a particular type of ‘gentleman’ in the East End, this thesis forms part of a wider examination of the education of elite men in homosocial institutions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As Lucinda Matthews-Jones summarises, ‘masculinity was undergoing a process of transformation in Victorian Britain’.⁴³ John Tosh, for example, has argued that a ‘flight from domesticity’ was evident in the period from 1880 to 1914, as men increasingly rejected the domestic sphere of the home and sought out the ‘homosociality’ provided in a club or a British colony.⁴⁴ Amy Milne-Smith and Paul Deslandes have explored how men in clubs and university colleges constructed their own domestic spaces, which played a significant role in the formation of masculine identities.⁴⁵ Similarly, this thesis presents the settlement houses as distinctly homosocial institutions where young men left (at least temporarily) their usual domestic spheres to be educated and trained according to a particular masculine ethos.

Key Terms and Concepts

The title of this study refers to Toynbee Hall and Oxford House as ‘labour colonies’ designed for the ‘making’ of social reformers in order to highlight their function as

and the Global (Routledge, 2016), 187.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Lucinda Matthews-Jones, ‘St Francis of Assisi and the Making of Settlement Masculinity, 1883-1914’, *What is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World*, edited by John H. Arnold and Sean Brady (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 286.

⁴⁴ See John Tosh, *A Man’s Place: Masculinity and the Middle-class Home in Victorian England* (Yale University Press, 2007), Chapter 8.

⁴⁵ Amy Milne-Smith, ‘A Flight from Domesticity? Making a Home in the Gentlemen’s Clubs of London, 1880-1914’, *Journal of British Studies* 45 (2006), 798-818; Paul Deslandes, *Oxbridge Men: British Masculinity and the Undergraduate Experience, 1850-1920* (Bloomington, 2005)

pedagogical spaces committed to both the personal formation and the professional advancement of settlers. Terms such as ‘colonies’ and ‘settlers’ are resonant of an imperial mentality commonplace in British philanthropic discourse generally during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁴⁶ For a number of contemporary observers, the analogy of a ‘settlement’ suggested that East Enders, like the peoples of Britain’s far-flung empire, were in need of ‘civilisation’ and that the experience of an upper-class resident in East London was similar to that of a ‘settler’ in a British colony. So pervasive was this thinking that residents were often known as ‘settlers’ or, less frequently, as ‘colonists’.⁴⁷ As the Toynbee settler and future British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, wrote:

The very name ‘settlement’ suggests that, at the period when they were started, the lives of the working classes were something apart from those of the rest of the nation, so far apart, indeed, that to visit them was like entering a foreign and possibly savage territory where a fort was to be erected, from which expeditions could be sent to get in touch with the natives.⁴⁸

Historians have recognised the prominence of such language and have drawn attention to the notion of a ‘civilising mission’ which lay at the heart of much of Victorian social reform. As scholars such as Catherine Hall, John Marriott, Alison Twells and Susan Thorne have shown, this mission referred to the task of bringing the Christian gospel to both the ‘heathen’ overseas and to the poor at home.⁴⁹ The ‘civilising mission’

⁴⁶ The settlement movement coincided with a period of British empire-building. The ‘highest tide of imperialism’ reached Oxford between the Boer War and the First World War, but the university continued to serve as a training ground for national and imperial leaders in the later years of the twentieth century. As late as the 1930s, 75 per cent of the members of the elite Indian Civil Service were from either Oxford or Cambridge. Half the members of the colonial service were also university graduates. See Richard Symonds, *Oxford and Empire: The Last Lost Cause?* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 16.

⁴⁷ ‘Settlers’ or ‘residents’ were the most common terms used to refer to Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men. J.A.R. Pimlott refers to settlers as ‘colonists’ in *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress, 1884-1934*, 194, 14.

⁴⁸ C.R. Attlee, *The Social Worker* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1920), 214.

⁴⁹ Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, eds, *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002); John Marriott, ‘In Darkest England: The Poor, the Crowd and Race in the Nineteenth-century Metropolis’ in *New Ethnicities, Old*

directed at London's East End, and more broadly at the underclasses of mainland Britain, can be analysed as an example of what Michel Foucault called 'internal colonialism'.⁵⁰ Beyond the linguistic parallels between 'darkest London' and 'darkest Africa', and the widespread fears of the 'savage' within, this paradigm of colonialism often involved the transfer of techniques of data collection, pedagogy and governance from the colonies to the metropolis.

It is important to recognise, however, that this 'civilising mission' was not simply about a perfectly-formed elite indoctrinating a malformed and malleable poorer class. It involved a significant campaign of reformation, regeneration and perhaps even salvation, directed at those who were to be the standard bearers of 'civilisation' in the slums – the youth of Oxbridge and the West End. As another social theorist of an earlier generation, Norbert Elias, argued in the mid-twentieth century, the 'civilising process' that had played an important role in much modern European history – whether imperial or otherwise – had often commenced with the self-policing of the social elite.⁵¹ In a similar way, the cultivation and regulation of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House settlers was intended to serve as a mechanism to promote the spread of 'civilisation' down the social hierarchy.

The metaphor of the colony or settlement encapsulates this 'civilising process'. Samuel Barnett defined his philanthropic scheme as a 'settlement' where men were 'to

Racisms?, ed. Phil Cohen (London: Zed Books, 1999), 82-100; Susan Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Alison Twells, *The Civilising Mission and the English Middle Class, 1792-1850: The 'Heathens' at Home and Overseas* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). On the moralising mission aimed at the working classes, see Lauren M.E. Goodland, "'Making the Working Man Like Me": Charity, Pastorship, and Middle-Class Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain; Thomas Chalmers and Dr James Phillips Kay', *Victorian Studies* 43, no. 4 (2001), 591-617.

⁵⁰ This refers to the settlement of a region within a country and the treatment of its inhabitants in ways that resemble the exploitation, regulation and transformation of societies by an external power that is the business of colonialism proper. See Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976*, trans. T. Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 103.

⁵¹ See Norbert Elias, *The Civilising Process: The History of Manners* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978).

learn as much as to teach, to receive as much as to give'.⁵² Philip Lyttelton Gell, one of Toynbee Hall's founding members, shared this philosophy. When he promoted the settlement scheme at Cambridge, he proposed that settlement residents serve as 'the outposts of civilisation'. He referred to the poorer classes 'down below' who had never been 'civilised'. They were, he stated, 'brutal and criminal and immoral, because from generation to generation they have not received the tradition of morality'. However, the 'civilising process' he described was also directed at the settlers. He assured potential residents that life at the settlement would be 'along with all its hard work, a refined and civilising life'.⁵³ In 1934, *The Spectator* clearly apprehended and endorsed this foundational aim of the houses, commenting that the settlement movement's aim was not purely enlightening the 'outer darkness' of the slums. Rather, it suggested, the founders of the movement hoped that 'by living among the working classes, and getting to know the real conditions of life under which they lived, the residents of Toynbee Hall would themselves be the gainers'.⁵⁴

The 'gentlemen' in the colonies, referred to in the title of this thesis, were typically members of the middle and upper-middle classes, particularly their educated professionals.⁵⁵ The momentum for social reform in general throughout this period was largely sustained by middle-class voluntary effort. As J.F.C. Harrison has observed, the 'condition of the people' question in this period was 'a middle-class construct'.⁵⁶ While

⁵² Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:312.

⁵³ The Universities' Settlement Association, *Work for University Men in East London* (Cambridge, 1884), 28.

⁵⁴ 'Fifty Years at Toynbee Hall', *The Spectator*, December 21, 1934, 5.

⁵⁵ On distinctions between commerce and the professions, see Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England since 1880* (London: Routledge, 1990), 78-84.

⁵⁶ J.F.C. Harrison, *Late Victorian Britain, 1870-1901* (London: Fontana, 1990), 199. Understandings of the term 'slum' were also driven by the middle class, particularly their fears of the poorer classes. Harold Dyos traces the origins of the term to the 1820s when it referred to 'a room in which low goings-on occurred' to the middle years of the century when it was 'a straight forward term for bad housing' before 'it passed into very general use as a semi-slang expression, a synonym for "rookeries", "fever-dens", "little hells", "devil's acres", "dark purlieus", until eventually the inverted commas disappeared' (H.J. Dyos, *Exploring the Urban Past: Essays in Urban History* (Cambridge University Press, 1982, 130-131).

Oxford House men were predominantly clergymen, the more secular Toynbee Hall attracted a broad cross-section of young professionals in the law, education, journalism and the public service. Clement Attlee, among others, could describe himself as a member of ‘a typical family from the professional class brought up in the atmosphere of Victorian England’.⁵⁷

The residents in both houses generally came from privileged or at least comfortable backgrounds. Samuel Barnett’s father, for example, was a wealthy manufacturer.⁵⁸ Hubert Llewellyn Smith of Toynbee Hall (see Figure 2), usually known simply as Llewellyn Smith, was the son of a partner in a wholesale tea business⁵⁹, and James Adderley (Oxford House) was the son of a baron.⁶⁰ As university graduates of Oxford or Cambridge, the settlers formed a young community with shared connections in Oxbridge, the civil service, British government and the wider British Empire. The son of a district sessions judge in the Indian Civil Service, the Toynbee resident, William Beveridge (see Figure 3), was representative of the educated settler who forged connections at Oxbridge and in the settlement that helped him to establish a career as a civil servant and social reformer. His friend (and later brother-in-law), Richard Henry Tawney (see Figure 4), was also a member of the ‘intellectual aristocracy’.⁶¹ Known as R.H. Tawney, or as ‘Harry’ to his friends, he spent just under three years at Toynbee Hall when he left Oxford, before establishing his career as an economic historian, educationalist and political thinker. Tawney’s pupil, colleague and friend, the economic

⁵⁷ C.R. Attlee, *As it Happened* (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), 5-6.

⁵⁸ Seth Koven, ‘Barnett, Samuel Augustus (1844–1913)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-30612?rskey=957ocw&result=1> (accessed 29 September 2018).

⁵⁹ Roger Davidson, ‘Smith, Sir Hubert Llewellyn (1864–1945)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-36147?rskey=cYkSit&result=1> (accessed 29 September 2018).

⁶⁰ N. C. Masterman, ‘Adderley, James Granville (1861–1942)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-54554?rskey=lZwQO2&result=1> (accessed 29 September 2018).

⁶¹ Lawrence Goldman, *The Life of R.H. Tawney: Socialism and History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 6.



Figure 2: Portrait of Sir Hubert Llewellyn Smith (1864–1945) by Walter Stoneman, 1917, National Portrait Gallery, London



Figure 3: William Beveridge at Balliol College, 1898, London School of Economics



Figure 4: Richard Henry (R.H.) Tawney. Richard M. Titmuss, 'Portraits from the Past: Richard Henry Tawney', *London School of Economics Magazine*, November 1971, 6.

historian, M.M. Postan, characterised Tawney as ‘an Edwardian and even Victorian gentleman with family roots in the English countryside, the Church, and the Indian Civil service’.⁶²

Settlers were to be role models and leaders for the poor and their personal and professional development was therefore conceived as a necessary part of the settlements’ programs to reform the East End. Henrietta Barnett envisaged that as ‘every man gained fuller life for himself’ he would then be in a position to share ‘his fuller life with those less happily placed’.⁶³ In this study, the ‘making’ of settlers refers to both the formation of a particular ethos and the career promotion of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men. As will be seen, each settlement constructed an ideal settler persona. Oxford House sought to produce a religious gentleman. The ideal Toynbee man, while sharing a broad Christian ideal, was a more secular reformer who was equipped with the knowledge and skills to effect political and social change. All residents were expected to demonstrate their commitment to an ethos of personal service and to make a practical contribution to the settlement and to the local community. Settlers were also actively encouraged to pursue their careers and were provided with opportunities for education, training and networking.

Toynbee Hall and Oxford House employed a number of pedagogical practices to address both the personal and professional needs of individual settlers. These are explored throughout the chapters of this study and include cross-class interaction, charismatic leadership and constant peer review and assessment. The settlements’ physical setting, communal lifestyle and personalised routines contributed to the making of settlers. Occasionally, an educational agenda for settlers was articulated formally, but most of these methods of reform were embedded in the daily life and routines of the settlement

⁶² Michael Postan, ‘D.M. Joslin 1925-70’ in *R.H. Tawney’s Commonplace Book*, eds. J.M. Winter and D.M. Joslin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), ix.

⁶³ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:13-14.

houses. Association with fellow residents and guests, for example, was regarded as a refining influence on settlers as they were able to learn from the ideas and examples of their peers. While settlement values were transmitted in an informal setting, individual guidance was also applied from above by settlement leaders.

Because cross-class contact was a central aim of the settlement houses, the type of East Londoner with whom residents interacted was also a significant component in the making of settlers. The term ‘poor’ is generally used throughout this thesis as a term of convenience to refer to the residents of the East End. This population ‘spanned a considerable spectrum from the homeless to sweated workers . . . to seasonally employed unskilled labourers to regularly employed skilled artisans, whose wages surpassed those of junior clerks’.⁶⁴ Toynbee Hall and Oxford House worked, in particular, amidst the cheap, unskilled labourers in East London known in the period as the ‘residuum’. In the Tower Hamlets (which included the districts of Bethnal Green and Whitechapel), it was estimated that 71,000 of 456,000 inhabitants belonged to this ‘class of unskilled labour’.⁶⁵ This population was often associated with drunkenness, idleness, degradation and immorality. The bishop who offered the post of vicar at St Jude’s to Samuel Barnett described it as ‘the worst parish in my diocese, inhabited mainly by a criminal population’.⁶⁶ After their arrival in Whitechapel, the Barnetts agreed with this assessment, describing the ‘sort of unskilled low-class cadger’ who ‘congregated in the parish’ as follows:

If the men worked at all it was as casual dock labourers, enjoying the sense of gambling which the uncertainty of obtaining work gave. But usually they did not work; they stole or received stolen goods, they hawked, begged, cadged, lived on each other with generous indiscrimination, drank, gambled, fought, and when they

⁶⁴ Koven, *Slumming*, 10-11.

⁶⁵ Henrietta Barnett, ‘East London and Crime’, *The National Review* 12 (1888), 433-436.

⁶⁶ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:68.

became too well known to the police, moved on to another neighbourhood.⁶⁷

Contact with the ‘residuum’ of Whitechapel and Bethnal Green elicited various responses from residents, highlighting both the ameliorative and the potentially harmful effects they could have on settlers. Some residents questioned the educational value of interaction with this ‘type’ of person, voicing doubts that they would be able to teach unskilled workers and dismissive of the notion they could learn anything from them in return. In other words, the location of the settlements and the recipients of their philanthropic activities raised questions about the class and religion of the social groups the settlers wanted to assist.

Methodology and Sources

This thesis focuses on the making of social reformers as it occurred within Toynbee Hall and Oxford House, London’s first two settlement houses. Their intertwined histories have been chosen as case studies for two main reasons. First, both houses emerged in direct response to the speech delivered by Samuel Barnett at Oxford University in 1883, and both sought to redress the same set of social and economic problems in East London. As well as their close proximity and similar clientele in the East End, the settlements had a shared aim to address the personal needs and wellbeing of settlers. Secondly, a comparative approach reveals the diversity within the settlements’ aims, ethos and practice as they sought to shape men into their image of an ideal settler.

The great point of difference between Toynbee Hall and Oxford House was their religious focus. Toynbee Hall was Barnett’s own project and, although a clergyman of the Church of England, he decided that the settlement house should be non-sectarian. Barnett

⁶⁷ Henrietta and Samuel Barnett, *Towards Social Reform* (New York: Macmillan, 1909), 239-249; Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:73-74.

was adamant in defining his philanthropic scheme as a ‘settlement’ rather than a mission. Men came not as ‘missioners’, he insisted, but as ‘settlers’.⁶⁸ Although it upheld a generalised Christian ethos, the settlement not only welcomed all Christian denominations but non-Christians as well, and religious observance was voluntary. Furthermore, the settlement engaged in a range of educational and cultural activities that were not overtly religious. Oxford House, on the other hand, was an Anglican mission set up in direct opposition to Toynbee Hall’s non-sectarian ideal. It was established with the explicit intent of re-Christianising the poor of London’s East End. Oxford House residents were members of the Church of England and their settlement work was founded on Christian beliefs and practices.

These religious differences between the houses are significant and were clearly recognised by contemporaries. Clement Attlee classified Oxford House as a ‘mission’ rather than a ‘settlement’ as it appealed ‘to those who are most concerned in spreading the Christian Gospel’. According to Attlee, a settlement such as Toynbee Hall was formed on a non-sectarian basis and appealed instead ‘to a somewhat wider range of interests, aiming to collect under its banner the enthusiast for art, literature, learning, industrial and social betterment’.⁶⁹ William Cosmo Gordon Lang, chairman of Toynbee Hall and archbishop of Canterbury, also recognised this difference. Interestingly, given his affiliations with Toynbee Hall, Cosmo Lang compared the Toynbee Hall men who were ‘studying problems or testing theories’ (rather unfavourably) with Oxford House settlers who were ‘loyally accepting something old and tried and sure and bringing it as a gospel, a good gift, to the people’.⁷⁰ Despite Cosmo Lang’s personal preference for Oxford House, it was in fact the more secular Toynbee Hall that became the more notable and

⁶⁸ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:312.

⁶⁹ Attlee, *The Social Worker*, 195.

⁷⁰ Cosmo Gordon Lang, in J.G. Lockhart, *Cosmo Gordon Lang* (London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1949), 50.

successful venture at the time. Toynbee Hall also had the more lasting impact on the locality and, due to its prominent alumni, on British life in general.

The settlements' divergent conceptions of religion and social reform were reflected in the distinct visions of masculinity that each promoted. The Toynbee Hall settler was generally characterised by his social work, his investigative research and his civic activities. The Oxford House resident, on the other hand, was more typically an Anglican clergyman or missionary. The settlements' different religious aims were also made manifest in the ideals and education the settlers received, the networks they forged and the careers they pursued. An examination of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House therefore highlights that although both settlement houses were seeking to 'make' social reformers, they each created a distinctive settler persona.

This thesis focuses specifically on the personae and experiences of settlers. Drawing upon the ideals, ambitions and reflections of various Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men, it places emphasis on the internal dynamics of the settlements' programs. The importance of the residents was recognised by William Beveridge when he remarked:

Toynbee Hall was a centre of social activities, adult education, social clubs, organisation of children's country holidays, conferences, debates, concerts and art exhibitions. But these were a consequence rather than the essence of the settlement. The essence of the settlement lies in the individual lives of the residents, as they are affected by the special experience of living in that particular place.⁷¹

Building upon Beveridge's premise, this study is concerned with the various well-educated men who lived in the settlement houses or who visited them regularly.

Between 1884 and 1914, approximately 215 men resided in Toynbee Hall and 480

⁷¹ William Beveridge, *Voluntary Action: A Report on Methods of Social Advance* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 131.

lived in Oxford House.⁷² The higher number of Oxford House men can be partly attributed to the fact that the settlement's reports often included residents and other volunteers in a single list. Toynbee Hall began with thirteen residents and typically housed ten to twenty men at any given time in this period (see Figure 5). Oxford House developed more slowly. When he arrived in Bethnal Green, Arthur Winnington-Ingram, the settlement head from 1889 to 1897 (see Figure 6), labelled Oxford House as 'not a very impressive affair' as it consisted of only three residents.⁷³ Due to its relocation to larger premises and Ingram's efforts at recruitment, the number of residents increased from this time onwards. When Winnington-Ingram resigned from the headship, he noted that there were at least thirty residents in the settlement.⁷⁴ Like Toynbee Hall, Oxford House usually accommodated about twenty men at one time. Additionally, both settlements attracted non-residential volunteers and scores of visitors. As the Toynbee Hall warden, Thomas Harvey, wrote, the settlement was 'the work of many lives, and not only those who have lived within the precincts of its quiet quadrangle'.⁷⁵ Settlement 'associates', as they were called, sympathised with the work of Toynbee Hall and visited the settlement regularly, but they were unable to become residents due to other commitments. Their views are nevertheless insightful and are included in this thesis.

In examining a 'settlement experience', this thesis makes substantial use of autobiographical writings, particularly the personal memoirs, reminiscences and anecdotes of individual settlers. The use of this source material reflects the aim of the study to examine the experience of settlement, the culture of the institutions and the influence of the settlement houses on their residents. It was noted by Thomas Harvey in

⁷² These figures are approximate and are based on the lists of residents published in the settlements' annual reports. The number of Oxford House men would have been slightly higher as this figure does not include the men who joined the settlement in 1908. This report is missing from the archives.

⁷³ Arthur Winnington-Ingram, *Fifty Years' Work in London, 1889-1939* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1940), 6.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁷⁵ Annual Report of the Universities' Settlement in East London (1900), 9.



Figure 5: The Warden, Mrs Barnett and the Residents, 1885. J.A.R. Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress 1884-1934* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1935), 49.

Front Row (on ground): T.G. Gardiner, E.B. Sargant, T.H. Nunn, R.N. Blandy

Middle Row: Bolton King, Mrs Barnett, S.A. Barnett, R.E. Mitcheson, C.H. Grinling, G. Parker

Back Row: H.G. Rawson, V.A. Boyle, J. Murray Macdonald, B. Whishaw, (name unknown)



Figure 6: The First Six Heads of Oxford House (William Jackson, James Adderley, Herbert Henson, Arthur Winnington-Ingram, Bernard Wilson, Henry Woollcombe). Mandy Ashworth, *The Oxford House in Bethnal Green: 100 Years of Work in the Community* (London: Oxford House, 1984), 6.

the annual report of 1907-1908 that ‘the real work of Toynbee hall’ can never be ‘recorded upon paper; it’s only record is in the lives of men’. Toynbee Hall, was, in Harvey’s view, ‘the collective life of a group of persons whose thought and work . . . have made Toynbee Hall what it is today’.⁷⁶ The correspondence and life writings of settlers are a critical source for gaining insight into the ‘collective life’ of a cohort of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men. The majority of settlers, however, did not leave personal papers. The average length of residence was two years, but many stayed only a few months and did not record their experience. The settlers examined in this study have not been selected according to any particular criteria, but it should be acknowledged that surviving records generally belong to residents who formed close or long-term connections with the settlements or who achieved some level of public distinction after leaving the East End. This study draws upon the works of approximately seventy men who have left substantial writings on the settlements including diaries, letters, speeches and memoirs.

Memoirs have provided some of the richest sources in this study as they convey various ideals, attitudes, beliefs and ambitions shared by Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men. Autobiographical texts are valuable sources for social and cultural history, particularly in studies like this that are concerned with individual personalities and experiences. Despite earlier misgivings about the subjective nature of memoirs and autobiographies as the ‘least convincing of all personal records’⁷⁷, a growing number of historians have made first-person texts central to historical projects. As James Amelang

⁷⁶ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1908, 11.

⁷⁷ For this quotation, see George Sidney Roberts Kitson Clark, *The Critical Historian* (London: History Book Club, 1968), 67; also cited in Jennifer Jensen Wallach, ‘Building a Bridge of Words: The Literary Autobiography as Historical Source Material’, *Biography* 29, no. 3 (2006), 447. In her research on memoir and autobiography, Wallach has noted that ‘traditionalist historians have sometimes been suspicious about the value of the unabashedly subjective memoir as a historical resource’ (‘Building a Bridge of Words: The Literary Autobiography as Historical Source Material’, 447). A.J.P. Taylor, for example, suggested: ‘Written memoirs are a form of oral history set down to mislead historians’ and are ‘useless except for atmosphere’ (Quoted in Wallach, ‘Building a Bridge of Words’, 447; also quoted in Paul Thompson and Joanna Bornat, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 190).

has written in his study of artisan autobiography in early modern Europe: ‘The increasing acceptance of such writing as a source points to important changes in history and the social sciences . . . above all, a renewed interest in individual experience – and representations of that experience – as keys to understanding larger social patterns and groupings.’⁷⁸ Jennifer Wallach, too, highlights the value of autobiographical writings in gleaning the thoughts and experiences of individual historical agents: ‘If we are to come to a deep understanding of a historical moment, we must endeavour to understand the individual experiences that constituted it.’ Wallach believes a memoir can ‘capture these intricacies’.⁷⁹ Autobiographies and memoirs not only document the particulars of one life; they can also provide insight into a historical period or moment.

Like any other historical source, however, autobiographical writing suffers from certain limitations. In some cases, there was a considerable lapse of time between the settling experience and its retelling in the pages of an autobiography. Settlers such as William Beveridge (who was 74 when his autobiography was published) and Clement Attlee (whose autobiography was published 45 years after he was appointed secretary of Toynbee Hall in 1909) composed their memoirs several years after their settling experience or after they had established their careers and reputations and Toynbee Hall had achieved world-wide fame. Written retrospectively and in reflection, these autobiographies are consequently subject to the limitations of memory and selective editing and may contain a range of distortions and biases.

In order to consider how such reflections may differ from contemporary sources, this thesis draws upon official settlement house records, including periodicals, annual

⁷⁸ Quoted in Jeremy D. Popkin, *History, Historians and Autobiography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 19.

⁷⁹ Jennifer Wallach, *Closer to the Truth Than Any Fact: Memoir, Memory, and Jim Crow* (University of Georgia Press, 2010), 4.

reports, news bulletins, pamphlets, minute books and correspondence.⁸⁰ The use of a wide range of memoirs also provides insight into the collective memories of settlers, moving beyond individual recollections and interpretations to capture broader impressions. Collectively, these sources provide valuable insights into the daily activities of the houses and the experiences and perspectives of settlers.

Various opinions and reflections about residency in the East End were recorded in settlement publications. Official records frequently presented Toynbee Hall or Oxford House in a highly positive light, highlighting the camaraderie within the settlements. Most settlers also wrote favourably of their experiences in their personal papers, but there were also some critiques from the disaffected. Henrietta Barnett's two-volume biography is one of the earliest studies of her husband and it has been a valuable source in the writing of this thesis. Written by the warden's wife and philanthropic partner, it is clearly selective, offering a sympathetic view of both Toynbee Hall and its founder. However, it offers an extensive and detailed account of the internal organisation of the settlement and settling experiences and it draws upon an array of contemporary commentators.⁸¹ Both official and personal settlement writings demonstrate that Toynbee Hall and Oxford House sought to shape social reformers and that this project elicited both positive and negative responses among residents.

⁸⁰ It is important to note that the Toynbee Hall archives are incomplete because the settlement was bombed during World War Two. In May 1941, the warden's lodge, the library and several bedrooms of Toynbee Hall were destroyed in a heavy air raid. The main building of Toynbee Hall survived, but some settlement papers were lost. For a discussion of these losses, see Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1938-1946, 12.

⁸¹ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:261. It is also important to note that Henrietta edited Samuel Barnett's personal letters for inclusion in her biography. As Emily Abel has previously noted, while some of Henrietta's revisions were 'relatively minor', she also 'rewrote many sentences and frequently combined several letters into one, thus obliterating a sense of the progression of Barnett's thought' (Abel, 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', 6).

Structure

Drawing upon the over-arching metaphor of a labour colony, each chapter of this thesis addresses an aspect of the settlements' programs which contributed to the making of social reformers. While the houses were frequently called colonies or settlements, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House generated a number of other metaphors in their campaign to improve settlers, including that of a monastery, a university, a clubhouse and, in the case of Toynbee Hall, a laboratory. These representations are discussed sequentially throughout the chapters of this study in order to examine particular aspects of the settlements' pedagogy. On their own, these metaphors do not sufficiently convey the full scope of the settlements' programs, but collectively they elucidate key functions of the 'labour colonies' as sites for the reformation and personal development of settlers. The various images used by settlers to describe Toynbee Hall and Oxford House also show that residents could have different priorities in terms of how they thought the settlements should operate.

The thesis begins with an account of the establishment of the two different 'labour colonies'. Chapter One examines the foundational aims and ethos of the settlement houses and the place that Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men occupied in the settlement movement. Concerns about the welfare of the poor labouring classes were accompanied by a perceived need to promote the salvation of the decadent youth of Britain's upper classes. This chapter explores this complex dynamic, focusing in particular on the settlements' aims to reform or 'civilise' the settlers. While Oxbridge was frequently idealised for its potential to regenerate the East End and cultivate the poor, there was also recognition among settlers of limitations within upper-class society and university culture. The settlement houses were presented as sites for the correction or the

improvement of the character and conduct of Oxbridge men. The motivations behind, and the understandings of, this discourse varied even among the residents themselves, but its prominence reveals a key component of the reformist agenda that was articulated in both settlement houses.

Chapter Two draws upon the metaphor of the settlement as a monastery, prominent in the early years of both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House, in order to examine the ethical formation of settlers in the East End. The settlements were sites for the cultivation of men and this chapter is concerned with the ideals and modes of behaviour that Toynbee Hall and Oxford House each sought to impart to settlers. It also considers the strategies that were in place in the daily life and routines of residents not only to encourage particular settlement values, but also to shield them from being unduly influenced by less savoury aspects of East End life.

Chapter Three presents the settlement houses as ‘postgraduate universities’ for the education and training of settlers.⁸² Oxbridge graduates had little direct experience with poverty and generally lacked a personal understanding of the East End. Consequently, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House residents expressed a need to expand their own education in order to sufficiently guide the urban poor. The settlements were sites where settlers could increase their knowledge and gain practical experience to complement their university education. Unlike the program aimed at the poor, this education was usually informal. Residents reflected that they could gain knowledge and expertise in the course of their practical activities in the East End.

The Oxford House education was first and foremost a religious one and it became known as a ‘theological college’. Closely related to the education of the Toynbee Hall settlers, on the other hand, was their development as researchers and investigators.

⁸² Arthur Pillans Laurie, *Pictures and Politics: A Book of Reminiscences* (London: International Publishing Company, 1934), 72.

Chapter Four evokes the metaphor of a laboratory to examine the investigative projects undertaken at Toynbee Hall by men who were increasingly concerned with measuring the extent of urban poverty and developing proposals for its amelioration. The image of the laboratory encapsulates the contemporary interest in detailed and methodical social investigation. This chapter explores the research ethos of Toynbee Hall, the projects it supported and the settlement's role in developing residents' knowledge, research skills, methodologies, techniques and networks. In the Toynbee Hall 'laboratory', settlers could study social problems and theories, share their findings with their peers, experiment with social schemes and participate in research projects. Residents who participated in social investigations could draw upon the expertise they gained at later stages of their careers.

While scholars have recognised that many settlers later became pre-eminent in their particular fields, Chapter Five seeks to locate the specific place that career-making occupied in the settlement agenda. Using the metaphor of the settlement as a gentlemen's club, it examines Toynbee Hall and Oxford House as sites where settlers could plan their careers, receive vocational guidance and forge personal and professional connections. It examines the processes of mentoring and networking in practice both within and outside the houses. This included an informal social network and a more pragmatic one which had the potential to advance men's careers.

An examination of settlement networking reveals that a number of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House leaders and residents continued to work as social reformers in Britain and its wider empire after leaving the East End. For Oxford House men, this was generally in the capacity as clergymen and missionaries. For Toynbee Hall, it was also as prominent politicians, civil servants, educators and other professionals. The social and imperial career destinations of Oxford men have been well recognised. Seth Koven observed: 'It was no accident that Balliol College, Oxford, under the leadership of

Benjamin Jowett, sent many of its best and brightest students to Toynbee Hall and to the Indian civil service.’⁸³ At the end of *Oxford and Empire: The Last Lost Cause?*, Symonds makes a similarly telling remark: ‘It was no accident that the high period of Empire coincided with the university’s involvement in settlement work in the slums of East London.’⁸⁴ Yet the history of this imperial networking still remains relatively impressionistic. A closer examination of these connections brings the settlement houses into the story of the universities’ broader social and imperial networks.

Chapter Six examines the responses of various Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men to their settling experiences and to the pastoral care they received. In their memoirs, men often presented settling as a formative experience, highlighting the rewards of fellowship and camaraderie. However, for others, the experience was a transient one, something to be noted only in passing in their later writings. There was no single settler experience. The motivations and expectations of residents varied. For some men, particularly in Oxford House, settling was a means of expressing their religious views, while for others it was an opportunity for them to contemplate their careers. Many sought a better understanding of East London’s poverty and the life of the poor. An examination of surviving settler writings reveals that while most men embraced the ideas presented to them, some resented the attention given to the advancement of settlers or believed that the settlements catered *too much* for the residents. Others were unaware that they, like the urban poor, were the targets of a settlement program.

The thesis as a whole examines Toynbee Hall and Oxford House from their foundation in 1884 until 1914. With some exceptions, notably Katharine Bradley’s work, the historical work in this field typically ends at this convenient juncture.⁸⁵ There are two

⁸³ Koven, *Slumming*, 254.

⁸⁴ Symonds, *Oxford and Empire: The Last Lost Cause?*, 303-304.

⁸⁵ See, for example, Abel, ‘Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall’; Koven, ‘Culture and Poverty: The London Settlement House Movement, 1870-1914’; Meacham, *Toynbee Hall and Social*

main reasons for this. Toynbee Hall temporarily moved to Poplar and was partially disbanded during the First World War; after the war, Toynbee Hall's activities evolved as state welfare expanded beyond its limited pre-1914 role.

While the Oxford House settling experience remained largely unchanged during the period between 1884 and 1914, the work of Toynbee Hall became increasingly professionalised from the turn of the century, largely due to William Beveridge's subwardenship from 1903 to 1905. In the early days of Toynbee Hall, as much emphasis was placed on the settlers' way of life as their actual work in the slums. Chapters Three, Four and Five demonstrate that the settlement agenda increasingly focused on the educational and vocational needs of residents who were evaluated by their practical contribution to the settlement and to the local community. While Toynbee Hall emphasised the importance of social research and policy making, Oxford House retained its primary focus on the religious formation of settlers. Due to its clearly defined religious agenda, there was a great deal of continuity in the Oxford House experience and, with its affiliation with the Church of England, the settlement remained the preserve of Anglican men throughout the period covered by this thesis.

Conclusion

From their foundation in 1884, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House were conceived as residential settlements or colonies in London's East End. The imagery of 'settling' in East London was not only an application of the colonial language which prevailed in philanthropic discourse in the late nineteenth century. Rather, the reformist or 'civilising' process that the settlement houses embraced was two-fold, directed at both the settlers

Reform, 1880-1914: The Search for Community and N.B. Kent, ed., *Cambridge in South London: The Work of the College Missions, 1883-1914* (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1914).

and the urban poor. Until now, scholarly attention has primarily focused on the more overt component of this agenda aimed at the poor. In contrast, the present study examines the settlements' related project which was aimed, both formally and informally, at the settlers. While this may appear to be an auxiliary aspect of the settlement houses, shaping a future generation of potential social and political leaders was regarded as a preliminary and highly significant stage in regenerating London's East End. The making of social reformers was a project that sought to prepare men who, by the nature of their class, education and connections, had the power not only to effect future change in the East End but also in Britain and its empire. The following chapters demonstrate that a shared belief in the importance of reforming, improving or training settlers linked Toynbee Hall and Oxford House in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They were colonies which embraced the 'double purpose' of addressing the needs and wellbeing of both social reformers and the poor.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, 1.

Chapter One

Civilising the Settlers

Generally it is assumed that the chief change is that to be effected in the habits of the poor. All sorts of missions and schemes exist for the working of this change. Perhaps it is more to the purpose that a change should be effected in the habits of the rich.

Samuel Barnett (Toynbee Hall warden), 1886.¹

I have always myself believed that there should be missions to the rich, and that the message delivered to them should be by those who really understand the social problem.

James Adderley (Oxford House head), 1916.²

Modern scholarship on Victorian philanthropy has long highlighted the lurid sensationalism and deep foreboding that was expressed in period representations of the East End. The metaphor of the ‘settlement’ or ‘colony’ that was applied to Toynbee Hall and Oxford House between 1884 and 1914 highlights, in particular, the fears and anxieties of ‘darkest London’ that saturated British sensibilities in the nineteenth century.³ However, alongside this rhetoric there co-existed within the settlement movement a language of cross-class exchange and mutual instruction in a more measured attempt to assess the condition and challenges of London’s poor, together with a systematic desire to alleviate the moral turpitude and practical failings of Britain’s more comfortable classes.

¹ Henrietta and Samuel Barnett, *Practicable Socialism: Essays on Social Reform*. 2nd ed. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1895), 73.

² James Adderley, *In Slums and Society: Reminiscences of Old Friends* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1916), 50.

³ For examples of this trope in contemporary literature, see William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (Charleston: BiblioBazaar, 2008), Margaret Harkness, *In Darkest London: A Story of the Salvation Army* (London: William Reeves, 1891) and Peter Keating, ed., *Into Unknown England, 1866-1913: Selections from the Social Explorers* (Glasgow: William Collins, Sons and Co., 1976). Also see John Marriott, ‘In Darkest England: The Poor, the Crowd, and Race in the Nineteenth-Century Metropolis’ in *New Ethnicities, Old Racisms?*, ed. Phil Cohen (London: Zed Books, 1999), 82-100; Felix Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire* (London: Blackwell, 2001) and Felix Driver and David Gilbert, ‘Capital and Empire: Geographies of Imperial London’, *GeoJournal* 51 (2000), 23-32.

Both notions, that of a degenerate East End and the moral exhortation to reform Britain's social elite, played a role in the creation of the settlement houses and their appeal to settlers. This chapter examines the early history and ideology associated with Toynbee Hall and Oxford House in the wider context of the social, political and religious debates of the time in order to argue that, from their inception, one of these settlement houses' foundational aims was to attract and recruit the youth of Britain's future governing class. Due to the merits of their status and education, the young men recruited were considered ideal social workers who had the potential to both reform the poor and undergo a process of formation themselves.

The condition of the poor was seen by contemporary observers as a particularly severe indictment on the nation's claims to progress.⁴ In his 1845 novel, *Sybil* or *The Two Nations*, the novelist and Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, famously wrote that the rich and the poor represented 'two nations'. While Disraeli's two nations referred to the industrial north and the rural south of England, this image was transferred to London in the 1850s to refer to the gulf between the urban slums of the East End and the fashionable districts of the West End. This binary was reinforced throughout the late nineteenth century by social explorers who were fascinated by the deprivation of the East End. In 1891, a chronicler of working-class life in the London slums, Margaret Harkness, identified within the city 'two nations, *East and West*'.⁵ This image was used to emphasise the argument that the rich and the poor were separated by class experience and mutual ignorance. As Walsham How, the Bishop of Bedford, stated: 'The two nations are ignorant of one another – to the West the East seems low, vulgar and irreligious; to the

⁴ The social commentator, R.A. Woods, reflected that the 'state of the London poor was felt to be to English civilisation something like an imputation of failure. It touched British pride and, by the very greatness of that difficulty, stirred that wonderful reserve of energy which distinguishes the British race'. See R.A. Woods, 'The Social Awakening in London', *Scribner's Magazine* 11, no. 4 (April 1892), 404.

⁵ Margaret Harkness, *In Darkest London: A Story of the Salvation Army* (London: William Reeves, 1891), 67-68. (italics in original)

East the West seems selfish and careless of the wants and aspirations of the poor.’⁶

Echoing the words of Disraeli earlier in the century⁷, the social reformer, Philip Lyttelton Gell, claimed:

The ‘Two Nations’[of London] . . . live side by side with so little sympathy, so little help rendered by the one to the other. If the present tendency of our cities be much further developed, the remaining links will part one by one, and the quarters of the rich and poor will stand apart in opposite – it may be in hostile – camps.⁸

The presence or absence of light contributed to this image of a divided or bifurcated city. While West London was lit with gaslights, the East End was shrouded in darkness. What had long been a physical contrast between the prosperous West End and the poverty-stricken East End was turned into what Raymond Williams calls an ‘interpretive image’. The West represented all that was ‘bright, dazzling, and enlightened’; the East all that was ‘dark, labyrinthine and threatening’.⁹ Metaphors of brightness were often used to articulate an effort to reform or enlighten slum districts and contributed to an imperial discourse which occupied a prominent place in the literature of social reform. Nineteenth-century urban explorers played on popular tropes that compared ‘Darkest London’ to ‘Darkest Africa’ as places ripe for conversion. This imagery presented the poor as a ‘savage’ race because they lived outside of moralising influences. On the other side of the class divide, however, concerns were persistently raised about a perceived lack of social consciousness and concern among the more privileged classes in West London.

Late nineteenth-century discourse drew upon this imagery of ‘two nations’, but

⁶ Quoted in Lucinda Matthews-Jones, ‘Centres of Brightness: The Spiritual Imagination of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House, 1880-1914’, (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 2009), 41.

⁷ Benjamin Disraeli, *Sybil, or The Two Nations* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1920), 76.

⁸ Philip Lyttelton Gell, *Universities Settlement in East London. The Municipal Responsibilities of the Well to Do* (1886), 1. Pamphlet bound in Annual Reports I – X, A/TOY/005, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

⁹ Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1973), 220.

there was awareness that London's social geography was much more complex than the image of a bifurcated city into east and west implied.¹⁰ Charles Booth's poverty maps, which were included in his seventeen-volume study, *Life and Labour of the People in London*, showed that the contrasts that were drawn between East and West London had been simplified. The maps represented varying levels of poverty in different districts across London. Blue and black colouring appeared in maps of the West End, for example, indicating poorer districts in the area. According to Booth, both Bethnal Green and Whitechapel were characterised by diverse social and economic conditions.¹¹

Investigators like Booth, as well as settlers and other philanthropists, criticised prevailing depictions of East and West London as 'two nations'. As the Reverend Eardley-Wilmot remarked in 1896: 'A contrast is sometimes drawn between the "squalid East," and the "magnificent and luxurious West". A contrast, there is no doubt [but] . . . The East is not by any means all "squalid" nor is the West continuously "magnificent"'.¹² The Oxford House resident, Lord Bal, argued that Whitechapel's High Street was in fact quite 'marvellous'. He noted that 'hundreds and thousands turn out to drink in the new week: all available space on the pavement and edge of the great road is occupied with booths in which everything imaginable is sold, from oilcloth to readymade boots'.¹³ East Londoners themselves refuted the suggestion that they lived in 'Outcast London'. One East Ender, writing under the initials A.P.Z., criticised the 'exaggerated stories that have circulated through the length and breadth of the land as to the moral and social conditions

¹⁰ Historians such as David Ward argue that the residential differentiation for most of the population was not so clearly marked. Ward observed that while there were 'concentrations of extremely destitute people', there were large areas that 'housed a mixture of lesser professionals, petty proprietors, master craftsmen, journeymen, labourers and domestic outworkers'. See David Ward, 'The Victorian Slum: An Enduring Myth?', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66, no. 2 (1976), 330-331.

¹¹ Charles Booth, 'Poverty Map', 1898-1899, Booth Collection, London School of Economics. A digitalised copy of the map has been provided by the London School of Economics. See <https://booth.lse.ac.uk/map/13/-0.1174/51.5064/100/0> (accessed 29 September 2018).

¹² E.A. Eardley-Wilmot, 'From West to East', *Good Words* (1896), 617.

¹³ See John Vincent, *The Crawford Papers: The Journals of David Lindsay, Twenty-Seventh Earl of Crawford and Tenth Earl of Balcarres 1871-1940, during the years 1892-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 13.

of this populous district'.¹⁴ Commentators also argued that East and West London could not be neatly polarised along the lines of 'civilised' or 'uncivilised'. The clergyman, Brooke Lambert, criticised depictions of the East End as a 'special district given over to evil courses' or as a 'Sahara in London destitute of all that supports the higher life'.¹⁵ James Adderley, who became the first head of Oxford House, similarly mocked the notion that their poor neighbours were 'savages'.¹⁶ It is indisputable that a vast divide between rich and poor did exist in the London of this time. However, period discussions of the East End suggest that the privileged classes – not just the poor – were presented as potential targets of a 'civilising mission'.

The settlement houses were founded on the premise that reformation was needed on both sides of this social divide. Significantly for this study, in discussions about the complexity of London's social landscape, the character and conduct of the upper classes were often scrutinised. 'A.P.Z.', writing to the *East London Observer*, argued that the West End could be as morally flawed as the East End. Acknowledging that there was 'little doubt that vice and ignorance may be found' in the slums, he argued that such observations could be readily applied to 'any populous district', including 'those fashionable parts of London where the rich and the poor are near neighbours'.¹⁷ The Toynbee Hall settler, Francis Fletcher Vane, also challenged common assumptions about the behaviour of the upper classes in England. Drawing upon his experiences in South Africa, he compared the 'frivolity of the well-to-do' unfavourably with the habits of men and women in British colonies, remarking:

Coming . . . from colonies where practically every man and woman has his or her

¹⁴ A.P.Z., 'Distress in the East of London: To the Editor of the *East London Observer*', *East London Observer*, February 28, 1885, 6. Also see 'In Defence of East London', *East London Observer*, December 29, 1883, 5.

¹⁵ Brooke Lambert, 'The Outcast Poor: Esau's Cry', *Contemporary Review* 44 (December 1883), 917.

¹⁶ James Adderley, *Stephen Remarx: The Story of a Venture in Ethics* (New York: Dutton, 1894), 50.

¹⁷ A.P.Z., 'Distress in the East of London', 6.

job to do . . . one is immensely struck by the large numbers of people in England of the middle classes who apparently spend most of their lives in trying to pass the time either with games or other forms of self-indulgence.¹⁸

Descriptions of the immoral life of the poor were prevalent in social literature in the Victorian period, including drunkenness, violence, crime and the idling and loafing of casual labourers and the unemployed. However, men like Vane attributed urban problems to failings in both of the city's 'two nations'. They felt that the gulf between the social classes resulted in losses to both the rich and the poor. In her biography of her husband, Henrietta Barnett suggested that if the problem of social segregation was not redressed it would be the upper classes who would be most disadvantaged: 'If the stronger members of society left the weaker alone . . . the strong would lose more than the weak.'¹⁹ What the upper classes would lose, Henrietta implied, was an opportunity to better themselves by showing sympathy and charity to the less fortunate. In practice, reformist efforts were aimed at both the upper classes and the poor. Edward Caird, the Master of Balliol College between 1893 and 1907, argued that philanthropy was a tool for improving the character of both rich and poor. It meant that 'which blesseth him that gives and him that takes'.²⁰ Rather than argue that the condition of the East End was solely the fault of the poor, he argued that the responsibility for social problems lay, at least in part, with the failure of the upper classes.

Two Different Settlement Plans for the Making of Social Reformers

The idea of a university settlement in London was first proposed in the 1860s and it was

¹⁸ Francis Fletcher Vane, *On Certain Fundamentals: Being Essays on Current Politics* (London: The New Age Press, 1909), 25-26.

¹⁹ Henrietta Barnett, *Canon Barnett: His Life, Work, and Friends by his Wife in Two Volumes with Thirty-Nine Illustrations* (London: John Murray, 1918), 1:201.

²⁰ Edward Caird, *The Moral Aspect of the Economical Problem: Presidential Address to the Ethical Society* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, Lowrey and Co., 1888), 3.

put forward as a scheme for the reformation of the urban poor, with little attention given to the benefits that could be accrued by social reformers themselves. The idea was largely inspired by the Oxford graduate, Edward Denison. In 1867, Denison ‘settled’ in Stepney and offered support to J.R. Green, his friend and the vicar of St Philip’s parish. Denison lived in Philpot Street for about eight months in order to find out for himself how the poor lived and to engage in philanthropic and educational work.²¹ According to Denison, the East End needed a ‘resident gentry’. The ‘evil condition of the population’, he argued, was due ‘to the total absence of residents of a better class’ and ‘the remedial influence that the mere presence of a gentleman’ could have.²² Due to his residence in Stepney, Edward Denison is sometimes regarded by historians as the first ‘settler’.²³ Around 1869, Denison, J.R. Green and Brooke Lambert, a vicar in Whitechapel, met at the home of John Ruskin in order to formulate a new scheme for aiding the poor.²⁴ Their idea was to establish a university settlement in East London so that ‘men of culture’ could have a refining influence on the life of the urban poor.²⁵ While this proposal did not come to immediate fruition, this meeting was a highly significant event in the history of the settlement house movement. As Werner Picht wrote in his 1914 study of Toynbee Hall, the proposal for a settlement house was a ‘suggestion that fell on fruitful soil prepared long before’.²⁶ However, by 1884 the idea had evolved to include a scheme aimed at the reformation of social workers as well as the urban poor.

In his foundational speech at Oxford, Samuel Barnett was actively seeking to recruit men for his settlement house scheme. In his effort to do so, he not only

²¹ J.R. Green, ‘Edward Denison – In Memoriam’, *Macmillan’s Magazine* 24 (September 1871), 379.

²² Baldwyn Leighton, ed., *Work among the London Poor: Letters and Other writings of the late Edward Denison*, (London: Richard Bentley and Son 1884), 17, 52.

²³ See, for example, John Alfred Ralph (J.A.R.) Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress 1884-1934, with a Preface by His Grace the Archbishop* (London: Dent, 1935), 12; Nigel Scotland, *Squires in the Slums: Settlements and Missions in Late Victorian Britain* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 177.

²⁴ Brooke Lambert, ‘Jacob’s Answer to Esau’s Cry’, *Contemporary Review* 46 (September 1884), 377.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Werner Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914), 27.

emphasised the poverty of London's East End and the needs of the poor, but he also outlined a reformist project aimed at the 'remaking' of the upper classes. In his address, Barnett recounted the following dialogue:

'What will save East London?' asked one of our university visitors of his master. 'The destruction of West London' was the answer, and in so far as he meant the abolition of the space which divides the rich and the poor, the answer was right. Not until the habits of the rich are changed, and they are again content to breathe the same air and walk the same streets as the poor, will East London be 'saved'.²⁷

In this conversation, the project of reforming the upper classes was presented as a necessary stage to the primary goal of 'saving' the East End. Samuel Barnett's speech and settlers' accounts of this event illustrate that the cultivation of the upper classes was a significant item on the settlement agenda. In his address, Barnett described the benefits of settling for university men. He declared that a settlement would be '*an outlet for every form of earnestness*', that there would be 'less distraction and more interest than in a West End lodging' and that settlers would learn 'facts which would revolutionise their minds'.²⁸ Barnett argued that a young man could be 'saved from selfishness if he were allowed at once to translate feeling into action'.²⁹ Additionally, settlers would be able to form 'many acquaintances'.³⁰ Barnett's speech was warmly received by his Oxford audience. The *Oxford Magazine* said it was an 'entrancing' address which garnered an 'enthusiastic' reception.³¹

In their reminiscences of the occasion, several university men reflected on the advantages of joining the settlement. According to Cosmo Lang, a Balliol student and a future chairman of the Toynbee Hall Council, Barnett promised that in return for their

²⁷ 'Settlements of University Men in Great Towns', paper read by Samuel Barnett at St John's College on 17 November 1883, in Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, *Practicable Socialism*, 104-105.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 102, 99. (Italics in original)

²⁹ *Ibid*, 102.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 101.

³¹ 'Notes and News: Samuel Barnett's "University Settlements in Great Towns"', *The Oxford Magazine* 21 (November 1883), 383.

assistance, university men would receive the ‘lessons of patience, fellowship [and] self-sacrifice’.³² Recalling the occasion, Canon Scott Holland made a similar remark:

He sometimes spoke with awe and bated breath about things that seemed to us commonplace enough. Once for instance in Balliol Hall he had described to breathless undergraduates all that might be possible to them if they came to work for the poor in East London, and then he mentioned as a culmination to their dreams and aspirations that possibly at last they might become poor-law guardians! There was rather a sudden fall in the excitement for the moment, at this vision of the East End, but we saw gradually that this meant that you would have got to the very heart of things in a way that really touched the life and needs of the poor.³³

Reflections like this highlight that the settlers and their various experiences were conceived by Barnett as an integral part of the settlement house movement. Clearly, his East End colony was to be an institution where Oxbridge men could be ‘saved’ from vices such as selfishness and decadence.³⁴

Samuel Barnett’s Oxford speech marked the inauguration of the university settlement movement in London. His audience included a number of men who later formed the nucleus of Toynbee Hall’s first residents and supporters. As Cosmo Lang observed: ‘We who heard the paper decided that we must act upon it.’³⁵ At a subsequent meeting of Oxford graduates and undergraduates, an action committee was appointed to ‘report as to the best means of carrying into effect the proposal laid before the university ... by the Rev. S.A. Barnett’.³⁶ The committee’s recommendations were presented at a meeting at Oxford on 23 February 1884, where it was decided that a university settlement would be established in East London.³⁷ Due to the convenience of its location near

³² *Stepney Welfare*, July 1913; cited in Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:310.

³³ Henry Scott Holland, *A Bundle of Memories* (London: Wells Gardner, Darton and Co., 1915), 92.

³⁴ ‘Settlements of University Men in Great Towns’, in Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, *Practicable Socialism*, 102.

³⁵ Quoted in John Gilbert Lockhart, *Cosmo Gordon Lang* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1949), 39.

³⁶ First Annual Report of the Universities’ Settlement in East London (Oxford, 1885), 5. The committee included James Bryce, the MP for Tower Hamlets; Philip Lyttelton Gell and Bolton King of Balliol College; C.S. Loch, secretary of the COS; and Alfred Milner of New College.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

Aldgate train station and the opportunities ‘afforded by Mr. Barnett’s various undertakings in Whitechapel’, it was recommended ‘that the site of the Boys’ Industrial School behind Commercial Street shall be secured as a home and centre for university men who desire to find work in East London’.³⁸ Given his public stature and his involvement in the scheme, Samuel Barnett was offered, and accepted, the first wardenship of the settlement.

In December 1884, Barnett’s settlement commenced on donations and financial support from individuals, Oxbridge colleges and London-based sponsors.³⁹ On Christmas Eve 1884, the first settlers, Henry Leigh of New College and Charles Grinling of Hertford College, moved into the new settlement, the first of a long succession of residents. The house was formally opened with a students’ *conversazione* on 10 January 1885. It was named Toynbee Hall in commemoration of Arnold Toynbee, who had died in 1883 at the age of 31. Shortly after Toynbee’s death, Barnett wrote to Philip Lyttleton Gell, one of Toynbee’s Oxford friends:

But now cannot some of us who loved him meet? Is there no upper chamber in which we may talk of him and see if his spirit won’t come as a tongue of fire – will you meet here on a Sunday – you – Milner – Wise and any other – what think you? His work must not fail – no one can do it but together we may do something.⁴⁰

Despite the biblical reference to the Christian celebration of Pentecost in the remark above, Toynbee Hall held no official connections with the Church of England and

³⁸ Ibid, 5.

³⁹ The residential aspect of the settlement was self-supporting, with settlers paying rent for their rooms. See J.A.R. Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress, 1884-1934* (London: Dent, 1935), 38. Part of the cost of the public functions of the settlement was covered by subscriptions from settlement associates and members of the Universities’ Settlement Association. For the most part, the settlement houses were supported by subscriptions from Oxford and Cambridge colleges, particularly Balliol College. Settlements also received some grants from institutions like the Board of Education and the London County Council. See Werner Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914), 32-33, 39.

⁴⁰ Letter from Samuel Barnett to P.L. Gell, March 14, 1883, D3287/115/2/15, Gell Papers, Derbyshire Record Office.

was criticised in some Oxford circles for its non-sectarian stance. One contemporary advised: 'The visitor will be disappointed if he expects to find Toynbee Hall a directly religious agency established for evangelistic purposes.'⁴¹ One writer, C.G.L (probably Cosmo Gordon Lang), suggested that the settlement should have 'at least an indirect connection with the clergy of the parish'. He added that it 'ought never to abandon the religious element'.⁴² In an interview with one of Charles Booth's researchers, Reverend Bayne went so far as to criticise Toynbee Hall as an 'irreligious influence'.⁴³ The opposition to Barnett's vision eventually centred on a group of High Church men in Keble College, Oxford, who felt that Toynbee Hall was too secular in character and who decided to establish an alternative scheme along clear Anglican lines. At a meeting at Keble College at the end of January 1884, which was addressed by the Warden of Keble, Edward Talbot, as well as Walsham How and Octavia Hill, proposals were put forward for a new settlement – Oxford House.⁴⁴

By the spring of 1884, there were plans in place for two separate university settlements. Samuel Barnett was disappointed by the defection. As his wife recorded, the fact that reformers had thought 'it necessary to start another settlement because Toynbee Hall was not in their opinion religious, was a deep, a very deep pain to Mr Barnett'. He 'could not help minding', Henrietta Barnett wrote, when Oxford House leaders or followers sought the support of men who had arranged to come to Toynbee Hall.⁴⁵ Barnett himself wrote to his brother of these rising tensions in March 1884: 'Keble people are . . . very vigorous and it will strain one's charity to be in spirit with their fellow

⁴¹ Henry Walker, *East London: Sketches of Christian Work and Workers* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1896), 33-34.

⁴² C.G.L., 'Letter to the Editor on University Settlements', *Oxford Magazine*, November 21, 1883, 397.

⁴³ Baxter Interview with the Reverend Bayne, notes for *Life and Labour of the People in London*. Third Series. Religious Influences, vol 2, London North of the Thames: The Inner Ring, A 39, parish notes, District 7 and 8, Booth Papers, London School of Economics.

⁴⁴ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 34.

⁴⁵ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:29.

workers. I must begin by quenching the desire to say what I think.’⁴⁶

Although Oxford House never quite emerged from the shadow of Toynbee Hall, it was the first settlement to officially begin work in East London. Oxford House opened its doors in October 1884, three months before the first residents arrived at Toynbee Hall. Oxford House men were first accommodated in converted school rooms of St Andrew’s parish in Bethnal Green. In 1891, Oxford House moved to new premises on Derbyshire Street near Bethnal Green Road. Edward Talbot later admitted that Oxford House men had played the part of the ‘cuckoo’ for ‘they in a degree stole Canon Barnett’s idea and put it to their own purposes’.⁴⁷ When the Talbots visited the Oxford House site in May 1884, Lavinia considered it to be ‘excellent in many ways’, but ‘p’raps too close to the ch[urch] and Vic[arage] for quite the right independence and too close I think to Mr Barnett and Whitechapel’.⁴⁸ However, while there was some initial disappointment on the part of Toynbee men, the relations between the settlements were for the most part amicable. According to J.A.R. Pimlott, there was ‘some bitterness’ for a time between the settlements, but the ‘success of both Settlements soon dispelled the early jealousy’.⁴⁹ Walsham How remarked in 1884 that he was ‘glad the two schemes are taking somewhat different shapes, as there will not be even a superficial appearance of rivalry’.⁵⁰

Although both settlement houses emerged from Samuel Barnett’s Oxford speech, Oxford House had been established in direct opposition to Barnett’s non-sectarian ideal. Their religious differences meant that Toynbee Hall and Oxford House would ultimately seek to make a different kind of social reformer (see Chapter Two). However, the two

⁴⁶ Letter from Samuel Barnett to Frank Barnett, 1 March 1884, F/BAR/002, Samuel Barnett Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

⁴⁷ E.S. Talbot, Bishop of Rochester, Annual Meeting of Oxford House, held at Keble College; reported in the *Oxford House Chronicle* (June 1896), 3.

⁴⁸ Diary of Lavinia Talbot, 4 May 1884, Talbot Papers, Hagley Hall, Stourbridge, West Midlands; cited in Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), 243.

⁴⁹ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 252-253.

⁵⁰ Walsham How, 23 February 1884; see Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, 106.

settlements shared a common aim to address the needs of their settlers, to look after their welfare and to provide them with a space in which they could channel their social interests.

‘Exactly the opportunity which their gathering interest in the problems of poverty demanded’: A settlement house

The settlement houses answered a felt need by young men to engage with social problems, enabling them to act upon concerns about the problems of the East End and the condition of the poor. The growing interest in philanthropy among Oxbridge men can be partly attributed to Andrew Mearns’s penny pamphlet, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*, which was published in 1883 when moves to establish Toynbee Hall had begun.

Published anonymously under the auspices of the London Congregational Union, *The Bitter Cry* emphasised the depraved and immoral condition of London’s poor and the consequent need for social work.⁵¹ While the *Bitter Cry* focused on poverty-stricken areas in South London rather than the East End, Mearns’s pamphlet (and other slum literature of the time) heightened the social awareness of university men and drew their attention to Toynbee Hall.⁵² As *The Oxford Magazine* remarked: ‘It was to the profound, and we trust not transient impression created in Oxford by the *Bitter Cry* that interest in Toynbee Hall was originally due.’⁵³ The interest that *The Bitter Cry* stimulated within the universities was evident in a letter that the future Toynbee Hall settler and educationalist, Robert

Morant, wrote to his mother:

⁵¹ J.A.R. Pimlott attributed the authorship of *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* to William Preston of Manchester. The pamphlet was also attributed to Preston by Halkett and Laing in the *Dictionary of Anonymous and Pseudonymous English Literature* and the British Museum Catalogue. See Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 25.

⁵² Geoff Ginn describes a common tendency for contemporaries to use *The Bitter Cry* to refer to conditions in the East End in ‘Answering the “Bitter Cry”’: Urban Description and Social Reform in the Late-Victorian East End’, *The London Journal* 31, no. 2 (2006), 185.

⁵³ ‘Notes and News’, *The Oxford Magazine*, February 10, 1886, 34.

Have you seen that pamphlet that everyone is talking of – *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*? Kerry [a friend] says there are just as bad things in his parish at Bristol – father and mother and three children, the first ill with consumption and the three children with scarlatina, all in one room with four pigs, and much worse things than that.⁵⁴

When Toynbee Hall was officially opened in 1884, Morant followed its development with interest, even seeking details of the settlement house from his sister who had participated in one of its concerts. However, he did not send in his name to the committee who were selecting residents. Despite his apparent enthusiasm for the settlement scheme, he focused instead on reading for his degree.⁵⁵ He did not join Toynbee Hall until 1895. Other Oxbridge men were prompted to take more immediate action. Before Mearns's publication, just a small number of Oxbridge men had entered Toynbee Hall or Oxford. However, by 1913, the number of settlers had grown to more than 400.⁵⁶ In late 1883, James Adderley observed that the *Bitter Cry* had 'successfully directed the attention of the West End to the East'.⁵⁷ C.H. Grinling, one of Toynbee Hall's first residents, recalled that the pamphlet was published during his last year at Oxford and 'drew me for a year or more to Whitechapel'.⁵⁸

Clearly, university men were receptive to the idea of a university settlement. In his speech at Oxford, Barnett stated that 'long before the late outcry' undergraduates and graduates had become conscious that social conditions were not right, and that 'they themselves were called to do something'. Alluding to social writings like *The Bitter Cry*, he added: 'The revelations of recent pamphlets have fallen on ears prepared to hear.'⁵⁹

Similarly, Pimlott described 'a high state of emotion' amongst Oxford men who 'wanted,

⁵⁴ Quoted in Bernard M. Allen, *Sir Robert Morant: A Great Public Servant* (London: Macmillan, 1934), 25.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁵⁶ *Westminster Gazette*, June 19, 1913; also cited in Matthews-Jones, 'Centres of Brightness', 37.

⁵⁷ Adderley, *In Slums and Society*, 16-17.

⁵⁸ C.H. Grinling, *Fifty Years of Pioneer Work in Woolwich* (London, 1920), 2.

⁵⁹ 'Settlements of University Men in Great Towns', in Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, *Practicable Socialism*, 97.

above all, the opportunity for practical assistance to the poor which Barnett was able to offer'.⁶⁰ According to Henry Scott Holland, Barnett 'came as a prophet just when it was wanted, and men saw in his Settlement proposal exactly the opportunity which their gathering interest in the problems of poverty demanded for its exercise and fulfilment'.⁶¹ Cosmo Lang, the future Archbishop of York, believed that the settlement houses allowed university men to act upon their feelings:

Our conscience felt the rebuke of the contrast between the wealth of inheritance and opportunity stored up in Oxford and the poverty of the life lived amid the mean streets and monotonous labour of East London. In a vague way we felt the claim of that poverty on our wealth. Could anything practical be done to meet it? The answer to that question was important. If it had not come, the movement might have drifted into mere vague sentiment or academic talk. It came that November evening.⁶²

As this commentary suggests, the settlement movement provided a channel for Oxbridge men who were keen to pursue social reform. This was the case for Basil Henriques who stayed at the Oxford and Bermondsey mission before joining Toynbee Hall. Henriques believed that the settlement movement offered an avenue for him to engage with social issues: 'I felt that Bermondsey needed *me*, but I felt still more that I needed Bermondsey. I simply must learn first-hand of their hardships and handicaps . . . I felt that I must make that struggle. I must cross that bridge.'⁶³ Settlement houses gave young men an opportunity to investigate social problems and to assist the urban poor. As a member of a prominent Anglo-Jewish family, settling in East London also afforded Henriques a cross-religious experience (see Chapter Six on residential responses to religious pluralism within the settlement). As his remark indicates, settling was viewed as a cross-class exchange which could benefit or redeem members of London's West End.

⁶⁰ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 29.

⁶¹ Holland, *A Bundle of Memories*, 92.

⁶² Cosmo Lang, *Stepney Welfare*, July 1913; see Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:310.

⁶³ Basil Henriques, *The Indiscretions of a Warden* (London: Methuen and Co., 1937), 21. (Italics in original)

A Key Item on the Agenda: Saving the ‘Wicked West End’

In the late nineteenth century, an emphasis was increasingly placed on the reform of individual character as a key element in social work.⁶⁴ The pervasive Victorian notion of ‘character’ was the belief that men and women could become virtuous by their ‘own effort of will’. This virtue, it was suggested, was ‘an essentially public characteristic, which consisted not simply of private rationality or piety but of promoting the best interests of society as a whole’.⁶⁵ Contact with the moralising influences of the middle and upper classes would, it was hoped, ‘improve’ the character of the urban poor. However, the improvement of the middle and upper classes themselves was also considered necessary for any genuine social amelioration.

The moral improvement of the more privileged social classes was a key concern of the settlement houses. In 1886, Hugh Hughes, a clergyman who supported the settlement movement, highlighted the problems of London’s ‘wicked’ West End.⁶⁶ Settlement leaders drew upon this image of an immoral West End not only to emphasise failings among the social elite, but also to suggest that the character and behaviour of East Enders could surpass that of their West End counterparts.⁶⁷ Samuel Barnett, among others, insisted that the ‘idlers of the West End’ were morally on the same level as ‘the idlers of the East End’ and that the ‘unemployed in East London’ were simply ‘the reverse side of the unemployed who crowd West London clubs and drawing-rooms’.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ See Stefan Collini, ‘The Idea of “Character” in Victorian Political Thought’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 35 (1985), 31-32.

⁶⁵ Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit*, 249.

⁶⁶ ‘The Wicked West End: An Interview with the Disraeli of Methodism’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, March 3, 1886, 1; also quoted in Matthews-Jones, ‘Centres of Brightness: The Spiritual Imagination of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House, 1880-1914’, 45.

⁶⁷ See, for example, Arthur Winnington-Ingram, *The Weakness of West End Christianity* (London: Wells Gardner, Darton and Co., 1910), 10.

⁶⁸ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:262.

The only difference, Barnett argued, was that the vices of the West End were ‘hidden by greater wealth’.⁶⁹ It was from this perspective that settlement leaders encouraged the upper classes to address ‘not only the problems of poverty, but also the ethics of luxury’. Samuel Barnett maintained that while ‘all sorts of missions and schemes’ existed for the poor, a change had to ‘be effected in the habits of the rich’.⁷⁰ The need for such reform was also highlighted in the period after Barnett’s wardenship. Thomas Harvey, his successor, spoke of the need to awaken in both East and West London ‘a divine discomfort with our own ignorance and selfishness, with our laziness and lack of courage’.⁷¹

Toynbee Hall and Oxford House were concerned about several aspects of West End behaviour, including divorce and extra-marital affairs. Their chief concern, however, was with the perceived decadence of the upper classes. Adderley, among others, reflected that he had always felt discomforted by the wealth and complacency of the upper classes and the ‘continual struggle of the masses’.⁷² Barnett wrote that he, too, felt ‘wearied’ by the extravagance and affectation of the rich.⁷³ In a letter to *The Times* entitled ‘Luxury and Poverty’ a group of settlement leaders accused West Enders of self-indulgence. They argued that luxury hindered social reform and could corrupt the upper classes by engendering indifference, selfishness and ignorance. In their letter, settlers urged West Enders to embrace a ‘simpler’ lifestyle.⁷⁴ Settlers frequently commented that their social circles in Oxbridge and the West End were limited. Despite its material comforts,

⁶⁹ ‘The Forcible Letter which we Printed Yesterday’, *The Times*, September 19, 1888, 7.

⁷⁰ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:256; Barnett in *Canon Barnett*, 2:261.

⁷¹ Quoted in Asa Briggs and Anne Macartney, *Toynbee Hall: The First Hundred Years* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), 82.

⁷² Adderley, *In Slums and Society*, 195, 26.

⁷³ Letter from Samuel Barnett to Henrietta Rowland, 8 June, 1872, in Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:52.

⁷⁴ James Adderley (Oxford House), Percy Alden (Mansfield House), Samuel Barnett (Toynbee Hall), Rebecca H. Cheetham (Women’s Settlement), George E. Gladstone (Passmore Edwards), W.J. Conybeare (Cambridge House), Beatrice C. Harrington (St. Margaret’s), T.E. Harvey (Chalfont House, Toynbee Hall), W. E. Jackson (Oxford House), J. Scott Lidgett (Bermondsey), H.S. Woollcombe (Oxford House), ‘Luxury and Poverty: Letter to the Editor’, *The Times*, February 11, 1905, 10.

settlement leaders argued that high society could be insulated, confined and unvarying and, as William Beveridge wrote, no man could ‘really be a good citizen who goes through life in a watertight compartment of his own class’.⁷⁵

In stark contrast to the notion of a ‘wicked’ West End, the East End was often promoted as a restorative place where the privileged classes could be improved. Samuel Barnett was prominent among settlement leaders who argued that East London could ‘do something to save West London’.⁷⁶ This was a view that enjoyed some longevity in the settlement movement. Guy Clutton-Brock, the head of Oxford House between 1940 and 1944, believed that Bethnal Greeners might further the knowledge of university men. He anticipated that it ‘may well be that there will be greater need for a settlement in Oxford and that Bethnal Green will have much to tell a University City’.⁷⁷ Contact with the East End and with different social classes, particularly the poor, was presented as a positive influence on the upper classes. For men like Charles Booth, the East End also offered some reprieve from the routines of daily life. Booth was not a resident of Toynbee Hall, but he used a shed on the settlement premises as a base for some of his work.⁷⁸ Booth’s wife commented that he was more relaxed walking through the East End than staying in his own estate of ‘quiet and beauty’. She wrote: ‘He likes the life and the people and the food which he says agrees with him.’⁷⁹ Settlers like Arthur Pillans Laurie believed that the East End was more ‘real’ than the West as it was ‘in touch with the facts of life’.⁸⁰

The salvation of the ‘wicked’ West End, it was argued, depended not only on this type of familiarity with the East End, but on the upper classes reconciling with their poor

⁷⁵ Letter from William Beveridge to Annette Beveridge, 28 November 1904, in William Beveridge, *Power and Influence* (New York: Beechurst Press, 1955), 30.

⁷⁶ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:92.

⁷⁷ Quoted in Mandy Ashworth, *The Oxford House in Bethnal Green: 100 Years of Work in the Community* (London: Oxford House, 1984), 44.

⁷⁸ This is the site where the Barnett Research Centre in Toynbee Hall now stands.

⁷⁹ Letter from Mary Booth to Beatrice Potter, 1887, MS797 I/1234, Booth Correspondence, Booth Papers, University of London Library.

⁸⁰ Arthur Pillans Laurie, *Pictures and Politics: A Book of Reminiscences* (London: International Publishing Company, 1934), 74.

‘brothers’ in the slums. The biblical parable of Jacob and Esau became a popular allegory for cross-class fraternalism for social reformers in the late Victorian period as the reconciliation of these two brothers was regarded as a possible model for a solution to the problems in London’s ‘two nations’.⁸¹ In this tale, Isaac’s wife, Rebekah, gives birth to two sons who represent two conflicting nations – the Edomites and the Israelites. As the elder son, Esau inherits all birth rights from his father. However, when he returns home one day feeling famished, he is tricked into giving Jacob his inheritance rights in exchange for a bowl of soup. Faced with Esau’s subsequent anger, Jacob flees to Haran where he eventually becomes a wealthy man. In an effort to placate Esau, Jacob later returns home and sends his brother a number of lavish gifts.⁸² Although Esau had assembled 400 men to attack Jacob, the gifts appease him and the two brothers are reconciled.

This story was frequently referred to within the settlement movement. Social reformers represented the poor as the downtrodden Esau and the upper classes as his younger brother, Jacob. Like their London counterparts, both brothers in this story were presented as subjects in need of reform. While he is the victim of the story, Esau is not faultless. In the Genesis story, he is depicted as ‘rough’ and ‘ruddy’. While Jacob is depicted as smooth-skinned, pale and a man of the ‘tent’, Esau is a ‘natural man’ of the field. Arthur Winnington-Ingram of Oxford House described Esau as ‘an animal’ who ‘cared for nothing but the passing moment’. He argued that Esau’s failing was that he ‘couldn’t “be bothered” as you would say, about things he couldn’t see, or touch, or handle’. He added, ‘give him a mess of pottage and he would never look beyond it’. Nevertheless, Winnington-Ingram believed that Esau was the moral man of the story,

⁸¹ This parable may be found in The Bible: Authorised King James Version, Genesis 25-33. A digitalised version may be found at

<http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/book.php?book=Genesis&chapter=25&verse=> (Accessed 29 September 2018).

⁸² Ibid, Genesis 32:5.

observing that Esau was frank, generous and ‘good-natured enough’ and that he ‘would have been popular in a boys’ club’.⁸³ Samuel Barnett argued that the settler’s role was, in many ways, like that of the younger and wealthier brother, Jacob. This is significant as Jacob is the morally flawed character in this story, guilty of both theft and deceit. It is he, too, who undergoes a process of reformation. Settlement leaders wanted the wealthy classes to perform the duties of an elder sibling and serve as an example to their younger family members.⁸⁴ However, Barnett argued that settlers needed to improve themselves before they could address the needs of the poor. He urged the rich, ‘before they go to deal with their poor, disinherited brother’ to wrestle, as Jacob had, ‘with the spirit that haunts their path’.⁸⁵

Toynbee Hall and Oxford House argued that the West End could be redeemed through a cross-class brotherhood. Settlers could play the role of Jacob who, after realising his faults, reconciled with his brother. In December 1883, Reverend Brooke Lambert wrote an article for the *Contemporary Review* entitled ‘The Outcast Poor: Esau’s Cry’ in which he argued that London’s poor, like Esau, had been deprived of their birth right. Lambert compared Jacob to settlers in the East End, writing: ‘An effort is being made to draw these classes estranged, as was Esau from Jacob, together. And this effort [is] in the form of University Settlements.’⁸⁶ The imperative for the university man to ‘love’ his ‘poor, disinherited brother’ in the East End was at the heart of the settlement idea.⁸⁷ Appealing for cross-class brotherhood, Samuel Barnett espoused fraternal love for the poor through what he called the ‘personal touch’.⁸⁸ This fraternal language was also evident within Oxford House where James Adderley advocated not a ‘patronising spirit’,

⁸³ Arthur Winnington-Ingram, *Addresses to Working Lads* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1908), 55-56.

⁸⁴ Winnington-Ingram, *The Weakness of West End Christianity*, 10.

⁸⁵ Samuel Barnett, ‘The Failure of Philanthropy’, *Macmillan’s Magazine*, March 1896, 396.

⁸⁶ Lambert, ‘The Outcast Poor: Esau’s Cry’, 917.

⁸⁷ Barnett, ‘The Failure of Philanthropy’, 396.

⁸⁸ Samuel Barnett, manuscript of speech delivered at Toynbee Hall, 2 July 1889, ms. 1463, ff 60, Samuel Barnett Papers, Lambeth Palace Library.

but ‘a spirit of neighbourliness’.⁸⁹

The Settlers as both Agents and Targets of Reform: The ‘Salt of the Earth’ and the ‘Submerged Gentlemen’

Like the ‘wicked’ West Enders, settlers were often depicted as men who had been limited or tainted by their social class, but such views co-existed with more idealistic representations. After all, it was among the upper-middle and upper classes that the settlements looked for prospective residents in the first place and it was hoped that they would play an important role in the settlement movement’s scheme of redeeming Outcast London. Samuel Barnett referred to Oxford men as the ‘salt of the earth’.⁹⁰ As this appellation suggests, the settlers were regarded as promising young men.

As former Oxbridge students, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men came from the higher ranks of British society, usually the gentry or the professional middle classes.⁹¹ Most settlers were recent graduates of Oxford and Cambridge who could reside in the slums without financial concerns. Of the 215 men who lived at Toynbee Hall between 1884 and 1914, at least 150 attended Oxford or Cambridge. Similar demographics were evident in Oxford House, but the proportion of Oxford settlers to Cambridge settlers was more pronounced. Of the 374 men who resided in Oxford House between 1884 and 1914 (and whose educational background can be identified), 336 were from Oxford and only 34 were from Cambridge. Four men were from other educational institutions – Harvard University, Middlebury College, Durham University and Copenhagen University.

⁸⁹ Adderley, *In Slums and Society*, 48.

⁹⁰ Letter from Samuel Barnett to Frank Barnett, 1 March 1884, F/BAR/002, Samuel Barnett Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

⁹¹ C. Arnold Anderson and Miriam Schnaper, *School and Society in England: Social Backgrounds of Oxford and Cambridge Students* (Westport: Greenwood, 1952). Also see Reba Soffer, *Discipline and Power: The University, History and the Making of an English Elite, 1870-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), especially pages 10-12; 179-180.

A contributor to the *Oxford Critic and University Magazine*, as early as 1857, believed that ‘as a rule’, university students were ‘gentlemen’.⁹² As such, they were deemed well suited to philanthropy and were regarded as the bearers of university culture. They were also recognised for their potential to initiate reform. In 1940, Beatrice Webb wrote of William Beveridge that he ‘and his class have to do the job . . . He agrees that there must be a revolution in the economic structure of society: but it must be guided by persons with training and knowledge’, that is, ‘by himself and those he chooses as his colleagues’.⁹³ Settlers, too, shared this view. In 1912, R.H. Tawney suggested that those best suited to undertake ‘bold social experiments’ were ‘those who have leisure’ and ‘have had the opportunity to develop their faculties’.⁹⁴ Samuel Barnett believed the youth of the settlers was also a valuable asset. As recent graduates, most settlers were young men in their early to mid-twenties and Barnett argued that although the ‘older generation may offer guidance’, ‘the driving force’ should come from the young.⁹⁵

Producing a new generation of socially engaged men was regarded as a prerequisite for a successful settlement. The settlement movement was founded on the notion that the urban slums needed the presence and leadership of a gentlemanly class. Philip Gell remarked that East Enders needed the guidance of a ‘well-to-do leisured class whose duty it is to maintain the standard of administration and refinement’.⁹⁶ Henry Scott Holland envisaged that university men could serve as ‘squires’ in East London.⁹⁷ In undertaking such tasks, settlers were expected to act as role models for the poor. As

⁹² ‘Oxford Manners’, *Oxford Critic and University Magazine* 1 (June 1857), 21.

⁹³ Beatrice Webb, diary entry, 11 August 1940, in ‘Beatrice Webb’s manuscript diary, 1 January 1940 – 9 December 1940’, Passfield/1, London School of Economics. A digitalised copy of this manuscript is available at: <https://digital.library.lse.ac.uk/objects/lse:mim304rov> (accessed 29 September 2018).

⁹⁴ R.H. Tawney, *Tawney’s Commonplace Book*, ed. J.M. Winter and D.M. Joslin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 16.

⁹⁵ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:104.

⁹⁶ Philip Lyttelton Gell, *Universities Settlement in East London. The Municipal Responsibilities of the Well to Do* (1886), 2. Pamphlet bound in Annual Reports I – X, A/TOY/005, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

⁹⁷ See James Adderley, *In Slums and Society*, 48. Nigel Scotland draws upon this notion in his *Squires in the Slums: Settlements and Missions in Late Victorian London* (London: I.B Tauris, 2007).

Samuel Barnett stated in his inaugural speech at Oxford, settlers would ‘set up a higher standard of man’s life’.⁹⁸ This was not a new idea for Barnett. Earlier, in 1878, he had argued: ‘If this East End is to be helped, it must be by those Christ-like enough to give their best to those that ask.’⁹⁹ In its statement of aims, Oxford House also suggested that settlers ‘may offer an example, so far as in them lies, of a simple and religious life’.¹⁰⁰ In this respect, the process of social improvement within the houses began with the upper classes.

As representatives of their class, the settlers’ persona was perceived to be as important as their activities in the East End. In a letter to his wife before the foundation of Toynbee Hall, Samuel Barnett wrote that ‘it is so much more important to be than to do’.¹⁰¹ In 1886, the Toynbee resident, P.L. Gell, placed a similar emphasis on settlers’ way of life rather than their actual work in East London. He remarked: ‘The primary object of Toynbee Hall is not to collect men together to do a certain piece of work, but rather to live a certain kind of life.’¹⁰² The idea that ‘being’ was more important than ‘doing’ was shared by other early settlers. In 1905, Barnett wrote with some disappointment that settlers ‘had been inclined to become too much like the “missionary” they were designed to supplement’. They had come to stand for ‘work among the poor’ rather than for ‘the being of a body of educated people’.¹⁰³ This comment not only highlighted Toynbee Hall’s role as a civic centre rather than a Christian mission (like Oxford House), but it also illustrates that the character and behaviour of settlers was of paramount importance to the settlement project. The settlers’ role was to serve as an

⁹⁸ ‘Settlements of University Men in Great Towns’, in Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, *Practicable Socialism*, 101.

⁹⁹ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:85.

¹⁰⁰ Oxford House, *Oxford House in Bethnal Green: Report, Balance Sheet and List of Subscriptions*, 1893 (1894), 6.

¹⁰¹ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:41.

¹⁰² Francis Charles Montague, *Arnold Toynbee: With an Account of the Work of Toynbee Hall in East London*, by Philip Lyttelton Gell; *Also an Account of the Neighborhood Guild in New York*, by Charles B. Stover (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Sciences, 1889), 58.

¹⁰³ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:104.

example to the poor and contribute to reform in the East End. There was therefore a persistent concern with their character and conduct. The settlement houses' dependency on the presence of Oxbridge men in the slums meant that personal failings on the part of the settlers could potentially disrupt or limit reformist aims.

Oxbridge was often idealised in university and settlement literature. In an address at St Mary's in Oxford in 1883, the Reverend Montagu Butler described the university as 'a great home of eager thought and enlightened action and generous friendship'.¹⁰⁴ At the end of the First World War, the *Oxford Magazine* described Oxford men as bearers of the university's culture: 'Oxford is a national and imperial asset . . . we have received a great heritage which we hold in trust for mankind. To spread that inheritance more widely is the task laid upon us.'¹⁰⁵ The settlement houses were founded with a similar view that Oxford and Cambridge were centres of sophistication, refinement and civilisation. Samuel Barnett praised the life of the Oxford student and the spirit of the university, observing: 'Oxford has a great charm in its society of people who are cultured.'¹⁰⁶ Barnett had spent three years at the university, entering Wadham College in September 1862. After obtaining a second-class honours degree in law and history, he spent a year as a master in Winchester College. According to Henrietta Barnett, Samuel 'dearly loved Oxford'.¹⁰⁷ The Barnetts frequently visited the university in search of reprieve from the demands of their parish work in Whitechapel. Henrietta painted an idyllic scene of the days she and her husband spent at Oxford with Arnold Toynbee and his peers. She recalled how 'in the evenings we used to drop quietly down the river with two or three earnest men, or sit long and late in our lodgings on the Turl, and discuss the mighty

¹⁰⁴ Rev. Montagu Butler, 'Love the Brotherhood', *Oxford Magazine*, October 1883, 344.

¹⁰⁵ *Oxford Magazine* 37, November 8, 1918, 49.

¹⁰⁶ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:367.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 1:66.

problems of poverty and the people'.¹⁰⁸ Henrietta was grateful for their friends at the university who 'swept us out of the darkness and pain of Whitechapel when it threatened to paralyse our powers'. However, she suggested that their own presence benefited university men, adding that she and Samuel Barnett in turn 'swept them out of the sunlight of the happier world, when it threatened to blind them to the sins and sorrows of those who too silently suffered'.¹⁰⁹

While settlement leaders appreciated the 'sweetness and light'¹¹⁰ of the universities, they also pointed to failings within these institutions. Oxford and Cambridge men may have been widely regarded as the 'salt of the earth' within settlement circles, but there was also recognition of a limit to the universities' capacity to shape young men. A number of settlers believed that a moral demarcation between the West End and the East End was too simplistic, as was the idealisation of the Oxbridge man above his London peers and the poor.

The behaviour of some university men was criticised within the settlements. Despite his affection for the university, Barnett expressed concerns about the culture of the public schools, which was engendering arrogance among some Oxford students. Writing to his brother in 1900, he described the universities as 'expensive schools with a schoolboy's ideal':

The public school-boy rules colleges and dons. He is 'the finest product of the times' and because he is strong and rich, looks down upon the other boys . . . patronises his 'clever smug' from the elementary school. There is no-one to check this spirit. Jowett [former Master of Balliol College], who was in with the great, could do so, but no-one had succeeded him.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Barnett, 'The Beginning of Toynbee Hall', 245.

¹⁰⁹ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:19.

¹¹⁰ Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1869), 23.

¹¹¹ Samuel Barnett to Frank Barnett, 24 and 28 November 1900, F/BAR/230, Samuel Barnett Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

Barnett's concerns were shared by other settlers. Arthur Winnington-Ingram, for example, expressed concern about drunkenness and gambling in university colleges. He argued that 'if this is to be the standard of Oxford, we are poisoning the well with a vengeance'. He made the following appeal to Oxford students: 'Why, it is to you we look to come down and to help us reform East London, and there is nothing which cuts underneath the trust and hope of those who have hard enough work to keep up hope already than to think Oxford is going to fail us.'¹¹² Concerns were also expressed by outside observers. Edward Cummings, a professor of sociology at Harvard University and the father of the American poet E.E. Cummings, criticised the 'juvenile eccentricities of college life' at Oxbridge.¹¹³

A perceived decline of Christianity within the universities was a subject of particular concern to settlement leaders. Although Oxford was a clerical university with the majority of its dons in holy orders, it experienced a period of religious doubt in the late nineteenth century.¹¹⁴ This decline reflected broader social and cultural changes which affected religious life from the 1860s. Urbanisation and industrialisation, as well as advances in natural science and biblical scholarship, contributed to what historians have called a Victorian 'crisis of faith'.¹¹⁵ The established Church of England remained a powerful institution throughout the Victorian era, but there were greater opportunities for non-Anglicans, including admission to Oxford and Cambridge.¹¹⁶ As the historian Hugh

¹¹² Arthur Winnington-Ingram, *The Gospel in Action* (London: Wells Gardner, Darton and Co., 1909), 124.

¹¹³ Edward Cummings, 'University Settlements', *The Quarter Journal of Economics* 6 (1892), 273.

¹¹⁴ M.G. Brock and M.C. Curthoys, ed., *The History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 7, 'Nineteenth Century Oxford, Part 1' (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 18.

¹¹⁵ There is a wide body of literature on the Victorian crisis of faith. See, for example, K.S. Inglis, *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963); Alan D. Chadwick, *Religion and Society in Industrial England: Church, Chapel and Social Change, 1740-1914* (London: Longman, 1976) and Alan D. Chadwick, *The Making of Post-Christian Britain* (London: Longman, 1980).

¹¹⁶ Religious tests for matriculation were abolished by the University Acts of 1854 (Oxford) and 1856 (Cambridge). Until 1871, college fellows were required to assent to the Thirty-Nine Articles of Faith of the Church of England. This obligation was repealed by the Universities Test Act 1871. Men attending or teaching at Oxford and Cambridge universities no longer had 'to subscribe to any article or formulary or faith'. The act preserved specific offices restricted to persons in holy orders or members of the Church of

McLeod has shown, there was a ‘substantial’ fall in church attendance in England between the late 1880s and 1914.¹¹⁷ From the 1860s, there was also a marked decline in candidates for holy orders, particularly in the Anglican Church.¹¹⁸ Many Oxford men who engaged in social service after 1870, including those who participated in university settlements, had decided against taking holy orders due to their religious doubts.¹¹⁹

The rise of Darwinism and scientific naturalism contributed to the widespread questioning and rejection of religion in Oxford.¹²⁰ In 1872, for example, Winwood Reade, an Oxford scholar, published *The Martyrdom of Man*, recording the results of his inquiry into evolution. Sharing his findings, Reade announced: ‘Christianity is false. God worship is idolatry. Prayer is useless. The soul is not immortal. There are no rewards and punishments in a future state.’¹²¹ Biblical scholarship also raised questions about Christian doctrines and interpretations of the bible. Benjamin Jowett, Master of Balliol College between 1870 and 1893 and a mentor to several Balliol men who joined the settlements, challenged the authority of the Bible. Jowett contributed an article entitled ‘On the Interpretation of Scripture’ to *Essays and Reviews*, a controversial volume published in 1860.¹²² In his essay, Jowett argued that the bible should be interpreted like any other text and not simply accepted without question. He asserted that ‘the book in

England. It also preserved the established system of religious instruction, worship and discipline. See V.H.H. Green, *Religion at Oxford and Cambridge* (London: SCM Press, 1964), 297-337.

¹¹⁷ Hugh McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe, 1848-1914* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 199-200.

¹¹⁸ José Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: A Social History of Britain, 1870-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 151.

¹¹⁹ Denys Leighton, *The Greenian Moment: T.H. Green, Religion and Political Argument in Victorian Britain* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2004), 274.

¹²⁰ Notable publications in the scientific field in this period included Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species* (1859), *Essays and Reviews* (1860), Huxley’s *Man’s Place in Nature* (1863), Lyell’s *Geological Evidences of the Antiquity of Man* (1863) and Darwin’s *Descent of Man* (1871).

¹²¹ Winwood Reade, *The Martyrdom of Man* (London: Watts and Co., 1925), xxv, 430.

¹²² *Essays and Reviews* is a collection of seven essays on Christianity written independently by scholars, six of whom were also clergy of the Church of England. The essays cover topics such as religious philosophy, the church and biblical criticism. Collectively, the essays challenged literal interpretations of the bible. The publication of the volume sparked years of debate and two of its authors, Rowland Williams and Henry Bristow Wilson, were charged with heresy. On the *Essays and Reviews* controversy, see J. L. Altholz, *Anatomy of a Controversy: The Debate over Essays and Reviews, 1860-1864* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994).

which we believe all religious truth to be contained, is the most uncertain of all books' because it is 'interpreted by arbitrary and uncertain methods'.¹²³ Although he was in holy orders and preached in Balliol Chapel, Jowett's view of the church remained critical. He kept his opinions on the subject private, a decision which can partly be attributed to the fact that in 1855, after the publication of his commentaries on the Pauline Epistles, Jowett had been required by the university's vice-chancellor to re-subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles of Faith of the Church of England. Jowett was perhaps recalling this experience when he wrote in 1870 to his confidante, Florence Nightingale, about the 'organised hypocrisy' of the church. On another occasion he told her: 'I gain an increasing conviction that the established Church must come down. It is so extremely unjust to those who are not members of it, socially, educationally, and in every way.'¹²⁴

It was within this context of religious questioning and criticism of the church that concerns were raised about the religiosity of Oxbridge undergraduates.¹²⁵ In 1895, Anthony Deane, a Cambridge graduate, opened up a debate on the subject when he wrote that 'the majority of Oxford and Cambridge undergraduates' were 'without, or at least profess[ed] to be without, any religious beliefs at all'.¹²⁶ Deane argued that agnosticism at the universities was regarded as a 'hallmark of intellectuality' and a 'sign of culture', and he criticised Oxbridge dons for encouraging this attitude either 'by their influence' or 'by their neglect'.¹²⁷ Most students were leaving the university,

¹²³ Benjamin Jowett, 'On the Interpretation of Scripture', *Essays and Reviews* (London: John Parker and Son, 1860), 172.

¹²⁴ Letter from Benjamin Jowett to Florence Nightingale, 4 January 1870 and 19 March 1870, in *Dear Miss Nightingale: A Selection of Benjamin Jowett's Letters to Florence Nightingale, 1860-1893*, ed. Vincent Quinn and John Prest (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 183, 186.

¹²⁵ The term 'agnostic' as it is used here was coined in 1869 by Thomas Huxley who regarded the verdict about a divine creator as unproven either way. See Iain McCalman, *Darwin's Armada* (Camberwell: Penguin, 2009), 358. Huxley wrote on the subject: 'In matters of the intellect do not pretend that conclusions are certain which are not demonstrated or demonstrable.' See Thomas Huxley, *Science and the Christian Tradition: Essays* (New York: D. Appleton, 1901), 246.

¹²⁶ Anthony C. Deane, 'The Religion of the Undergraduate', *The Nineteenth Century* (1895), 675.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 675, 678.

he asserted, as ‘unbelievers’ or ‘blasphemers’.¹²⁸ Deane’s assertions were challenged by men in both Oxford and Cambridge. In ‘A reply from Cambridge’, Reginald Fellows insisted that Deane had been ‘led astray’ in his ‘account of the religion of the undergraduate’.¹²⁹ Hugh Legge from Oxford also refuted Deane’s ‘very erroneous picture of the young Oxford man’¹³⁰, but he agreed that religion at Oxford was in decline. According to Legge, Deane had mistaken indifference and scepticism for agnosticism. The ‘average freshman’, he wrote had ‘a certain amount of inbred reverence for sacred things’ but was generally ‘indifferent to everything in the way of serious religious thought’.¹³¹ Due to its ‘gross indifference’ to religion, Legge (like Deane) argued that the university was failing in its responsibility to prepare young men for careers in the church.¹³²

For many Oxbridge men, a religious impulse was replaced by a secular, social impulse. While early historiography generally presented the history of Victorian religion as a shift from evangelicalism to agnosticism¹³³, modern scholarship recognises that the crisis of faith did not lead inexorably to secularisation.¹³⁴ As José Harris has shown, the predominant religion of the late nineteenth century was ‘social Christianity’, which extended beyond the boundaries of institutionalised religion.¹³⁵ This movement was inspired in part by the clergyman and theologian, Frederick Denison Maurice (1805–1872). In his *Theological Essays*, Maurice argued that charity was ‘the key to unlocking

¹²⁸ Ibid, 676.

¹²⁹ Reginald B. Fellows, ‘The Religion of the Undergraduate: A Reply from Cambridge’, *The Nineteenth Century* (1895), 860.

¹³⁰ Hugh Legge, ‘The Religion of the Undergraduate: A Reply from Oxford’, *The Nineteenth Century* (1895), 863.

¹³¹ Ibid, 862.

¹³² Ibid, 867.

¹³³ See, for example, G.M. Young, *Portrait of an Age: Victorian England*, ed. George Kitson Clark (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), 115-116. José Harris discusses this historiography in *Private Lives, Public Spirit: A Social History of Britain, 1870-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 253.

¹³⁴ See, for example, J. Wolffe, ‘Religion and “Secularisation”’, in P. Johnson, ed., *Twentieth century Britain: Economic, Social and Cultural Change* (London and New York: Longman 1994), 427-41.

¹³⁵ Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit*, 253.

the secrets of Divinity as well as Humanity'.¹³⁶ Although Arnold Toynbee later rejected the notion of charity in favour of social justice he, along with other Oxford men, including T. H. Green, Benjamin Jowett, Charles Gore (Bishop of Oxford) and Canon Scott Holland, drew upon Maurice's philosophy. They espoused a practical, socially-oriented Christianity grounded in good works.¹³⁷ Beatrice Webb, among other social reformers, attributed the growth of middle-class social reform in the late Victorian period to this shift in religion. As Webb put it, the 'impulse of self-subordinating service' had been 'transferred consciously and overtly from God to man'.¹³⁸

For some participants in the settlement movement, the 'spirit of social Christianity' at Oxford became an antidote for religious doubt or apathy.¹³⁹ Religious doubts and sentiments could be channelled into social action. In this way, the settlement houses could meet the religious needs of young men. Hugh Legge used this argument to promote Oxford House. He issued this challenge: 'Let Mr Deane go to the head of Oxford House who knows more of and is better known by undergraduates than anyone else in Oxford or out of it, and ask him what he thinks about agnosticism.' Legge added: 'Mr Winnington-Ingram's work is proof positive of what can be done to abolish indifferentism.'¹⁴⁰ The historian and Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, J.R. Seeley, also regarded the settlements as sites in which Oxbridge graduates could explore religion: 'A way is open for Christian devotion which young men may enter without painful hesitation and perplexities. It is a plain road which you can't easily mistake, and which you will not regret having

¹³⁶ Fredrick Maurice, *Theological Essays* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1853), 7.

¹³⁷ See Charles Gore, ed., *Lux Mundi: A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation* (London: J. Murray, 1904); Mark Bevir, 'Welfarism, Socialism and Religion: On T. H. Green and Others', *Review of Reviews*, 55 (1993), 639-661.

¹³⁸ Beatrice Webb, *My Apprenticeship* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1926), 143.

¹³⁹ For this quotation, see Lawrence Goldman, *The Life of R.H. Tawney: Socialism and History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 181. Goldman observes that while Tawney wrote little about Christian doctrine throughout his life, the 'spirit of a social Christianity', was 'perhaps the most powerful of all the external influences' on him.

¹⁴⁰ Legge, 'The Religion of the Undergraduate: A Reply from Oxford', 868.

entered, believe me, twenty years hence'.¹⁴¹

Reformation within the settlements was not intended to be limited to the discovery of religion. It also referred to men's character and conduct more generally. As we have already seen, Henry Scott Holland suggested that the settlement houses could prevent men from misusing their wealth and wasting their leisure time.¹⁴² One writer in *The Westminster Gazette* suggested that Samuel Barnett also 'endeavoured to temper what an Oxford man has described as their early headstrong blunderings and muddlings'.¹⁴³ As Reverend H.G. Woods noted in a sermon to Oxford undergraduates in 1885, university men were at a 'critical time' in their lives.¹⁴⁴ The settlements' intervention came at a time when they were entering a new phase in their professional lives and often felt a need for personal support or guidance. The settling experience was intended to be a milestone and as 'integral a part of the life of the average undergraduate as the college boat or eleven'.¹⁴⁵ Oxbridge itself played an important role in fostering the values of future settlement men. Paul Deslandes has examined the universities as 'nurseries of blooming youth' in which students progressed from boyhood to manhood.¹⁴⁶ Settlements were presented as extensions of the university where graduates could explore new aspects of religion, culture and society.

Settlement Discourse: Promises to the Settlers

Settlers in Toynbee Hall and Oxford House were to be the recipients of education,

¹⁴¹ Universities Settlement Association, *Work for University Men in East London* (Cambridge: Fabb and Taylor, 1884), 3.

¹⁴² Anonymous, *The Oxford House in Bethnal Green: Report of Meeting Held at the Mansion House in Support of an Appeal for the Building Fund on Wednesday, 21st Jan., 1891*, 9-10.

¹⁴³ *The Westminster Gazette*, June 18, 1913, in Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:386.

¹⁴⁴ Rev. H.G. Woods, University Sermon. Oxford. March 1st, *Oxford Review: The Undergraduates' Journal* 432, no.7 (4 March 1885), 161.

¹⁴⁵ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 51.

¹⁴⁶ Paul Deslandes, *Oxbridge Men: British Masculinity and the Undergraduate Experience, 1850-1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 48.

training and mentoring in the East End, yet the discourse employed to articulate these aims varied and could be used for a range of purposes. As the primary formal aim of the settlement houses was to target the poor, the benefits men could accrue from settling were less prominent in the settlements' official statement of aims. The Universities' Settlement Association (the committee of university men and London supporters appointed to establish a settlement house in East London) stated that its intention was to provide education and recreation for the poor in London and to advance plans to promote their welfare. To achieve this, it would 'maintain a house or houses for the residence of persons engaged in or connected with philanthropic or educational work'.¹⁴⁷ Werner Picht stated that the object of Oxford House was to enable university men to 'take part in the social and religious work of the Church in East London', including health work, education and recreation. He mentioned as an aside that it was also intended that settlers 'may learn something of the life of the poor'.¹⁴⁸

Despite this relative absence from official statements, refrains about the benefits of settling featured prominently in reflections by residents and in promotional speeches and writings. As the discussion of Samuel Barnett's founding speech at the beginning of this chapter illustrates, the promises made to settlers can in part be attributed to the settlements' aims to promote their work and to recruit new residents. Rather than merely highlighting the magnitude of social problems, settlers emphasised the gains of residing in the East End.

The rhetoric of a two-fold agenda was prominent in both settlement houses. In 1892, for example, a Toynbee Hall report called on men to 'rally – as learners, as teachers, and as friends – to the work of personal social service'.¹⁴⁹ Settlement refrains,

¹⁴⁷ 'The Universities' Settlement in East London Memorandum and Articles of Association', 1884, A/TOY/009/001, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

¹⁴⁸ Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, 223.

¹⁴⁹ See Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:22.

such as the dictums to ‘learn as much as to teach’ or ‘to receive as much as to give’, were intended to inspire men who may have otherwise felt ill-suited to life in the East End or reluctant to settle there.¹⁵⁰ Henrietta Barnett described some of the popular catch phrases of the settlement houses:

Very varied were the men who came to us, but that spirit was the same – the spirit of learning not teaching, the spirit of comradeship not patronage. Indeed among the happy chaffing catchwords which spring up wherever young people get together, was one of warning often laughingly given, ‘You are not to do him good, you know’.¹⁵¹

In lieu of an alarmism that emphasised the threat posed by poor social conditions, the language of recruitment within the settlement movement was usually more optimistic. Settlers were told that they all had something to offer and to receive. James Adderley appealed to residents by asserting in the *Oxford House Chronicle* that no particular skills were needed and that all settlers could make a contribution to settlement life. He declared that if a man ‘cannot preach in the streets, he may very probably be able to play football on a Saturday afternoon’ or if he could not ‘give a scientific lecture or sing a song’, he could very easily ‘make himself agreeable at one of the clubs, by talking to the men, and getting to know and like them as friends’.¹⁵² Such commentary was designed to appeal to men who felt they were ill-equipped for the task of settling. In October 1899, four years before William Beveridge became Toynbee Hall’s sub-warden, he attended a recruitment meeting conducted by the settlement. He was impressed by what he learnt, but wrote to his mother that while he would ‘like to do something’ for the settlement, he felt he was ‘incapable of teaching anything that is wanted except perhaps swimming’.¹⁵³ However, he

¹⁵⁰ Ibid 1:312.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 1:307.

¹⁵² *Oxford House Chronicle* 8, no.1 (January 1894), 9.

¹⁵³ Letter from William Beveridge to Annette Beveridge, 1899, Beveridge/2A/46, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics. Also see José Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 35.

and other potential settlers were assured that they would have a rewarding experience.

Settlement leaders and supporters made settling in the slums sound exciting. On one occasion in March 1892, *The Oxford Magazine* reported that Balliol Hall was ‘rammed full’ with students interested in slum work. Herbert Asquith, the future Liberal Prime Minister, reportedly ‘roused the meeting to the last pitch of enthusiasm’ when he described the future of Toynbee Hall ‘in language that thrilled through his audience’.¹⁵⁴ Like Asquith, early settlement leaders deliberately emphasised the ‘thrill’ of settling in the slums in order to garner the interest of men, particularly those who were heading to alternative destinations to pursue philanthropic work. In 1911, the Oxford House head, Frederick Iremonger, wrote that it was becoming increasingly difficult each year to attract residents. He attributed this not to a lack of responsibility on the part of university men, but to a growing interest in the foreign mission field. He explained that ‘Canada interests men at Oxford more than Bethnal Green’.¹⁵⁵

Iremonger’s comments that reform efforts abroad could limit philanthropic activities in London echoed concerns of what Charles Dickens had referred to as ‘telescopic philanthropy’.¹⁵⁶ In Dickens’s *Bleak House*, Mrs Jellyby devotes her time and energy to the people of Borioboola-Gha in West Africa, while neglecting the welfare of her own family. She represents the type of philanthropists Dickens criticised for devoting their energies to reform abroad instead of attending to their social responsibilities at home. Settlers like Samuel Barnett argued that reformers should not be distracted by imperial affairs to the extent that they overlooked domestic social problems. Barnett’s experiences in Egypt before the establishment of Toynbee Hall strengthened his convictions of the need for reform in London. He concluded that it was ‘the English

¹⁵⁴ *Oxford Magazine*, March 9, 1892, 224.

¹⁵⁵ See Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, 224.

¹⁵⁶ See Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1993), Chapter 4.

pauper and not the Egyptian fellah who most needs help'.¹⁵⁷ As Barnett wrote to his brother:

People talk of the oppression of these fellahs . . . Still somehow their condition does not stir me as does the condition of the English labourer – These people . . . enjoy life as children and seem to have resources both in prayer and play which take them out of themselves . . . With our English labourer it is different – His image, worn and wearied with work in cold and rain, his face on which no memory or hope of joy leaves a mark, his life unhallowed by learning art or religion often comes as a shadow before the sun.¹⁵⁸

Like Barnett, Oxford House men expressed concern that investment in empire could threaten the progress of social reform in London. In 1901, an Oxford House pamphlet stated that the 'steady and quiet progress' of the settlement's work had been 'brusquely interrupted by the Boer War'. It reported that the call for volunteers to join the campaign in South Africa appealed to the very men who were 'readiest to respond to the call for East End workers', resulting in a falling number of settlers. Appealing for recruits, Oxford House announced: 'For every volunteer who goes from Oxford to fight for our Empire abroad, there ought to be forthcoming from the university another willing to undertake the complementary service of training and forming the citizen of our Empire at home.'¹⁵⁹

Settlements for Settlers: Links to Empire

In an apparent effort to compete with the popularity of colonial projects, the settlement houses offered the equivalent of an imperial experience for those located 'at home'. A

¹⁵⁷ Letter from Samuel Barnett to Mary Barnett, 25 February 1880, F/BAR/527, Samuel Barnett Papers, London Metropolitan Archives; quotation cited in Emily Abel, 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', (PhD diss., University of London, 1969), 81.

¹⁵⁸ Samuel Barnett to Frank Barnett, 21 December 1879, F/BAR/527, Samuel Barnett Papers, London Metropolitan Archives; quotation cited in Abel, 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', 81.

¹⁵⁹ 'The Oxford House in Bethnal Green', pamphlet, I/OXF/A/17/3, Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives.

growing number of scholars, including Catherine Hall, Sonya O. Rose, Susan Thorne and Andrew Thompson, have shown that the British Empire had a significant impact on metropolitan society, culture and politics.¹⁶⁰ As John Marriott writes, ‘colonial culture reached back to the metropolis, to emerge in and inform domestic concerns’.¹⁶¹ A ‘relationship of mutual reciprocity’¹⁶², as Marriott calls it, was particularly evident after the 1857 Indian mutiny against the British East India company, a ‘seismic rupture’ that raised ‘more strikingly than heretofore anxieties around the metropolitan and colonial poor’. The uprising, he writes, ‘confirmed the worst fears of the British of the latent threat from a population living in darkness and degradation’ outside the reforming influence of Christianity. Marriott draws a parallel between the mutiny in India and the discontentment of the working poor in London in the 1860s, who were facing an industrial downturn.¹⁶³

The connections between the empire and the metropolis were reflected in settlement house discourse. Some settlers deliberately played on the imperial imagery associated with the notion of a ‘settlement’. Borrowing from the travel writing genre, which ‘set out the heroism of venturing among the distant heathen’¹⁶⁴, they likened excursions into the East End to travelling to colonies of the British Empire. Cosmo Lang, for instance, described Samuel Barnett’s Oxford speech as a ‘call to come and see’ and to share ‘the life of that, to us, dim and strange other world of East London’.¹⁶⁵ Similar

¹⁶⁰ Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, eds, *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Colony and Metropole in the English Imagination* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002); Susan Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Andrew Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back? The Impact of Imperialism on Britain from the Mid-nineteenth Century* (Harlow and New York: Pearson Longman, 2005).

¹⁶¹ John Marriott, *The Other Empire: Metropolis, India and Progress in the Colonial Imagination* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), 2.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, 1.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, 2, 121–227, 166.

¹⁶⁴ Ellen Ross, ed., *Slum Travellers: Ladies and London Poverty, 1860–1920* (Berkeley: California University Press, 2007), 12.

¹⁶⁵ *Stepney Welfare* (July 1913); cited in Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:310.

language was evident in Samuel Barnett's address at Cambridge in May 1884, in which he invited students to work in the East End in conjunction with Oxford. On this occasion, Barnett made the following promise: 'Individuals travel and read to gain wider interest and enlarge sympathy; but the knowledge of the poor would give as much interest as India or America, and would often stir deeper feelings than reading about heroes.'¹⁶⁶ Appeals of this sort gained supporters. Francis Vane joined Toynbee Hall not only because he had a 'general sympathy for suffering', but also because he had a desire for some intrigue or excitement. Vane thought that visiting the urban slums would be a thrilling experience. 'It was my custom when there was little doing in the matter of parades and guards', he wrote, 'to seek adventures'.¹⁶⁷ Arriving at Toynbee Hall in 1886, Charles Robert (C.R.) Ashbee entertained similar thoughts. He wrote that East London contained 'the element of poetry and adventure into the unknown'.¹⁶⁸ Another resident joined Toynbee Hall because he thought 'the East End of London had a thrill' about it.¹⁶⁹

Some men believed that the slums had an exotic appeal. Fred Gore, a working man who visited Oxford House, recalled that the manager of a boys' club 'came to Bethnal Green under the impression that he was going down to meet some sort of Central African tribe'.¹⁷⁰ These views persisted, albeit to a lesser extent, into the early twentieth century. When John St George Heath proposed that the residents of Toynbee Hall move to accommodations in Poplar during World War One, he faced some opposition from the Toynbee council. In justifying his proposal, Heath appealed to the 'spirit of adventure'

¹⁶⁶ Samuel Barnett, 'Settlements of University Men in Great Towns', Summary of Speech Delivered at St John's College, Cambridge, *Cambridge Review* (May 7, 1884), 307; quotation cited in Abel, 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', 99-100.

¹⁶⁷ Francis Fletcher Vane, *Agin the Governments: Memories and Adventures* (London: Sampson, Low Marston and Co., 1929), 55, 57.

¹⁶⁸ C.R. Ashbee, 'Memoirs', Volume One: 'The Guild Idea, 1884-1902', 7-10, CRA/3/1, The Papers of Charles Robert Ashbee, Personal Papers, King's College Cambridge.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Sir Harold Howitt, May 5, 1967, conducted by Emily Abel; see 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', 99.

¹⁷⁰ Transcript of Interview Conducted by Mandy Ashworth, April 3, 1984, handwritten, with a copy of letter of thanks from Mandy Ashworth to Gore, April 10, 1984. I/OXF/A/7/2/7, Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives.

and curiosity which ‘had been evident in the early days of Toynbee Hall’.¹⁷¹ The Poplar premises at numbers 4 and 5 Montague Place consisted of two early Victorian houses located in an industrial district near the Blackwall Tunnel. According to Pimlott: ‘Frequent excitements were caused by the vicinity of the Chinese quarter and the presence of many foreign sailors in the neighbourhood’.¹⁷²

Although imperial imagery was prevalent in the settlement houses and in wider philanthropic circles, the poor were not simply cast as the ‘other’. As this chapter has shown, the settlements challenged conventional philanthropic ideas about the morality and civilisation of social reformers and the East End poor. While Adderley recalled the ‘primitive’ early days of the settlement when ‘an Oxford don’ could be seen ‘carrying his bath across the road to his diggings in the “Buildings”’, he criticised settlers’ assumptions that their poor neighbours were ‘savages’.¹⁷³ The Barnetts also recognised ‘that the poor were not colonial subjects but rights-bearing citizens’.¹⁷⁴

Events in the empire not only influenced settlement discourse, but also their activities in the East End. The Barnetts’ 1890 tour abroad, specifically their four-month visit to India, encapsulates this link. The tour was a defining moment for Samuel and Henrietta Barnett as it convinced them of the importance of Toynbee Hall’s educational agenda. Drawing connections with settlement work in East London, Samuel Barnett argued that both the Indian poor and the poor at home needed education. He was critical of Indian universities, describing them as ‘the most mischievous of western institutions in India’ because they ‘force[d] the Indian mind into western grooves’.¹⁷⁵ He described the condition of the Indian poor as follows:

¹⁷¹ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1915, 21.

¹⁷² Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 195.

¹⁷³ Adderley, *Stephen Remarx: The Story of a Venture in Ethics*, 50.

¹⁷⁴ Lucy Hartley, ‘From the Local to the Colonial: Toynbee Hall and the Politics of Poverty’, *Victorian Studies*, vol. 61, no. 2 (2019), 279.

¹⁷⁵ Quoted in Abel, ‘Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall’, 84.

Put the question to any one of these poor families we visited: 'What would happen in case of illness, failure of the rains, or bad trade?' The answer is short – 'Starvation'. Put another question: 'What intelligent reason has anyone why he should resist a call on his passions?' The answer again is short – 'None'. Multiply the answer by millions, and you have the cause of the two great facts which mark Indian history – 'famine' and 'panic'.¹⁷⁶

In keeping with his philosophy at Toynbee Hall, Barnett identified a need to educate both sides of the social divide in order to redress these problems. He described 'the people who guide India' as 'ignorant', noting 'that colonels and majors use commanding voices to say nothing'.¹⁷⁷ Barnett's reference to the 'panic' in Indian history seems to be a reference to the 1857 Indian mutiny. This is significant because his criticisms of imperial rule in India echoed concerns about Britain's lack of knowledge that had been voiced after the uprising. In his *History of the Indian Mutiny* (1887-1898), John Kaye suggested that the Indian rebellion had exposed British ignorance. Mary Carpenter, a social reformer who spent time in India, highlighted the same problem, writing that 'the British public' was 'very little informed of the actual condition and wants of that great country and its inhabitants, beyond what may be gathered from official or from missionary reports'. A 'more familiar knowledge' was needed on both sides.¹⁷⁸

Samuel Barnett's experience in India seems to have cemented his vision of Toynbee Hall as a centre for the education of settlers as well as the urban poor. In a speech in 1891, not long after his return to England, Barnett posed the following rhetorical questions: 'How can we call upon voters to decide upon tariffs if they have no knowledge of the conditions of the races of the world? How can we ask Englishmen to govern India if they have no knowledge of the natives and their condition of life? There

¹⁷⁶ Quoted in Hartley, 'From the Local to the Colonial: Toynbee Hall and the Politics of Poverty', 285.

¹⁷⁷ Quoted in Abel, 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', 83.

¹⁷⁸ Quoted in Marriott, *The Other Empire*, 199, 201.

must be knowledge if the world is to go on in its career of progress.’¹⁷⁹ Training future social and political leaders to educate the poor at home was likely seen by Barnett as a useful prerequisite for learning about India and extending ‘western sympathy’¹⁸⁰ to the poor there.

The training of future bureaucrats would not in and of itself be regarded as philanthropic work, but the above example illustrates how Barnett regarded the education of settlers as a long-term solution to poverty at home and in the wider British Empire. His two-way approach to addressing social problems highlights the breadth and diversity of Victorian philanthropy. James Walvin has emphasised the scope of philanthropic activities in the nineteenth century ‘as Victorians sought to put right the wrongs of the world around them’:

Not all their efforts were directed at obvious physical human needs. They helped animal welfare . . . they built libraries . . . they staffed the thousands of classes in local Sunday and ragged schools. There were few aspects of contemporary social life which failed to lure Victorians to their charitable stations.¹⁸¹

With its primary aim of alleviating social problems and assisting the urban poor (whether through direct or indirect action), Toynbee Hall was regarded as a philanthropic institution. It was explicitly established for men involved in ‘philanthropic or educational work’ and the Barnetts referred to settling as a type of ‘philanthropy’.¹⁸² In some ways, as Gertrude Himmelfarb notes, Toynbee Hall ‘resembled a civic and educational institution more than a charitable institution’ because rather than giving ‘relief or charity’,

¹⁷⁹ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:5.

¹⁸⁰ Quoted in Abel, ‘Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall’, 83-84.

¹⁸¹ Quoted in Geoffrey A.C. Ginn, *Culture, Philanthropy and the Poor in Late Victorian London* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 3.

¹⁸² ‘The Universities’ Settlement in East London Memorandum and Articles of Association’, 1884, A/TOY/009/001, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives. Also see Quasi-Autobiography of Dame Henrietta Barnett: Biography written in longhand by friend, companion and literary executrix, Marion Paterson, LMA/4063/006, Henrietta Barnett Papers, London Metropolitan Archives; and Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, *Practicable Socialism: Essays on Social Reform* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1895), 105.

it ‘dispensed education, culture, and civic amenities’.¹⁸³ This may be why Walter Besant labelled the settlement houses as a ‘new philanthropy’, which involved giving ‘not money, but yourselves’.¹⁸⁴ The idea was that by ‘helping those less privileged than themselves’, settlers would ‘fulfil their better selves’.¹⁸⁵

Conclusion

Both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House reproduced the image of a segregated city, prevalent in philanthropic discourse in nineteenth-century London, to highlight their role as class-bridging institutions. However, the two settlements were not designed solely for the transformation of East Enders. They also put forward a program which was concerned with the ideals and experiences of the settlers. As this chapter has demonstrated, two prominent representations of West Enders and Oxbridge men emerged in settlement literature. As university graduates, settlers were recognised as well-educated, ambitious and promising young men who could provide leadership and service in the East End. At the same time, they were also regarded as flawed or ‘submerged’ gentlemen who needed to redress their conduct or re-examine their values. According to the settlement leaders discussed here, Oxbridge could have a limiting or even a negative influence on its students – a problem the settlement houses sought to correct. The foundation speeches and early debates within the settlements reveal an agenda to redeem, improve and, as we shall see, advance Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men. While both houses had a vested interest in emphasising the advantages of settling, this aspect of their program was not

¹⁸³ Gertrude Himmelfarb, ‘Victorian Philanthropy: The Case of Toynbee Hall’, *The American Scholar*, vol. 59, no. 3 (1990), 378.

¹⁸⁴ Walter Besant, ‘On University Settlements’, in J.M. Knapp, *The Universities and the Social Problem: An Account of the University Settlements in East London* (London: Rivington, Percival and Co., 1895), 6; Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1891, 19.

¹⁸⁵ Himmelfarb, ‘Victorian Philanthropy: The Case of Toynbee Hall’, 378.

merely rhetorical. It was directly related to practical social work within the settlements.

The following chapter examines strategies employed by the settlement houses as they each sought to find suitable residents and shape them to fit their own particular image of an ideal settler.

Chapter Two

A Modern Monastery in the East End: Creating the Ideal Settler

As years went on and increased numbers of those who cared for social well-being joined us, the performance of specific acts of charity took a secondary place, in proportion to the value of accumulated experience and its consequent birth of fresh intentions.

Henrietta Barnett, *Canon Barnett: His Life, Work and Friends*¹

A colony or settlement was not the only metaphor that Samuel Barnett considered when he prepared his proposal for a new philanthropic scheme. The draft of his speech that inaugurated the settlement movement was called ‘Modern Monasteries: A Suggestion for a Mission’.² By the time Barnett delivered his speech at Oxford, however, he had chosen a new title, ‘Settlements of University Men in Great Towns’³, systematically erasing all reference to either a monastery or a mission. Barnett’s revisions can be clearly seen in the surviving manuscript, including his methodical replacement of the term ‘modern monastery’ with ‘university settlement’.⁴ Toynbee Hall was officially presented as an extension of the universities, and a quasi-colonial settlement, but the rest of the speech remained virtually unchanged, and the original monastic conception remained embedded in the project.

This chapter argues that despite Samuel Barnett’s amendment, his original idea of

¹ Henrietta Barnett, *Canon Barnett: His Life, Work, and Friends by his Wife in Two Volumes with Thirty-Nine Illustrations* (London: John Murray, 1918), 2:94.

² Canon Barnett, ‘Modern Monasteries: A Suggestion for a Mission’, 1883, MS.1466, ff.34-41, Samuel Barnett Papers, Lambeth Palace Library.

³ Samuel Barnett, *Settlements of University Men in Great Towns* (Oxford: The Chronicle Company, 1884). In 1883, the speech was published by the *Oxford Magazine* under the title, ‘Settlements of University Men in Great Towns’. It was also published as ‘The Universities and the Poor’ for *Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review* 15 (1883), 255-261.

⁴ Barnett, ‘Modern Monasteries’, MS.1466, f.38, Lambeth Palace Library.

founding a ‘modern monastery’ in the East End was reflected in the introspective aspects of the programs of both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House. Chapter One examined the settlements’ foundational ideal of a mutual exchange between the upper classes and the poor, focusing in particular on the prominence of a systematic drive to recruit the youth of Britain’s social elite as a means of promoting reform within that class. This chapter draws upon Barnett’s early conceptualisation of a settlement to examine this reformist program in practice in Toynbee Hall and Oxford House between 1884 and 1914.

Despite Barnett’s erasure of the term, the idea of a modern monastery persisted in the early years of the settlement movement, reflecting each settlement’s function as a site for the self-cultivation and development of settlers. His removal of the term ‘mission’, however, was more definitive and it marked the key difference between the two settlement houses. Barnett was making a clear distinction between Toynbee Hall, a non-sectarian civic centre, on the one hand, and Christian missions (like Oxford House) on the other. While both settlements were conceived as sites for the making of social reformers, this remaking occurred in quite different religious contexts. Drawing upon the central metaphor of the monastery, this chapter has two main functions. First, it seeks to describe the type of settler that Toynbee Hall and Oxford House each wanted to create. It then examines key features of the settlements’ programs that focused on selecting suitable residents and moulding them to fit each settlement’s particular vision of an ideal social reformer.

The metaphor of a monastery was prominent in discussions about the settlement houses in their early years and coincided with a revival of Anglican and Catholic monasticism in Britain from the mid to late nineteenth century.⁵ In 1887, the Reverend

⁵ Between 1842 and 1953, 114 Anglican orders (32 male and 82 female) were established in Britain. See Peter Anson, *The Call of the Cloister: Religious Communities and Kindred Bodies in the Anglican Communion* (London: S.P.C.K., 1955), 590-594. Also see Susan O’Brien, ‘Terra Incognita: The Nun in Nineteenth-century England’, *Past and Present* 121 (1988), 110-144; Michael Hill, *The Religious Order: A*

J.B. Gilman remarked that settlers, just like ‘the noble Franciscans’ of the thirteenth century, had given up the ‘comforts and luxuries which were theirs by birth and heritage’ in order to live among the poor.⁶ St Francis served as an example for a number of men who joined the settlements. Dick Sheppard, an Oxford House head, was called a ‘papier mâché’ reproduction of St Francis by one of his friends.⁷ Similarly, the Oxford House heads, James Adderley and Herbert Henson, adopted monastic nicknames, referring to one another as Abbot Adderley and Prior Henson.⁸ Adderley, in particular, was devoted to St Francis. He wrote two hagiographies of the saint and sought to follow his example in his daily life.⁹ Both Franciscan monasteries and the settlements, Addeley observed, emphasised the importance of social action.¹⁰ In his 1898 study ‘On University Settlements’, Walter Besant, the novelist and founder of the People’s Palace (an educational and cultural centre for East Enders on Mile End Road)¹¹ also presented settlement houses as monastic institutions. Like settlers in the East End, he remarked, St Francis and his followers had visited and lived in the ‘the poorest and most miserable parts of the towns, and worked among the poorest and most miserable of the people’.¹² Besant likened the settlement ethos of personal service to St Francis’s work with the poor:

What St Francis command [sic] his followers was, that they should be obedient;

Study of Virtuoso Religion and its Legitimation in the Nineteenth-century Church of England (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1973).

⁶ J.B. Gilman, ‘Toynbee Hall, Whitechapel’, *Lend a Hand* 2 (1887), 255.

⁷ Walter Matthews, ‘The Impatient Parson’, in *Dick Sheppard by His Friends* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938), 33.

⁸ See Owen Chadwick, *Hensley Henson: A Study in the Friction between Church and State* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 39-50; Herbert Hensley Henson, *Retrospect of an Unimportant Life*, vol 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), chapter 2. Also see Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), 249.

⁹ James Adderley, *Francis the Little Poor Man of Assisi: A Short Story* (London: Edward Arnold, 1906); James Adderley, *St Francis of Assisi and His Friars* (London: S.P.C.K, 1926).

¹⁰ Adderley, *St Francis of Assisi and His Friars*, 3.

¹¹ The People’s Palace was opened by Queen Victoria on May 14, 1887. The complex had a library with a reading room, swimming pool, gymnasium, picture gallery, technical college and a winter garden. Geoff Ginn examines the People’s Palace in ‘Gifts of Culture, Centres of Light: Cultural Philanthropy in the Late Victorian East End’, (PhD diss., University of Queensland, 2001), chapter 5.

¹² Walter Besant, ‘On University Settlements’, in Will Reason, *University and Social Settlements* (London: Methuen, 1898), 3.

that they should remain in poverty; and that they should be celibate. They were to be obedient because work of all kinds among men must be organised; very well that law is in full force in the University Settlement. They were to remain in poverty – that law is also in force wherever work is done without reward or money. They were to be celibate – a custom, if not a law, which also prevails in the modern settlement.¹³

Despite the frequency of such comparisons, there were clearly significant differences between the settlement houses and a Franciscan monastery, including their religious focus. Samuel Barnett may have espoused a Christian ethos within the settlement, but (unlike Franciscan monks) residents were not required to adhere to any religious doctrines or practices. As Barnett noted when he removed any reference to a monastery in his early conceptualisation of Toynbee Hall, the settlement was not connected to a parish church and its activities had a broader scope than religious missions like Oxford House. Furthermore, despite Besant's assertions, neither Toynbee Hall nor Oxford House settlers made formal vows of poverty, chastity or obedience, nor were they ever expected to do so. While they resided among the poor and were not paid for their work within Toynbee Hall and Oxford House, settlers retained both the accoutrements and material comforts of their class.

These differences and the fact that Barnett removed all references to a 'monastery' and a 'mission' in his founding speech have suggested to some scholars that he abandoned these concepts entirely.¹⁴ According to Gertrude Himmelfarb, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men 'were not to be latter-day St Francises'. It was 'Barnett's intention that the young men living among the poor would become better acquainted with them, move more easily among them, understand and sympathise with them, and serve them in whatever way they could'. It was 'not that they would live the life of the poor or

¹³ Ibid, 2-3.

¹⁴ See, for example, Koven, *Slumming*, 238 and Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 240.

lose themselves in the service of the poor'.¹⁵ Seth Koven notes that Barnett abandoned his 'flirtation with the notion of founding a mission' or 'modern monastery' almost immediately. He suggests: 'Barnett must have come to realise that monasticism had unfavourable connotations to most Englishmen in the 1880s who associated it with Roman Catholicism, with outdated forms of association, and with the unnatural asceticism and sexuality of mendicant orders.'¹⁶ Koven has shown that while celibacy was an aspiration for some settlers, they were not always as celibate as Besant implied.¹⁷

Nevertheless, it is significant that Samuel Barnett and early settlers aligned the settlement houses with monasticism. This popular analogy highlighted the importance that was placed on the internal components of a settlement program that was designed to shape Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men. This chapter draws upon the metaphor of a modern monastery to examine the settlement houses as sites for the reformation of the settlers. Lucinda Matthews-Jones has previously located the settlement movement within a monastic framework to argue that Christianity 'played a fundamental role in the conception and early work' of both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House. She argues that St Francis became a model for settlers because of his work among the poor and his religious mission.¹⁸ However, the symbol of the monastery also illuminates a highly introspective aspect of the settlement enterprise that was not confined to religion. While monasteries undertake philanthropic work and pastoral care outside of their walls, the development of their residents is also an integral part of their work. For monks like St Francis, personal morality and the regulation of their own behaviour was as much a subject of concern as the welfare of the poor.¹⁹ In a similar way, the settlement houses functioned as sites of

¹⁵ Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion*, 240.

¹⁶ Koven, *Slumming*, 238.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Lucinda Matthews-Jones, 'Centres of Brightness: The Spiritual Imagination of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House, 1880-1914', (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 2009), 209, 177.

¹⁹ Bernard Aspinwall, 'Changing Images of Roman Catholic Religious Orders in the Nineteenth Century',

self-improvement. Like their monastic counterparts, settlers were expected to meet certain standards established by their community and to conduct themselves in particular ways. Clearly, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House were not conceived as medieval monasteries. However, Samuel Barnett's early experiment with the phrase 'modern monastery' suggests that he intended to adapt traditional models of monasticism in order to shape men within the settlements.

The settlements served as retreats where men's personal aspirations could be nurtured while they prepared for the next phase of their lives. When the Barnetts stayed in Naples in April 1888, Samuel visited a Carthusian monastery. Although he did not draw any connections between this institution and Toynbee Hall, he did remark on the value of such establishments:

The great place with its eleven dirty, ignorant inmates, its frescoes of bad art, its cool courts with oranges and flowers, its magnificent situation, set us thinking. Clearly its disestablishment was justified, but clearly also there is a use in any system for buildings adapted for rest, for self-culture, and for common life.²⁰

Although their gentlemanly 'inmates' could not have been labelled either 'dirty' or 'ignorant', Toynbee Hall and Oxford House were sites adapted for such a purpose. The Barnetts also made additional provision for Toynbee settlers or workers who were seeking a reprieve from East London itself. In 1889, they purchased Heath End House on Hampstead Heath, which they renamed St Jude's Cottage. Here, the Barnetts provided accommodation for tired Toynbee men and other visitors to the settlement. According to

in William J. Sheils, ed., *Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition: Papers Read at the 1984 Summer Meeting and the 1985 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 354. On monasticism in this period, see Michael Hill, *The Religious Order: A Study of Virtuoso Religion and its Legitimation in the Nineteenth-century Church of England* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1973) and Rene Kollar, *A Universal Appeal: Aspects of the Revival of Monasticism in the West in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (London: International Scholars Publications, 1996). Also see Peter Anson, *The Call of the Cloister: Religious Communities and Kindred Bodies in the Anglican Communion* (London: S.P.C.K., 1955).

²⁰ Letter from Samuel Barnett to Frank Barnett, 23 April 1888, F/BAR/067, Samuel Barnett Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

Henrietta Barnett, there was a lady superintendent for the home and other ‘happy family’ arrangements. She wrote that ‘a few days or weeks at Hampstead became a joy to many weary people of all classes’.²¹ The cottage offered quiet and seclusion. The rooms set aside as ‘rest-rooms’ in the cottage were reached by a separate staircase. They were intended for men who needed a space of their own. Henrietta recorded that ‘Mr. Aves and Mr. Alexander came to finish their respective books’, while Dr. Gregory came for a visit ‘when, fresh from his discoveries in Central Africa, he was battling with a rare bacillus’.²²

The Makings of the Ideal Settler

The credentials of selected residents demonstrate the type of men that Toynbee Hall and Oxford House each wanted to recruit and ‘make’. Aspiring settlers were measured against certain criteria. Oxford House sought out settlers with strong religious convictions who demonstrated ‘loyal intimacy’ to the church.²³ As Arthur Winnington-Ingram asserted, the principles of Oxford House ‘are and will continue to be first and foremost the belief in Christianity as the true starting point of all civilising effort’.²⁴ Oxford House’s founding mission statement read:

The Oxford House in Bethnal Green is established in order that Oxford men may take part in the social and religious work of the Church in East London; that they may learn something of the life of the poor; may try to better the condition of the working classes as regards health and recreation, mental culture and spiritual teaching; and may offer an example, so far as in them lies, of a simple religious life.²⁵

Toynbee Hall, on the other hand, did not appoint men on the basis of their

²¹ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:136.

²² *Ibid.*, 2:145.

²³ Herbert Hensley Henson, ‘The University Settlements in the East End’, in *Some Urgent Questions in Christian Lights*, ed. Henry Jones (London: Rivington’s, 1889), 259.

²⁴ Oxford House, Annual Report, 1889, 1.

²⁵ ‘Oxford House in Bethnal Green. Object: to Provide a Centre for Religious, Social and Educational Work Among the Poor of East London. Report, Balance Sheet, and List of Subscriptions’, 1893, 6.

religious beliefs. As the settlement's annual report of 1890 noted: 'Among the residents of Toynbee have been found Churchmen, Nonconformists, Roman Catholics, Jews and unsectarians No man can say that Toynbee Hall has any narrow aim; it does not exist to increase any party, or bring honour to anybody.'²⁶ Barnett argued that 'believers in different creeds' could work 'together in friendship' towards the same ends.²⁷ However, Toynbee Hall did still adhere to a careful selection process. It sought to deter men who might be tempted to join the settlement not because of the opportunities it offered for social investigation and reform but because it was an alternative to more expensive lodgings. Samuel Barnett and the first thirteen residents of Toynbee Hall formed the 'Grand Committee', which supervised the various activities of the settlement, including the acceptance of residents. According to Werner Picht, as long as the house was not full, anyone was admitted 'without difficulty on recommendation'.²⁸ Each prospective resident first applied to Samuel Barnett who, after inquiries, invited him as a paying visitor. The candidate lived at the settlement for a probationary period of three months and then his name went up to 'Grand' which judged his potential. At this time, the candidate could become a full resident, although sometimes a further period of probation was deemed necessary. Associates of Toynbee Hall also had to be elected by the committee.

To be approved as a Toynbee Hall resident, candidates were expected to demonstrate an active interest and involvement in social work. 'Grand' looked for 'serious men anxious for social reform'.²⁹ The 'desire for the opportunity to render service, unstinted, unadvertised, unappraised, was the only motive accepted by old Residents as a new Resident's qualification'.³⁰ There was no written obligation for settlers to work in any particular field of social work. However, they were expected to

²⁶ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1890, 8.

²⁷ Henrietta and Samuel Barnett, *Towards Social Reform* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1909), 266.

²⁸ Werner Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914), 30.

²⁹ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:37.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 2:38.

‘lend a hand at anything which is going on’, to contribute to the work of the settlement and to actively participate in the local community.³¹ A shortage of Toynbee recruits during World War One prompted Grand to reduce the residents’ probationary period from three months to a month. Aside from this, the prerequisites for settling remained largely unchanged throughout the inter-war period. In 1919, a Toynbee Hall memorandum officially listed the ‘qualifications for election as a resident’. It was expected that prospective residents had received a public school or university education, or ‘an education which in the opinion of the warden is equivalent to this’.³² While it was intended that graduates could disseminate the knowledge and culture they had acquired at Oxford or Cambridge, men without a university background could still join the settlement. This was the case for James (known as Jimmy) Mallon who became Toynbee Hall warden in 1919. While Mallon had left school early due to financial difficulties, he had gained significant experience in the field of social work in lieu of a formal qualification.

The model gentlemen the settlements sought to produce (once they had chosen suitable volunteers) were not unique to either Toynbee Hall or Oxford House. Rather, they corresponded with values of British masculinity evident in other homosocial institutions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As a Christian mission, Oxford House more closely resembled a monastery than Toynbee Hall in its efforts to develop the religious values of settlers. Edward Talbot, the warden of Keble College, declared that ‘one object’ animated the Oxford House settlement and that was ‘the preparation of character for . . . the reception of the religion of Christ’.³³ Oxford House supported the religious aspirations of its residents, many of whom were either

³¹ William Smart, *Toynbee Hall: A Short Account of the Universities Settlement in East London, with Suggestions for a Similar Work in Glasgow* (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1886), 5, 6.

³² Memorandum, 1919, A/TOY/006, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

³³ *The Times*, January 21, 1891.

contemplating ordination or were already clergymen. Its ideal settler was clearly defined as a Christian reformer, clergyman or missionary. The archetypal Oxford House resident embodied a number of the masculine values examined by Paul Deslandes in his study of Oxbridge men, including ‘an evangelical Christian ethos that privileged earnestness, self-sacrifice, sensitivity to those less fortunate and contemplative piety’ as well as a model that emphasised the ‘muscular Christian’, a powerful male figure, characterised by ‘physical strength, muscular development, the stiff upper lip, adventure, fortitude, and action’.³⁴

Formed on a non-sectarian basis, Toynbee Hall attracted a wider range of settlers of various religious and political affiliations. Its ideal settler is therefore harder to define according to a particular ‘type’. While Toynbee Hall was more secular than Oxford House, it was characterised, particularly under Barnett’s wardenship (1884-1906), by a generalised Christian ethos and many of its residents from 1884 to 1914 were devout Christians. Henrietta Barnett wrote that a central aim of Toynbee Hall was to find ‘the buried life’ within others: ‘In our dealings with individuals, we should remember more consciously their ideal selves – the Christ in them . . . Few realise that in the individual there is a buried life, a life which can think and love, and that the only end worth achieving is the release of this life from beneath its load of selfish, mean cares.’³⁵ As Henrietta and other early settlers saw it, the aim of the settlement house was for men ‘to learn about God and to love men’.³⁶ In contrast to Oxford House, however, the Toynbee settler was not defined primarily by his Christianity. The broader social and civic purposes of Toynbee Hall contributed to the making of a different kind of reformer who

³⁴ Paul Deslandes, *Oxbridge Men: British Masculinity and the Undergraduate Experience, 1850-1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 5. Examples of these models within Oxford House are discussed in the present chapter and in subsequent chapters of this thesis. See, for example, Ernest Hardy’s account of his Christian faith in Chapter 5. For an example of the muscular Christian, see the discussion of the Oxford House curriculum in Chapter 3.

³⁵ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:264.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 1:320.

was distinguished from his Oxford House counterpart by his engagement in prominent social research projects and scientific inquiries (see Chapter Four). If the model Oxford House settler was a man of the church, the ideal Toynbee resident (while he could certainly be a Christian) was also a social investigator and policy maker who contributed to social causes in the wider arenas of politics, the civil service, the church, and in professions such as education and journalism.

Although they were each seeking to create a different type of social reformer, both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House showed a persistent concern for the personal and professional development of individual settlers. The character of residents was considered paramount as they were potentially future leaders of Britain and its empire. The settlement houses fostered what the historian Reba Soffer described in her study of the English upper classes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as an ethos of leadership premised on notions of service to ‘God, country, and good’.³⁷ As the Toynbee settler R.H. Tawney wrote, the upper classes needed to be ‘disciplined into being servants of the public’.³⁸ In 1891, after visiting Balliol House, one of Toynbee Hall’s residential hostels, Herbert Henry Asquith, the future Liberal prime minister, expressed the hope that the settlement would function as a ‘nursery of great ideals’, a ‘training school’ in which men could become ‘strenuous and valiant servants’.³⁹ These virtues were still upheld in 1922 when Henrietta Barnett delivered the presidential address of the International Organisation of University Settlements. She commented on ‘the marvellous spirit of sacrifice’ among settlement workers.⁴⁰ This remark probably had particular resonance in the inter-war period as the language of sacrifice had been prominent during the First

³⁷ Reba Soffer, *Discipline and Power: The University, History, and the Making of an English Elite, 1870–1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 3.

³⁸ R.H. Tawney, *Commonplace Book*, ed. J.M. Winter and D.M. Joslin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 22.

³⁹ *Toynbee Record*, April 1891, 77.

⁴⁰ See Henrietta Barnett, *Matters that Matter* (London: J. Murray, 1930), 15.

World War.

Another driving principle of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House was the belief that philanthropy was a duty or obligation. Francis Fletcher Vane of Toynbee Hall viewed the social activism of the 1880s as an ‘expression of the awakening of the national conscience in respect to the duty which the well-to-do should have in respect to the less fortunate’.⁴¹ This emphasis was appropriate for a former Guards officer, but concerns about ‘duty’ were also voiced by social workers more generally. According to R.C. Whiting, Clement Attlee’s initial visit to a boys’ club in Stepney in 1905 was as much out of a sense of ‘duty’ as of ‘genuine interest’. There was, Whiting observes, a ‘sense of duty running in his family’.⁴²

Other virtues advocated in settlement circles included generosity, industry, social justice, patience, compassion, selflessness and a public spirit. It was believed that settling in the slums would also engender humility and sympathy for the poor. Settlers were expected to be ‘possessed by the common desire to share their good things with their neighbours’.⁴³ Discipline in the settlements was valued, including punctuality, forethought and self-control. As Barnett opined: ‘It is good to feel free to come and go, unbound by rule or fear, but it is also good to obey. It is good to call no one master, but it is also good to be under authority.’⁴⁴

Of the settlement houses’ various publications, the *Oxford House Chronicle* was particularly notable for encouraging settlers’ imperial ambitions. In 1900, one of its writers presented settling as a service to the state. Speaking on behalf of Oxford House,

⁴¹ Francis Fletcher Vane, *Agin the Governments* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co., 1929), 55.

⁴² R.C. Whiting, ‘Attlee, Clement Richard, first Earl Attlee (1883–1967)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-30498?rskey=G1RHEZ&result=1> (accessed 29 September 2018).

⁴³ Walter Besant, ‘On University Settlements’, in J.M. Knapp, *The Universities and the Social Problem: An Account of the University Settlements in East London* (London: Rivington, Percival and Co., 1895), 6; Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1891, 19.

⁴⁴ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:80.

he wrote: 'The maintenance of our empire – which we believe exists for a moral and beneficent purpose – may well be regarded as the first and highest duty of a loyal Englishman.' He felt that Oxford House had a role to play in imperial endeavours, insisting that it was necessary to 'devote time and energy to the task of qualifying the citizens of the empire for the fulfilment of their important duties'.⁴⁵ This commitment to empire reflected Oxford House's missionary ambitions abroad. Toynbee Hall men also engaged in imperial affairs, but usually ones involving matters of governance, politics and education. These imperial connections were evident in the values espoused within both settlements, which included practical action, patriotic duty, courage, endurance, honour and physical strength. Both houses emphasised the importance of correct behaviour or 'good form', as well as 'chivalry' and 'strength of thought and will'.⁴⁶

The commendations of particular settlers in early publications by Toynbee Hall and Oxford House illustrate the qualities encouraged in the settlements. In Toynbee Hall, for example, Bolton King was praised for his 'gracious personality' and 'princely generosity'.⁴⁷ Ernest Aves was commended for being 'so wise', 'steadfastly dutiful' and a 'friend-maker', while E. J. Urwick was regarded as an 'incomparable host' who undertook 'self-forgetting labour'.⁴⁸ The Barnetts' description of one of their friends, a Mr T. C. Horsfall who visited Whitechapel, illustrates the type of character they were seeking to bring out in Toynbee men:

To see a goal clearly, and to pursue it without pause or weariness, to accept successes but as goads to further achievements, to learn with as much avidity as to teach, to forget disappointments and ignore triumphs, to have a single altruistic aim for all action . . . those attributes made a character to love as well as respect.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ *Oxford House Chronicle* 15, no.2 (February 1901), 11.

⁴⁶ *Annual Report of the Universities' Settlement in East London*, vol. 23 (1906), 10.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 2:26.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 2:27.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 2:46.

Techniques of training settlers

The training techniques employed by the settlements to create their ideal social reformers were not unique. They were accepted features of late nineteenth-century pedagogy. Like other homosocial spaces such as public schools and universities, the settlement houses embraced particular codes of masculinity which regulated the behaviour of men towards one another. Their strategies closely resembled the educational system at Oxbridge. Paul Deslandes examines a ‘system of institutional discipline, encoded in written and unwritten rules and standards of conduct’ which ‘carefully ordered the university experience and regulated the activities of students at both Cambridge and Oxford’. As Deslandes shows, nearly every facet of college life, from dining to personal relationships, was monitored by the universities. These rules, often medieval in origin, were present in Oxbridge undergraduate culture until after the First World War.⁵⁰ Modelled on their university counterparts, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House also established routines and rules in order to supervise residents and disseminate settlement values. The settlements offered residents a familiar and collegiate atmosphere, the society of contemporaries, and ‘the kindly guidance and supervision of an elder man’ (the settlement warden).⁵¹ In striking contrast to the universities, however, the training of the settlers occurred amidst the poverty of the East End.

Shaping the Settler in a Monastic Space: The Settlements’ Physical Characteristics

Both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House used their physical settings to transmit particular values to their residents. Of the two settlements, Oxford House more closely

⁵⁰ Deslandes, *Oxbridge Men*, 83-84.

⁵¹ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:42.

approximated the monastic ideal in its physical manifestations. This was largely due to its simpler setting. Between 1884 and 1892, Oxford House men were accommodated in a former schoolhouse adjacent to the parish church (see Figure 7). According to James Adderley, it was ‘a miserable shanty which had been put together out of the old National Schoolrooms in St Andrew’s parish’.⁵² Four bedrooms and a sitting room were located on the upper floors and there was a drawing room on the ground floor. With such basic accommodation, simplicity became the settlement’s hallmark. Residents were encouraged to embrace Christianity by minimising worldly luxuries, including alcohol. Arthur Winnington-Ingram, the Oxford House head from 1889 to 1897, was committed to the temperance movement and encouraged residents to give up drinking. Herbert Henson, who served as Oxford House head in 1887 and 1888, did not find it easy to commit to teetotalism, but he believed it would support his work among the poor:

I have not taken, I do not propose to take, I cannot imagine myself taking (or keeping) a pledge, it would be too degrading. I should resume drinking to assist my independence: but I profess my purpose, declare my intention, publish my policy defining my attitude: and so long as my mind remains unaltered on the matter. I am a Teetotaller. Purposes sometimes are abandoned: intentions have been known to change: policy may alter: attitudes too long maintained are wearying: I do not understand or appreciate the servile ‘virtue’ of consistency. . . . But, seriously Mr. Warden I must continue a teetotaller so long as necessity is laid on me to wage on working men the wisdom, the liberty, the duty of teetotalism.⁵³

Henson once asserted that he ‘long[ed] to throw all aside’ and ‘be an ascetic as was [St] Francis’⁵⁴, but very few settlers actually aspired to live a monastic life. The notable exceptions were James Adderley, Henry Chappel and Ernest Hardy from Oxford House who founded the Society of the Divine Compassion at St Philip’s parish in

⁵² Adderley, *In Slums and Society*, 17-18.

⁵³ Letter from Herbert Hensley Henson to William Anson, 30 April 1888, f.98, All Souls College, University of Oxford.

⁵⁴ Henson, *Retrospect of an Unimportant Life*, 14; Herbert Hensley Henson diaries, 25 May 1886, Henson 4, 55, Durham Cathedral Library Collection.



Figure 7: The first Oxford House building (bottom) and the second Oxford House building (top). See T. C. Collins, 'The Settlements of London', *Leisure Hour* (1895), 799; F. Arnold, 'Oxford House and Toynbee Hall', *Leisure Hour* (1884), 274.

Plaistow, the first Franciscan order within the Church of England.⁵⁵ On leaving Oxford House, Edward Gordon Bulstrode also joined a religious order, the Society of St John the Evangelist.⁵⁶ For most Oxford House settlers, however, a simpler lifestyle was all that was expected for men seeking to gain a greater understanding of the urban poor. A desire for simplicity was clearly expressed by Henson on one occasion after he had visited the Barnetts at their more lavish establishment at Toynbee Hall. He remarked that the ‘drawing room impressed me not a little. It was exceedingly pretty and tasteful: but far too luxurious for my taste (fancy St Paul on that sofa, contemplating that statuette: and drinking afternoon tea out of those cups!!)’.⁵⁷

For some men at Oxford House, asceticism may have been a virtue of necessity, rather than a deliberate choice. According to early settlers, the first Oxford House building was limited in both size and comforts. When he arrived in Bethnal Green, Arthur Winnington-Ingram felt that Oxford House needed its own purpose-built home. An annual report for the same year stated that a ‘larger and more convenient House’ was needed.⁵⁸ From 1892, the Oxford House settlement occupied premises on Derbyshire Street near Bethnal Green Road (Figure 7). A large, two-storied, red-brick building, Oxford House was an imposing presence compared to the cottages that surrounded it. It could accommodate 21 residents and included large public rooms, a lecture hall, a dining room, a library and a chapel. Despite its new accommodations, however, Oxford House retained its simple décor. When the journalist Henry Nevinson visited Oxford House in 1893, he approved of the plain design of the rooms which, unlike Toynbee Hall, were ‘quite free of pictures and tinsel decorations’. His commentary underscores the monastic aspirations of many Oxford House settlers. As Nevinson wrote, Oxford House was ‘a

⁵⁵ James Adderley, *In Slums and Society* (London: Unwin, 1916), 72.

⁵⁶ Barrie Williams, *The Franciscan Revival in the Anglican Communion* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1982), 77.

⁵⁷ Herbert Hensley Henson, 23 January 1888, Journal 4, 18, Durham Cathedral Library Collection.

⁵⁸ Oxford House Annual Report, Balance Sheets, Lists of Subscriptions, 1889 (Oxford, 1890), 12.

more genuinely monastic establishment' than Toynbee Hall.⁵⁹

This difference between the two settlements may have been partially due to the greater economic capacity of Toynbee Hall. However, Toynbee residents also made a conscious decision to eschew the more ascetic traditions of Oxford House. This suggests that there were divergent understandings of monasticism within the settlement movement. St Francis never expected total asceticism from his followers, but had instead encouraged simplicity, personal service and an appreciation of culture.⁶⁰ Conceived as a 'modern monastery' in this sense, Toynbee Hall embraced aestheticism rather than asceticism as a means of refining its residents. Unlike Oxford House, it did not reject the former living conditions of residents, but instead sought to recreate the atmosphere of Oxford and Cambridge within the London slums.

Situated at 28 Commercial Street, next to St Jude's parish, Toynbee Hall posed a striking contrast to the poverty around it. Originally an industrial school for destitute boys, it was re-built to look like a neo-Elizabethan manor house (see Figure 8), covered in ivy and with a red-brick façade. One contemporary remarked that the 'magnificent Gothic frontage of Toynbee Hall and its Balliol and Wadham Colleges' stood in 'strange juxtaposition with the inhabitants of outcast humanity'.⁶¹ Another observer wrote in the *Charity Organisation Reporter* that the building would have had 'more affinity with Chelsea Embankment than with the ordinary run of dull Whitechapel'.⁶² The settlement's common rooms were elegantly furnished with paintings and sculptures. The dining room (see Figure 9) was decorated by one of the first residents, C.R. Ashbee, and his students at the settlement. They painted sunflowers around modelled medallions of a stylised tree.

⁵⁹ Henry Nevinston, '11 February 1893', Ms.Eng.misc.e.610/1/f.16, Henry Nevinston Papers, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

⁶⁰ See Barrie Williams, *The Franciscan Revival in the Anglican Communion* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1982).

⁶¹ Henry Walker, *East London: Sketches of Christian Work and Workers* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1896), 37. Wadham House and Balliol House were opened in 1887 and 1891 respectively as residential quarters for students of Toynbee Hall classes.

⁶² 'Toynbee Hall', *Charity Organisation Reporter* 13 (11 October 1884), 333.



Figure 8: Unidentified Artist, Toynbee Hall Quadrangle and Buildings, c.1903, The Social Museum Collection, Harvard University



Figure 9: The Toynbee Hall Dining Room. Henrietta Barnett, *Canon Barnett: His Life, Work and Friends* (London: John Murray, 1918), 2:78.

Settlers and visitors were particularly pleased with the drawing room (see Figure 10).

Henrietta Barnett remarked that it was equal to many found in the West End, ‘erring, if at all, on the side of gorgeousness’.⁶³ In his 1886 account of Toynbee Hall, William Smart described it as

a lofty square room with latticed windows. The walls are covered by a high dado of gold peacock-eye paper, and above that a frieze of Indian red with Japanese fans fixed up here and there. There is a high mantel of white wood, and a great tiled fire-place. For the rest, it is furnished as ordinary drawing-rooms are – with china cabinets, lounges, settees, a grand piano, tables heaped with albums.⁶⁴

The settlement was deliberately designed to encourage residents to feel part of settlement life.⁶⁵ This was reflected in the choice of decorations, such as the crests of Oxbridge colleges that were displayed in the dining room. J.A.R. Pimlott wrote that Toynbee Hall’s residential quarters were intended to be ‘the universities’ house’.⁶⁶ Located on the upper floor, these quarters were modelled on university accommodation, and settlers could rent either a single bedroom or a suite which included a sitting room.⁶⁷ *The Cambridge Review* remarked that a resident’s apartment was no different than ‘an ordinary college room’.⁶⁸ Under Samuel Barnett’s wardenship, Henrietta supervised the decorating of the residents’ rooms. Men were consulted on their individual tastes and, according to Henrietta, became quite attached, or even possessive, of their personal quarters. She wrote that her ‘most carefully thought-out’ schemes for decorating often failed because of ‘the predatory instincts of some residents’, suggesting that they were

⁶³ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:42.

⁶⁴ Smart, *Toynbee Hall*, 7.

⁶⁵ Robert A. Woods, ‘The Social Awakening in London’, in *The Poor in Great Cities* (New York, 1895), 19.

⁶⁶ J.A.R. Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress, 1884-1934* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1935), 38.

⁶⁷ Arthur Pillans Laurie, *Pictures and Politics: A Book of Reminiscences* (London: International Publishing Company, 1934), 79.

⁶⁸ *Cambridge Review*, February 18, 1885, 214.



Figure 10: Unidentified Artist, Toynbee Hall Drawing Room, c.1903, The Social Museum Collection, Harvard University

reluctant to admit others within their private space.⁶⁹ Although Henrietta Barnett lamented that this could create some difficulties, this comment conveys the homeliness of Toynbee Hall. A sense of familiarity was also achieved by modelling the settlement on university cloisters and quadrangles. Thomas Harvey, Barnett's successor as warden of Toynbee Hall, remarked that 'the narrow winding corkscrew staircase rather reminds one of college'.⁷⁰ One American visitor agreed, remarking that Toynbee Hall was

essentially a transplant of university life in Whitechapel. The quadrangle, the gables, the diamond-paned windows, the large general rooms, especially the dining room with its brilliant frieze of college shields, all make the place seem not so distant from the dreamy walks by the Isis or the Cam.⁷¹

At first glance, the continuity that men would have sensed as they moved from the universities to Toynbee Hall may suggest that the settlement's architecture and design had little to contribute to the transformation of settlers. However, these aspects of the settlement were in fact aimed at the cultivation of residents and visitors. Elijah Hoole, the architect of Toynbee Hall, described the settlement as a centre of civilisation. It was 'civilised' but without 'undue luxury or display'.⁷² One writer for the *Cambridge Review* likened Toynbee Hall to a 'comfortable country house', observing that the settlement's design was 'admirably suited to its purpose', which was the 'maintenance amid East End surroundings of the usual civilised existence'.⁷³ Samuel Barnett and others espoused the 'unconscious and refining restraint of drawing-room surroundings'.⁷⁴ As Barnett wrote: 'The Settlement will not add to the hardness of life – in some ways it is likely to bring ease. We shall live in space – comfort and quiet – we shall give up the hard weary work

⁶⁹ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:42.

⁷⁰ Letter from Thomas Harvey to Anne Harvey, 6 March 1900; cited in Abel, 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', 123.

⁷¹ Robert A. Woods, 'The Social Awakening in London', *Scribner's Magazine* 11, no. 4 (April 1892), 412.

⁷² *The Cambridge Review*, February 18, 1885, 214.

⁷³ H.F. Wilson, 'Toynbee Hall', *The Cambridge Review*, February 18, 1885, 214.

⁷⁴ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:161.

of parish work to efficient curates.’⁷⁵ Robert Woods, a social commentator, described Toynbee Hall as ‘delightfully quiet’. He felt that ‘with the music of the violins floating out through the drawing-room windows . . . the roar of London was all unheard’.⁷⁶ Charles Ashbee also reflected on the peaceful ambience of the settlement: ‘Toynbee . . . is one’s Salvation . . . life here is wonderful because it allows one to contemplate and BE in times of urban chaos.’⁷⁷ It is likely that these qualities of silence, contemplation and peacefulness prompted Henry Nevinson, a journalist associated with Toynbee Hall, to describe the settlement as ‘a monastic establishment where there are no vows’.⁷⁸ As settlement leaders wrote in a letter to *The Times*:

We do not ask for extremes of asceticism or of voluntary poverty . . . We ask for the example of full lives spent in refined homes, lives which find their interest in clear thinking and deep feeling, so that people may realise that the greatest happiness is within their reach if they will seek ‘to be’ rather than ‘to have’.⁷⁹

This expectation that settlers would eschew materialism, choosing ‘to be’ rather than ‘to have’, was problematic if not contradictory given the comforts that surrounded them within the settlement. However, this exhortation confirms that Toynbee Hall did not align monasticism with asceticism. Rather, the settlement’s physical setting was used to encourage refinement, cultural aesthetics and personal reflection.

The Cloistered Settlers: Interaction with the Urban Poor

Central to the program of reform aimed at Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men was the

⁷⁵ Letter from Samuel Barnett to Frank Barnett, 1 March 1884, F/BAR/002, Samuel Barnett Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

⁷⁶ Robert A. Woods, *English Social Movements* (London: Swan Sonnenschein and Co., 1892), 86.

⁷⁷ C. R. Ashbee to ‘Much Beloved’, 23 February 1887, CRA/1/3/1887-1892/f.30, King’s College, University of Cambridge.

⁷⁸ Henry Woodd Nevinson, *Changes and Chances* (London: Nisbet, 1923), 91.

⁷⁹ James Adderley (Oxford House), Percy Alden (Mansfield House), Samuel Barnett (Toynbee Hall), Rebecca H. Cheetham (Women’s Settlement), George E. Gladstone (Passmore Edwards), W.J. Conybeare (Cambridge House), Beatrice C. Harrington (St. Margaret’s), T.E. Harvey (Chalfont House, Toynbee Hall), W. E. Jackson (Oxford House), J. Scott Lidgett (Bermondsey), H.S. Woollcombe (Oxford House), ‘Luxury and Poverty: Letter to the Editor’, *The Times*, February 11, 1905, 10.

notion that both the East End surrounds and the urban poor could have a positive influence on settlers. As we have seen, Henry Scott Holland presented both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House as centres where men could be brought ‘under the healthy influence of contact with working men and the poor’.⁸⁰ This aim was particularly prominent in the literature of Toynbee Hall. William Beveridge, for example, suggested that settling could humble university men as they recognised the privileges of their social position and ‘the sin of taking things for granted’.⁸¹ Samuel Barnett agreed that by moving into the East End, men would have ‘the pleasure of looking truth in the face, of seeing the cost of a coat, not on a shop ticket but on the worker’s body’. Settling, he argued, could lead to significant changes in the attitudes and behaviour of the upper classes:

They will realise as never before the meaning of life, the responsibility of cheap buying, the cost at which they prosper. They will change their own actions, and some of their luxuries will become hateful to them; their fruits out of season, their horses kept for show, their wines and their jewels will seem like the price of blood; they will give them up that others may have food and knowledge. They will also understand what change of law is desirable, and certainly will suspect changes which will destroy the individuality for which they have learnt respect.⁸²

Direct contact with the poor was espoused as a beneficial experience for settlers. This contact could take different forms, but was usually integrated in the settlement houses’ routines. For instance, Henrietta Barnett recorded that a group of poor children dined daily in Toynbee Hall with one of the residents acting as host. She believed that these ‘small, pinched little people seated amid plenty in the beautiful dining-room, eager with palpable hunger, were very pathetic’, but also ‘an excellent influence on the residents’.⁸³ Virtues, particularly industriousness, thrift and authenticity, were attributed

⁸⁰ Anonymous, *The Oxford House in Bethnal Green: Report of Meeting Held at the Mansion House in Support of an Appeal for the Building Fund on Wednesday, 21st Jan., 1891*, 9-10.

⁸¹ Letter from William Beveridge to Annette Beveridge, 28 November 1904, in William Beveridge, *Power and Influence* (New York: Beechhurst Press, 1955), 30-31.

⁸² Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:272.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 2:233.

to the poor who were sometimes presented as role models for young men. Barnett hoped that settlers, 'in the presence of a worker's life' would feel 'something of the dignity of work' and would subsequently start 'putting themselves to work'.⁸⁴

The idea that contact with the East End poor could shape settlers in such a positive way was frequently expressed, posing a striking contrast to wider contemporary concerns about the potentially demoralising influences of the urban poor upon the upper classes. Of particular concern were the unskilled and uneducated metropolitan poor, including London's 'residuum', among whom the settlers worked. Historians have examined this discourse. Indeed, Gareth Stedman Jones argues that the sense of urgency evident in late Victorian discussions of social problems stemmed from fears of exactly this sort of East Londoner. There were concerns that the vices which were commonly associated with the East End would spread to the upper classes and threaten the wellbeing of the entire nation. Stedman Jones conveys the social, moral and political anxieties of the Victorian middle and upper classes who regarded the East End as a 'nursery of destitute poverty and thriftlessness ... as a community cast adrift from the salutary presence and leadership of men of wealth and culture, and as a potential threat to the riches and civilisation of London and the Empire'.⁸⁵ William Forster, who drafted the Education Act of 1870, vividly described these concerns when he declared to the House of Commons that the nation was threatened by 'invading armies of ignorance, misery and destitution [which] swarm upon us like insects'.⁸⁶ The image of an advancing mob or army was particularly common and drew upon a prevailing sense of the revolutionary threat of the poor in late Victorian London. The clergyman, Brooke Lambert, expressed concern that the cry of the

⁸⁴ Address delivered to a Toynbee Hall gathering, 2 July 1889, MS1466, ff53-61, Samuel Barnett Papers, Lambeth Palace Library.

⁸⁵ Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 15-16.

⁸⁶ W.E Forster, Third Reading of the Education Act, House of Commons, 25 July 1870. *A Verbatim Report with Indexes of the Debates in Parliament during the Progress of the Elementary Education Bill, 1870, together with a Report of the Act* (London: National Education Union, 1870), 515.

poor could ‘soon become a howl – the howl of a crowd of injured brothers’ who would ‘advance’ with 400 000 men ‘to meet us’.⁸⁷ The journalist, Charles Masterman, was also concerned that the poor would ‘invade the homes of the respectable, and assail the houses of the rich and good’.⁸⁸ These fears were clearly evident in Mearns’s *Bitter Cry of Outcast London*, which pointed to ‘a vast mass of moral corruption, of heart-breaking misery and absolute godlessness’ in ‘the very centre’ of the city.⁸⁹ Drawing emphatically on fears of the potential impact of this state on the upper classes, Mearns warned: ‘THIS TERRIBLE FLOOD OF SIN AND MISERY IS GAINING UPON US.’⁹⁰ Given this dominant narrative of the contaminating effects of the East End poor, the settlement discourse that highlighted the benefits of cross-class interaction was much less familiar. Despite contemporary fears, within settlement circles, residency in the East End was seen as salutary.

Immersion in East End life (or at least some direct contact) was central to the settlement house project, but it was accompanied by efforts to ward off corrupting influences that were identified among the unskilled and destitute workers of Whitechapel and Bethnal Green. London’s East End was entered with trepidation by some social reformers who were concerned about the risks they might be taking in regard to their own health and moral condition. When William Beveridge arrived at Toynbee Hall for a short visit, he sent the following assurance to his anxious mother, Annette: ‘I write to say that I am getting on here most excellently and have not developed any large number of infectious diseases though I have been about and seen many things.’⁹¹ While it is doubtful that Beveridge (or other educated social reformers) was seriously worried about the health

⁸⁷ Brooke Lambert, ‘The Outcast Poor: Esau’s Cry’, *Contemporary Review* 44 (December 1883), 917.

⁸⁸ C.F.G. Masterman, *From the Abyss: Of its Inhabitants by One of Them* (London: R. Brimley Johnson, 1902), 11.

⁸⁹ Andrew Mearns, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* (London: James Clark, 1883), 1-3.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 20. (capitalisation in original)

⁹¹ Letter from William Beveridge to Annette Beveridge, 16 January 1900, Beveridge/2A/47, Beveridge Papers, British Library of Political and Economic Science, London School of Economics; also cited in Abel, ‘Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall’, 100.

risks of going into the East End, the suspicion that the area was unsafe seemingly persisted in some social circles. Beveridge's remark was clearly a response to his mother's misgivings about him visiting East London. Concerns about the potentially harmful effects of going into the slum districts were also voiced more widely. Becoming *too* immersed in the East End carried with it concerns of degenerating or 'going native'.⁹² As Samuel Barnett told Charles Booth in 1898: 'Those who began this work coming to live "in the East End" lodged here or there in the neighbourhood and became too much (it was thought) coloured by their surroundings – "too dirty" Mrs Barnett said'.⁹³ Such anxieties closely corresponded with the vulnerability of colonial identity and fears of the 'ubiquitous native' invading 'hallowed territory' in the British Empire.⁹⁴

Toynbee Hall and Oxford House encouraged settlers to learn from their experiences in the slums and from their contact with the poor while seeking to prevent men from either emulating the poor conditions surrounding them or being adversely affected by the behaviour of East Enders. Toynbee Hall and Oxford House leaders presented gentlemanly accoutrements as a protective shield against East End influences. Settlers were encouraged to maintain a 'cultured life' and to 'live their own life' with 'no affectation of equality with neighbours by the adoption of mean or dirty habits'.⁹⁵ There was to be 'no appearance of sacrifice'.⁹⁶ While Oxford House was a simpler setting, and its men tended to be more ascetic in their personal habits, their own comfort remained an important consideration. The men lived much as they had in their Oxbridge colleges. Beer was allowed in both settlements (despite the teetotalism of some Oxford House leaders)

⁹² The term 'going native' refers to the coloniser's fears of contamination due to absorption into 'native' life and customs. There was a widespread fear of 'going native' in the British Empire in this period. See Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Post-colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (Routledge, 2013), 132.

⁹³ See B/227 ff 241-242, Booth Collection, British Library of Political and Economic Science, London School of Economics.

⁹⁴ See Gail Ching-Liang Low, 'White Skins/Black Masks: The Pleasures and Politics of Imperialism', *New Formations* (1989), 86.

⁹⁵ Samuel Barnett, 'University Settlements', *Nineteenth Century* 38 (December 1895), 1020.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

and ample servants were employed. Until 1901, when a resident took over domestic duties, Henrietta Barnett was responsible for the housekeeping at Toynbee Hall and for the management of its domestic staff which included between 25 and 30 maids, cooks and other servants.⁹⁷ Henrietta took some pride in being a ‘good housekeeper’ and hostess. She sought to provide ‘well-coached servants, daintily decorated tables, and properly cooked food’.⁹⁸ With ample provisions in both settlements, residents could live the unambiguous life of gentlemen in Whitechapel or Bethnal Green. Samuel Barnett insisted that interactions with the Whitechapel poor did not mean there would be a ‘lowering of our standards’.⁹⁹ Edward Urwick, a sub-warden of Toynbee Hall concurred, maintaining that settlers should uphold their elite status:

It is sometimes thought that to be part of a poor neighbourhood we must ourselves become like the poor – imitating, to some extent, their conditions of living . . . We shall do no such thing. We want to fill the place of the well-to-do cultured classes as such; and while our consciences ought to prevent extravagance or undue luxury, it is not part of our duty to lower our standard of living to a level of marked discomfort.¹⁰⁰

While Toynbee Hall and Oxford House espoused cross-class brotherhood, they clearly distinguished fraternity from class equality – the elite would remain the elite. The meditative and peaceful qualities of the houses had something of the atmosphere and accoutrements of a monastery, and while a discipline was enforced upon their residents, such sentiments as expressed by Urwick clearly distanced the settlers from the monastic ideals of St Francis in their direct dealings with the poor. Urwick was typical of settlers who felt no need to eschew the privileges of their social station. As historians such as K.S. Inglis have argued, it was ‘no part of the social theory behind settlements that the

⁹⁷ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:313.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2:81-82.

⁹⁹ ‘What Toynbee Hall does for East London’, A/TOY/22/3/6, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

¹⁰⁰ E.J. Urwick, ‘The Settlement Ideal’, *Charity Organisation Review* 18 (March 1902), 123.

differences between classes should be ignored or removed'. Settlements like Toynbee Hall 'were not supposed to foreshadow a classless society'.¹⁰¹

The settlements sought to maintain protected spaces for residents to ensure that they were not overly or negatively influenced by the East End and its inhabitants, particularly its criminal underclasses. In many respects, the settlement houses served as enclaves which sheltered men from the surrounding poverty. Toynbee Hall, in particular, was praised for being a centre of 'light', 'warmth', 'love' and 'culture'. It was a 'sanctuary', a 'haven' or, as the residents often expressed it, an 'oasis' in the midst of the perceived ugliness, noise and brutality of the slums.¹⁰² This imagery emphasised a divide between the safety and comfort of the settlement and the potentially corrupting world of the East End.

Within the settlements themselves, the passage of East End visitors and their interactions with settlers were carefully regulated. Both settlements prohibited East Enders from accessing the residential quarters, and the Toynbee Hall drawing room was usually reserved for the settlers. The shielding of settlers within the settlement was particularly evident in the spatial relationship between Oxford House and one of its clubs. The Oxford House Club, which was frequented by East Enders, shared a common roof with the settlement house proper. However, the door connecting the two venues was kept closed at all times, literally shutting out the poor from the monastic peace and quiet set aside for the settlers. The door was not opened until 1940.¹⁰³

As well as using architecture to monitor the access of East Enders to the settlements, arrangements were made to suit the needs and comforts of the settlers. In the

¹⁰¹ K.S. Inglis, *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), 171. Also see Standish Meacham, *Toynbee Hall and Social Reform, 1880-1914: The Search for Community* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 40-42; Asa Briggs and Anne Macartney, *Toynbee Hall: The First Hundred Years* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), 7-8.

¹⁰² For examples of such descriptions, see Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:340.

¹⁰³ Transcript of interview, Mandy Ashworth interviewing Sir Guy and Molly Clutton-Brock, 1984, Oxford House University Settlement Papers, Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives.

early days of Toynbee Hall, for instance, books were housed in the settlement's dining room. However, as Henrietta Barnett recorded, 'as the residents' work increased and they returned after long evenings spent in crowded rooms, and wanted supper, clean air, and talk, it became necessary to find another home for the books'.¹⁰⁴ In 1886, it was proposed that a reading room be built adjoining Toynbee Hall, which would be open on weekdays and Sundays. This move was intended to minimise disruption to residents and ensure their comfort. Such developments eventually led to the creation of the Toynbee Hall Students' Free Library (see Figure 11).

The settlement houses also regulated the interactions between settlers and domestic servants, expressing concern that such contact could undermine the residents' gentlemanly status or threaten their chastity. A distinction was thereby drawn between the poor outside and the domestic servants inside the houses. While East Enders were the targets of a settlement program to establish mutually beneficial relations, there were no such attempts to connect with the settlements' domestic staff. Samuel Barnett emphasised that the settlers were gentlemen and as such they were 'waited upon by an admirable staff of servants, such as may be seen in the most refined of English homes'. He added, 'we know our place also, and are for the most part, as befits gentlemen, unacquainted with their names'.¹⁰⁵ Some of Henrietta Barnett's acquaintances advised her to hire only male servants, similar to the Oxford 'scouts' or Cambridge 'bed-makers', presumably to avoid sexual liaisons between the classes. According to Henrietta, the settlement engaged young maids 'without serious trouble', but there appears to have been some policing of social and sexual relations between residents and domestic staff. Henrietta noted that in the early days of the settlement, girls were occasionally dismissed because they 'would not understand'. Settlers were also forewarned about sexual innuendo and advised that offers

¹⁰⁴ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:2.

¹⁰⁵ 'What Toynbee Hall does for East London', A/TOY/22/3/6, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.



Figure 11: Unidentified Artist, Photograph of the Toynbee Hall Students' Free Library, c. 1903, The Social Museum Collection, Harvard Art Museums

to carry the heavy trays or fetch the coals were liable to generate ‘mistaken notions’.¹⁰⁶

While liaisons that may have taken place between settlers and their servants were not openly discussed in settlement circles, warnings were evidently issued to settlers regarding their interactions with the domestic help. Like other settlement measures, this was part of a program that sought to enable settlers to learn from the East End and its people without being ‘tainted’ by their surrounds. The gentlemen were not to lower their standards or to forget their place in society. To this end, the settlements established communal rituals to regulate and guide the behaviour of their residents.

A Monastic Community: Shaping Residents through Settlement Rituals

While Franciscan ideals of becoming the poor in order to serve the poor did not underpin the settlements’ aims of fraternity, the houses did appropriate some features akin to monastic life as a means of shaping settlers. This included imposed daily rituals (including prayer and religious observance in the case of Oxford House), communal life and a system of internal house discipline.

In accordance with its Christian ideals, the settlers’ routine in Oxford House was centred on religious observance. Chapel services were held each morning and, as one resident wrote, it was ‘as natural with the Head to go to chapel first thing as it was to have breakfast. Nobody was pressed to attend but everybody did’.¹⁰⁷ Sunday was a particularly busy day in the religious life of Oxford House men.¹⁰⁸ Residents would attend an eight o’clock service in the settlement’s chapel. At ten o’clock, most Oxford House men took part in the activities being held at local Sunday schools. They attended a service at the

¹⁰⁶ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:41.

¹⁰⁷ Oxford House, Annual Report, 1889, 10.

¹⁰⁸ ‘A Week’s Work’, *The Oxford House Chronicle* 5 (1893), 6.

parish church in the late morning as well as an evening service.¹⁰⁹

While religious observance was more prominent in Oxford House, communal living was the mainstay of both settlements and was seen as contributing to the moral formation of residents. William Beveridge acknowledged that men interested in social reform could ‘settle individually’. However, he emphasised the importance of the Toynbee community, where he saw the ‘older members guiding and helping the new ones’. He asserted: ‘Few who have passed through a settlement will question the value of Canon Barnett’s social invention.’¹¹⁰ Settlers in both houses lived as ‘a family’¹¹¹, taking meals together and gathering for settlement functions. In Oxford House, residents also shared morning prayers and spent evenings together in working men’s clubs.

The communal life of the settlements demanded some degree of conformity. In Oxford House, this was achieved by the residents’ shared Christianity. In Toynbee Hall, Samuel Barnett insisted that settling should require some degree of sacrifice to the community, including ‘the surrender of self-will and will-worship’.¹¹² Individual residents in Toynbee Hall could espouse a variety of political and religious beliefs, as the settlement was non-denominational and apolitical. However, settlers who stood for political election were requested not to use the Toynbee Hall address in their writings and residents could not write to newspapers from the settlement address without first checking with Barnett.¹¹³ Despite such constraints, Barnett emphasised the importance of individuality. He wanted the settlement to house at least twelve residents at any one time. Aside from a possible biblical reference to the twelve disciples, Barnett believed that a group of this size would enable men to seek solitude when necessary. The Toynbee

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ William Beveridge, *Voluntary Action: A Report on Methods of Social Advance* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 132.

¹¹¹ Smart, *Toynbee Hall*, 5.

¹¹² Samuel Barnett, ‘University Settlements’, in *University and Social Settlements*, ed. William Reason (London: Methuen, 1898), 19.

¹¹³ Samuel Barnett, ‘A Retrospect of Toynbee Hall’, in *Towards Social Reform*, 263.

community was designed to allow ‘more space for the growth of individuality’. As

Barnett wrote:

When only a few men live together, it is impossible for one to seek loneliness without letting the others be conscious of the fact. All are so closely packed that there is no room for the play of temper, no space in which opinion can move and unconsciously exert influence, and there is danger either of frequent friction or of the establishment of a narrow uniformity.¹¹⁴

The importance of community was evident under subsequent settlement leaders and it was still strong in both houses in the inter-war period. As late as the 1940s, Guy Clutton-Brock of Oxford House characterised settlement life as ‘cooperative, sharing and communal’.¹¹⁵ Residents in both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House could seek advice and assistance from their fellow residents and from the warden. While this guidance was likely to be of a religious kind in Oxford House, in Toynbee Hall it usually centred on social inquiry. Toynbee Hall was distinguished from Oxford House by its multiple forums for social discussion, including its Thursday evening ‘smoking debates’ and the clubs it established to study topical issues. The Toynbee Hall Enquiries’ Club, for example, was established in 1901 to provide opportunities for settlers, East Londoners and other invited guests to engage with social, political, economic and industrial questions. The Toynbee Hall warden from 1919 to 1954, Jimmy Mallon, emphasised the importance of discussion and debate within the settlement. He described the Enquirers’ Club as ‘a safety valve for thoughts and feelings which, if suppressed, turned into bitterness and morbidity’, an expression of the ‘Englishman’s way of “getting things off his chest”’. Discussions took place, he claimed, in an atmosphere of ‘toleration and good humour, to which all contribute’.¹¹⁶ Although there were some years when the Enquirers’ Club did not run, it

¹¹⁴ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:25.

¹¹⁵ Quoted in Ian Bradley, *Oxford House in Bethnal Green, 1884-1984: 100 Years of Work in the Community: A Short History* (London: Oxford House, 1984), no page.

¹¹⁶ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1926, 33.

survived until after the Second World War. It was then replaced by 'At Homes' by Arthur Morgan, the Toynbee Hall warden between 1954 and 1963. These were open only to residents, who were treated to fireside chats in the Toynbee dining room with politicians and economists.¹¹⁷

As well as providing opportunities for serious social discussions, Toynbee Hall encouraged an informal sense of fellowship within the settlement between 1884 and 1914. J.A.R. Pimlott, for example, described the 'Toynbee Pantomime' which formed part of the settlement's annual Christmas party. Residents participated in these productions for their own amusement. Pimlott states that 'no attempt was made to achieve technical perfection, and the play merged into the charade'. He commented that the 'setting was usually crude. The costumes were hastily improvised. The players often did not know their parts, and had recourse to such devices as reading out of their hats'. In short, the annual pantomime was 'merely a good joke' intended to entertain the actors themselves.¹¹⁸ For Pimlott, the significance of the pantomime was not the quality of the performance but the sense of community it engendered. He described the event as 'a manifestation of the communal life which is so valuable an aspect of residence in a settlement'.¹¹⁹

Like the settlement's spatial arrangements, Toynbee Hall's communal lifestyle was designed to shelter men from being corrupted by the East End environment. While Samuel Barnett actively encouraged contact with the poor, he only wanted residents to be influenced by their surrounds to a certain extent. He cautioned settlers that they should not be 'overcome' by their new neighbourhood.¹²⁰ Barnett's reservations were in part due to the presence of the 'residuum' in the local area. Before Toynbee Hall had even been

¹¹⁷ Katharine Bradley, 'Poverty and Philanthropy in East London, 1918-1959: The University Settlements and the Urban Working Classes', (PhD diss., University of London, 2006), 156.

¹¹⁸ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 176.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 175.

¹²⁰ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:25.

established, he had personally encountered the criminal element that existed in Whitechapel. As one settlement associate wrote, ‘the first act of welcome Canon Barnett met with from one of his future parishioners’ when he arrived in Whitechapel in 1873, ‘was to be knocked down and have his watch stolen’.¹²¹ The behaviour of the casual labourers, street sellers and other workers who lived in the district was also a potential source of discomfort for settlement workers. There was one particularly notable occasion when Kenneth Grahame, the famous author of *The Wind in the Willows*, arrived at the settlement to give a talk on literature only to be mobbed by a group of Cockney girls who cuddled him and smothered him with kisses! Perhaps not surprisingly, Grahame’s contact with the settlement was short-lived.¹²²

Barnett believed that a larger group of men was better equipped to resist these less favourable influences in the East End and to prevent settlers from giving way to ‘the slovenliness and cheapness and want of manners which often distinguishes industrial neighbourhoods’.¹²³ Barnett argued: ‘The advantage of a settlement is that a body of university men living together keep up the distinctive characteristics of their training, they better resist the tendency to put on the universal drab, and they bring a variety into their neighbourhood.’¹²⁴ The emphasis placed on a settler community was also evident in Balliol House and Wadham House, the two student hostels attached to Toynbee Hall. Outlining the objectives of Wadham House, Barnett stated that ‘communion represents the highest state of human development . . . It is the hope of the founders that Wadham House may offer an example of a common life satisfying to its members and helpful to its neighbours’. A man was expected ‘to consider the other residents, subduing, if necessary,

¹²¹ Thomas Okey, *A Basketful of Memories* (London: J.M. Dent, 1930), 56.

¹²² Alison Prince, *Kenneth Grahame: An Innocent in the Wild Wood* (London: Allison and Busby, 1994), 62.

¹²³ Universities Settlement in East London, Annual Report, 1890, 8.

¹²⁴ Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, *Practicable Socialism: Essays on Social Reform* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1895), 127.

his own taste and temper so as to make the House pleasant and restful'.¹²⁵

As this remark suggests, settlers, like their monastic counterparts, were encouraged to conform to certain standards of behaviour and to adopt a routine which was synchronised with the daily life and rhythm of the houses. The Barnetts encouraged residents to 'care for the House as a whole' and to 'feel that all their labours were interdependent'.¹²⁶ The settlement routine was central to this aim. Settlers' individual routines were flexible and tailored to their interests and time commitments, but there were activities in which all residents were called upon to participate, such as attendance at social functions. According to a Toynbee Hall memorandum, associating with students and club members was a settler's 'own choice', but occasions such as weekly debates were 'an honourable obligation'.¹²⁷ Residents who had an aptitude for teaching were also encouraged to offer classes. Under Barnett's wardenship, residents were invited to weekly talks. Henrietta Barnett recalled: 'Sometimes we had poetry evenings, each man reading what he counted worthy.'¹²⁸ Toynbee Hall's weekly schedule was largely based on the settlement's meal times. Lunch and dinner were taken communally at a long table at specified times (see Figure 12). Henrietta detailed the daily rules and routines of Toynbee Hall as follows:

No one was to have soup who did not appear at dinner while it was being served, and I have seen learned professors and 'double honour' men run up the long dining-room, and the Warden linger over the ladling with mischief in his eyes, to enable them to scramble into their seats before the tall parlour-maid whisked the tureen off the table. Three breakfasts were served hot at stated hours, and then a comic flag was solemnly hoisted, after which no one was allowed breakfast except on payment of a prohibitive fine. Dinners and luncheons were taken at a long table, but 'Grand' [the Grand Committee] decided no one was good enough to breakfast together and so small separate tables were used for the first meal. The arrangements were often altered. Spartan rules were occasionally issued on early tennis, hours for lights out, or limitation of service, and then 'Grand' would be

¹²⁵ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:13.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 2:62.

¹²⁷ Memorandum, 1919, A/TOY/006, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

¹²⁸ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:62.



Figure 12: Two of Toynbee Hall's Parlour Maids. Robert Woods, 'The Social Awakening in London', *Scribners* (April, 1892), 410.

leavened by a more lenient spirit, and votes were passed for greater laxity, and another course added at dinner. Through all the twenty-two years, 1884-1906, that my husband presided over 'Grand', there were, however, two matters on which the decisions were never reversed. One was dancing and the other was Sunday lawn tennis. Every year the latter came up and every year it was vetoed.¹²⁹

The settlement life described by Henrietta Barnett was seemingly carried out with solemnity, but also with a sense of 'mischief' and humour symbolised by the 'comic flag' being hoisted to signal the end of the formal breakfast hour. However, there were clear house rules in place and settlers were expected to demonstrate discipline, responsibility and commitment in order to ensure the efficient running of the settlement. Henrietta did not explain why settlers were not 'good enough' to eat breakfast together. This decision may have been due to the varied hours men kept, or even to an opinion that they were not on their best behaviour in the mornings! Evening and weekend meals usually formed the core of settlement gatherings where men had the opportunity to freely converse with their fellow residents and guests. This sense of community was frequently regarded as a civilising influence on settlers as they were able to learn from the ideas and example of their mentors and peers.

Settlement Pedagogy: The Role of Settlement Peers and Leaders in Shaping Residents

A peer-to-peer form of education operated among the social reformers in Toynbee Hall and Oxford House. In his study on English settlement houses, William Reason observed that settlers did not lose their individuality, but the opinion or criticism of their peers motivated them to refine and to maintain their work ethic and standards. Association with fellow residents was thought to check the 'development of fads and of sloth' and

¹²⁹ Ibid, 1:315.

encourage cleanliness and order.¹³⁰ This was a form of pedagogy that was well recognised by Toynbee settlers in particular. Samuel Barnett asserted that ‘man was not made to be alone’, adding: ‘We are all members one of another, depending on one another not only for food but for teaching’.¹³¹ Settlers were helped ‘by the companionship of their fellows to take larger views of what is wanted – their enthusiasm for progress is kept alive, and at the same time well pruned by friendly and severe criticism’.¹³² This philosophy was evident when Barnett wrote to a friend, warning that ‘in cutting yourself off from men, you are depriving yourself of the best training which God provides’.¹³³ Some settlers were clearly aware of this peer-to-peer influence. The Toynbee resident, Werner Picht, described an individual’s process of reformation as he interacted with his fellows: ‘In conversation with them he sees himself constantly compelled to revise his own judgment, he becomes less easily fixed in an idea than an isolated person, and the novice is quickly brought into the right way.’ Picht felt that these influences could create a ‘fear of criticism’ and curtail creativity and the ‘desire to experiment’, but he was confident that each settler had the freedom to form his own views.¹³⁴ One settler spoke enthusiastically of the educational benefit of mingling with other residents. ‘We learn much’, he declared:

I should say that we see life under varying conditions and new aspects, and attempt to partake in the life we see . . . we have the opportunity not merely of enlarging our sympathies, of gaining broader views and a more catholic standpoint, but of building up a new system of relationship side by side with our old, of forming round the Hall a new world of student-friends and guest-friends, acting and reacting on one another, by whose means refinement and knowledge may pass electrically as from friend to friend, and not professionally as from tutor to pupil.¹³⁵

This type of peer group pedagogy had certain parallels with other adult education

¹³⁰ Reason, ‘University Settlements’, 18.

¹³¹ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:264.

¹³² Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:312.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 1:264.

¹³⁴ Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, 95.

¹³⁵ See *The Critic* 11 (1887), 135.

institutions in this period. Although it focused on the education of the working classes, not the social elite, George Macaulay Trevelyan's description of 'friends educating each other' at the Working Men's College in London encapsulates much of the settlement houses' educational philosophy.¹³⁶ A system of communal and democratic learning within a class was also advocated by the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), pioneered by Albert Mansbridge. Founded after a meeting at Toynbee Hall in 1903 as the Association to Promote the Higher Education of Workingmen, the WEA aimed to extend educational opportunities for the working classes, primarily by the extension of university teaching. Tutorial classes were designed to provide a course of study to working-class men and women who did not have the means to study at a university.¹³⁷ The WEA promoted a collaborative style of learning; members formed classes, chose subjects and requested staff from universities. A pamphlet issued by the Workers' Educational Association in 1908 described a communal style of learning where every member spread 'habits of criticism and reflection among his fellows' in a way that would be impossible if education were organised 'simply from above'.¹³⁸

Settlement leaders also played an important role in the training of settlers in the East End. This guidance was intended to be mild and unobtrusive. The style of leadership in the settlements was encapsulated in a remark made by the Oxford House head during World War Two, Guy Clutton-Brock. He defined his role as follows: 'I wasn't their boss, sitting in an office or going around telling people what to do. There were some very capable people on the staff.'¹³⁹ Settlement leaders acted as advisors and mentors to individual residents. According to one Toynbee man, Samuel Barnett, in particular,

¹³⁶ G.M. Trevelyan, *The Working Men's College* (London, 1904), 198.

¹³⁷ See Lawrence Goldman, *Dons and Workers: Oxford and Adult Education since 1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), particularly pp.105-107.

¹³⁸ Workers' Educational Association and University of Oxford, *Oxford and Working-Class Education: Being the Report of a Joint Committee of the University and Working-class Representatives on the Relation of the University to the Higher Education of Workpeople* (Oxford, 1908), 50.

¹³⁹ Quoted in Mandy Ashworth, *The Oxford House in Bethnal Green: 100 Years of Work in the Community* (London: Oxford House, 1984), 41.

expected ‘great things’ from his residents.¹⁴⁰ Barnett felt that it was his role to act as a counsellor and friend. The following list, taken from one of his letters, illustrates that much of his time was spent working with Toynbee Hall settlers and associates on an individual basis:

As to yesterday:

1. Buckland; talk re his own work and entertainment policy.
2. Eagan; talk re work with C.O.S. and his reading.
3. Bullock; talk re a friend in distress – his work.
4. A French Abbé about a friend who would go into Balliol House.
5. Kemp Welch; re a defaulter in Balliol House and county court proceedings, also re Exhibition.
6. Peppin; letters re Settlements’ Conference, scheme for Rathbone.
7. Courtney Kenny; re Kittle.
8. Courtney’s; re young Lionel Curtis – New Coll. – as their possible Secretary.
9. Ball; re Sanitary Council and Whitechapel authorities.
10. Miss Coker; re pictures and gas lights.
11. Budgett – a new Resident. Right sort – comes on Monday.
12. Hart and Mrs. Lobb; re class for former in afternoon school.
13. Miss Turriff; re house for Cheltenham ladies.¹⁴¹

Henrietta Barnett, who included this letter in her biography of her husband, presented this as a typical day for Samuel Barnett in the East End. The personalised nature of his schedule reflects the settlement aim to minister to residents’ needs on an individual level. Henrietta wrote that her husband always remembered that each institution consisted of a number of individuals: ‘To him the individuality of each human being was worthy of reverence. To develop it was a duty, and any step was deprecated which tended to hinder personal relations, even if it simplified machinery, reduced effort, or made it possible to benefit large numbers.’¹⁴² The settlement motto ‘one by one’ was, according to Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, ‘the phrase which best expresses our

¹⁴⁰ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:317.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, 1:323.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, 1:184-185.

method'.¹⁴³ Samuel believed that the settlement's activities had their 'root and their life in the individuality of its members'.¹⁴⁴

Under the Barnetts, settlers were given individual guidance, but they were also allowed independence in choosing how they would contribute to the settlement's work. Due to its broader civic activities, Toynbee Hall arguably offered a wider range of choices for settlers than Oxford House. Ernest Aves, who was sub-warden of Toynbee Hall between 1890 and 1897, distinguished the settlement from Christian missions 'where the men work under authority; are told . . . to do this or that'. He observed: 'At Toynbee the method has been rather to find out what a man is good for, and let him do it in his own way.'¹⁴⁵ Settlement administration gave men the opportunity to explore their interests and test their skills. This was evident on one occasion when the Barnetts were visiting Italy in the winter of 1903-1904. Henrietta noted that there were 'men of great ability in Toynbee, including Mr William Beveridge', and that Samuel believed that his absence would allow the 'full development of their work'.¹⁴⁶ New settlers were introduced to a variety of activities before they selected their own pursuits. One resident described his early days at Toynbee Hall as follows:

The first week at Toynbee Hall is always, I imagine, attended by a feeling that one is out of regular work and reduced to jobs. Such at any rate was my experience when I arrived last October, and was sent to play whist at the 'Whittington' Club, to canvass for the School Board election, and then handed over to the 'Sanitary Aid' to learn the nature of bell-traps and dust-bins. When, however, I began to feel my feet, my energies were transferred to the Charity Organisation Society, and my weekly programme began to shape itself into definite form.¹⁴⁷

As this account illustrates, a number of avenues were open to settlers in the field

¹⁴³ Samuel Barnett, *Worship and Work: Thoughts from the Unpublished Writings of the Late Canon S.A. Barnett*, ed. Henrietta Barnett (Letchworth: Garden City Press, 1913), 71.

¹⁴⁴ Barnett, 'University settlements', 20.

¹⁴⁵ Quoted in Meacham, *Toynbee Hall and Social Reform*, 53.

¹⁴⁶ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:242.

¹⁴⁷ Gilman, 'Toynbee Hall, Whitechapel', 256.

of social work. An 1884 brochure advertising the work of Toynbee Hall listed activities in which settlers could participate, including attendance at working men's and boys' clubs; participation in settlement discussions, entertainments and excursions; teaching; and conducting men and boys through museums and picture galleries on Saturday afternoons.¹⁴⁸ In addition, both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House actively supported the Children's Country Holiday Fund (CCHF), a philanthropic organisation that had been founded in 1884 'to provide fresh air for ailing London children'.¹⁴⁹ The CCHF organised holidays in the country for children from poor families, away from the 'deteriorating influences of city squalor'.¹⁵⁰ Summer vacations were viewed as an opportunity for London children to rest, regain their health and take a respite from the 'gloomy cramped streets', 'the monotonous houses of hideous aspect' and 'the sordid tragedy' of London's slums.¹⁵¹ Children boarded for two weeks with local 'cottagers' who were paid by the fund to look after the children.¹⁵² In its first year, the fund sent about 5000 children to homes in the country.¹⁵³ Throughout the early twentieth century, it organised summer vacations for approximately 40,000 children each year.¹⁵⁴

Settlers who joined the CCHF were involved in selecting suitable children, visiting their families to ensure they came from respectable homes and calculating the amounts that each family should contribute towards the cost of the holiday in proportion to the family's circumstances.¹⁵⁵ Volunteers found potential host families in the

¹⁴⁸ Toynbee Hall, untitled brochure, 25 October 1884, A/TOY/005, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

¹⁴⁹ Children's Country Holiday Fund, Annual Report, 1903.

¹⁵⁰ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1886, 13; Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1889, 14.

¹⁵¹ Cyril Jackson, 'The Children's Country Holiday Fund and the Settlements', *The Universities and the Social Problem: An Account of the University Settlements in East London*, ed. John M. Knapp (London: Rivington, Percival and Co., 1895), 89.

¹⁵² The cost of a child's holiday was estimated to be 14 shillings. Parents were asked to make a contribution if they could, but two thirds of the funds were raised by committees. See Children's Country Holiday Fund, Annual Report, 1904.

¹⁵³ *Toynbee Record* 1, no.4 (January 1889), 143.

¹⁵⁴ *The Charity Organisation Review*, vol. 21 (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1907), 140; *The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, vol. 114 (J.W. Parker and Son, 1912), 17.

¹⁵⁵ Children's Country Holiday Fund, Annual Report, 1903.

countryside and inspected their homes before arranging for children to be escorted to their destinations. Some settlers were also appointed to official positions within the CCHF. Samuel Barnett served as chairman of its committee from 1884 until his resignation in January 1913.¹⁵⁶ Four prominent Toynbee men began their careers as secretaries of the fund: Cyril Jackson (1888-1896), Edward Urwick (1898-1899), R.H. Tawney (1903-1906) and Wilfred Blakiston (1907-1911).¹⁵⁷

The CCHF was a popular source of work for residents, but settlers were often introduced to a wide variety of activities when they arrived at Toynbee Hall. During a period of residence of only a few months in 1888, John Sinclair, for example, contributed to the work of the Children's Country Holiday Fund and the Education Reform League. Additionally, he was a director of a cooperative production society, helped to start the Co-operative Aid Association, organised an exhibition of co-operative products at Lord Aberdeen's house and, with a group of other residents, investigated the claims of both sides in the match girls' strike of 1888.¹⁵⁸ Eventually, each settler formed his own routine tailored to his particular interests, commitments and future plans. One man's weekly routine in Toynbee Hall went as follows:

My mornings were devoted to reading and private coaching, but my afternoons till Friday were spent in visiting in Limehouse. Monday evening was first set down for a class at the 'Whittington' [the boys' cadet corps]. This was at 9 o'clock, but I generally spent some time beforehand in chat with the boys. Afterwards came Mrs. Barnett's weekly 'At Home', at which we have had many most enjoyable discussions. When the Whittington classes were reconstituted I relinquished my elementary class for a share in a dramatic class on Wednesday. Tuesday was nominally my free evening, but actually was spent usually in assisting at the entertainments, *conversazioni*, at Toynbee Hall, whenever my services either at

¹⁵⁶ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:183, 189.

¹⁵⁷ Children's Country Holiday Fund, Reports, 1885-1913. It was through his work with the CCHF that Tawney met his future wife, Jeannette Beveridge (the sister of William Beveridge) whom he married in 1909.

¹⁵⁸ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 57. For further details on John Sinclair, see Maurice Headlam, 'Sinclair, John, first Baron Pentland (1860-1925)', rev. Marc Brodie, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-36109?rskey=iVqS8K&result=4> (accessed 29 September 2018).

the piano or otherwise might be required. On Wednesday I have a literature class for pupil teachers, and my Thursday evening is pleasantly spent in assisting at the Boys' Club.¹⁵⁹

Among the settlement leaders of both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House, Samuel Barnett was the most frequently cited as an influence on residents in the period between 1884 and 1914. Barnett's contact with individual residents allowed him to supervise and direct various settlement activities, including those in which he was not active himself. According to Henrietta, he was not directly involved in the management of the settlement's clubs. His 'share of the work was to talk with the men who were managing them, hear their difficulties, suggest new outlets for youthful energy, discuss individual characters, and find fresh workers' as the clubs grew or as residents left the East End.¹⁶⁰ While their schedules varied, all Toynbee settlers met privately with Samuel Barnett at least once a week for half an hour's talk in his study. Many settlers reflected that they left these meetings, and indeed the settlement itself, feeling inspired. John Alfred (J.A.) Spender, the journal editor and writer, recalled that Barnett 'never grudged you his time' and that, whatever the subject of discussion, he 'never seemed bored or tired or superior or condescending'.¹⁶¹ He elaborated: 'There was no better critic living of schemes in the air, and I can see him still in my mind's eye applying that gentle Socratic method so careful not to hurt your feelings, but so obviously wise and experienced to the well-meant impracticable notions in which generous youth abounds.'¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1886, 23.

¹⁶⁰ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:70.

¹⁶¹ John Alfred (J.A.) Spender, *Life, Journalism and Politics: An Autobiography* (London: Cassell and Co., 1927), 46.

¹⁶² *Westminster Gazette*, June 19, 1913.

Feminine Influences on Settlers

While both settlements were characterised by their masculine leadership, there were some feminine influences upon men within Toynbee Hall. Women played a very slight role in Oxford House where residents had few ties with female associates. Toynbee Hall, however, invited women as guests to settlement functions and accepted female volunteers.¹⁶³ Residency was restricted to men, but there were opportunities to associate with women within the settlement. Bolton King, one of the settlement's earliest residents, claimed that 'comradeship' in Toynbee Hall had 'known no difference of sex. Women have found here respect and reverence, and have been treated as equals'.¹⁶⁴

Henrietta Barnett was a strong female presence within the all-male settlement. In many ways, she exemplified what Eileen Yeo has called 'radical femininity', whereby middle- and upper-class women in the nineteenth century created 'empowering identities' in order to participate in social and political activities.¹⁶⁵ Frank Prochaska highlights the 'persistence', 'tact', 'persuasiveness' and 'willingness' of such women who challenged the 'masculine officialism' prevailing in the field of British social reform.¹⁶⁶ Henrietta Barnett created 'an assertive public persona' to 'negotiate the constraints imposed by her . . . gender'.¹⁶⁷ C.R. Ashbee, for example, called her a 'fine, noble, bright-eyed, vigorous woman' who 'will have her own way and not be sparing of her opinion'.¹⁶⁸ Henrietta's

¹⁶³ For example, when Jimmy Mallon was commissioned to research the cost of living in East London in 1936, his assistants included two men and seven women. Most of the women involved were related to Toynbee men, including Mallon's wife, Stella. See Bradley, 'Poverty and Philanthropy in East London, 1918-1959: The University Settlements and the Urban Working Classes', 82.

¹⁶⁴ *Toynbee Record*, July-August 1894, 134.

¹⁶⁵ Eileen Janes Yeo, ed. *Radical Femininity: Women's Self-Representation in the Public Sphere* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1998), 1.

¹⁶⁶ Frank Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 222. This and the above reference are cited in Alison Creedon, 'A Benevolent Tyrant? The Principles and Practices of Henrietta Barnett (1851-1936), Social Reformer and Founder of Hampstead Garden Suburb', *Women's History Review* 11, no. 2, 231, 232.

¹⁶⁷ Creedon, 'A Benevolent Tyrant?', 234.

¹⁶⁸ Quoted in Seth Koven, 'Henrietta Barnett, 1851-1936: The (auto)biography of a Late-Victorian Marriage', in *After the Victorians: Private Conscience and Public Duty in Modern Britain, Essays in*

writings suggest that she was keen to impress upon men the qualities of women. In a letter to Philip Lyttelton Gell, for example, she emphasised that women could contribute to settlement life. She wrote that ‘it would do every whipper snapper who thinks he as a male is superior to women, good to know that big Toynbee [Hall] has asked a woman for her council [sic]’.¹⁶⁹ Henrietta ‘presented herself as a bold, audacious, decisive and independent-minded person’.¹⁷⁰ Her husband, on the other hand, was often characterised by contemporaries (and Henrietta herself) by traditional feminine qualities, including ‘gentleness and tenderness’.¹⁷¹ Seth Koven refers to the ‘subversive complementarity’ of the Barnetts’ marriage – an ‘untraditional but complementary distribution of masculine and feminine traits between them’.¹⁷²

In her marriage, Henrietta both accepted and challenged Victorian gender roles. As the wife of Toynbee Hall’s first warden, she associated regularly with the settlement’s residents. A ‘round robin’ (see Figure 13) from Toynbee settlers inviting her to attend dinner ‘whenever she pleases’ suggests that her presence was welcomed and, indeed, actively sought. Some settlers regarded Henrietta Barnett as a reforming influence in the predominantly masculine arena of the settlement house. One resident wrote that while some men ‘resented’ the presence of a woman in the settlement, Henrietta ‘brought a touch of womanly refinement which corrected bachelor habits’ and tempered ‘male roughness’.¹⁷³ Seth Koven also notes that her ‘social motherhood on behalf of working-class children and youths . . . conformed to larger patterns of female philanthropy in the nineteenth century’ and ‘appeared to rectify the most glaring irregularity in her private

Memory of John Clive, edited by Peter Mandler and Susan Pedersen (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 41.

¹⁶⁹ Letter from Henrietta Barnett to P.L. Gell, January 22, 1887, D3287/115/2, Gell Papers, Derbyshire Record Office.

¹⁷⁰ Koven, ‘Henrietta Barnett, 1851-1936: The (auto)biography of a Late-Victorian Marriage’, 41.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁷³ Barnett, *Cannon Barnett*, 2: 42-43.

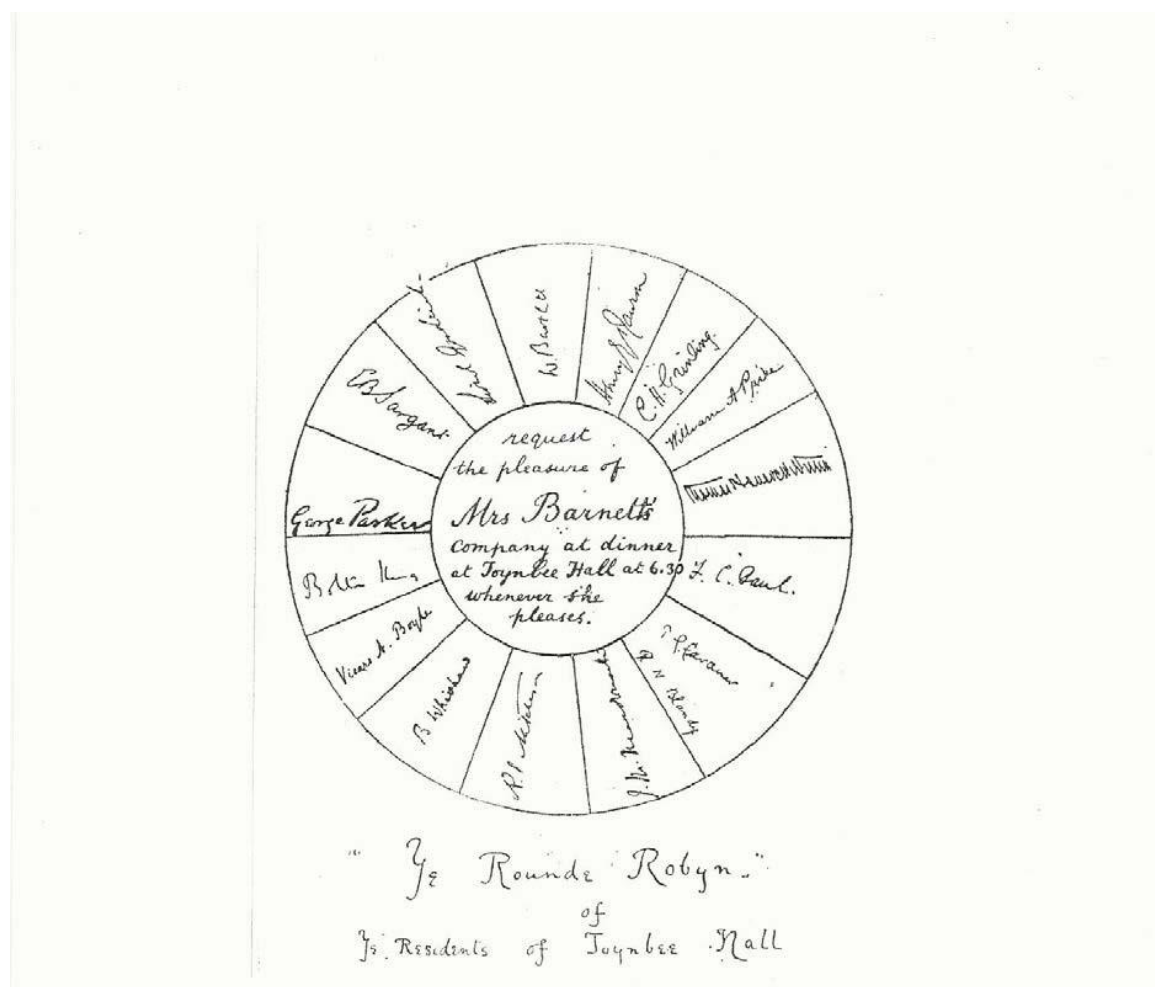


Figure 13: A round robin received by Henrietta Barnett to attend functions at Toynbee Hall. Henrietta Barnett, *Canon Barnett: His Life, Work and Friends* (London: John Murray, 1918), 2:43.

life: her failure to be a “real” mother and produce offspring’.¹⁷⁴

A social reformer in her own right¹⁷⁵, Henrietta Barnett made an equivalent contribution to many of the causes and reforms espoused by her husband. Beatrice Webb considered the Barnetts as ‘a double-star-personality, the light of the one being indistinguishable from that of the other’.¹⁷⁶ Henrietta herself wrote in later life that in their shared careers as social reformers, her husband was ‘sometimes the playwright and I the actor, while at other times I was the instigator and he was the organiser. On all matters we consulted and moulded each other’s opinions or enlarged our respective outlooks’.¹⁷⁷ The Barnetts lived together at St Jude’s vicarage until 1892 when they moved into the warden’s lodge at Toynbee Hall.¹⁷⁸ Most settlers were young and single and, according to one resident, Henrietta represented a ‘new ideal of married life, that of the wife as an equal partner with the husband in work and thought’.¹⁷⁹ This view was shared by other residents and associates. J.A.R. Pimlott described Henrietta as self-confident and determined, while Cosmo Lang regarded her as Samuel Barnett’s source of inspiration: ‘The ideals and plans which glowed in the fervent imagination of the wife were clarified and defined and disciplined as they passed through the mind of the husband.’ Jimmy Mallon agreed that the Barnett partnership was ‘uniquely suited’.¹⁸⁰ His own wife, Stella

¹⁷⁴ Koven, ‘Henrietta Barnett, 1851-1936: The (auto)biography of a Late-Victorian Marriage’, 44.

¹⁷⁵ Before her marriage to Samuel Barnett in 1873, Henrietta had assisted the housing and charity reformer Octavia Hill in the parish of St Mary’s in Marylebone. She had also worked as a poor law guardian. Henrietta was a co-founder in 1876 of the Metropolitan Association for the Befriending of Young Servants. She was also active in the Garden City movement, rescuing 80 acres of Hampstead Heath for public enjoyment and creating the Hampstead Garden Suburb. See Seth Koven, ‘Barnett [née Rowland], Dame Henrietta Octavia Weston (1851–1936)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-30610?rskey=xe3gcW&result=1> (accessed 29 September 2018).

¹⁷⁶ Beatrice Webb, *My Apprenticeship* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1926), 182.

¹⁷⁷ Henrietta Barnett, *Matters that Matter* (London: John Murray, 1930), vi.

¹⁷⁸ Barnett, *Cannon Barnett*, 2:58.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 2:42-43. On the Barnett partnership, see Seth Koven, ‘Henrietta Barnett, 1851-1936: The (auto)biography of a late Victorian Marriage’, in *After the Victorians: Private Conscience and Public Duty in Modern Britain: Essays in Memory of John Clive*, ed. P. Mandler, S. Pedersen and J. Clive (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 31-53.

¹⁸⁰ Cited in Briggs and Macartney, *Toynbee Hall*, 26, 27.

Mallon, seems to have occupied a similar position in settlers' affections.¹⁸¹ Pimlott wrote that by her 'kindliness and charm Mrs Mallon has endeared herself to all who have been in residence in the subsequent period, and has contributed notably to the happiness of the communal life of the settlement'.¹⁸²

Toynbee settlers were encouraged to hone their domestic skills by arranging parties for friends and visitors. In 1901, the Toynbee resident, Francis Douglas assumed the duty of housekeeping in the settlement. Henrietta Barnett, who had until then undertaken this responsibility, believed that Douglas was well suited to the position: 'I never knew such a man: he was as good as a capable woman!'¹⁸³ Other settlers also contributed to this homely setting within Toynbee Hall. In an article entitled 'Hospitalities', Samuel Barnett presented the settler in a decidedly domesticated role:

The resident carefully chooses friends to meet the guests who will get and give enjoyment. He has the tables daintily spread and decorated with flowers, and he provides that food shall be simple and abundant. Again, he himself, in the drawing room, receives each guest as he arrives, and, about half an hour after the time, conducts them all to the dining room.¹⁸⁴

In his account, Barnett added that after 'good food and good company', there would be two or three short speeches before the party adjourned to the drawing room 'to smoke, to sing songs, to tell tales until they part at twelve o'clock'.¹⁸⁵ His discussion of hospitality highlights the social functions of the settlement houses and their role in shaping settlers.

¹⁸¹ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 227.

¹⁸² Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 227.

¹⁸³ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:41-42.

¹⁸⁴ Samuel Barnett, 'Hospitalities', in *The Universities and the Social Problem: An Account of the University Settlements in East London*, ed. J.M. Knapp (London: Rivington, Percival and Co., 1895), 64.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

The Religious Shaping of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House Men

A different religious focus led to the formation of different ideals within the two settlement houses and ultimately to the making of a different type of social reformer. Life in Oxford House was intended to be a transformative experience for men as they re-examined religious views and practices during their residency. In the case of a Mr Bulstrode, this transformation was highly visible. Regarded as something of a ‘dandy’ while he was at Oxford, Bulstrode became a Franciscan monk after leaving Oxford House.¹⁸⁶ Donning a ‘dingy old blue cassock, heavy boots and shapeless hat’, he emerged, at least in dress, as a different man.¹⁸⁷ In their autobiographies, a number of Oxford House settlers reflected that their residency had strengthened their religious convictions. Arthur Winnington-Ingram told the story of one man who was uncertain of his religion when he joined Oxford House. After five years of working among the poor, ‘his faith came back to him’ as he had seen ‘the gospel in action’.¹⁸⁸ Ingram’s anecdote, regardless of its accuracy, reflects Oxford House’s key aim to Christianise not only the urban poor but also the settlers who worked with them. Oxford House retained this aim and ethos from 1884 to 1914.

While a Christian ethos was evident within Toynbee Hall, particularly under Barnett’s wardenship, its role in shaping settlers was less overt than it was in Oxford House. The Barnetts’ philosophy was that Christianity could be presented in a ‘natural way’ in the course of practical social work.¹⁸⁹ To this end, Toynbee Hall’s activities were educational and civic in character rather than religious. While the Barnetts held morning

¹⁸⁶ Packard, *Brother Edward, Priest and Evangelist*, 23.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 20.

¹⁸⁸ Quoted in S.C Carpenter, *Winnington-Ingram: The Biography of Arthur Foley Winnington-Ingram, Bishop of London, 1901-1937* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1949), 39.

¹⁸⁹ William Reason, ‘Settlements and Recreations’, in *University and Social Settlements* (London: Methuen, 1898), 76.

prayers in the Toynbee Hall drawing room, there were no demands on residents to attend.¹⁹⁰ As *The Queen* magazine commented in 1893, Barnett introduced people to the church not by ‘pushing and driving and pulling and bribing them to attend the Church services’, but by simply being present.¹⁹¹ The memoirs of Barnett’s fellow workers in Whitechapel suggest that this undogmatic nature of his social activism contributed to the regard in which he was held.

The importance that Toynbee Hall placed on educational work and social research and investigation was reflected in the transition of some settlers’ motivations from clerical ambitions to interests in social welfare. Robert Morant, for example, was motivated by religious feelings when he joined Toynbee Hall. However, he became increasingly concerned with social and economic affairs. After his experience at Toynbee Hall, Morant abandoned his previous aspirations of becoming a clergyman to pursue educational reform and a career in the civil service.¹⁹²

A similar transition was made by Thomas Harvey who succeeded Samuel Barnett as Toynbee warden in 1906. Harvey’s leadership has been largely overshadowed by Samuel Barnett’s foundational work, but his role is significant as his change in approach was typical of many subsequent leaders of Toynbee Hall. Harvey was brought up as a Quaker and, like many Quaker families at the time, the family was closely knit in its religious beliefs. As a child, Harvey accompanied his parents to society meetings in Leeds.¹⁹³ His Quaker heritage had a profound influence on his personal life. As *The Friend* remarked at the time of Harvey’s death, he ‘did very much throughout a long life to strengthen and enrich the witness of the Society of Friends’. Harvey was commended

¹⁹⁰ Walter Besant, *East London* (New York: Garland, 1980; orig published London, 1899), 348.

¹⁹¹ See Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:202.

¹⁹² Geoffrey K. Fry, ‘Morant, Sir Robert Laurie (1863–1920)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-35096?rskey=qxBvPb&result=1> (accessed 29 September 2018). See also, Bernard M. Allen, *Sir Robert Morant: A Great Public Servant* (London: Macmillan, 1934).

¹⁹³ William Harvey, *We Were Seven* (London: Constable, 1936), 2-3.

for his ‘devotion to the Society of Friends shown both in eager care that its records should be preserved and studied . . . and in steadfast support of contemporary Quaker activities’.¹⁹⁴ However, while he was largely motivated by religious beliefs on entering the settlement, Harvey came to believe that the philanthropic activities of Quaker societies were not sufficient to address contemporary social problems. In 1907, Harvey wrote in the settlement’s annual report:

More and more men realise that good intentions and generous sympathies will not suffice to heal our social evils. We need patient study, on every hand, the collecting of information, the observation of existing experiments and the laborious putting together of the isolated stores of knowledge and experience which existing social agencies already possess.¹⁹⁵

Harvey’s emphasis on the importance of social research and investigation highlighted a key feature of Toynbee Hall that, from the outset, distinguished it from the missionary and evangelising impulses of Oxford House.

Conclusion

When he was in Oxford in 1883, Samuel Barnett presented his philanthropic project of settling in the slums of London as an extension of the university and its culture. He had at an earlier date conceived his proposed settlement house as a modern Franciscan monastery where men would undergo a process of personal reformation while serving the poor. This metaphor of a monastery has been embraced and extended in this chapter in order to explore certain aspects of both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House which became organising principles for the selection and shaping of their visions of an ideal settler between 1884 and 1914.

¹⁹⁴ Reprint of *The Friend* 113, no.19, May 13, 1955.

¹⁹⁵ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1907, 3.

Like monasteries, the settlements provided residents with a safe, quiet, secluded and contemplative space (albeit amidst the turmoil of the East End outside their walls); a communal lifestyle; weekly rituals; and mentoring programs, all of which were regarded as healthy influences on settlers. However, it was at the interface where the poor and underprivileged classes were directly engaged that the analogy ceases. On this border terrain where rich and poor met, Franciscan ideals were noticeably absent. The settlers were members of the social elite and were expected to remain so. They were to be gentlemen and an inspiration to the poor; they were not to share the realities of stark poverty. Unlike Franciscan monks, they were not expected to remain celibate or to live austere lives themselves. The mentoring they received was temporary and less rigorous than the expectations placed on traditional monks.

Barnett's decision to place the term 'modern' before 'monastery' suggests that he was well aware of these differences and intended to adapt the Franciscan model to suit the needs and expectations of settlers. His decision to call his philanthropic institution a 'settlement', not a mission, was equally if not more significant. It established from an early stage that Toynbee Hall was different from religious centres like Oxford House. Monastic imagery remained prominent in the settlement houses in the period between 1884 and 1914 but it co-existed with visions of settling as an educational enterprise and vocational opportunity. Building upon the arguments made here about the settlements' aims to improve the settlers, the following chapter examines Toynbee Hall and Oxford House as 'postgraduate universities' for the further education of settlement men.

Chapter Three

A University in the East End: Educating the Settlers

We must educate ourselves before we can help others.

Samuel Barnett, 1892.¹

Men learn more indirectly than directly . . . they pick up more than they are taught.

Samuel Barnett, 1887.²

The education and training of settlers was a critical component of the program of reform examined in this study. Most Oxbridge graduates had little direct experience of poverty and generally lacked personal knowledge of the East End. Aware of this limitation in their prospective residents, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men argued that if settlers were to be role models and teachers to the urban poor they first needed to expand their own education. On the evening of Toynbee Hall's opening *Conversazione* in 1892, Samuel Barnett summarised this viewpoint, outlining an educational agenda that departed from conventional reformist programs aimed directly at the poor and focused instead on the qualifications of the settlers. Barnett regarded the education of residents as 'a means to an end', insisting: 'We must educate ourselves . . . Let our end be, having educated ourselves, to help others.'³ This pedagogical aim and approach was a defining feature of both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House between 1884 and 1914 and forms the focus of the

¹ See 'An Appeal For Social Service', *The Pall Mall Gazette*, October 3, 1892, 2.

² Henrietta Barnett, *Canon Barnett: His Life, Work, and Friends by his Wife in Two Volumes with Thirty-Nine Illustrations* (London: John Murray, 1918), 1:327.

³ 'An Appeal For Social Service', 2.

present chapter.

Given the significance of this educational agenda, it is not surprising that the settlement houses were popularly referred to as universities in the East End.⁴ As the Toynbee resident, Arthur Pillans Laurie remarked, settlement houses were ‘postgraduate universities’ for men who were about to begin their careers.⁵ Both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House were presented as institutions for educating settlers, but the specific appellations that were applied to each settlement reflected their different aims and ethos in this endeavour. Werner Picht, for example, referred to Toynbee Hall as ‘a school for social workers’, highlighting the settlement’s civic activities.⁶ Oxford House, on the other hand, was defined in terms of its Christian heritage. James Adderley called it a ‘theological college’, while his successor, Herbert Henson, remarked that the settlement acquired ‘the atmosphere and accumulate[d] the traditions, of a training school for parsons’.⁷ The education that settlers received corresponded with the Christian mission of Oxford House and the more secular traditions of Toynbee Hall. While the educational activities and pedagogies differed between the two settlements, however, both embraced a program that actively targeted the settlers.

Drawing upon the central metaphor of the university, this chapter argues that the education and training of residents formed a significant part of the settlements’ objective to teach the East London poor. Settling in Whitechapel and Bethnal Green was intended to be a learning experience for the upper classes and both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House were sites where men could increase their knowledge of social issues and gain practical experience. Due to its non-sectarian stance, Toynbee Hall’s educational program

⁴ See, for example, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, April 14, 1886, 11.

⁵ Arthur Pillans Laurie, *Pictures and Politics: A Book of Reminiscences* (London: International Publishing Company, 1934), 72.

⁶ Werner Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914), 124.

⁷ James Adderley, *In Slums and Society: Reminiscences of Old Friends* (London: Unwin, 1916), 55; Herbert Hensley Henson, *Retrospect of an Unimportant Life* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), 29.

was arguably more extensive than that of Oxford House, but settlers in both houses could variously obtain, exchange or dispute information in their particular areas of interest. Focusing upon the educational experiences of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men, this chapter examines the forms of pedagogy that operated within the settlement houses, including role modelling, mentoring and guided, practical experimentation. Collectively, the settlements' educational programs and teaching strategies were designed to shape settlers into future educators of the urban poor.

Depictions of the settlement houses as educational centres were prominent in the literature of both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House. When Toynbee Hall was first established, Samuel Barnett anticipated that the settlement would become 'a real centre of learning'.⁸ He imagined that 'a long succession of colleges' could develop in Whitechapel 'just as colleges sprang up at Oxford and Cambridge in the Middle Ages'.⁹ Undoubtedly, both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House were pedagogical spaces for the East End poor. One of the key objectives of the Universities' Settlement Association was 'to provide education and the means of recreation and enjoyment for the people in the poorer districts of London and other great cities'.¹⁰ In his 1898 study of the settlement house movement, William Reason wrote that Toynbee Hall

may be likened to a People's University. There are classes including Hebrew and modern languages, in languages themselves; in different branches of natural science; in history; in economics; in ethics; in such technical subjects as shorthand, book-keeping, friendly society finance, drawing, ambulance, nursing, swimming etc. There are also . . . afternoon classes for girls in subjects ranging from domestic economy to hygiene, through ordinary class subjects to such things as musical drill [and] wood-carving.¹¹

⁸ Letter from Samuel Barnett to Frank Barnett, 29 March 1885, F/BAR/023, Samuel Barnett Papers, London Metropolitan Archives; also cited in Emily Abel, 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', (PhD diss., University of London, 1969), 212.

⁹ *Toynbee Record* 2, no.3 (December 1889), 26.

¹⁰ Memorandum of Association, printed in First Annual Report of the Universities' Settlement in East London (Oxford 1885), 3.

¹¹ William Reason, *University and Social Settlements* (London: Methuen and Co., 1898), 45.

The importance of education in the settlement house agenda was evident throughout the period from 1884 to 1914, and beyond. Writing of Toynbee Hall in the 1930s, Pimlott described the settlement house as being ‘first and foremost an educational centre’.¹²

Previous settlement historiography has focused on this notion of a ‘People’s University’ in order to examine educational programs that were predominantly aimed at the poor. Geoff Ginn, for example, includes education among the many cultural amenities which were introduced by Toynbee Hall in an effort to elevate the character of the poor. Through a similar lens, Seth Koven and Emily Abel regard the pedagogical aims of the settlement as an effort to apply particular theories of culture which were articulated by prominent Victorian thinkers.¹³ Some settlement historiography has identified elements of social control and condescension in the settlements’ educational activities for the poor. In his study of Toynbee Hall, Standish Meacham argued that settlers regarded the East End as a cultureless ‘void’ and sought to impose new ideals upon the poor. According to Meacham, the settlement’s programs were ‘consciously designed to impose a hierarchy of values upon the pupils for whom they were designed’.¹⁴ Unlike Meacham, most historians argue that the settlements embraced the cultural ideals of Matthew Arnold. In *Culture and Anarchy*, first published in 1869, Arnold wrote that ‘culture’ did ‘not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes’ or ‘win them for this or that sect of its own, with ready-made judgements and watchwords’. He defined it as something which would ‘do away with classes’, making ‘the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere’ and allowing men to ‘live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, where

¹² J.A.R. Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress, 1884-1934* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1935), 229.

¹³ Geoff Ginn, ‘Gifts of Culture, Centres of Light: Cultural Philanthropy in the Late Victorian East End’, (PhD diss., University of Queensland, 2001); Seth Koven, ‘Culture and Poverty: The London Settlement House Movement, 1870-1914’, (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1987); Abel, ‘Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall’.

¹⁴ Standish Meacham, *Toynbee Hall and Social Reform, 1880-1914: The Search for Community* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), x.

they may use ideas, as it uses them itself, freely, nourished and not bound by them'.¹⁵

While historians have varying interpretations of the settlements' educational philosophies, they have retained sharp focus on the education of the poorer classes.

Undoubtedly, this was a significant agenda within Toynbee Hall and Oxford House. Both settlements organised various educational and recreational activities for East Enders, including classes, debates, lectures, reading parties, clubs, musical and sporting events, dramatic performances and art exhibitions. Settlers were actively encouraged to contribute to these programs. They could, for example, teach classes, give lectures, lead clubs, arrange art loans and coordinate settlement functions. The University of London organised extension lectures which were held at the settlement houses, providing teachers who were usually experts in their chosen fields.¹⁶ Toynbee Hall and Oxford House also offered their own courses, which were often taught by the residents themselves.¹⁷

Henrietta Barnett listed 134 subjects offered by Toynbee Hall, including literature, languages, history, science and geography, and a miscellany of specialist activities, such as first aid, elocution, clay modelling, basket work and book-keeping.¹⁸ Optimistically, a number of early residents intended that Toynbee Hall would eventually serve as a working-class university in the East End. In 1886, an anonymous writer in the *Toynbee Journal and Students' Union Chronicle* provided an imagined account of what Toynbee Hall would be like in 1932. The author wrote:

The Old Hall still stands, but around it has been built a circle of University Buildings with dwellings for 400 students, mostly clerks and workers from the co-operative factories of the neighbourhood . . . The six hours' day leaves time

¹⁵ Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, ed. J. Dover Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 70.

¹⁶ Nigel Scotland, *Squires in the Slums: Settlements and Missions in Late Victorian Britain* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 41, 58.

¹⁷ For a sample of some of the various subjects offered at Toynbee Hall, see Werner Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914), 38. For Oxford House, see Mandy Ashworth, *The Oxford House in Bethnal Green: 100 Years of Work in the Community* (London: Oxford House, 1984), 13-17.

¹⁸ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:330-331.

enough for study, and many have here laid the foundation of literary and political glory. No one is so poor that he cannot afford the College education . . . The tutors are for the most part employed in the same factories as the students.¹⁹

In this vision of the future educational role of Toynbee Hall, both the students and teachers of the settlement are members of the working classes. However, this idealistic depiction of the settlements was a long-term objective.

In their efforts to achieve this goal, the settlement houses employed two key strategies: they provided educational services in the East End and they trained settlers to share their knowledge and insights with the poor. Pimlott drew attention to this second method, observing that ‘the training of social workers’ was an ‘important settlement function’. Pimlott recognised the ‘value of settlements for this purpose’, but suggested that this was a subsidiary aspect of the settlement program.²⁰ However, the education of the settlers and the poor was considered to be interdependent. Both were cast as ‘learners’ within this community, a belief made clear in Samuel Barnett’s motto: ‘It is the learner who makes others learn.’²¹ In a Toynbee Hall leaflet in September 1894, the settlement house was represented not as ‘an educational institute of teachers and students’, but as a ‘co-operative society, in which every member gives as well as gets’.²² Settlers highlighted ‘deficiencies in working-class education’, but they were also aware of the ‘ignorance of the upper classes about the condition of the poor’. As Samuel Barnett remarked:

The inhabitant of the West [End] knows nothing of how the inhabitants of the East End live or think. He is ready to believe at one moment that they are half-starved, vicious, threatening to devour, at another moment that they are contented and listless slaves. The ignorance of the East as to the West is just as gross; here the common opinion is that no-one works, that eating fills up the greater part of life

¹⁹ *Toynbee Journal and Students’ Union Chronicle*, April 1886; reprinted in Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, 50.

²⁰ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 259-260.

²¹ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:95-96.

²² Toynbee Hall, leaflet, 1894, A/TOY/022, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

and that the one concern of all is to profit by the work of others.²³

Barnett envisioned Toynbee Hall as an 'East London College' which would 'give means of life to working as well as to leisured people'.²⁴ According to Pimlott, the settlement movement contributed to the shaping of an 'educated and politically conscious working class' as well as a 'socially conscious upper class'.²⁵ In many respects, the first of these aims was dependent on the education of the settlers and particularly the formation of a future generation of teachers.

The settlements' goal of training new teachers was in part motivated by concerns about the calibre of the urban poor and of the teachers in East London. In 1888, the *Toynbee Record* reported that 'good work' had been achieved by 'direct contact with the classes holding the lowest moral standards'. However, the *Record* expressed concern that these benefits were transient, noting: 'Vitality seems to pass out of the worker so quickly without a corresponding gain.'²⁶ Edward Harold Spender, father of the poet Stephen Spender and a journalist and author himself, delivered a lecture at Toynbee Hall in 1892 in which he expressed the opinion that 'the promoters' of Toynbee had 'aimed too low in their laudable efforts to spread culture among the masses'.²⁷ The calibre of school teachers in East London was also criticised. These teachers often began their professions after leaving school and many of them were only fourteen or fifteen years of age or even younger.²⁸ Samuel Barnett asserted that the character of many teachers needed

²³ Samuel Barnett, 'On the Purpose of Toynbee Hall', 1889, MS 1466, ff.57, Samuel Barnett Papers, Lambeth Palace Library.

²⁴ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:340.

²⁵ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 43.

²⁶ *Toynbee Record*, October 1888, 12.

²⁷ Records of the London Society for the Extension of University Teaching, 1892; cited in Koven, 'Culture and Poverty: The London Settlement House Movement, 1870-1914', 266. Edward Harold Spender resided at Toynbee Hall between August 1887 and February 1888 and again between October 1890 and September 1891. He returned to the settlement to deliver this lecture.

²⁸ On pupil teachers and their training in this period, see R.W. Rich, *The Training of Teachers in England and Wales during the Nineteenth Century* (Bath: Cedric Chivers, 1972) and Wendy Robinson, *Pupil Teachers and their Professional Training in Pupil Teacher Centres in England and Wales, 1870-1914*

improvement, expressing disappointment in the limitation of teachers' interests and their indifference to knowledge that did not increase their salaries. On one occasion, he described the pupil teachers who had attended one of the settlement's evening parties as 'so cocky and so ignorant'.²⁹ In 1887, he wrote to his brother about a party of elementary teachers who were uncultured, 'conceitedly ignorant, comfortably ugly men and women'.³⁰ Like Barnett, the Toynbee resident, Edmund Sargant, was at times appalled by the scholarly standards of teachers who visited the settlement. He was particularly disappointed by their lack of interest in general reading.³¹ Sargant observed that when efforts were made to entertain or amuse them, 'how unenthusiastic they were, and how difficult it was to make them laugh'.³² As well as seeking to cultivate the urban poor (or at least 'the best minds of the working people of the district')³³ and pupil teachers directly, the settlement houses sought to train the settlers as agents of university culture in London and in Greater Britain. According to one Toynbee Hall publication: 'The thought of the immense leverage of such a body of teachers, if set single-heartedly to raise our young citizens, is most inspiring.'³⁴

(Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 2003).

²⁹ See *The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, January 4, 1919, 15.

³⁰ Letter from Samuel Barnett to Frank Barnett, 1887, F/BAR/062, Samuel Barnett Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

³¹ Philip Gardner, "'There and not Seen": E.B. Sargant and Educational Reform, 1884-1905', *History of Education: Journal of the History of Education Society* 33, no. 6 (2004), 622.

³² Ibid. Settlers' dissatisfaction with how teachers responded to their improvement efforts is resonant of the concept of the 'gift relationship' that has been explored by historians and social anthropologists. As Alan Kidd writes, much of the charity directed to the poor in the nineteenth century 'suggests an awareness of the reciprocity intrinsic to the gift relationship', a 'form of exchange' whereby the act of giving created an obligation to reciprocate in some way. See Alan Kidd, 'Philanthropy and the "Social History Paradigm"', *Social History* 21, no. 2 (1996), 183, 187.

³³ Clement Attlee wrote that a settlement should be 'in closer touch than ever with the best minds of the working people of the district'. See C.R. Attlee, *The Social Worker* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1920), 216.

³⁴ Cited in Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:354.

The ‘danger of ignorance’ among Settlers

Underpinning the project of settling in the East End was a desire for knowledge. Most settlement leaders between 1884 and 1914, with the notable exception of Dick Sheppard of Oxford House³⁵, had studied at Oxford. For university graduates, the settlement experience was regarded as a supplement to their previous education. For the small number of settlers who did not have an academic background, the settlements could be particularly valuable. This was the case for Jimmy Mallon, the warden of Toynbee Hall between 1919 and 1954, who, unlike many of his fellows, had not attended Oxford or Cambridge. Mallon’s father had died when he was four, leaving him to help his mother to support the family financially. He attended Owens College in Manchester, but left school at the age of fourteen to become an apprentice to a jeweller. He acquired further education by attending lectures and debates as a staff member of the Ancoats Settlement in Manchester.³⁶ Due to the bombing of the warden’s lodge in 1941, Mallon’s autobiography was destroyed.³⁷ It is therefore not known how he was inspired to continue his education. However, his enthusiasm for the educational work of Toynbee Hall may have been driven by his interest in widening his own knowledge.

In order to assume teaching roles at Toynbee Hall and Oxford House, there was a general recognition among settlers that the upper classes needed to improve their understanding of the East End. While the ‘needs of East London’ were ‘often urged’,

³⁵ Dick Sheppard was a student at Trinity Hall, Cambridge between 1901 and 1904. See Alan Wilkinson, ‘Sheppard, Hugh Richard Lawrie [Dick] (1880-1937)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-36061?rskey=TsbOk3&result=1> (accessed 14 October 2018).

³⁶ Founded in 1895, the Ancoats settlement offered education and cultural opportunities to the local poor. Inspired by Toynbee Hall, it enabled small numbers of students and graduates to live in one of the poorest areas of Manchester to undertake social work and investigation. See M.E. Rose and A. Woods, *Everything went on at the Round House: A Hundred Years of the Manchester University Settlement* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 68. Also see M.D. Stocks, *Fifty Years in Every Street: The Story of the Manchester University Settlement* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1956).

³⁷ See Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1938-1946, 12.

Samuel Barnett believed that they were ‘little understood’.³⁸ Arthur Laurie also referred to the collective ignorance of the upper classes: ‘The ignorance of this vast city on the part of the rest of London was remarkable.’³⁹ Much of this ignorance was attributed to sensationalised depictions of the poverty of the East End or, as *The Spectator* put it, the ‘hysterical talk about “Outcast London”’.⁴⁰ One Toynbee Hall report insisted on the need for ‘facts’ rather than ‘sensational stories’, hearsay knowledge and sentimental references.⁴¹ Highlighting the ignorance that erroneous representations of the London slums engendered, Samuel Barnett also lamented that social writers had ‘so dwelt on wretchedness, that any home which does not reach the lowest standard of wretchedness is not regarded as poor’ and that the ‘visitor to East London expects to see only starving people’.⁴² In his view, the lurid images of the degradation of the East End reflected the ignorance of social writers and not the conditions of poverty.

Within the settlement movement, sensationalist and sentimental visions of the East End were viewed as an impediment to effective reform. Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men expressed concern that misconceptions of the East End could harden the attitudes and behaviour of social reformers. Samuel Barnett warned of the ‘danger of ignorance’ among the nation’s leaders, asserting that ‘half the poverty and sufferings of our neighbours is due to ignorant help’.⁴³ In his speech at Oxford, he argued that lack of knowledge had been ‘the source of the mistaken charity’ which had ‘done much to increase the hardness of the life of the poor’. Barnett argued that ‘men of goodwill have done, and will again do irreparable mischief through ignorance’.⁴⁴ By ‘mistaken charity’,

³⁸ Samuel Barnett, *Settlements of University Men in Great Towns* (Oxford, 1884), 9.

³⁹ Laurie, *Pictures and Politics*, 76.

⁴⁰ ‘From Oxford to Whitechapel’, *The Spectator*, January 17, 1885, 79.

⁴¹ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1903, 8.

⁴² Samuel Barnett, *Perils of Wealth and Poverty: By the Late Canon Barnett*, ed. V. Boyle (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1920), 38.

⁴³ ‘An Appeal For Social Service’, 2.

⁴⁴ See Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, eds, *Practicable Socialism: Essays on Social Reform* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1888), 296.

Barnett meant the ‘indiscriminate’ giving of doles to the poor which, he argued, encouraged idleness and carelessness. His belief that the poor needed to learn to work and support themselves was in line with mainstream philanthropic thinking at the time. The Charity Organisation Society, founded in 1869, also sought to end ‘indiscriminate charity’. It used investigative case work to determine the extent to which poor applicants should be given assistance.⁴⁵ The ‘mischief’ Barnett described also referred to West End ‘slummers’ who visited the East End for a thrill or for an evening’s entertainment.⁴⁶ Samuel Barnett argued that it was a lack of knowledge that caused fashionable ‘slummers’ to trivialise or romanticise the urban slums to the extent that they expressed disappointment in the reality of poverty whenever they encountered it. He recalled visitors to Whitechapel, ‘after reading some tale or some appeal’, complaining that ‘things are not so bad as we expected’.⁴⁷ Similarly, Henrietta Barnett recounted an occasion when one lady, after visiting St George’s-in-the-East and Stepney, expressed ‘great astonishment to find that the people lived in *houses*’. She had expected, Henrietta wrote, that ‘they abode, not exactly in tents, but in huts, old railway carriages, caravans, or squatted against a wall’.⁴⁸ James Adderley, too, disapproved of ‘provoking rich people’ who found that the slums were not ‘slummy’ enough for them.⁴⁹ Arthur Laurie agreed and felt that such misconceptions could result in misguided or thoughtless conduct. He criticised the ‘men and women in evening dress’ who were ‘personally conducted’ through ‘the worst slums known, prying into people’s homes and behaving in an intolerable manner’.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ For an examination of the Charity Organisation Society, see Charles Loch Mowat, *The Charity Organisation Society, 1869-1913: Its Ideas and Work* (London: Methuen, 1961).

⁴⁶ See Peter Keating, ed, *Into Unknown England, 1866-1913: Selections from the Social Explorers* (Glasgow: William Collins, Sons and Co., 1976), 14.

⁴⁷ Barnett, *Perils of Wealth and Poverty*, 37-38.

⁴⁸ See Henrietta Barnett, ‘Passionless Reformers’ (reprinted from *The Fortnightly Review*, August 1882) in Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, *Practicable Socialism*, 48-61. (italics in original)

⁴⁹ James Adderley, ‘Is Slumming Played Out?’ *English Illustrated Magazine* 10 (1893), 834.

⁵⁰ Laurie, *Pictures and Politics*, 73.

Settlement leaders believed that education could correct misunderstandings among social reformers and inculcate greater compassion on the part of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men. Knowledge of the poor would, it was argued, dispel doubts, fears and suspicions about the East End. In 1912, Alfred Milner, then chairman of the Toynbee Council, addressed an audience gathered at the settlement. He announced that by learning about the East End, settlers would become more sympathetic to the needs of the poor: ‘Knowledge begets sympathy, and sympathy is the golden key which opens a way to the solution of many problems that are a hopeless puzzle to the mere theorist.’ Milner added that if ‘methods of handling economic and social problems’ had become ‘humanised and promise a richer harvest of results’, it was due to the settlements and to the ‘influence of the men who have graduated in them’.⁵¹

Settling: A Practical Training Course after University

In both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House, the student and collegiate life of Oxbridge was regarded as an integral part of a settler’s educational experience. Samuel Barnett referred to Oxbridge colleges as the ‘national depositories of knowledge’. He wrote of the ‘strange charm which the old universities exercise’, remarking that ‘the Oxford or Cambridge man is still held to possess some peculiar knowledge’.⁵² Settlers like Edmund Sargant firmly believed in the value and the prestige of their university education. Recalling his own experience at Rugby and Cambridge, Sargant argued that the public school experience should be shared: ‘I got to like the boys [pupil teachers at Toynbee Hall] so much that I wanted to see them have some of the opportunities that boys at public schools have.’⁵³

⁵¹ Address delivered by Lord Alfred Milner at Toynbee Hall, 9 December 1912, printed in Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1913, 14.

⁵² Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, *Practicable Socialism*, 102.

⁵³ Quoted in Gardner, “‘There and not seen’: E.B Sargant and Educational Reform, 1884–1905’, 623.

While Toynbee Hall and Oxford House espoused the values of the public school and the university, settling in the East End was presented as a practical activity that could expand and complement these educational experiences.

Many Toynbee Hall and Oxford House settlers had pursued a liberal arts education at university, including a study of ‘the classics’. The Toynbee Hall settler and educationalist, Robert Morant, for instance, obtained a third class in classical moderations in 1882 (as well as a first class in theology in 1885).⁵⁴ This was a degree shared by a number of settlers. The course of Classical Moderations and *Literae Humaniores*, better known as the ‘Greats’, was based on knowledge of Greek and Latin history, philosophy and literature. Students read works by Plato and Aristotle, Cicero and Tacitus, among others.

Possessing classical knowledge was a mark of social prestige in the nineteenth century. As early as 1693, John Locke had argued in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, that classical studies were best suited to the ‘gentleman’.⁵⁵ Thomas Gaisford, the Dean of Christ Church in Oxford from 1831 to 1855, asserted that Greek ‘not only elevates above the vulgar herd, but leads not infrequently to positions of considerable emolument’.⁵⁶ The classical scholar embodied the ideal of the educated elite in the Victorian period. As John Raymond de Symons Honey observes: ‘The Victorians valued classical studies because they looked for, and believed they found, in them a values-system which helped to explain their own situation, and thus acted as a guide in matters of taste, of politics, and of morals.’⁵⁷ Classical studies were considered important not only to a young man’s moral and intellectual development but also to their training as future

⁵⁴ Geoffrey K. Fry, ‘Morant, Sir Robert Laurie (1863–1920)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-35096?rskey=qxBvPb&result=1> (accessed 29 September 2018).

⁵⁵ John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1889), 52.

⁵⁶ Thomas Gaisford, Christmas Day Sermon in the Cathedral, Oxford, in Rev. W. Tuckwell, *Reminiscences of Oxford*, 2nd ed. (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1907), 124.

⁵⁷ John Raymond de Symons Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe: The Development of the English Public School in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Quadrangle/New York Times Book Co., 1977), 130.

bureaucrats or agents of empire. They were perceived to develop ‘flexibility of mind’, diligence, leadership and discipline in students.⁵⁸ The importance of the classics in Oxford was clearly reflected in the educational programs of the university settlements. One settler recounted that after leaving Oxford he volunteered to teach Latin and Greek, as well as English literature, at Toynbee Hall.⁵⁹

A study of the ‘Greats’ by university men was widely regarded as excellent preparation for political and administrative careers. However, the settlement houses sought to fill the gaps in their knowledge about the conditions in London’s poorer districts. This was highlighted by Samuel Barnett’s remark about some Oxford visitors to Whitechapel in 1884. He declared: ‘They are good fellows, but what a lot they will learn!’⁶⁰ The settlement houses sought to broaden the outlook of university graduates and expand their interests, introducing them to ‘other men and other thoughts’.⁶¹ In 1893, James Adderley wrote: ‘Let no young man think his education complete until he has come to know the poor, their lives and their needs.’⁶² This ideal was shared by Toynbee Hall. In his speech at Oxford, Barnett argued that men lacked knowledge ‘which comes only from the sight of others’ daily life’ in the East End.⁶³ William Beveridge referred to Toynbee Hall as ‘a school of post-graduate education in humanity’ for those who have done *Literae Humaniores* in Oxford.⁶⁴ Whether or not Beveridge believed that studying the classics was indeed good preparation for social work in the East End, he presented settling as a highly pragmatic form of education. He noted that settlement houses were

⁵⁸ Françoise Waquet, *Latin, or the Empire of a Sign: From the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries*. Trans. John Howe (London: Verso, 2001), 187–188.

⁵⁹ *The Works and Hopes of the Universities’ Settlement in East London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1887), 30.

⁶⁰ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:217.

⁶¹ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:344.

⁶² Adderley, ‘Is Slumming Played Out?’, 841.

⁶³ ‘Settlements of University Men in Great Towns’, paper read by Samuel Barnett at St John’s College on 17 November 1883, in Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, *Practicable Socialism*, 103.

⁶⁴ William Beveridge, *Voluntary Action: A Report on Methods of Social Advance* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 129.

‘places where the residents might learn; many of them have been used for social surveys; many today act as the clinics where students of social science in the universities go for their practical experience’.⁶⁵

The Settlers’ Curriculum

In his introductory text on social work, Clement Attlee wrote that settlement houses educated reformers in ‘the social problems of the time’.⁶⁶ Residents were expected to be familiar with their settlement’s particular philosophies and methods and to be aware of their own place within the settlement house movement and within wider social reform efforts in London. In a lecture to the Cooperative Congress in Oxford in May 1882, Arnold Toynbee argued that social reformers needed to understand their particular roles in the philanthropic field. He emphasised that education ‘should be offered to the *citizen*, with a view to showing what are his duties to his fellow-men and in what way union with them is possible’. The ‘mere vague impulse in a man to do his duty’ was insufficient, Toynbee argued. Each social worker needed ‘the knowledge which enables him to perceive what his duties are, and how to perform them’.⁶⁷ Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men were expected to understand their own tasks as settlers as well as to learn about social conditions of the East End and the lives of its inhabitants.

The content of the settlements’ curricula would have been familiar to most Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men who had attended university. Although they offered some vocational courses such as bookkeeping, carpentry, clay modelling and wood-carving, both settlements, like their Oxbridge counterparts, subscribed to a predominantly humanistic education. Between 1884 and 1914, classes were primarily designed to impart

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ C.R. Attlee, *The Social Worker* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1920), 196.

⁶⁷ Arnold Toynbee, *Lectures on the Industrial Revolution in England: Popular Addresses, Notes and Other Fragments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 228.

knowledge rather than develop workers' skills. In both the universities and the settlements, the values underpinning educational programs were considered to be as important as their subject matter. As the *Oxford Magazine* remarked in 1918, it was not only the subject but 'the spirit in which it is taught that determines its educational value'.⁶⁸

In their educational programs, both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House covered a wide range of subjects. However, an examination of the most prominent subject matter in each settlement and the pedagogical methods they adopted illustrates that not only did they have different priorities in their education of settlers, but that 'the spirit in which they taught' was also quite distinct. Surviving educational materials usually take the form of listings of lecture topics, reading materials and course names rather than extended documents. However, the topics that were selected reflect particular values promoted in each settlement. The juxtaposition of a selection of lectures delivered during 1892 in Oxford House and Toynbee Hall respectively highlights the differences between the two settlements (see Figures 14 and 15). These lists of topics illustrate how the Christian ethos of Oxford House and Toynbee Hall's more secular approach informed their educational work.

Many of the Oxford House settlers were theology graduates and the settlement became a training centre for men preparing for ordination. Referring to Oxford House's 'avowed object of the training of clergy', Werner Picht observed that Oxford House was 'a good place in which to pass a year after leaving Oxford, before going on to one of the Theological Colleges'. He believed that this was why one year was the average length of residency for Oxford House men.⁶⁹ Christianity, often regarded in relation to patriotism, 'manliness' and a public spirit, was (not surprisingly) the chief subject in the educational

⁶⁸ Quoted in Richard Symonds, *Oxford and Empire: The Last Lost Cause?* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 19.

⁶⁹ Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, 135, 224.

Figure 14: Extract from lecture list, Oxford House Annual Report, 1892.⁷⁰

Jan 3. Rev. A.F.W Ingram	Where we have got to
Jan 10. Rev. E. McClure	The Outlook of the Working Man
Jan 17. Rev. J.O. Nash	The Sermon on the Mount
Jan 24. The Archdeacon of Essex	The Reality and Authority of Conscience
Jan 31. Rev. W.S. Carter	The Secret of Success
Feb 7. Rev. B.R. Wilon	The Use and Abuse of Creeds
Feb 14. Rev W.A. Carroll	How long will Christianity Last!
Feb 21. Rev. Paul Petit	Our English Cathedrals
Feb 28. Rev. H.E.J. Evan	Revelation
Mar. 6. Rev. A.F.W. Ingram	What is the use of keeping Lent!
Mar. 13. Rev. R.C. Nightingale	Cardinal Manning and Mr Spurgeon
Mar. 20. Rev. F.J. Foakes Jackson	Julian, Emperor and Apostate
Mar. 27. Rev. A.C. Headlam	Why do I call the Old Testament inspired?
Apr. 3. Canon Whitford	Influence
Apr. 17 (Easter Sunday)	The Resurrection and Modern Life
Rev. W.T. Roxburgh	
Apr. 24. Rev. A.F.W. Ingram	Are the Gospels Genuine!
May 1. Mr E.A. Newton	Satan in all ages
May 8. Canon Jelf	Patience better than Proof
May 15. Mr C.E. Green	The History of the Growth of our Colonies
May 23. Rev. T.C. Fry, D.D.	Socrates

Figure 15: Extract from list of lectures delivered at Toynbee Hall's smoking debates, 1892.²

Rev. H.V. Le Bas	The Sunday Society
P.W. Clayden	Disestablishment or Reform
Hon. E. Lyulph Stanley	The School Board Election
Hon. Bernard Coleridge, M.P.	The Compulsory Eight Hours Bill
R.T. Reid, Q.C. M.P.	Rate Supported Free Libraries
Frank Hilton	Local Option
Miss Bolton	The Prevention of Cruelty to Children
J.B. Lakeman	Factory Inspection
Mrs Fawcett	Justice and Expediency
G.R. Parkin	Colonial Federation
W.R. Cremer, M.P.	How to avoid War
Henry Ward, L.C.C.	Work of the Coming County Council
Francis Buxton	Provident Dispensaries
The Earl of Portsmouth	Are Block Dwellings Desirable?
Stepniak	The Russian Crisis
T.R. Buchanan, M.P.	The Referendum
Arthur J. Williams, M.P.	Free Law
Rev. T.W. Fowle	Poor Law Reform
Dr Edwards	Compulsory Vaccination
Major Wright (Salvation Army)	The Home Colony
W. Bousfield	Technical Education
H.O. Arnold Foster, M.P.	The Pay and Prospects of the Soldier
C. Howard Vincent, M.P.	United Empire Trade
Rev. G.S. Reaney	The Dangers of the Partisan Press
Edward Bond	The Payment of Members
J.A. Spender	Pension Schemes for Old Age
W. Woodall, M.P.	Manual Training
DR Farquaharson, M.P.	Triennial Parliaments

⁷⁰ Oxford House, Annual Report, 1892, 13-14. ² Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1892, 37.

material circulated in the settlement. The settlement's religious affiliations were clearly reflected in the choice of lecture topics in Oxford House, which included discussions of Christian history, doctrines and saints. Sunday lectures between 1887 and 1889, for example, included discussions on St Paul and St Augustine of Hippo. Other subjects listed were 'Christianity and Social Reform', 'Morality', 'Why Social Reform must be Christian' and 'Civilisation without Religion'. Lectures on 'Christianity and Masculinity' also reflected the settlement's ethos.⁷¹

Oxford House's missionary activity was clearly reflected in the imperial themes evident in its curriculum, particularly in the choice of subjects in history, religion and politics. In its annual report of 1887, Oxford House recorded that lectures had been delivered on 'Patriotism and Duty', 'English Conquests of India', 'Colonial Federation', 'Waterloo' and 'Political Problems – Old and New'.⁷² As Figure 16 illustrates, lecture topics and discussions in Oxford House included subjects such as the 1857 'Indian Mutiny' and topical issues such as 'Imperial Britain' and the 'white man's burden'. A number of lectures celebrated the life and work of British imperial figures, including Sir Henry Havelock, the British general; David Livingstone, the famed explorer of Africa; and John Patteson, an Anglican Bishop who worked as a missionary in New Zealand. Herbert Henson, the head of Oxford House between 1887 and 1888, delivered a lecture on the British army officer, Charles Gordon, to several working men's clubs in London.⁷³ Gordon's story was a popular one at the time. In 1883, a Sudanese revolt against Anglo-Egyptian rule had prompted the Gladstone government to send General Gordon to supervise the evacuation of British and Egyptian troops. Gordon evacuated more than 2000 people before the Sudanese army surrounded the city of Khartoum. Under Siege,

⁷¹ See Oxford House, Annual Report, 1887, 19, 26, 27; Oxford House, Annual Report, 1888, 27, 28; Oxford House, Annual Report, 1889, 37.

⁷² Oxford House, Annual Report, 1887, 20.

⁷³ Herbert Hensley Henson, *Gordon: A Lecture* (Oxford: B.H. Blackwell, 1886).

LECTURES FOR NOVEMBER.

1st	S. John's, Copenhagen St.	G. H. Morrell..	"Indian Mutiny."
2nd	University Club	P. J. Kirkby ..	"Shooting Stars."
3rd	Parish Club, Acton	G. H. Morrell ..	Debate.
4th	Cornwall Club	J. V. Macmillan	"England in Egypt."
4th	Rugby Mission	P. J. Kirkby ..	"Shooting Stars."
4th	Holland Hall	Rev. B. R. Wilson ..	"The Work of the Borough Councils."
5th	S. Cuthbert's, Millwall..	G. H. Morrell ..	"Imperial England."
6th	Planet Street Institute ..	G. H. Morrell..	"The White Man's Burden."
7th	Rose and Shamrock	G. H. Morrell..	"The White Man's Burden."
7th	Borough Polytechnic ..	F. Hall	"The Australian Commonwealth."
8th	S. Simon's, Morpeth St..	G. H. Morrell ..	
8th	All Saints', Buxton St..	J. C. Crowley ..	"Photography."
9th	University Club	J. V. Macmillan	"England in Egypt."
10th	Union St., Southwark ..	G. H. Morrell..	"Imperial England."
10th	Webbe Institute	F. H. Williams..	"Canada."
11th	Cornwall Club.. ..		
11th	Rugby Mission	J. V. Macmillan	"England in Egypt."
11th	Holland Hall	Col. Everitt ..	"Nature's Gentlemen."

Figure 16: A Selection of Lectures Offered at Oxford House, *The Oxford House Chronicle* 14, no. 11 (1900), 7.

Gordon held out until January 1885 when his forces were defeated. A relief expedition from Britain arrived two days later – too late to save Gordon who had been killed. The story of the siege of Khartoum and the subsequent beheading of Gordon became one of the most well-known examples of imperial sacrifice circulating in late Victorian Britain.⁷⁴ In his lecture, Henson celebrated Gordon as a military hero and martyr who was ‘pure’, honourable and ‘unselfish’ and a ‘never-dying example’ for Britons.⁷⁵ In his approach to this historic event, Henson endorsed virtues of loyalty, patriotism and courage.

Discussions of empire and imperial affairs occurred at Toynbee Hall but, as both a domestic and overseas missionary enterprise, Oxford House was more likely to draw upon themes of imperial sacrifice and martyrdom than its counterpart. The imperial heroes that Oxford House celebrated in its educational programs reflected the settlement’s connections with the empire as a Christian mission. This was evident in the selection of speakers to discuss their experiences in the empire within settlement circles. In March 1901, the *Oxford House Chronicle* reported on a lecture of ‘special interest’. A Reverend W.G. Swayne, who had served for some months as Military Chaplain in South Africa, gave a Lantern Lecture at the Webbe Institute of Oxford House on ‘South Africa in Time of War’.⁷⁶

Oxford House leaders also promoted sport as a religious outlet. F.R. Barry, a bishop, referred to preachers like Winnington-Ingram who ‘exhorted us to take God onto the football field’ and who ‘gave us healthy advice about Christian manliness’.⁷⁷ When he was asked about starting a boys’ club, Winnington-Ingram stated that the first thing to do was to start a football club. He himself was an enthusiastic sportsman, playing tennis,

⁷⁴ On General Gordon, see Richard Davenport-Hines, ‘Gordon, Charles George (1833–1885)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-11029?rskey=dXkLKe&result=7> (accessed 29 September 2018). Also see, John Pollock, *Gordon: The Man Behind the Mask* (London: Constable, 1993).

⁷⁵ Henson, *Gordon: A Lecture*, 30–31.

⁷⁶ *Oxford House Chronicle* 15, no. 3 (March 1901), 18.

⁷⁷ J. Blackie, *Bradfield, 1850–1915* (The Warden and Council of St Andrew’s College Bradfield, 1976), 96.

hockey and golf. Oxford House boasted a ‘fives’ court, a sport in which Winnington-Ingram excelled.⁷⁸ The Oxford House resident, Ernest Bramwell, described the ‘tremendous games’ played on Oxford House’s Fives Court. He recalled: ‘I don’t think I ever heard of anybody who defeated the head [Winnington-Ingram] at Fives.’⁷⁹ Winnington-Ingram’s love for sport resulted in a caricature which was published in *Vanity Fair* in 1912 (see Figure 17). He had left the settlement by this time and was Bishop of London. Nevertheless, the image of Ingram wearing clerical garb and a cross around his neck with his tennis racket and tennis shoes encapsulates the relationship between religion and sport that was evident in the settlement.

Although Toynbee Hall’s curriculum included subjects in religion and ethics, its educational program had a greater social and civic purpose than that of Oxford House. Lecture and discussion topics reflected Toynbee Hall’s aim to prepare settlers for active citizenship. A wide range of topics was covered, from lectures on John Keats and English and European history, to physiology, to talks on electricity and metal work. Amongst this miscellany of subjects, social, political and civic affairs were particularly prominent. Lectures, smoking debates and other discussions were held on topical issues of the day, including East End trades, the Poor Law system, ‘democracy and industry’, ‘reform bills’, ‘the efficiency of English and foreign labour’, trade unions, the housing of the working classes, ‘the future of the casual labourer’ and state socialism. The educational program also included discussions about international affairs, such as ‘The Indian National

⁷⁸ Fives is an English sport where a ball is propelled against the walls of a special court using a gloved or bare hand as though it were a racquet. The game was often played between the buttresses of church buildings in England. See John Nauright and Charles Parrish, eds, *Sports Around the World: History, Culture, and Practice* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2012), 83.

⁷⁹ Quoted in Ashworth, *The Oxford House in Bethnal Green*, 10.



Figure 17: Walter Hester, Caricature of the Right Reverend The Bishop of London. 'In his Lighter Moments', *Vanity Fair*, 22 May 1912.

Congress’ and the ‘English in Egypt’.⁸⁰ This was evidently a program designed to ‘make’ a social reformer who was well informed and prepared for a future career in social welfare, the civil service or politics.

Like Oxford House, Toynbee Hall promoted sporting activities, but it did so in a more secular way. While Samuel Barnett believed that sport had ‘deep moral significance’⁸¹, athletic activities were usually encouraged within the settlement as another form of training which could instil patriotism, loyalty, discipline and leadership skills. Such activities were part of a broader celebration of athleticism in Oxbridge. The *Pageant Post*, an Oxford paper, deemed athletic prowess a valuable asset for ‘statesmen, rulers and good citizens’ – just the type of men that Toynbee Hall sought to make.⁸² For many university men in this period, a strong and athletic body was viewed as the archetypal masculine trait. Participation in sports was considered manly as it could test nerve, endurance, self-regulation and cooperation. Toynbee Hall organised football, boxing, cricket, tennis and swimming clubs among other sporting activities. While these activities were primarily for East Enders, settlers could also participate. The Toynbee settler, Thomas Hancock Nunn, sometimes took part in boxing matches with different opponents in the settlement’s quadrangle. Werner Picht believed football, in particular, was an activity of great social value as it could teach a young man ‘to subordinate his own will to the welfare of the majority’.⁸³

The Settlements’ Pedagogical Methods

In their efforts to train settlers, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House employed various forms

⁸⁰ For these and further examples of lecture listings, see Toynbee Hall’s annual reports, particularly Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1884, 12; Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1888, 28; Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1892, 2.

⁸¹ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:343.

⁸² ‘Modern Oxford Reformers’, *Pageant Post*, June 1907, 8.

⁸³ Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, 66.

of pedagogy, combining theoretical study with practical experience. This was the mode of education advocated by Clement Attlee in *The Social Worker* in which he emphasised the importance of having well-informed social reformers. ‘The training required’, he argued, should ‘be practical and theoretical, the practical being obtained by working with more experienced people and the theoretical by reading and courses of lectures’.⁸⁴

The settlements’ educational programs shared a number of similarities with the Oxbridge system. Like men at Oxford and Cambridge, residents were provided with varying levels of individual guidance by mentors, albeit they were settlement wardens rather than college tutors. Much university teaching at this time was based on reading and oral discourse and, like their Oxbridge counterparts, settlers acquired information by attending lectures, debates and discussions with their peers. Just as college lecturers provided or recommended books to their students, residents were encouraged to pursue independent reading and study. However, the settlements’ educational programs were less rigorous and less formal than the universities. They were also, as Attlee noted, ‘less methodical’ than the training offered by other philanthropic institutions like the Charity Organisation Society; nevertheless, they provided, he said, ‘experience in almost every kind of voluntary work’.⁸⁵ The residents’ education was based predominantly on practical experience rather than classroom learning. Settlers were encouraged to experiment with different teaching or research techniques and to garner new skills in the course of their practical work in the East End. Unlike Oxford and Cambridge, interaction with the urban poor was a significant component of the settlements’ educational programs for their residents.

Toynbee Hall and Oxford House leaders acted as mentors to residents and visitors, encouraging them to learn from their experiences in the East End and to become well-

⁸⁴ C.R. Attlee, *The Social Worker* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1920), 145.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 145-146.

informed about social issues. Settlement heads were usually more experienced in the field of social reform than their fellows and were in a position to offer guidance to new residents. As one interviewer said of Samuel Barnett: ‘No man, probably, has a more extensive acquaintance with the wants and needs of the East End.’⁸⁶ When one man joined Toynbee Hall as Samuel Barnett’s secretary in 1898, Barnett wrote to him and provided a list of preliminary reading material. His letter reflects his eagerness to ensure that his new colleague was well versed in both settlement literature and philanthropic ideas more broadly. Barnett advised the settler to ‘master the Toynbee Reports’ in order to understand the settlement’s work and history. He added:

You and I might talk over the notes you make. Read also the introduction to *The Charities Register*, which you can borrow of [sic] C.O.S. It is written by Loch. You might look over Booth’s volumes and get some idea of East London from statistics. For light reading read Nevinson’s *Neighbours of Ours*, published by Arrowsmith, Bristol.⁸⁷

Given that Barnett had by this time become increasingly critical of the Charity Organisation Society (COS) and its methods of dividing applicants for relief into the ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ poor, it is interesting that he encouraged this new resident to familiarise himself with the views of C.S. Loch, the secretary of the COS between 1875 and 1913.⁸⁸ Henry Nevinson and Charles Booth, whose works Barnett recommended, had both been associated with Toynbee Hall. The settlement had endorsed Booth’s statistical survey of London poverty in the 1880s and 1890s. Nevinson’s collection of London slum stories, *Neighbours of Ours* (1895), was based on his investigations in London in the same period, including his visits to Toynbee Hall where

⁸⁶ ‘The Dwellings of the London Poor: An Interview with the Rev. S.A. Barnett’, *Cassell’s Family Magazine* (1886), 397.

⁸⁷ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:123-124.

⁸⁸ See ‘A Friendly Criticism of the Charity Organisation Society’, reprinted in the *Charity Organisation Review* (August 1895), 338-344. This paper, which Samuel Barnett read to a meeting of the Charity Organisation Society Council in July 1895 was, despite its title, a scathing attack on the society. Barnett accused the COS of having narrow and inflexible methods of providing poor relief.

he gave classes in English literature.⁸⁹

The advice that this particular resident received formed part of a wider educational program which was aimed at all settlers. While this letter included a number of directions and suggestions, knowledge was usually shared in this informal way. As Henrietta Barnett wrote: ‘Mr. Barnett did not believe in frontal attacks, and people had been so preached at, that direct teaching was shunned.’⁹⁰ Instead, Samuel Barnett insisted that men would obtain knowledge which could not necessarily be tabulated. They would, he hoped, ‘absorb thought as air’.⁹¹ An examination of E.B. Sargant’s educational work in the East End suggests that he held similar principles. In 1888, Sargant founded a school in South Hackney for the education of working-class children.⁹² ‘School Field’, as he dubbed it, was a practical experiment to explore different teaching methods. Like Barnett, Sargant promoted creativity and intellectual independence and argued that teaching should be ‘unconstrained and natural’.⁹³ To this end, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men could tailor their educational experiences within the settlements to their individual interests. William Beveridge observed that Toynbee Hall provided ‘a sort of general culture in political and social views’, which didn’t ‘lead all men to one particular view’. However, he believed that settlers were in ‘a position of having seen all sorts and conditions of men to have reasonable views on all social proposals’.⁹⁴ In *University and Social Settlements*, William Reason anticipated that a man visiting the East End ‘will probably be surprised at the new knowledge he almost unconsciously acquires’. This knowledge would be obtained in an informal learning environment. Reason elaborated:

⁸⁹ See Henry Nevinson, *Neighbours of Ours* (London: Macmillan, 1895).

⁹⁰ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:320.

⁹¹ Samuel Barnett, ‘Settlements or Missions’ in Henrietta and Samuel Barnett, *Towards Social Reform* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1909), 279-280.

⁹² E.B. Sargant, ed, *School Field Magazine, 1890-1894* (London, 1894), xix. School Field thrived until its closure in July 1894.

⁹³ *Ibid*, xviii.

⁹⁴ William Beveridge to Annette Beveridge, 28 November 1904, in William Beveridge, *Power and Influence* (New York: Beechurst Press, 1955), 30-31.

He will, as he listens to some casual talk, shape for himself a new idea of what is done by guardians or vestrymen; he will discover the part which local government plays in life, and learn how trade unions, co-operative societies, and friendly societies are worked; he will get new light on clubs, and be set thinking about measures of reform and development.⁹⁵

Apprenticeship was a significant aspect of the settlements' pedagogy and Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men generally reflected that they gained most by engaging in regular settlement activities – just as Reason suggested. According to William Beveridge, settlers could gain highly practical knowledge of the poor which they could not have discovered from book-learning. Beveridge wrote that he learned about social problems in his practical work: 'I was set to learn about the main problem of those days, not from books, but by interviewing unemployed applicants for relief, taking up references from former employers, selecting the men to be helped, and organising the relief work.'⁹⁶ As these remarks suggest, settlers could learn not only from books but also from their routine activities in the East End, working in various fields of local government, including public health and sanitation, employment and housing. Oxford House men, for example, could work in 'The House of Shelter' which opened in February 1887 to assist casual labourers who could not afford a night's lodging. Residents assisted men and women in finding suitable employment by establishing the Oxford House Labour Association.⁹⁷ Toynbee men formed a 'Streets Patrol Committee' in 1885 (this practice was revived in 1889 but deemed unnecessary by the 1930s) to gather eyewitness accounts of the East End and to support the police. Two members would patrol the neighbouring district on some nights in every week.⁹⁸ Pimlott states that this work not only led to improved conduct in the neighbourhood, but it also enabled settlers 'to collect a considerable volume of useful

⁹⁵ Reason, *University and Social Settlements*, 17-18.

⁹⁶ Beveridge, *Power and Influence*, 23-24.

⁹⁷ Nigel Scotland discusses these activities in *Squires in the Slums: Settlements and Missions in Late Victorian London*, 67-68.

⁹⁸ Arthur Pillans Laurie recounted his experience of these patrols. See Laurie, *Pictures and Politics*, 76-79.

information about conditions in the neighbourhood'.⁹⁹

A peer-to-peer educational system was also operative within the settlement houses as they aimed to combine education with a sense of fellowship. Toynbee Hall's Annual Report of 1887 recorded that the 'method of friendship' had been 'as much kept in sight as the positive communication of knowledge'. The settlement announced that instruction was 'given and received' with the aim of establishing 'friendship and sympathy between the teachers and the taught'.¹⁰⁰ Clement Attlee highlighted the instructional benefits of interaction. Conversation and dialogue was, he wrote, 'one of the best methods of education that a settlement affords' as it provided an opportunity for the exchange of views and the discussion of rival theories. He argued that the 'true function of settlements' was to act as centres of voluntary work 'where workers and thinkers of all classes can meet freely and discuss their common problems, and where information and advice is always forthcoming'.¹⁰¹ While settlers could meet together informally, Toynbee Hall also arranged opportunities to facilitate information sharing. The Toynbee Economic Club (1891-1903; 1906-1908) encouraged discussion among residents and East Londoners about a broad range of social and economic issues. Residents and invited speakers presented papers on a variety of topics, including trade unionism and General Booth's unemployment scheme.¹⁰² The Enquirers' Club, formed in 1901, was a similar forum for settlers, civil servants, political economists and local residents to discuss and debate social issues together. The club members included many West Enders. J.A. Salter, a civil servant and Toynbee Hall resident, recalled: 'We would invite someone of distinction and special knowledge of social problems to be our guest for the evening, and, after an opening exposition (all being comfortably seated in arm-chairs in the drawing-

⁹⁹ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 82.

¹⁰⁰ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1887, 15.

¹⁰¹ C.R. Attlee, *The Social Worker* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1920), 197, 153, 215.

¹⁰² *Toynbee Record* 3, no. 6 (March 1891), 62; *Toynbee Record* 3 (April 1891), 74.

room), submit him to comment and cross-questioning.’¹⁰³

Underpinning the settlements’ educational programs was not only conversation with men ‘of distinction’, but also contact with the urban poor who lived in the areas around Toynbee Hall and Oxford House. It was often suggested that the educational systems for both university men and the poor were too insular and that this amplified social tensions. As Edmund Sargant argued: ‘As long as the richer classes draw their teachers from their own ranks, and the poorer classes from theirs, and as long as the distinction between the two classes of teachers is preserved, so long will the ignorance of one part of the nation about the other continue.’¹⁰⁴ The settlement houses sought to bridge these divisions. By settling in the East End, Toynbee and Oxford House men hoped to glean insights about the poor that could not be gained in the West End or Oxbridge. Barnett opined that ‘workmen who are casually and frequently met, whose idle words become familiar, whose homes are known, reveal the workman mind [sic] as it is not revealed by clever essayists or by orators of their own class’.¹⁰⁵ Werner Picht shared this view, suggesting that men who could live ‘face to face’ with social problems would be ‘better fitted’ to develop social legislation than officials who knew them only ‘in theory’.¹⁰⁶

With this philosophy in mind, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House provided opportunities for interaction with the poor. Classes and clubs within the settlements were designed to promote close relationships between the residents and their East End students. The Students’ Union, the largest society of Toynbee Hall, was founded in 1885 with the philosophy that ‘if the students could occasionally meet together in some place other than the lecture-room, with opportunities for social intercourse, one step nearer university

¹⁰³ J.A. Salter, *Memoirs of a Public Servant* (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), 46.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Gardner, “‘There and not Seen’: E.B Sargant and Educational Reform, 1884–1905’, 623.

¹⁰⁵ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:312.

¹⁰⁶ Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, 98.

education would have been made'.¹⁰⁷ Toynbee Hall's 'smoking debates', which were held on Thursday evenings (between 1888 and 1910), brought settlers and the residents of East London into discussions about key issues of the day. The debates were described in the settlement's reports as crowded affairs which were intended to be as valuable to locals as they were to the residents and visitors of Toynbee Hall. Such discussions, one annual report stated, enabled men to 'understand the worker's point of view, not only by the words of the speakers but by the faces of the audience'.¹⁰⁸

This sort of contact with the poor was promoted as an important component of the settlers' education, but it was also one that raised questions among Toynbee men about the type of 'worker' from whom they could learn. As the settlement generally worked among largely unskilled and uneducated workers, some residents expressed doubts about the capacity of the local community to contribute to their own education. This was the case for R.H. Tawney whose educational interests ultimately lay not with the unskilled poor in East London but with the working classes in England's industrial north. The East London poor depended on the support it received; they were, in the words of Tawney, 'a subservient lot'.¹⁰⁹ The class of workers in the industrial north, on the other hand, was characterised by its craft skills, independence and self-sufficiency. There was community cohesion in the north and the makings of a social and political movement. Tawney argued that the most effective social reform would be achieved in alliance with workers in the northern industrial cities: 'It is in Lancashire, where Labour is protected by factory acts and trade unions, not in London, where it is not, that factory life, cooperation, friendly societies, education, social institutions for a hundred different purposes, find their fullest development.'¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ *Toynbee Journal and Students' Union Chronicle* 1, no.1 (October 1885), 5.

¹⁰⁸ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1907, 13.

¹⁰⁹ David Marquand, 'R.H. Tawney. Prophet of Equality', *The Guardian*, 26 November, 1960.

¹¹⁰ R.H. Tawney, *Poverty as an Industrial Problem* (London, 1913), 16.

It was his involvement with the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), rather than his residency at Toynbee Hall, that provided Tawney with what he perceived to be an authentic cross-class educational experience. Tawney joined the WEA in 1905 and moved quickly onto its executive, a position he held until 1947. As a tutor for the WEA, Tawney taught history and economics to working classes in industrial towns like Rochdale, Chesterfield, Wrexham and Longton. Later in life, he reflected that 'the best part' of his education was 'not at school or college' but as a tutor for the WEA.¹¹¹ It was here that Tawney achieved a rapport with the working classes that had eluded him in East London. He formed a 'fellowship' with his students, seeking personal intercourse and personal tuition with them outside the formal classroom setting. He would often spend the evening at the home of one of his students, discussing matters with a group of working-class companions until the early hours of the morning.¹¹²

Tawney's aim in the WEA was to extend to the working class the benefits of education that he had enjoyed, but he reflected that he not only taught these students, he also learnt from them. At the end of his teaching career, Tawney stated: 'I can never be sufficiently grateful for the lessons learned from the adult students whom I was supposed to teach, but who, in fact, taught me'.¹¹³ Through his students, Tawney increased his knowledge of working-class life, acquiring a range of details about wages and working conditions.¹¹⁴ His students personalised abstract ideas about industrialism and they demonstrated in their daily lives some of the real flaws in Britain's social and economic system. In the preface to his 1912 book, *The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century*, Tawney acknowledged a great debt to the members of his tutorial classes. He wrote a

¹¹¹ R.H. Tawney, 'The WEA and Adult Education', in *The Radical Tradition: Twelve Essays on Politics, Education and Literature*, ed. Rita Hinden (London: Allen and Unwin, 1964), 82.

¹¹² Meredith Kwartin Rusoff, 'R.H. Tawney and the WEA', in *A Ministry of Enthusiasm: Centenary Essays on the Workers' Educational Association*, ed. Steven K. Roberts (London: Pluto Press, 2003), 61.

¹¹³ R.H. Tawney, 'The WEA and Adult Education', lecture delivered on 8 May 1953, reprinted in *The Radical Tradition: Twelve Essays on Politics, Education and Literature*, ed. Rita Hinden (London: Allen and Unwin, 1964), 91.

¹¹⁴ Goldman, *The Life of R.H. Tawney: Socialism and History*, 80.

tribute to the

members of the tutorial classes conducted by Oxford University, with whom for the last four years it has been my privilege to be a fellow-worker. The friendly smittings of weavers, potters, miners, and engineers, have taught me much more about the problems of political and economic science which cannot easily be learned from books.¹¹⁵

Tawney's gratitude and loyalty to the WEA was reflected in his decision to leave his entire estate, excepting a few small bequests, to the association on his death. In the words of Tawney's recent biographer, Lawrence Goldman, the opportunity to 'use his intellectual resources to educate and also liberate serious-minded people' on these 'terms of social equality' had been a much more appealing concept to Tawney than working in East London amidst 'people who lacked the capacity to be uplifted'.¹¹⁶

Questions were raised by other settlers about the intellectual value of working with the poor in East London. Concerns were expressed within Toynbee Hall that workers in the district would be unable to comprehend the settlement's educational content let alone teach the settlers anything in return. William Beveridge wrote that the liberal arts subjects at the settlement 'simply flabbergasted' the education committee. He added: 'It will be about two miles and a half above the heads of any possible audience to be got here.'¹¹⁷ He and other settlers feared that visitors at the settlement would be unable to understand the classics.

Rather than learning from the poor, some settlers felt they had to 'teach down' to their East End students. Edward Harold Spender thought it necessary to adjust his teaching to suit his working-class audiences. When he delivered a course on the French Revolution, he did not expect 'a very profound reading', only 'a thorough knowledge of

¹¹⁵ R.H. Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1912), ix.

¹¹⁶ Goldman, *The Life of R.H. Tawney: Socialism and History*, 30.

¹¹⁷ William Beveridge to Annette Beveridge, 8 September 1903, Beveridge/2A/50, London School of Economics.

one textbook'. He outlined his approach: 'Any discussion of historical method would be confusing: my effort has been to give them the latest possible research on the French Revolution in the simplest possible manner.' Spender presented history to the poor as 'a tale with a moral attached', rather than as 'a science'. The lecturer, J.W. Waghorn, acknowledged that he, too, 'thought it necessary to simplify the instruction wherever possible' and to omit 'difficult conceptions'. Other lecturers refused to compromise their classes or felt no need to do so. F.W. Rudler, for example, reported that he 'did not find it necessary to lower the standard of teaching' for his working-class students.¹¹⁸

Despite reservations about the calibre of the urban poor with whom the settlement worked, recollections of settlers and visitors often contain a narrative about a two-way exchange. While Toynbee Hall had a vested interest in sharing positive anecdotes about its residents, the volume of commentary suggests that there were genuine educational exchanges between Toynbee men and East End workers. The German resident, Werner Picht, argued that Toynbee classes were 'more than an institution for the imparting of knowledge'. He believed that they formed a 'neutral ground' on which members of different classes were 'combined in a common activity, giving and taking'.¹¹⁹ One lecturer, for example, reflected on his 'good talks' with his students about Dickens's *Pickwick Papers* and Tennyson's *In Memoriam*.¹²⁰

A number of lecturers at Toynbee Hall also felt they had forged genuine friendships with their students. This was the case for Vivien Lewes, a professor of chemistry at the Naval War College, who lectured at both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House. He reflected that his 'audience treat[ed] me as a personal friend', bringing 'questions as to points in their daily work which in many cases have necessitated a long

¹¹⁸ This reflection and quotations above cited in Koven, 'Culture and Poverty', 266, 267-269.

¹¹⁹ Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, 45.

¹²⁰ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1885, 37.

series of experiments to elucidate'.¹²¹ The historian, Samuel Rawson Gardiner, who lectured at Toynbee Hall for 20 years, reported that 'no other lectures give me so much pleasure to deliver'.¹²² Gardiner commended one of his students for being 'decidedly original' and felt pleased to 'have to do with a man who thinks for himself'.¹²³ In return, one of Gardiner's students, Thomas Okey, declared that Gardiner's classes were 'a rich intellectual endowment to us Toynbee students'.¹²⁴

Such feelings of gratitude towards Toynbee Hall's teachers are evident in the surviving working-class memoirs associated with Toynbee Hall.¹²⁵ One working man, Frank Galton, recalled that the Toynbee settlers, Hubert Llewellyn Smith, Arthur Rogers and Vaughan Nash, 'opened a new world to me . . . They were from the public schools and university and were [an] entirely new phenomenon to us'.¹²⁶ Frederick Rogers, one of the settlement's most prominent working-class students, enthused: 'I had dreamed of what scholarship might be . . . now I was face to face with true scholarship, and I sat silent and with bowed head.'¹²⁷ As beneficiaries of Toynbee Hall's mission, working-class men would be inclined to write favourably about the settlement. There are therefore certain limitations in using these sources individually. When considered collectively, however, the theme of cross-class exchange is clearly evident.

The two-way educational process that Tawney achieved with industrial workers in the WEA was experienced by some residents who worked among the unskilled urban poor at Toynbee Hall. One Toynbee man described the students in his political economy class as 'the best sort of working men'. He believed his students were 'steady', 'thrifty'

¹²¹ Cited in Koven, 'Culture and Poverty', 260.

¹²² Ibid, 261.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Thomas Okey, *A Basketful of Memories* (London: J.M. Dent, 1930), 50.

¹²⁵ See, for example, Frederick Rogers, *Labour, Life and Literature: Some Memories of Sixty Years* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1913), 81-82; and Okey, *A Basketful of Memories*, 50.

¹²⁶ Quoted in Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), 266.

¹²⁷ Rogers, *Labour, Life and Literature*, 81.

and ‘interested in the improvement of their order’. He felt that his own knowledge base was limited and that he could make only a ‘small contribution to the subject’. However, he found that the class had much to teach him. He wrote that his working-class students brought to ‘discussions a good practical knowledge and common sense’ which complemented his ‘book-knowledge of the subject’. He explained: ‘Between my ounce of theory and their pound of practice we have some very interesting talks.’¹²⁸ Another Toynbee settler described a similar teaching experience. When he selected Henry George’s 1879 treatise on questions of poverty, *Progress and Poverty*, to study with his club members, his plan was ‘that they should give me their practical experiences as workers on matters of which a student fresh from Oxford must necessarily be ignorant’. He was satisfied with the results of this approach. As representatives ‘of many different trades gathered round the table, a good deal of useful information was thus elicited’.¹²⁹

While these men gained knowledge in the East End, other settlers were inspired by the particular values of the workers they met. One resident wrote that he had benefited from his contact with the urban poor: ‘The chief practical lesson they have taught me is that of sticking with whatever they take up with.’¹³⁰ In his memoirs, the Toynbee settler, William Braithwaite, wrote that he gained a deeper understanding of working-class attitudes. He recorded that his inspiration for supporting the National Insurance Act largely came from his experiences of working in boys’ clubs while he was a resident of Toynbee Hall. He wrote: ‘My own experience in boys’ club work was convincing to me that working people ought to pay something! It gave them a feeling of self-respect, and what cost nothing was not valued.’¹³¹ While these sentiments were often expressed within the settlements, Tawney had been able to recognise the political potential of workers in

¹²⁸ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:327.

¹²⁹ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1885, 36.

¹³⁰ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1886, 41.

¹³¹ William Braithwaite, *Lloyd George’s Ambulance Wagon, Being the Memoirs of William J. Braithwaite, 1911-1912* (Bath: Chivers, 1970), 80.

the industrial north and his views were perhaps vindicated by the fact that it was there and not among the poor of East London that the Labour Party of 1906 was founded (see Chapter 6).

While Oxford House residents also interacted with the urban poor, it was in a more distinctly Christian setting and usually evangelical in tone. Residents delivered and attended lectures, but they were also involved in activities that were quite different from those of Toynbee Hall. No equivalent to the Enquirers' Club, for example, existed at Oxford House. The settlement was, however, known for its open-air preaching, particularly its public addresses in East London's Victoria Park. These were occasions which allowed settlers to interact with East Enders who did not usually participate in settlement activities. There are no known records of Henson's or Adderley's lectures in Victoria Park. However, reflections in some of their personal writings illustrate that the settlers' exchanges with East Enders were a learning experience. Both parties welcomed discussion and posed questions and commentary to the other. Herbert Henson, who preached at the park on a number of occasions, relished the opportunity to debate. He declared that 'the church has something to say for the Lord' and that 'parsons are not afraid to come out of their uncompetitive pulpits and challenge opposition in the open air'.¹³²

Settlers like Henson, Adderley and Winnington-Ingram felt that there was a great deal to be gained by listening to the opinions of their audiences who were often well-informed working men. According to contemporary commentators like Henry Walker, East Enders enjoyed open discussion. Walker reported that 'the crowds are keenly interested in the subjects of dispute, and range themselves on the one side or the other'.¹³³

Winnington-Ingram actively encouraged questions from his audiences, urging them to

¹³² 'May 4th 1886 to July 11th 1887: Mostly in All Souls and Oxford House, Bethnal Green', Herbert Hensley Henson Journals, 4, f.383, Durham Cathedral Library Collection.

¹³³ Henry Walker, 'Sunday in East London: Victoria Park', *Sunday at Home*, 1895, 791.

suggest topics for his future lectures. This invitation prompted lively dialogue, some of which was recorded by Winnington-Ingram in his book, *Why am I a Christian?* He noted, for example, that a worker once asked him, ‘Who was Cain’s wife?’ as ‘there was no-one for him to have married except his own mother, Eve’.¹³⁴ Winnington-Ingram countered that although the bible was a religious text, it did not necessarily contain the answers to all questions. He insisted that it was primarily meant ‘to teach us Goodness’, not science or history.¹³⁵ Not surprisingly, given the setting of his sermons, Winnington-Ingram was also questioned on the theological implications of poverty. Challenges such as the following were put forward by working men: ‘Look at East London with all its poverty. Either God does not care, in which case He is not love, or He cannot do anything, in which case He is not almighty?’ Another sceptical member of the audience asked: ‘Do you suppose He cares for us out-of-works?’¹³⁶ Perhaps driven by such critical questioning, Winnington-Ingram devoted much time to preparing his sermons.¹³⁷ In this way, his mission to the poor was combined with study, reflection and self-improvement.

Settlers usually received a practical education in the course of their routine work, whether it was through the religious activities of Oxford House or the more secular educational work of Toynbee Hall. However, there were also more formal avenues of learning, particularly as the twentieth century progressed. One of the most notable opportunities for Oxbridge men to investigate the East End was ‘Universities Week’, which was held annually at Toynbee Hall from 1921 to introduce students to social problems and ‘to further the study of industrial questions’.¹³⁸ The Oxford and Cambridge Study Week brought students from the universities to Toynbee Hall. During these weeks,

¹³⁴ Arthur Winnington-Ingram, *Why am I a Christian?* (London: G.P. Putnam’s, 1929), 34.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹³⁷ S.C. Carpenter, *Winnington-Ingram: The Biography of Arthur Foley Winnington-Ingram, Bishop of London, 1901-1937* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1949), 52.

¹³⁸ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1921, 12.

students resided at the settlement and were provided with opportunities to visit slum districts and local communities. They were able to attend lectures from local politicians, social workers, police, teachers and trade unionists, amongst others. One of the students of an Oxford and Cambridge study week in December 1928 described it as a ‘thoroughly enjoyable week of many new spectacles and experiences’. His visit coincided with one of Toynbee Hall’s ‘At Homes’ when the warden and his wife opened their doors to receive various East End visitors. This student recalled:

On Monday I went to Toynbee Hall in the East End, which was to be my home for the week. I found the days of great interest. Generally, in the mornings, we had lectures from employers and employed in various trades, for example, building, printing and clothing . . . Our afternoons were spent variously, one in the docks as guests of the Port of London authority . . . one at the Trade Schools in Southampton Row, one to Welwyn Garden City, and one at the Varsity Rugby Match. One night we had a ‘Dockers’ ‘At Home’, during which I sang a song from the *Pirates*.¹³⁹

While this man referred to activities undertaken collectively within the settlement, the program of Toynbee Hall’s Study Week of 1925 suggests that this educational experience could also be meaningful on an individual level. Entitled ‘A Personal Approach to Social Problems’, the agenda included a series of speakers who each discussed his own experiences in various aspects of social work. Some settlement residents were included on the agenda. Basil Henriques, for example, spoke on his work ‘as a Settlement Resident in Connection with Education’ and Jimmy Mallon gave a lecture entitled ‘My Work as a Settlement Resident in Connection with the Drink Question’.¹⁴⁰

A Vocational Education: Settling Skills

¹³⁹ Quoted in Asa Briggs and Anne Macartney, *Toynbee Hall: The First Hundred Years* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), 105.

¹⁴⁰ See Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 238-239.

Both settlement houses aimed to impart knowledge and skills that could assist men in their chosen vocations. And men from both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House recorded some of the educational benefits of settling. However, the tone and style of the education settlers received was quite different, reflecting the Anglican and the non-sectarian stances of Oxford House and Toynbee Hall respectively.

Toynbee Hall became known as a training ground for orators and statesmen. Leadership skills and experience in teaching and public speaking were actively promoted. Residents were encouraged to develop and offer courses for East Enders; organise reading groups, clubs and events for poorer students; and attend discussion groups with their peers. According to one Toynbee man, he and his fellow residents found opportunities for ‘enlarging our culture and our sympathies’ and ‘gaining broader views’.¹⁴¹ Lectures were a popular feature of settlement life and served as occasions when men were encouraged to engage in critical thought, questioning and debate. According to Werner Picht, men learnt ‘how to consider the questions of the day more conscientiously’.¹⁴²

For men like William Beveridge, becoming a university settler was as much about professional development as an interest in philanthropy. Beveridge described Toynbee Hall as a centre where he could form an ‘authoritative opinion on the problems of city life’.¹⁴³ When Beveridge informed his mother that he was considering the sub-wardenship of Toynbee Hall, he emphasised skills that could be gained by settling. He wrote that he would receive ‘immediately practical experience’ in organisation and leadership. He would also, he believed, obtain the knowledge to formulate sound opinions on urban

¹⁴¹ This and similar reflections were recorded in the supplement ‘Our Work and Hopes’ in Toynbee Hall’s Second Annual Report, 1886, 22-43.

¹⁴² Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, 56.

¹⁴³ Letter from William Beveridge to Henry Beveridge, 28 April 1903, in Beveridge, *Power and Influence*, 17.

problems.¹⁴⁴ Beveridge's position as editor of the *Toynbee Record* may have been good training for his later position as a leader-writer for *The Morning Post*, a role Beveridge assumed after resigning his sub-wardenship. Beveridge was 'very glad to have this chance', writing: 'I shall practice [sic] the art of self-expression.'¹⁴⁵ As a school manager, too, Beveridge wrote less about his relationship with students and teachers than about the leadership skills he was able to hone as a young man: 'I [chose] a head mistress for a Board School from three ladies each old enough to be my mother.'¹⁴⁶ Beveridge also regarded his visit to a working men's club as a learning experience, albeit one of a less practical kind. He noted that he was 'acquiring an exhaustive knowledge of beer'.¹⁴⁷

Like Beveridge, Clement Attlee described his residency in East London (not only at Toynbee Hall but also in Stepney and Limehouse) as an educational experience which benefited him in his future career. He recorded in his autobiography, 'countless lessons in practical economics'.¹⁴⁸ After Attlee was appointed as a lecturer and tutor at the London School of Economics in the Department of Social Science and Public Administration in 1912, he reported: 'I was not appointed on the score of academic qualification but because I was considered to have a good practical knowledge of social conditions.'¹⁴⁹ This knowledge seems to have assisted him in making decisions in his political career. He offered the following anecdote as an example:

When I was Prime Minister a senior civil servant was outlining a fuel-rationing scheme and emphasising the importance of householders storing fuel. I told him that many people had nowhere to store it, adding, 'When I lived in East London I kept the coal under the bed. At first I bought too big a sack.'¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁴ José Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 74.

¹⁴⁵ William Beveridge to Annette Beveridge, 22 September 1903, Beveridge/2A/50, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics.

¹⁴⁶ William Beveridge to Annette Beveridge, 20 April 1904, in Beveridge, *Power and Influence*, 24.

¹⁴⁷ William Beveridge to Annette Beveridge, 10 July 1904, Beveridge/2A/51, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics.

¹⁴⁸ C.R. Attlee, *As it Happened* (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), 31.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

While Toynbee men like Attlee received an education in areas such as ‘practical economics’ (including such questions as the rationing of fuel), Oxford House men generally reflected on their Christian teachings and lessons in East London. Like Toynbee Hall, Oxford House provided men with skills in leadership, teaching and public speaking, but it was with a view to preparing them as clergymen, Christian missionaries and evangelists rather than for more secular careers in education or politics. Men pursuing a clerical career were encouraged to support local parish work by giving sermons and contributing to Sunday school classes. Herbert Henson, for example, could draw upon his Oxford House experience of preaching in Victoria Park when he later became a vicar in Barking. As Owen Chadwick observes: ‘Used to the soap-boxes of Victoria Park, he knew how to make himself heard in the open air. And in the open air he could be more amusing than he liked to be in the pulpit.’¹⁵¹ Henson was encouraged in this endeavour by the responses of the local community. On one occasion, he was delighted to hear someone remarking ‘that for once a parson didn’t mind coming out of the Church to speak’.¹⁵²

Conclusion

The university settlements were characterised by their aims to reform and educate all those who came into contact with them – the poor of the East End as well as the settlers themselves. William Smart described Toynbee Hall as ‘a University Colony in East London where men might live face to face with the actual facts of crowded city life [and] might gain practice and experience in social questions’.¹⁵³ As educational centres in the East End, both settlement houses aimed to inform and train the settlers.

¹⁵¹ Owen Chadwick, *Hensley Henson: A Study in the Friction between Church and State* (Norwich: The Canterbury Press, 1994), 56.

¹⁵² ‘May 4th 1886 to July 11th 1887: Mostly in All Souls and Oxford House, Bethnal Green’, Herbert Hensley Henson Journals 4, f.384, Durham Cathedral Library Collection.

¹⁵³ William Smart, *Toynbee Hall: A Short Account of the Universities Settlement in East London, with Suggestions for a Similar Work in Glasgow* (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1886), 4.

The educational methods examined in this chapter were not intended to solve the problems of poverty immediately, but they were conceived as a fundamental stage not only in the task of educating the poor in London, but in effecting social reform in Britain and its empire. The settlements instructed potentially influential men and hoped that the knowledge gained in Toynbee Hall and Oxford House would assist them to contribute to social welfare from within the settlement houses and after leaving the East End. Settlers who reached positions of influence would be able to draw upon their settlement expertise. Henrietta Barnett highlighted the ways in which educating the settlers could eventually lead to reform in the East End:

All have left behind them marks of their residence; sometimes in the policy of the local Boards, of which they have become members; or in relation to the Student residences; or the Antiquarian, Natural History, or Travelling Clubs which individuals among them have founded; or by busying themselves with classes, debates, conferences, discussions. Their activities have been unceasing and manifold, but looking over many years and many men it seems to my womanly mind that the best work has been done by those men who have cared most deeply for individuals among the poor. Out of such deep care has grown intimate knowledge of their lives and industrial position, and from knowledge has come improvement in laws, conditions, or administration.¹⁵⁴

The role of the settlement houses as educational centres raised a number of questions about settlers' motivations and contributions. Despite her optimistic reflection above, Henrietta Barnett commented that it was sometimes easier to find volunteers who were keen to *investigate* conditions than ones who were anxious to actually *reform* them.¹⁵⁵ Werner Picht also raised a concern that using settlements primarily as sites for training social workers could create 'egotistic' residents who were 'only useful to a limited extent for the work which they wish to undertake for the sake of their training'. Picht suggested that settlements could avoid this difficulty by carefully selecting their residents and encouraging them to make use of their training in their subsequent

¹⁵⁴ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:313.

¹⁵⁵ Pimlott refers to Henrietta's opinion in *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 103.

careers.¹⁵⁶ In this way, the settlements could ‘educate an elite set of men who later, in prominent or humble positions, live out the ideas which they have absorbed in the settlements’.¹⁵⁷ He argued that the importance of the settlement lay largely in its ‘educational influence’ on the residents, which ‘in many cases has given the direction to their whole life’. He added, ‘even where the later calling has no direct relationship to settlement work, the teachings of Toynbee Hall are not forgotten: in no one who has lived there does the social conscience again go to sleep’.¹⁵⁸

In Toynbee Hall, social investigation was a significant part of many settlers’ educational experience. Chapter Four focuses on the research and investigative work of Toynbee Hall which functioned as a laboratory where future civil servants, investigators and politicians could informally work out new principles of social policy.

¹⁵⁶ Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, 134.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 129.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 31.

Chapter Four

The Settlement Laboratory: Social Investigation and Research

Each group of social workers, each settlement has been a laboratory of social science in which new theories are tested, or applications adapted to this country of reforms.

Clement Attlee, *The Social Worker*, 1920.¹

In 1920, the future British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, published *The Social Worker*, his first book, based on his experiences as a resident of East London. In this manual for social workers (a text that was used for many years at the London School of Economics), Attlee described settlement houses as ‘social laboratories, where new ideas can be worked out and experiments tried of every variety of new social effort’.² This view of the settlement was not a new one. The metaphor of a laboratory was evoked throughout the period from 1884 to 1914 (and beyond) to encapsulate Toynbee Hall’s role as a centre of social research and investigation. In 1908, Herbert Asquith, the British Prime Minister, described Toynbee Hall as ‘a research laboratory for social reformers’.³ In 1935, J.A.R. Pimlott reiterated: ‘Toynbee Hall was one of the sociological laboratories on the patient work of which legislators and administrators so largely depended.’⁴ Toynbee Hall’s status as a laboratory was also recognised by visitors from abroad. Robert Woods, the American social reformer who spent six months at Toynbee Hall, described settlement houses as ‘laboratories in social science’ where ‘science and sympathy’ united to gain knowledge

¹ C.R. Attlee, *The Social Worker* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1920), 221.

² *Ibid*, 216.

³ See *Progress: Civil, Social, Industrial. The Organ of the British Institute of Social Service*, vol. 8 (1913), 146.

⁴ J.A.R. Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress, 1884-1934, with a Preface by His Grace the Archbishop* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1935), 95.

and information that could help to redress social problems. Woods wrote that ‘the close scientific study of the social conditions in the neighbourhood about a settlement is indispensable to its success’.⁵

Drawing upon this popular conceptualisation of Toynbee Hall as a ‘laboratory’, this chapter argues that the social research and investigative projects undertaken in Toynbee Hall contributed in a very real sense to the making of a new type of social reformer – a social scientist. Unlike scientists in a conventional laboratory, the men examined in this chapter worked in the field. They studied the extent and nature of urban problems before developing theories and devising schemes for social amelioration. In doing so, they participated in a branch of first-hand, systematic and scientific social investigation that was increasingly gaining recognition as a profession in this period.

The focus of this chapter is on Toynbee Hall, not Oxford House. While it was described as a monastery, a theological college and a clubhouse, Oxford House was never referred to as a laboratory. This highlights a significant difference between the two settlements. While Oxford House publications were primarily concerned with religious subjects and Christian missionary activities, Toynbee Hall established a notable reputation in the field of social research. Its contribution to social investigation and reform has been recognised by historians who have generally examined this aspect of settlement work in relation to the creation of a state welfare system in Britain.⁶ As Eileen Yeo observes: ‘Many of the key players in the social science story in this period, Clement Attlee, William Beveridge, Hubert Llewellyn Smith, E. J. Urwick, began their

⁵ See Robert A. Woods, ‘University Settlements as Laboratories in Social Science’, in *The Neighbourhood in Nation Building* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1923), 31, 37, 9.

⁶ See, for example, Asa Briggs and Anne Macartney, *Toynbee Hall: The First Hundred Years* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1984), 98; Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 237; and Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship Between Classes in Victorian Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 258-259, 328.

active social service while in residence at Toynbee Hall.’⁷ Emily Abel views Toynbee Hall through this lens, referring to a transition within the settlement between 1884 and 1914 when Toynbee Hall, ‘gradually developed into a centre for social investigation and reform’.⁸ More recently, Katharine Bradley has shown that settlement houses, particularly Toynbee Hall, had ‘a fundamental influence on the development of the welfare state’. This occurred, she explains, through their alumni entering politics and the civil service and ‘through the settlements’ ability to powerfully convey the practical experience of voluntary work in the East End to policy makers’.⁹ Bradley identifies Toynbee Hall as a ‘hothouse’ for future administrators.¹⁰ Focusing on the period between 1918 and 1959, she argues that its influential dissemination network enabled the settlement to influence the formation of national social policy in the period. In doing so, she examines the changing relationship between the voluntary sector and state welfare.

Building upon this historiography, this chapter examines the role Toynbee Hall played in the development of settlers as social researchers and investigators between 1884 and 1914. In contrast to previous scholarship, it focuses not so much on the relationship between voluntary and state welfare or the *results* of the settlers’ investigations, but rather on the *formation* of these men within the field of social science. The settlement ‘laboratory’ was a physical and intellectual space where men could study social problems and theories, collaborate with their peers, experiment with social schemes and participate in research projects. This chapter explores the settlement’s research philosophy, the key studies and investigations undertaken by residents and associates, and the settlement’s

⁷ Eileen Yeo, *The Contest for Social Science: Relations and Representations of Gender and Class* (London: Rivers Oram, 1996), 212.

⁸ Emily Abel, ‘Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall’, (PhD diss., University of London, 1969), 147.

⁹ Katharine Bradley, ‘Poverty and Philanthropy in East London, 1918-1959: The University Settlements and the Urban Working Classes’, (PhD diss., University of London, 2006), 2. Also see Katharine Bradley, *Poverty, Philanthropy and the State: Charities and the Working Classes in London, 1918-1979* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2009).

¹⁰ Bradley, ‘Poverty and Philanthropy in East London, 1918-1959: The University Settlements and the Urban Working Classes’, 10.

role in developing residents' knowledge, research skills, methodologies, techniques and networks. It argues that the Toynbee Hall investigator epitomised a new type of social worker that was emerging in the late Victorian period, one who combined scientific and statistical study with personal observation and experience. First, this chapter examines the 'scientific investigator' of Toynbee Hall by analysing social surveys produced by settlers, particularly Harry Lewis's study of Jewish East London (1900)¹¹ and Hubert Llewellyn Smith's *New Survey of London Life and Labour* (1928-1935).¹² It also discusses investigations into the causes of poverty, most notably William Beveridge's study of *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry* (1909), the culmination of years of research undertaken during his residency in East London.¹³ Secondly, this chapter considers Toynbee Hall men who combined their research with personal exploration and social activism. Collectively, the work and experiences of these settlers show that their residency in Toynbee Hall played a significant role in their formation as social investigators and policy makers.

The Foundation and Aims of the Toynbee Hall Laboratory

From its foundation, social investigation and research were important activities in Toynbee Hall, reflecting broader developments in social work in the late nineteenth century. The 1880s were retrospectively identified by Clement Attlee as the beginning of a 'new era in social service'.¹⁴ It was in this period that the first significant steps towards modern scientific social investigation were taken in London. Researchers and policy

¹¹ Harry Lewis and Charles Russell, *The Jew in London: A Study of Racial Character and Present-day Conditions* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1900).

¹² Hubert Llewellyn Smith, ed., *The New Survey of London Life and Labour* (London: P.S. King, 1930-1935).

¹³ William Beveridge, *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry* (London and New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1909).

¹⁴ Attlee, *The Social Worker*, 187.

makers increasingly recognised poverty as a structural problem and sought to define and to institutionalise aspects of social study. They sought to carefully measure and analyse the nature and extent of a variety of social problems. A systematic analysis of life in East London would, it was hoped, supply the data that reformers and legislators needed to propose potential solutions to social problems. The research methods of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were diverse, including independent study, participant observation, interviewing, experimentation and a systematic mapping and recording of demographic patterns, social conditions and cultural contexts.¹⁵ In this period, a series of empirical surveys were conducted by social researchers, beginning with Charles Booth's famous study of poverty in East London (1886-1903) and Benjamin Seebohm Rowntree's survey of York (published in 1901).¹⁶ Subsequent surveys were conducted in other British cities and towns, including West Ham (1907), Middlesbrough (1907) and Norwich (1910 and 1914) as social investigators set out to measure the extent of the poverty that imaginative writers had long been describing in lurid and sensationalist language.¹⁷

A study by the Toynbee resident, Norman Dearle, on leading industries and their conditions in London encapsulates the milieu of social investigation in this period. In his study, Dearle examined the methods of training used in industrial trades in London. At the beginning of his book, he clearly established his key research question: 'Are the

¹⁵ On these developments in social research, see E.P. Hennock, 'Poverty and Social Theory in England: The Experience of the Eighteen-Eighties', *Social History* 1 (1967), 67-91; E.P. Hennock, 'The Measurement of Urban Poverty: From the Metropolis to the Nation, 1880-1920', *Economic History Review* 2 (1987), 208-227; Martin Bulmer et al, eds., *The Social Survey in Historical Perspective, 1880-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1991), particularly chapters 2, 3, 5 and 7.

¹⁶ For an examination of Britain's poverty surveys in this period, see Eileen Janes Yeo, 'Social Surveys in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', in *The Cambridge History of Science*, edited by Theodore Parker and Dorothy Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), vol. 7. Also see E.P. Hennock, 'Concepts of Poverty in the British Social Surveys from Charles Booth to Arthur Bowley', in Martin Bulmer et al, eds., *The Social Survey in Historical Perspective, 1880-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 189-217.

¹⁷ This sensationalist imagery was particularly evident in the work of the journalist George Sims and the nonconformist minister Andrew Mearns. See George R. Sims, *How the Poor Live, and Horrible London* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1889) and Andrew Mearns, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* (London: James Clark, 1883).

trades of London sufficiently varied and representative?’¹⁸ Dearle described the ‘state of affairs prevailing in London’. He concluded that industrial training needed to address the organisation of juvenile labour, including improved sanitation and wages as well as ‘good habits of work and regular conditions’.¹⁹ He highlighted, in particular, the importance of training both skilled and unskilled workers. What is particularly notable about Dearle’s study is his methodology. He systematically examined the issue of industrial employment and training and carefully defined the scope of the problem, classifying the distribution of London industry according to different classes and grades of labour.²⁰ A reviewer of Dearle’s exhaustive study highlighted its importance:

Mr Dearle’s study has unusual value, not only intrinsic but as a model for parallel studies in many other industrial centres ... the day of propaganda has gone by and that of the definite handling of specific conditions has arrived. Such actual problems can be dealt with only upon a solid basis of ascertained facts. The ‘survey’ . . . must precede any attempts at legislation or school reform; and only after many such surveys shall have been made and many resulting methods of vocational education and guidance shall have been scientifically and patiently tried, will it be possible to lay down any general principles concerning industrial training. To this long work of necessary preparation, Mr Dearle has made an early and useful contribution.²¹

The emphasis in this review on the importance of ‘facts’ and scientific methods was representative of the nature of investigation pursued by Toynbee Hall men and their contemporaries. This investigation was, as the reviewer above noted, treated as a preliminary stage in the evolution of social legislation and reform.

This type of detailed investigation in London was famously pioneered by Charles Booth who, in the words of his biographers, T.S. and M.B. Simey, was the ‘founding

¹⁸ Norman Burrell Dearle, *Industrial Training, with Special Reference to the Conditions Prevailing in London* (London: P.S. King and Son, 1914), vi.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 498-499.

²⁰ For Dearle’s classification of industrial workers, see *ibid.*, 13-14.

²¹ James P. Munroe, review of *Industrial Training. With Special Reference to the Conditions Prevailing in London*. By Norman B. Dearle. *The American Economic Review*, vol. 5, no. 1 (March 1915), 128-129.

father of British sociology'.²² While he was not a resident of Toynbee Hall, Booth worked closely with the settlement in undertaking his research. In 1886, he began the monumental survey that resulted in the publication of seventeen extensive volumes on *The Life and Labour of the People in London*. A Liverpool ship owner and businessman, Booth had questioned earlier claims by H.M. Hyndman, the leader of the Social Democratic Federation, that one quarter of the population of London was living in poverty.²³ There is some dispute as to whether Hyndman's findings prompted Booth's research²⁴, but whether or not Booth set out to disprove Hyndman is not the point. The aim of his investigation was clear: the condition of the poor was in need of systematic exploration. Booth set out to investigate the facts behind impressionistic accounts of poverty. Scientific inquiry seemed to offer a way of resolving the conflicting claims about the condition of the poor. Booth wanted to give some definite quantitative meaning to the term 'starving millions'. As he later said:

The lives of the poor lay hidden from view behind a curtain on which were painted terrible pictures: starving children, suffering women, overworked men; houses of drunkenness and vice, monsters and demons of inhumanity; giants of disease and despair. Did these pictures truly represent what lay behind, or did they bear to the facts a relation similar to that which the pictures outside a booth at some country fair bear to the performance of the show within? This curtain we have tried to lift.²⁵

Using his own funds, Booth hired a team of assistants to conduct a detailed

²² T.S. Simey and M.B. Simey, *Charles Booth: Social Scientist* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 4. On Booth and his poverty surveys, also see Albert Fried and Richard M. Elman, ed., *Charles Booth's London: A Portrait of the Poor at the Turn of the Century, drawn from his Life and Labour of the People in London* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971); Rosemary O'Day and David Englander, *Mr Charles Booth's Inquiry. Life and Labour of the People in London Reconsidered* (London: Hambleton Press, 1993); David Englander and Rosemary O'Day, eds., *Retrieved Riches: Social Investigation in Britain, 1840-1914* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1995); and Belinda Norman-Butler, *Victorian Aspirations: The Life and Labour of Charles and Mary Booth* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1972).

²³ H.M. Hyndman, *The Record of an Adventurous Life* (New York: Macmillan, 1911), 304.

²⁴ On this debate see, for example, Simey and Simey, *Charles Booth: Social Scientist*, 68-70; O'Day and Englander, *Mr Charles Booth's Inquiry. Life and Labour of the People in London Reconsidered*, 27-31; Englander and O'Day, *Retrieved Riches: Social Investigation in Britain, 1840-1914*, 16.

²⁵ Charles Booth, *Labour and Life of the People. Volume 1: East London* (London: Macmillan, 1889), 591-592.

investigation of London poverty. His purpose was to ‘enumerate the mass of people in London in classes according to degrees of poverty or comfort and to indicate the conditions of life in each class’.²⁶ Booth and his investigators systematically collected data, conducted visits and interviews and compiled information in extensive tabulations and maps. In the course of his research, Booth occasionally imitated the early settlers by finding temporary homes in poor neighbourhoods as he sought the meaning of his exhaustive statistics.

The end result of this project was a massive compilation of data that classified particular districts and their inhabitants by occupation and income (ranged in eight levels from A to H).²⁷ With these classifications, Booth developed the subsequently influential concept of the ‘poverty line’, an income level that could separate those who earned barely enough to obtain the necessities of life from those who had regular standard earnings or better. Beyond statistics, Booth’s study offered densely detailed descriptions of the living conditions of the poor. The *Maps Descriptive of London Poverty* are perhaps the most distinctive achievements of Charles Booth’s inquiry. In a series of detailed maps (for examples, see Figures 18 and 19), the levels of poverty found by the survey investigators were painstakingly mapped out street by street. Each street on the map was colour coded to indicate the social and economic status of its occupants. Booth argued that this research was necessary for social policy making, observing: ‘In intensity of feeling and not in statistics lies the power to move the world. But by statistics must this power be guided if it would move the world right.’²⁸

Booth’s survey marked an important transition from philanthropy to sociological

²⁶ Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London* (London: Macmillan, 1902), ix.

²⁷ A was the lowest class, the occasional labourers, the loafers and the semi-criminals. B was the very poor, living ‘in want’. C was the irregularly employed. D had small regular earnings. E and F earned regular wages, including artisans and factory workers. G and H were the middle class who lived in comfort. For an outline of Booth’s classifications, see London School of Economics, ‘What were the poverty maps?’, <https://booth.lse.ac.uk/learn-more/what-were-the-poverty-maps> (accessed 29 September 2018).

²⁸ Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London. Final Volume. Notes on Social Influences and Conclusion* (London: Macmillan, 1902), 178.



Figure 18: Charles Booth, 'Descriptive Map of London Poverty', 1889, British Library. The British Library provides the following colour code for Booth's maps: 'Gold: Upper-middle and Upper classes. Wealthy; Red: Well-to-do. Middle-class; Pink: Fairly comfortable. Good ordinary earning; Purple: Mixed. Some comfortable, others poor; Pale Blue: Poor. 18s. to 21s. a week for moderate family; Dark blue: Very poor, casual. Chronic want; Black: Lowest class. Vicious, semi-criminal' (see Online Gallery, British Library, <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/crace/c/026map0000182c1u00000000.html>).



Figure 19: Charles Booth's 'Descriptive Map of London Poverty', 1889, British Library. Detail showing the City of London and the East End.

study in the late nineteenth century. His study revealed that up to 35 per cent of the population was living ‘at all times more or less in want’ – a higher proportion than Hyndman had estimated.²⁹ Booth argued that East London was more heterogeneous than prevailing depictions of ‘Outcast London’ would suggest. He therefore challenged the conventional image of London as a city neatly divided between regions of wealth and brightness (the West End) and regions of poverty and darkness (the East End). Booth’s research also illustrated that poverty was not simply the result of personal inadequacy or failure, but was linked to underlying social and economic factors such as inadequate employment or low wages. Booth’s project advanced systematic, evidence-based methods of social research. His findings indicated that the major problems of poverty were beyond the scope of charity and would have to become the responsibility of the state. An important consequence of Booth’s work was that it inspired others to undertake social inquiries of their own.

Settlement leaders, including Samuel Barnett and his successors Thomas Harvey and John St George Heath, took an active interest in social research, highlighting that settlement programs should be based on accurate information and clear evidence. They rejected sensationalised reports on the grounds that they obscured the problems of the urban poor. The settlement served as a meeting place for men who wanted to understand urban problems and formulate appropriate measures for their remedy. According to the ‘Articles of the Universities’ Settlement Association’, one of Toynbee Hall’s aims was to ‘inquire into the condition of the poor’.³⁰ A memorandum presented to the Toynbee Hall Council in 1913 reiterated the settlement’s ‘ideal of research’, asserting that residents should be men ‘with a serious and intelligent interest in the political, social and industrial problems of the day’. The memorandum encouraged settlers to undertake research and to

²⁹ Simey and Simey, *Charles Booth: Social Scientist*, 90.

³⁰ *Toynbee Record* 1, no. 8 (May 1889), 96.

share their findings with the wider community through publications and speaking engagements.³¹ The Arnold Toynbee Trust, a fund which had been created in 1884 as a memorial to Toynbee, facilitated such research by providing resources for investigation. The Toynbee Hall Council, acting as trustees for the fund, selected subjects for study and commissioned writers to conduct research.³² Settlers were given an opportunity to examine a range of different social problems. Commissioned studies included: *The Jew in London* by Henry (Harry) Lewis and Charles Russell, *The London Police, Today and Tomorrow* by Hugh Gamon, and *Studies of Boy Life in Our Cities*, edited by Edward Urwick (with articles by the Toynbee settlers, Josie Cloete and William Braithwaite).³³ The Barnett Fellowship, established by Toynbee Hall in 1914 as a memorial to Samuel Barnett, also encouraged university men to explore the East End. It was open to graduates of English and American universities who were given an opportunity to live among the poor and examine social problems.³⁴

Because research and investigation were so prominent on the settlement's agenda, residents who wanted to explore the roots of 'the social question' regarded Toynbee Hall as a promising place to start. William Beveridge remarked on the influence of Edward Caird, the Master of Balliol College between 1893 and 1907³⁵, who directed the attention of many socially conscious students like himself to social work in London. As a student at Oxford, Beveridge was advised by Caird that his first duty at the university was to 'self-

³¹ Memorandum of Residents, 1913, A/TOY/006, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives, p.2.

³² Alon Kadish, *Apostle Arnold: The Life and Death of Arnold Toynbee, 1852-1883* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1986), 231.

³³ Lewis and Russell, *The Jew in London*; Hugh Gamon, *The London Police Court, Today and Tomorrow* (London: J.M. Dent, 1907); Edward Urwick, ed., *Studies of Boy Life in Our Cities* (New York: Garland, 1980).

³⁴ Briggs and Macartney, *Toynbee Hall: The First Hundred Years*, 59.

³⁵ S. M. den Otter, 'Caird, Edward (1835-1908)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-32239?rskey=k09MHk&result=1> (accessed 29 September 2018). On Edward Caird, also see Henry Jones and John Henry Muirhead, *The Life and Philosophy of Edward Caird* (Glasgow: Maclehose, Jackson and Co., 1921).

culture, not politics or philanthropy'. Once he had 'performed that duty and learned all that Oxford can teach', he was advised to 'go and discover why, with so much wealth in Britain, there continues to be so much poverty'. When Beveridge joined Toynbee Hall, he took up the challenge that Caird had set before him and other Oxford men. Beveridge wrote that both he and Tawney were

anxious to join, by way of carrying out Edward Caird's desire expressed to us at Balliol, that when we had done with Oxford studies, some of us should go to Poplar to discover why with so much wealth, there was also so much poverty in London. This advice was the decisive factor in taking both of us to Toynbee Hall, under Canon Barnett.³⁶

Beveridge's sub-wardenship at Toynbee Hall was characterised by his interest in social inquiry. Recognising this priority and acknowledging that the solutions to social problems in East London required more than goodwill and charity, Barnett selected Beveridge as sub-warden with the explicit purpose of expanding the settlement's role in the field of social investigation. He hoped that young men would gather around Beveridge, inaugurating 'a new life' at the settlement.³⁷ Beveridge favoured a practical, problem-centred approach to social work and had little time for many of the settlement's traditional philanthropic activities. As he wrote to his mother in 1903: 'I for one have no right to waste my education by becoming an organiser of charity or children's holidays or missions!'³⁸ Instead, Beveridge believed that empirical research and observation lay at the heart of the social reformer's role in solving urban problems. For him, the settlement's value lay in its social research upon which the government could base far-reaching changes.

As Barnett had hoped, Beveridge's view that the settlement should emphasise

³⁶ William Beveridge, *Power and Influence* (New York: Beechhurst Press, 1955), 9.

³⁷ Letter from Samuel Barnett to William Beveridge, 21 May 1903, Beveridge/2B/2/3/84, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics.

³⁸ Letter from William Beveridge to Annette Beveridge, 11 May 1903, Beveridge/2A/50, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics.

social investigation was shared by other residents; R.H. Tawney was among them. Tawney shared Beveridge's interest in social and economic problems, including unemployment and casual labour. He summarised his impressions at the end of his first year at Toynbee Hall. According to Tawney, a settlement was 'something deeper than the desire of certain persons of the "leisured" class to reside in a district where leisure is a rare possession, to make the acquaintance of individual working men'. It was useful primarily because it served as 'a common repository of social knowledge'.³⁹ Speaking at Oxford a few months later, Tawney (according to Beveridge) urged students to study social problems while living in East London and 'to put themselves in a position to get some sound comprehensive social theory'.⁴⁰

The Making of the Scientific Investigator

A defining characteristic of the Toynbee Hall social investigator was his participation in scientific, statistical research. Clement Attlee's account of the social worker in his 1920 text encapsulates many of the attributes of the Toynbee Hall scientific investigator. Like the social worker Attlee describes, Toynbee Hall residents contributed to social knowledge 'by cultivating habits of careful observation and analysis of the pieces of social machinery that came under [their] notice'.⁴¹ They were also pioneers in 'discovering new social groupings and new methods of advance' and provided systematic data based on their observations.⁴² Like the ideal social worker that Attlee envisaged, Toynbee Hall men found 'in the work of research and investigation the best outlet for

³⁹ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1904, 22.

⁴⁰ Letter from William Beveridge to Annette Beveridge, 28 November 1904, in Beveridge, *Power and Influence*, 30-31.

⁴¹ Attlee, *The Social Worker*, 230.

⁴² *Ibid*, 220-221.

their desire for social service'.⁴³

Several Toynbee Hall men received an introduction to scientific investigation by participating in Charles Booth's landmark study. Booth later acknowledged the settlement for supporting his research.⁴⁴ Throughout his project, he drew upon the settlement's resources and expertise. Booth used a shed on the premises (where the Barnett Research Centre now stands) as a base for his work in East London.⁴⁵ Samuel Barnett provided him with local advice and letters of introduction and was responsible for introducing Booth to East End officials, businessmen, clergymen and tradesmen who could provide him with information.⁴⁶ The settlement also provided Booth with volunteers. Toynbee Hall residents or associates were engaged by Booth as researchers, collaborators and assistants, including Ernest Aves, Henry Nevinston and Percival Burt Allen. During his residency at Toynbee Hall in 1888 and 1889, Hubert Llewellyn Smith also assisted Booth, by examining the relationship between immigration, the labour market and social deprivation.⁴⁷ Booth's survey involved other residents in a less formal way as the settlement became a testing ground for investigators to share their findings. Booth's researchers posted maps that they had compiled of East London inside Toynbee Hall so that residents familiar with surrounding neighbourhoods could review the results of their research.⁴⁸ In addition, the Toynbee Economic Club was used as a forum for a trial run of the industry series of Booth's survey and some of Booth's associates delivered lectures or

⁴³ Ibid, 16.

⁴⁴ Simey and Simey, *Charles Booth: Social Scientist*, 63-70.

⁴⁵ Bradley, 'Poverty and Philanthropy in East London, 1918-1959: The University Settlements and the Urban Working Classes', 264.

⁴⁶ O'Day and Englander, *Mr Charles Booth's Inquiry. Life and Labour of the People in London Reconsidered*, 12.

⁴⁷ In his analysis of the influx of new populations into London, Llewellyn Smith argued that there was no evidence that 'alien' immigrants displaced domestic workers from employment. See Booth, *Labour and Life of the People*, vol.1, 501-564.

⁴⁸ Simey and Simey, *Charles Booth: Social Scientist*, 124.

held classes at Toynbee Hall.⁴⁹ Through these connections with Booth's study, Toynbee Hall residents would have expanded their knowledge of conditions in East London and developed skills in social research.

Hubert Llewellyn Smith's work as a civil servant and social statistician was informed by his participation in Booth's survey. Smith already held a double first in mathematics from Corpus Christi College in Oxford when he joined Toynbee Hall, but the Booth inquiry constituted a rigorous apprenticeship in the use of statistics and empirical methods. Roger Davidson observes that it was during 'Charles Booth's pioneering inquiry of the 1880s' that Llewellyn Smith 'learned his statistical and investigative skills'.⁵⁰ Smith's connections with the social scientific community contributed to his appointment as the first labour commissioner of the Board of Trade in 1893.⁵¹ Here, Llewellyn Smith played an important role in building up the statistical department as an important source of investigation of unemployment. He developed social research and statistical methods and contributed to the quantitative knowledge about the workings of the British labour market. Under Llewellyn Smith's supervision, investigations into the causes and effects of unemployment, and possible remedies, were undertaken at the Board of Trade. He himself wrote a 'Report on Agencies and Methods for Dealing with the Unemployed' which analysed unemployment according to seasonal

⁴⁹ See *Toynbee Record* (June 1896), 10. It was reported that at the last three meetings of the Toynbee Economic Club, the speakers were Jesse Argyle, George Duckworth and Ernest Aves who were all part of Booth's team of investigators. The *Toynbee Record* of December 1897 (p.104) reported that Aves addressed the club again on 23 November 1897. The *Record* for April 1898 (p. 104) reported that Jesse Argyle delivered a paper on 'The Limits of Municipal Enterprise'.

⁵⁰ Roger Davidson, 'Smith, Sir Hubert Llewellyn (1864–1945)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-36147?rkey=Zthmrb&result=1> (accessed 29 September 2018). Hubert Llewellyn Smith's early career is reviewed in Roger Davidson, 'Llewellyn Smith: The Labour Department and Government Growth 1886-1909', in G. Sutherland, ed., *Studies in the Growth of Nineteenth-century Government* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 227-262. Also see Alon Kadish, *The Oxford Economists in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 18-30, 70-75.

⁵¹ Smith later wrote a history of the Board of Trade. See Hubert Llewellyn Smith, *The Board of Trade* (London: G.P. Putnam and Sons, 1928).

and cyclical variations.⁵² Like his research for Booth, Llewellyn Smith's work in the Board of Trade was systematic. For one investigation, he hired trained statisticians to devise an index of approximately 100 British towns; this made it possible to draw comparisons between British wages and their European and American counterparts.⁵³ Smith worked in the commercial, labour and statistical branch of the Board of Trade between 1897 and 1906 which required similar skills.⁵⁴

It is likely because of the knowledge and expertise he gained by working on Charles Booth's survey that Hubert Llewellyn Smith was chosen as the director of a new survey of London between 1928 and 1935.⁵⁵ Booth's survey provided a static picture of East London as he had been concerned with things as they were. 'I have not undertaken', he wrote, 'to investigate how they came to be so, nor, except incidentally, to indicate whither they are tending'.⁵⁶ In 1928, the London School of Economics initiated a new survey to measure poverty in London in order to chart the social and economic changes that had taken place in the city in the 40 years since Booth's study. The survey's central research question was: 'What has been the change in the numerical relation of poverty to wellbeing?'⁵⁷ Like Booth, the 'New Survey' was primarily interested in the conditions of the poor. And like its predecessor, the work was a massive catalogue of social conditions in London, including a street survey and poverty maps. In many cases, Booth's methods were closely followed. The study was compiled from a series of census returns,

⁵² Davidson, 'Llewellyn Smith: The Labour Department and Government Growth 1886-1909', 256.

⁵³ Eileen Janes Yeo, 'Social Surveys in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', in *The Modern Social Sciences*, edited by Theodore Parker and Dorothy Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), vol. 7, 96.

⁵⁴ Roger Davidson, 'The State and Social Investigation in Britain, 1880-1914', in Michael J. Lacey and Mary O. Furner, ed., *The State and Social Investigation in Britain and the United States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 254.

⁵⁵ Roger Davidson, *Whitehall and the Labour Problem in Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain: A Study in Official Statistics and Social Control* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 119-120. See also, O'Day and Englander, *Mr Charles Booth's Enquiry: Life and Labour of the People in London Reconsidered*, 16-17.

⁵⁶ Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London* (London: Macmillan, 1902), xi.

⁵⁷ Hubert Llewellyn Smith, ed., *The New Survey of London Life and Labour* (London: P.S. King, 1930-1935), vol. 1, 55.

questionnaires, door-to-door interviews and information obtained from school attendance officers, employment exchanges, Boards of Guardians, charitable workers and clergymen.

The findings of Llewellyn Smith's team were published in nine volumes between 1930 and 1935. The study's frontispiece was a quotation from the final volume of Booth's original study in which he stated: 'Comparisons with the past are absolutely necessary to the comprehension of all that exists today; without them we cannot penetrate to the heart of things.'⁵⁸ Booth's remarks suggest that although it had not been the primary aim of his own study, he supported research that sought to identify patterns and changes over a period of time. The new survey, which took this approach, found that around 12 per cent (rather than 35 per cent) of the population of East London were 'subject to conditions of privation which if long continued, would deny them all but the barest necessities and cut them off from access to many of the incidental and cultural benefits of modern progress'.⁵⁹ The high level of statistical evaluation in the *New Survey of London Life and Labour* reflected Llewellyn Smith's background in scientific investigation, including his early formative experience in social research when he was a resident at Toynbee Hall.⁶⁰

The scientific research pioneered by Booth and his colleagues informed other studies generated in association with Toynbee Hall. Booth's techniques of data collection and mapping were particularly evident in a study of Jewish East London which was co-authored by Harry Lewis⁶¹, a Toynbee resident who had participated in Booth's survey,

⁵⁸ Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London. Final Volume*, 31; Smith, *The New Survey of Life and Labour* (1930), vi.

⁵⁹ Smith, *New Survey of London Life and Labour* (1934), 6.

⁶⁰ In addition to the New Survey, Smith later published a history of East London. In this study, he did not draw heavily upon his research or experiences of the East End, choosing instead to focus on an earlier period of history. See Hubert Llewellyn Smith, *The History of East London: From the Earliest Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1939).

⁶¹ A Jew himself, Harry Samuel Lewis was educated at King's College School and St John's College, Cambridge where he was Fry Scholar in Hebrew. He resided at Toynbee Hall between January 1889 and June 1908, undertaking social work among Jews in the East End. He worked with the Jewish Board of Guardians and was Honorary Secretary of the East London Tenants' Protection Committee. Between 1908

and Charles Russell who was not a Toynbee Hall resident. *The Jew in London: A Study of Racial Character* (1900) was commissioned by Toynbee Hall and the Toynbee Trust in response to the large-scale Jewish immigration that occurred in the East End from the 1880s onwards. Due to a series of pogroms in Russia and Poland, the Jewish population in London grew to 135,000 during the last two decades of the nineteenth century.⁶² This included ‘a highly visible community concentrated in the East End’.⁶³ Russell and Lewis produced their study in the wake of a public outcry that Jewish immigrants were ‘unfair competition’ for the English working classes and were ‘lowering the rate of wages’ and ‘increasing the burden of pauperism’.⁶⁴ Lewis and Russell ‘sought to present a balanced picture’ of the situation.⁶⁵ Their study includes two essays that ‘attempt to describe the Jewish community in London’. The first essay, written by Russell, describes this population ‘from the outside by an observer, who, though fair and even friendly, has no special personal ground of sympathy with the Jewish race or religion’. The second essay, ‘Another view of the question’, was written by Lewis, ‘a member of the race [who] is thus able to enter fully into its feelings and aspirations’, while remaining ‘sufficiently detached and independent to perceive the defects of his nation, and sufficiently candid to admit these defects’.⁶⁶ Both essays provide detailed information on the religious rituals, family dynamics, work habits and cultural traditions of Jews in London.

The Jew in London, which was endorsed by Toynbee Hall (Samuel Barnett even

and 1913, he was Minister of Manchester’s Reform Synagogue. See University of Cambridge, Cambridge Alumni Database, <http://venn.lib.cam.ac.uk/cgi-bin/search-2016.pl?sur=&suro=w&fir=&firo=c&cit=&cito=c&c=all&z=all&tex=LWS881HS&sye=&eye=&col=all&maxcount=50> (accessed 29 September 2018).

⁶² Laura Vaughan, *Mapping Society: The Spatial Dimensions of Social Cartography* (London: UCL Press, 2018), 144. For a discussion of Jewish East London, see William J. Fishman, *East London 1888* (London: Duckworth, 1988), 131-176. Also see David Englander, ‘Booth’s Jews: The Presentation of Jews and Judaism in *Life and Labour of the People in London*.’ *Victorian Studies* 32, no. 4 (1989): 551-571.

⁶³ Cornell University Library, *Jewish East London*, <https://digital.library.cornell.edu/catalog/ss:19343551> (accessed 18 October 2018).

⁶⁴ Lewis and Russell, *The Jew in London*, xi.

⁶⁵ Peter Barber, *Mapping International London Through Time*, 2007, <https://www.culture24.org.uk/history-and-heritage/art42807> (accessed 20 October 2018).

⁶⁶ Lewis and Russell, *The Jew in London*, x-xi.

wrote the book's introduction), is revealing of the settlement's official stance on ethnic issues, particularly Jewish immigration and social integration. The book supports the assimilation of Jews into English society and culture. According to the preface, it was expected that the Jewish race 'will dissolve like a lump of salt in water'. Russell also commented on the assimilation of the younger generation of Jews, noting that the 'transformation effected by an English training is astonishing in its completeness' and that 'all the children who pass through an elementary school may be said to grow up into English Jews'.⁶⁷ This position on Jews was confirmed by Samuel Barnett when he appeared before the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration in 1903 and remarked:

I am impressed by the rapidity with which aliens become Britons, i.e., hard workers, good members of society and concerned for the health and wealth of the country. I do not think it wise they should be massed together as they are, but as immigrants I believe they, like other immigrants, give something of value to English life, and that exclusion would be a blow not only to English character but to English wealth.⁶⁸

The pro-integrationist approach put forward by Toynbee Hall through its social research and other official channels was not shared by all residents. As Chapter Six shows, a number of settlers felt that the Jews in East London fell outside the settlement's philanthropic program.

While their book was supportive of Jewish integration, the map that Lewis and Russell included as a centrepiece in their study may have been less reassuring to readers as it emphasised the 'problem' of recent Jewish immigration. The fold-out coloured map of Jewish East London, which was produced in 1899 by George Arkell (one of Booth's assistants), is arguably the most distinctive feature of Lewis's and Russell's study (see Figures 20 and 21). Covering an area from Bow to Limehouse on the one hand, and to

⁶⁷ Lewis and Russell, *The Jew in London*, xvii, 24.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Ben Peter Gidley, 'Citizenship and Belonging: East London Jewish Radicals 1903-1918', (PhD diss., University of London, 2003), 124.



Figure 20: George E. Arkell's map of Jewish East London from C. Russell and H.S. Lewis, *The Jew in London: A Study of Racial Character and Present-Day Conditions: Being Two Essays Prepared for the Toynbee Trustees* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1900). Blue indicates Jewish populations. Shades of pink and red indicate non-Jewish populations.

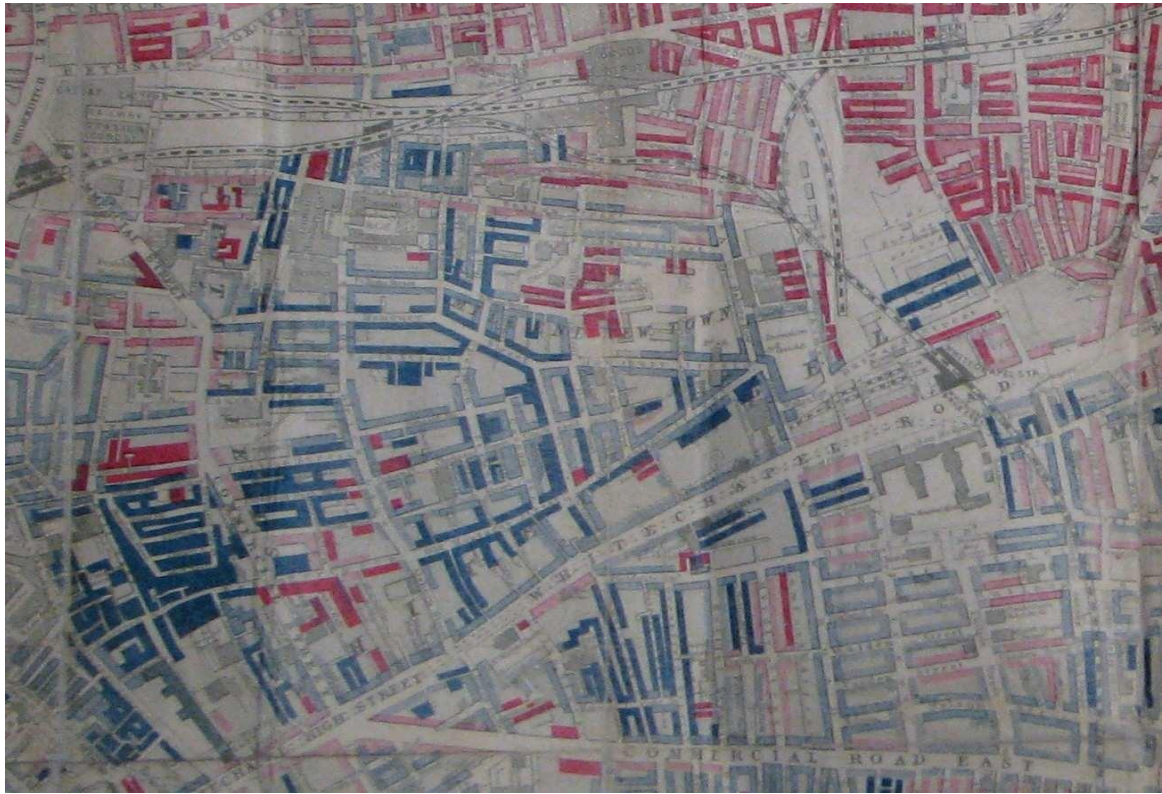


Figure 21: Enlargement of George E. Arkell's map of Jewish Whitechapel. Russell and Lewis, *The Jew in London*, map inserted at the front.

Shoreditch and the City of London on the other, the map shows the density of Jewish populations in East London at the end of the nineteenth century.⁶⁹ The similarities between Arkell's map of Jewish London and Booth's poverty maps are striking, reflecting Arkell's involvement in Booth's research. Arkell employed similar colour codes and investigative techniques to Booth and his assistants, calculating the proportion of Jewish to non-Jewish households in East London on a street by street basis. Like Booth, he divided the residents of the area into distinct social and economic groups. Arkell's map includes six classes, each represented by a separate hue ranging from dark blue (over 95 per cent Jewish) to dark red (less than five per cent Jewish).⁷⁰ It illustrates that Whitechapel, Spitalfields and Mile End had particularly large Jewish populations. There was a high proportion of Jews in Whitechapel Road and Commercial Street, including the area surrounding Toynbee Hall.⁷¹ In the text, Lewis and Russell analyse the map, describing the growth of the Jewish population in East London:

The area covered by the Jewish quarter is extending its limits every year. Overflowing the boundaries of Whitechapel, they are spreading northward and eastward into Bethnal Green and Mile End, and southward into St George's-in-the-East; while further away in Hackney and Shoreditch to the north, and Stepney, Limehouse and Bow to the east, a rather more prosperous and less foreign element has established itself . . . And beyond this there is a considerable migration into remote parts of London – notably into the district of Soho.⁷²

While Arkell illustrated the growth of the Jewish population in East London, the collector's notes for this map in Cornell University Library advise that Arkell's cartographic representation is also a 'salutary reminder to approach maps with caution'

⁶⁹ Lewis and Russell, *The Jew in London*, xxxiv.

⁷⁰ Ibid, xxxvi- xxxvii.

⁷¹ Ibid, xxxviii. In 1887, there were more than 28,000 Jewish immigrants living in the neighbourhood. See Charles Booth, 'The Inhabitants of Tower Hamlets (School Board Division), their Condition and Occupations', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 50 (1887), 326-391.

⁷² Lewis and Russell, *The Jew in London*, 12-13.

because ‘those that claim a statistical basis are not necessarily neutral’.⁷³ In this case, as scholars such as Laura Vaughan have shown, Arkell created ‘the impression that the Jewish presence in the area was much greater – and much more problematic – than it was in reality’.⁷⁴ The map focuses on only a small part of the city – one where Jewish populations were most concentrated. Arkell’s choice of ‘deeper, darker shades of blue’ to indicate higher numbers of Jews made their presence seem more pronounced amongst the ‘brighter shades of pink and red’.⁷⁵ These visual techniques made Arkell’s map ‘alarmist without actually distorting the underlying data’ and its inclusion by Lewis and Russell may have fed existing concerns about Jewish immigration.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, Arkell’s attention to detail and concern with calculating the extent of Jewish settlement in East London reflected a wider interest in mapping, measuring and studying urban slum districts in this period.

Testing Ideas in the Field

Social investigation at Toynbee Hall did not just involve the compilation of vast quantities of information. It also consisted of concerted efforts to examine the root causes of urban problems and to consider practical solutions for their amelioration. Toynbee Hall provided settlers with an opportunity to pursue particular lines of inquiry through practical work and experimentation. The settlement became a testing ground where residents gathered information and evaluated their theories and ideas before publishing their findings.

⁷³ Cornell University Library, *Jewish East London*, <https://digital.library.cornell.edu/catalog/ss:19343551> (accessed 18 October 2018).

⁷⁴ Vaughan, *Mapping Society: The Spatial Dimensions of Social Cartography*, 151.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 8.

⁷⁶ Cornell University Library, *Jewish East London*, <https://digital.library.cornell.edu/catalog/ss:19343551> (accessed 18 October 2018).

William Beveridge's research during his residency at Toynbee Hall is a key example of the ways in which practical work in the field contributed to settlers' development as professional social investigators. Beveridge's study, *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry* (1909), was the result of years of research, discussion and practical endeavours undertaken during his residency at Toynbee Hall. From the outset, Beveridge entered the settlement with the specific aim of investigating casual labour and unemployment. The day after he joined the settlement, he penned a research question in his diary: "Economics & Industry" But why???"⁷⁷ Identifying the relationship between these two concepts remained his primary goal during his stay in East London. Based at Toynbee Hall, Beveridge observed the effects of unemployment in the East End first hand and was given opportunities to explore the issue. In November 1903, two and a half months after his arrival at the settlement, he reported to his mother on his progress in this area:

During the week . . . I have been in two ways concerned with the 'Unemployed' – first in getting signatures to a letter for the papers written by Canon Barnett (and touched up by me), proposing a really sensible and non-philanthropic way of dealing with the problem . . . second in getting together a joint committee of Toynbee, Balliol House and Wadham residents, which is to sit in the manner of a Royal Commission on the Unemployed examining in particular the various schemes proposed in the past.⁷⁸

It is clear from this letter that from an early stage in his residency, Beveridge was engaging with the problem of unemployment. In doing so, he was drawing upon the people and resources of Toynbee Hall. He was evidently using the settlement's publications to disseminate his proposals in the public arena and by forming a 'joint committee' he had, in effect, created a research team that could contribute findings to his

⁷⁷ William Beveridge, personal diary, 2 September 1903; quoted in Abel, 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', 174.

⁷⁸ Letter from William Beveridge to Annette Beveridge, 15 November 1903, Beveridge/2A/50, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics.

own investigations.

A significant phase in Beveridge's development as an economist was his involvement in the Mansion House Fund during his residency. London's Mansion House Fund of 1886 was a philanthropic agency that had been established by the Lord Mayor to assist the unemployed.⁷⁹ A committee of the fund came together in 1903 in response to a letter to the press, signed by Samuel Barnett and other East Enders, advocating the establishment of labour colonies where unemployed men could work during the winter. The Mansion House committee funded relief works along the lines that were suggested, providing employment for more than 400 men at Hadleigh Farm and Osea Island between December 1903 and March 1904. The men received lodging in the country and their families in the city received monetary support for periods ranging from a few days to several weeks.⁸⁰ Toynbee Hall residents contributed to the operations of the Mansion House Fund. Beveridge served on its executive committee and he and Barnett were active in publicising the scheme.⁸¹ For both men, the project was not only a means of assisting the unemployed but an 'experiment' in social work which could potentially inform future research and investigation. Barnett encouraged Beveridge to draw upon the knowledge he gained from the fund, as 'the results of this experiment' could inform him and other young social reformers in 'dealing with harder problems'.⁸²

As Barnett had anticipated, the Mansion House Fund provided Beveridge with an opportunity to study unemployment in a highly practical way. Beveridge wrote of gathering the 'scientific results' and formulating 'measures based on careful diagnosis'.⁸³

⁷⁹ See Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 291-294, 298-300.

⁸⁰ William Beveridge and H.R. Maynard, 'The Unemployed: Lessons of the Mansion House Fund', *Contemporary Review* (November 1904), 629.

⁸¹ Beveridge and Maynard, 'The Unemployed', 629. Beveridge resigned from the executive committee in February 1904, following a disagreement with another one of its members.

⁸² Letter from Samuel Barnett to William Beveridge, 30 January 1904, Beveridge/2B/3/22, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics;

⁸³ Letter from William Beveridge to Henry Beveridge, 10 March 1904, Beveridge/2A/37, Beveridge

This included interviewing workers who had been involved in the scheme, analysing the results of these surveys, and comparing his figures with the Board of Trade's statistics on unemployment.⁸⁴ Beveridge combined this practical work with social theory, writing enthusiastically of how he had spent time 'constructing the most glorious curves representing seasonal and cyclical variations of employment' and was expanding his knowledge of economic problems.⁸⁵

For Beveridge, the investigation highlighted the inadequacy of philanthropic relief as a remedy for social problems. In the following July, when he and H.R. Maynard (another settlement resident) interviewed men who had worked at the colony, it was revealed that, while the scheme had provided temporary relief, 'a large number of men with good employers' references and good records at the colonies were still out of work'.⁸⁶ Furthermore, the farm colonies provided assistance to only a small proportion of the unemployed.⁸⁷ In November 1904, Beveridge wrote to his father: 'Compulsory colonies of course are not meant to be and could not possibly be a remedy for the problem of unemployment – i.e. of the fluctuations of trade throwing out of work people willing to work.' He added: 'This problem seems to me much the harder one and I certainly don't see where the remedy is yet.'⁸⁸ The results of the investigation had opened up new questions for Beveridge, encouraging him to explore the structural causes of unemployment and to look beyond relief schemes for a solution. Toynbee Hall's survey had made it clear to him that workers who found themselves unemployed due to a long cyclical depression needed to be able to draw upon an adequate source of relief. The

Papers, London School of Economics; Beveridge and Maynard, 'The Unemployed: Lessons of the Mansion House Fund', 633.

⁸⁴ William Beveridge, 'Unemployment in London', *Toynbee Record* 17, no. 1 (October 1904), 13.

⁸⁵ Letter from William Beveridge to Annette Beveridge, 2 March 1904, Beveridge/2A/51, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics; quotation cited in Abel, 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', 176.

⁸⁶ Beveridge and Maynard, 'The Unemployed: Lessons of the Mansion House Fund', 631.

⁸⁷ Beveridge, 'Unemployment in London', 13.

⁸⁸ Letter from William Beveridge to Henry Beveridge, 19 November 1904, Beveridge/2A/37, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics.

complexity of the problem, in Beveridge's opinion, demanded a national program of state-supported relief.⁸⁹ As he put it: 'The problem presented by recurring periods of unemployment is beyond the powers of charity and is wholly outside the scope of a Poor Law dealing with destitution in general.'⁹⁰

Beveridge's work in connection with the Mansion House Fund, and the information he acquired on unemployment as a Toynbee Hall resident, played a foundational role in his career as a civil servant and economist. In his autobiography, Beveridge later recalled that it was at the settlement that he had learned the meaning of poverty 'and saw the consequence of unemployment'. He wrote:

I remember asking myself what had gone wrong with economic laws in East London; if there was no demand for these men [who had been trained at the farm colonies] why did not they either go away or starve and die? What kept them just alive where they were? From this came the theory of underemployment and the reserve of labour, as I developed it later in articles and lectures and in *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry*.⁹¹

José Harris has argued that William Beveridge's resulting study on unemployment 'became the standard work on the subject'.⁹² It was, in Beveridge's own words, 'a record of the principal facts of unemployment with a continuous argument as to the causes of unemployment'.⁹³ The insights that Beveridge had developed during his residency at Toynbee Hall provided a starting point for this research. He also drew upon a series of lectures he had delivered during the Michaelmas term at Oxford in 1908, and used a wealth of empirical data including trade union records, the reports of distress committees and various statistics of commerce and manufacture.⁹⁴ As the sub-title of the book

⁸⁹ Beveridge, 'Unemployment in London', 14-15.

⁹⁰ William Beveridge, 'Preservation of Efficiency', *Toynbee Record* (December 1904), 46.

⁹¹ Beveridge, *Power and Influence*, 24.

⁹² José Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 143. Also see José Harris, *Unemployment and Politics: A Study in English Social Policy, 1886-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 21-26 and Briggs and Macartney, *Toynbee Hall: The First Hundred Years*, 65-66.

⁹³ Beveridge, *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry*, vii.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, vii.

indicates, Beveridge explicitly framed unemployment as an economic problem rather than as an individual failing. He emphasised this point at the beginning of his study: ‘The inquiry must be essentially an economic one ... into unemployment rather than into the unemployed.’⁹⁵ Unemployment was not due to ‘the idleness of the unemployable’, he argued, but to faults in the industrial system and the structure of the labour market.⁹⁶ He concluded that there were ‘specific imperfections of adjustment between the demand for labour and the supply of labour’ and these gave ‘rise to a real and considerable problem of unemployment’.⁹⁷ To address the problem, Beveridge proposed the need for some form of insurance against seasonal and cyclical unemployment as well as other ‘minor measures’ including ‘the systematic distribution of public work’ and ‘the steadying of the ordinary labour market by elasticity of wages’.⁹⁸ A key recommendation was for an improvement in the organisation and efficiency of the labour market and the exchange of information between employers. Beveridge advocated setting up ‘known centres or offices or exchanges, to which employers shall send or go when they want employment’.⁹⁹ When the demand for labour fluctuated, a reserve of labourers could be hired through the use of a nation-wide network of these exchanges. Beveridge insisted that if all the jobs available in a trade or a district were registered at a single office, it would be clear that ‘any man who cannot get work through that office is unemployed against his will’.¹⁰⁰

Personal Investigations and the Making of the Social Reformer

In their research, Toynbee Hall settlers drew upon their practical, first-hand experience of

⁹⁵ Ibid, 3.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 12.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 14.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 230.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 198.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 215.

social conditions. Although late Victorian social investigation was distinguished by its scientific research and statistical material, personal observation remained a key aspect of social work. In his exploration of the East End and his encounters with its residents, Charles Booth has been described not only as a statistician but as a practitioner of ‘the arts of participant observation and reporting’.¹⁰¹ Participant observation gained increasing recognition as a method of research during the late nineteenth century.¹⁰² The tradition was popularised by social explorers like James Greenwood who went to East London incognito in order to explore the lives of the urban poor. Greenwood, for example, spent a night in a Lambeth workhouse in 1866 disguised as a ‘casual’ and subsequently published an account of this experience and subsequent visits under the pseudonyms ‘The Amateur Casual’ and ‘One of the Crowd’.¹⁰³ When Beatrice Potter (later Webb) investigated East End dock labour, the sweating system and the Jewish garment industry for Booth’s survey, she disguised herself as a seamstress and obtained temporary work in Jewish tailoring shops in order to gain first-hand experience of labouring life. In ‘Pages from a Work Girl’s Diary’, she records how she listened to the talk of working-class women, enjoying a sense of anonymity and uninhibited observation.¹⁰⁴ Like Booth, Webb combined her social observations with further research. As she later observed: ‘Such romantic adventures . . . would have been of no value at all without the more solid work

¹⁰¹ Simey and Simey, *Charles Booth, Social Scientist*, 65.

¹⁰² On this style of investigation, see Mark Freeman and Gillian Nelson, *Vicarious Vagrants: Incognito Social Explorers and the Homeless in England, 1860-1910* (Lambertville: True Bill Press, 2008); Peter Keating, ed., *Into Unknown England, 1866-1913: Selections from the Social Explorers* (Glasgow: William Collins, 1976); Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004); and Ellen Ross, ed., *Slum Travellers: Ladies and London Poverty, 1860-1920* (Berkeley: California University Press, 2007).

¹⁰³ James Greenwood, ‘A Night in a Workhouse’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1866. Jack London, Everard Wyrall and Mary Higgs were among others who investigated a number of workhouses in the first decade of the twentieth century. See Jack London, *The People of the Abyss* (Oakland, California: Star Rover House, 1982); Everard Wyrall, ‘The “Spike”: An Account of the Workhouse Casual Ward’ (1909), in *Vicarious Vagrants: Incognito Social Explorers and the Homeless in England, 1860-1910*, ed. Mark Freeman and Gillian Nelson, 231-279 (Lambertville: True Bill Press, 2008); Mary Higgs, ‘The Tramp Ward’ (1904), in *Vicarious Vagrants: Incognito Social Explorers and the Homeless in England, 1860-1910*, ed. Mark Freeman and Gillian Nelson, 206-231 (Lambertville: True Bill Press, 2008); and Mary Higgs, *Glimpses into the Abyss* (London: P.S. King and Son, 1906).

¹⁰⁴ Beatrice Webb, ‘Pages from a Workgirl’s Diary’, *The Nineteenth Century* 139 (September 1888), 305.

of investigation.’¹⁰⁵

Like Booth and his team of researchers, Toynbee Hall settlers used local knowledge and experience in their investigative studies. Although they did not engage in incognito exploration, their ‘participant observation’ came from living among the poor and engaging with local issues. Residency in Toynbee Hall provided men with an opportunity to undertake personal explorations in the district and to speak to local residents. The result of this direct approach to social study was a branch of literature described by Peter Keating whereby a representative of one class personally sets out to explore and report upon the life of other classes lower on the social scale.¹⁰⁶ Although statistical analysis was the chief component of his research, Hubert Llewellyn Smith also drew upon personal observations of East London, combining his statistical data with more vivid accounts of urban life. His research on immigration for Booth’s survey contains detailed descriptions of London’s street scenes, including its Jewish immigrants. Like other members of the Booth inquiry, Llewellyn Smith shared the ‘dominant view’ of this time that Jews were a ‘peculiar people’ with defining racial characteristics.¹⁰⁷ This is evident in his account of the area around Toynbee Hall:

... Whitechapel is the great centre of the foreign population of London. It is not the least interesting of the features that make the Whitechapel Road the most varied and interesting in England, that amid the crowds that jostle each other on the pavement or gather in eager groups round the flaring lights of the costermonger’s barrow, the fancy shows, and the shooting salons of the great trunk artery of East London, the observant wanderer may note the high cheek-bones and thickened lips of the Russian or Polish Jew.¹⁰⁸

The detail provided by Llewellyn Smith highlights that as a settler at Toynbee Hall he

¹⁰⁵ Sarah Tooley, ‘The Growth of a Socialist: An Interview with Mrs Sidney Webb’, *The Young Woman* (February 1895), 148.

¹⁰⁶ Keating, *Into Unknown England*, 13.

¹⁰⁷ David Englander, ‘Booth’s Jews: The Presentation of Jews and Judaism in “Life and Labour of the People in London”’, *Victorian Studies*, 32, no.4 (1989), 555.

¹⁰⁸ Smith, ‘Influx of population’, Charles Booth, *Labour and Life of the People. Volume 3*, 100.

was ‘the observant wanderer’ who witnessed this street scene.

Personal experience also contributed to Llewellyn Smith’s history of the 1889 dock strike which he co-authored with a fellow Toynbee Hall resident, Vaughan Nash.¹⁰⁹ During his time in the East End, Smith was increasingly involved in union agitation. Along with other settlement residents who were opposed to the system of casual labour that operated in the docks, Smith and Nash had supported workers to hold out during this strike. Ben Tillett, the trade unionist who rose to prominence during the strike, characterised them as ‘two good friends of ours’ who ‘came to us with no high-brow condescension’.¹¹⁰ Shortly after the strike, Smith and Nash wrote *The Story of the Dockers’ Strike, Told by Two East Londoners*. The study provided a detailed account of the background, events and impact of the strike. Due to the affiliations of its authors (who also collaborated with the Labour leader, John Burns), this ‘story’ was highly sympathetic towards the working class and the unionist movement. It was likely for this reason that the trade unionist, Tom Mann, later referred to it as ‘the best account of the strike’.¹¹¹ The fact that Nash and Smith referred to themselves as ‘East Londoners’ in the title of the study is particularly significant, reflecting as it does the settlers’ proximity with the event they recorded and their sympathy with the workers. This identification also highlights the social investigator’s role as both observer (as the authors of the study) and participant (as ‘East Londoners’ who were involved in the strike).

This style of investigation was often highly personal as settlers drew upon Toynbee Hall’s ideals of connecting with the poor. In *The Social Worker*, for example,

¹⁰⁹ Hubert Llewellyn Smith and Vaughan Nash, *The Story of the Dockers’ Strike, Told by Two East Londoners* (London: Unwin, 1889).

¹¹⁰ Ben Tillett, *Memories and Reflections* (London: John Long, 1931), 130, 137. In 1887, Tillett and some fellow workers had formed a Tea Operatives and General Labourers Association in an attempt to prevent a wage reduction. It rose to prominence in the 1889 strike. See Duncan Bythell, ‘Tillett, Benjamin [Ben] (1860–1943)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-36522?rskey=w4mppy9&result=1> (accessed 29 September 2018). Also see Jonathan Schneer, *Ben Tillett: Portrait of a Labour Leader* (London: Croom Helm, 1982).

¹¹¹ Tom Mann, *Tom Mann’s Memoirs* (London: Labour Publishing, 1923), 92.

Clement Attlee proposed solutions to urban problems based not on abstract theory but on his own experiences in East London. Robert Pearce describes Attlee's study as 'no brilliant academic treatise', but as an 'extremely practical book'.¹¹² The study reflected Attlee's personal approach to social issues. As Attlee later wrote in his autobiography, 'one learns much more of how people in poor circumstances live through ordinary conversation with them than from studying volumes of statistics'.¹¹³

This view was shared by Charles Hawkins, a Toynbee Hall resident (February 1906-June 1912; May 1913- July 1913) who put his settlement training to use in a survey of poverty in Norwich, which was published in 1910.¹¹⁴ Hawkins's social analysis was based on qualitative research, including his own personal observations and perceptions of urban life. In his study, Hawkins examined casual and unskilled labour, unemployment and the municipal and charitable provision for social problems in the district. The problem of poverty itself was not central to the survey, nor was it a statistical analysis. As Hawkins wrote: 'Cold statistics only become vital and significant when brought into relation with other facts about life and work in Norwich.'¹¹⁵ Hawkins's research methodology was characteristic of the Toynbee Hall philosophy of personal contact with the poor. He emphasised the importance of investigators visiting working-class homes in order to learn more about them and to assist them. There were 'many dark places in Norwich', he noted, 'into which the light

¹¹² Robert Pearce, *Attlee* (London: Longman, 1997), 24. Kenneth Harris describes *The Social Worker* as 'pithy, workmanlike [and] based on his own experiences'. See Kenneth Harris, *Attlee* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982), 48.

¹¹³ C.R. Attlee, *As it Happened* (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), 29.

¹¹⁴ Charles Hawkins, *Norwich, A Social Study* (London: Warner, 1910). The geographic location of Hawkins's investigation was significant. As E.P. Hennock and Mark Freeman have shown, London dominated the field of urban social investigation until the publication of a number of provincial studies on poverty at the turn of the century. Cities once neglected by philanthropists were increasingly explored after the publication of Benjamin Seebohm Rowntree's survey of York in 1902. See E.P. Hennock, 'Poverty and Social Theory in England: The Experience of the Eighteen-Eighties', *Social History* 1 (1967), 67-91; E. P. Hennock, 'The Measurement of Urban Poverty: From the Metropolis to the Nation, 1880-1920', *Economic History Review* 2 (1987), 208-227; and Mark Freeman, 'The Provincial Social Survey in the Edwardian Period', *Historical Research* 75 (2002), 73-89.

¹¹⁵ Hawkins, *Norwich: A Social Study*, 19.

of educated public opinion is only brought by the agency of the parson and the district visitor'.¹¹⁶

A personal type of research methodology was also used by Hugh Gamon, a Toynbee Hall resident (1904-1905) who was commissioned by the Toynbee Trustees to produce a study on police courts. Gamon spent 12 months visiting and observing police courts in London. He visited Church Army homes, Salvation Army shelters and children's remand homes. His resulting study, *The London Police Court: Today and Tomorrow* (1907)¹¹⁷, reflected many of Toynbee Hall's ideals. For example, he argued that court missionaries should, like the settlers, be well educated and 'cultured' people who lived in the local district in order to feel sympathy with the local population with whom they worked.¹¹⁸ He also emphasised the settlement values of friendship and the 'personal touch', observing: 'The missionary wants all the attributes of a true friend.'¹¹⁹ To Gamon, 'the friend in the police-court, par excellence, is the police-court missionary. He is the friend of all alike, and the friend simply, never the prosecutor'.¹²⁰

This personal dimension of investigation, which was so characteristic of Toynbee Hall's ethos, often led to active engagement in social reform. Clement Attlee identified a close connection between social research and social activism in *The Social Worker*:

Every social worker is almost certain also to be an agitator. If he or she learns social facts and believes that they are due to certain causes beyond the control of the individual to remove them, then it is impossible to rest contented with the limited amount of good that can be done by following the old methods.¹²¹

Personal inquiry and social advocacy were closely intertwined when Toynbee Hall settlers examined 'social facts' during the London match girls strike of 1888 and took

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 293. Also see the discussion on the contributions of health visitors on pp. 90-94.

¹¹⁷ Gamon, *The London Police Court: Today and Tomorrow*.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 193.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 176.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 161.

¹²¹ Attlee, *The Social Worker*, 5.

immediate action by publishing the results of their investigation.¹²² A group of residents, including Hubert Llewellyn Smith, Arthur Laurie, Arthur Rogers and Henrietta Barnett, along with the settlement associate Arthur Stevenson, formed an unofficial committee of inquiry to investigate wages and working conditions in the industry. They interviewed match girls and the directors of the Bryant and May match factory in order to evaluate their respective claims and to obtain information about factory life.

The settlers shared the results of their investigations in a series of letters to the press. On 17 July 1888, the *St James's Gazette* published a statement from the Toynbee Hall team. The settlers had found, it was reported, that for 'the greater part of the year', the girls received 'a wage so small as to be totally insufficient to maintain a decent existence'. The Toynbee group asserted that the low wages were due to a punitive system of fining employees and of issuing deductions to pay for equipment. The strike offered, the settlers concluded, 'unanswerable evidence' of the 'deplorable' conditions that existed in the factory.¹²³ When *The Standard* announced the end of the match girls' strike on 18 July 1888, it also published a letter from one of the factory's directors, which refuted the allegations made by the 'Toynbee correspondents'. On behalf of the factory, the director criticised the settlers' 'strong prejudice in favour of the girls' side of the strike question' and their lack of any 'experience whatever of match manufacture'.¹²⁴

The swift dismissal of the settlers' statements as 'grossly unfair' and 'absolutely untrue' suggests that the Toynbee inquiry did not affect the directors or influence their decisions. It did, however, contribute to the publicity the factory was experiencing. Whether Toynbee Hall's campaign was successful or not, this episode in the settlement's social activity is significant. It shows how investigators could draw upon their research

¹²² For a recent study on this strike, see Louise Raw, *Striking a Light: The Bryant and May Matchwomen and their Place in History* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011). Also see Reg Beer, *The Match Girls Strike 1888* (London: National Museum of Labour History, 1983).

¹²³ *St James's Gazette*, 17 July 1888, 12.

¹²⁴ *The Standard*, 18 July 1888, 3.

and personal inquiries in an effort to mobilise public opinion and advocate for social change. The work of this group of Toynbee Hall settlers also reveals something of the collaborative nature of the settlement's research.

The Toynbee Hall Research Community

Residency in Toynbee Hall provided networking opportunities for social investigators who could draw upon the knowledge, resources and expertise of a wider research community. Hubert Llewellyn Smith's participation in the survey of London labour and poverty, for example, gave him the opportunity to work with Booth's team of investigators, including Clara Collet, David Schloss and Beatrice Potter.¹²⁵ Among themselves, settlers could participate in group projects, such as the collection of essays entitled *Studies of Boy Life in Our Cities*, a joint study commissioned by the Toynbee Trust.¹²⁶ Edited by Edward Urwick, it explored the impact that the modern city had upon the lives of young people and the future of the British citizen, a topic that was of particular concern amongst residents. Josie Cloete and William Braithwaite, both former Toynbee men, contributed, providing first-hand experiences of the adolescent boys they had met during their time in East London.

Residents found assistants among their fellow settlers who could work with them on their own projects. During his residency at Toynbee Hall (1906-1910), Joseph Nicholson undertook research on boy labour for Cyril Jackson. Nicholson also contributed to Beveridge's study on unemployment.¹²⁷ In his preface to *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry*, Beveridge acknowledged Nicholson who was 'mainly responsible for the

¹²⁵ Rosemary O'Day, *Mr Charles Booth's Inquiry: Life and Labour of the People in London, Reconsidered* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 1993), 19.

¹²⁶ Edward Urwick, ed., *Studies of Boy Life in Our Cities* (New York: Garland, 1980).

¹²⁷ Interview with J.S. Nicholson, 31 March 1967, conducted by Emily Abel; cited in Abel, 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', 145.

bibliography' and who gave 'invaluable aid at the last moment in completing statistics and verifying references'.¹²⁸ Beveridge also drew upon the wider Toynbee Hall research community to expand his knowledge. He recalled one occasion when he had the opportunity to discuss social problems with Llewellyn Smith with whom he later worked in the Board of Trade. Beveridge wrote:

My first recollection of him is of his coming to Toynbee Hall to give a group of us who were working on the problems of casual unemployment the benefit of his profound knowledge of that problem...I remember Canon Barnett, who was responsible for bringing him, commenting on the generosity with which he had poured out his mind and his time for our benefit.¹²⁹

As this remark suggests, Toynbee Hall was a venue for information sharing. Residents could discuss, exchange and debate information and ideas about social and economic issues. Written research could also be circulated among settlers to expand their knowledge base. Toynbee Hall's official publications provided residents with an opportunity to disseminate their findings to a wider audience. Before the publication of his study on unemployment, Beveridge contributed a series of articles to the *Toynbee Record*, including research on 'The Vagrant and the Unemployable' and 'Unemployment in London'.¹³⁰ He also published articles on 'Pauperism' and 'Unemployment – The Preservations of Efficiency'.¹³¹ Beveridge's work was evidently read by audiences outside of the settlement. Among them was the publisher, J.M. Dent, who read one of Beveridge's early articles on unemployment in the *Toynbee Record*. Dent encouraged Beveridge to share his research with social reformers and to expand the publication into a

¹²⁸ Beveridge, *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry*, ix.

¹²⁹ Quoted in Stuart Eagles, *After Ruskin: The Social and Political Legacies of a Victorian Prophet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 132.

¹³⁰ See *Toynbee Record* 16, no. 7 (April 1904), 97-105; *Toynbee Record* 16, no.8 (May 1904), 117-120; *Toynbee Record* 7, no.1 (October 1904), 9-15.

¹³¹ *Toynbee Record* 17, no.2 (November 1904), 25-29; *Toynbee Record* 17, no.3 (December 1904), 43-47.

book-length study.¹³² Barnett himself actively encouraged Beveridge's research in the field of unemployment. On one occasion, he wrote that the problem of unemployment was Beveridge's 'job' within the settlement and promised to support him 'with all my power'.¹³³

In retrospective accounts, settlers commented upon the support network of the settlement as they pursued research and undertook investigations. Jimmy Mallon recalled that he first visited the East End in 1906 to investigate the manufacture of clothing and of paper boxes. He found himself at Toynbee Hall where he was assisted by Thomas Harvey, the settlement warden at that time, as well as Edward Wise who resided at the hall between 1908 and 1912. He wrote with satisfaction of how the three collaborated on their research, visiting poor homes and workshops to obtain information.¹³⁴ J.A.R. Pimlott's acknowledgements at the beginning of his history of Toynbee Hall are indicative of a supportive research community that could be found within the settlement. Pimlott acknowledged the assistance of Henrietta Barnett and Bolton King who had loaned settlement documents, Jimmy Mallon for guidance during the research of his book, and residents and ex-residents (including Francis Douglas, Thomas Harvey, John Dale, Leonard Bluett, Eldred Hitchcock, Joseph Hodgkinson, Alphonsus Duggan and C. Mark Baker) who had offered him helpful encouragement and advice. He also acknowledged a fellow resident, Ernst Rutland, for preparing a map for his book of Toynbee Hall and the neighbourhood.¹³⁵ The acknowledgments made to Toynbee Hall in Harry Lewis's and Charles Russell's study on *The Jew in London* are even more positive. This may of course be attributed to the fact that they were composed by Samuel Barnett

¹³² Letter from J.M. Dent to William Beveridge, 6 October 1904, Beveridge/2B/4/14, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics; cited in Abel, 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', 178.

¹³³ Letter from Samuel Barnett to William Beveridge, 6 September 1904, Beveridge/2B/4, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics.

¹³⁴ James Mallon, introduction, in Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, ix-x.

¹³⁵ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 222.

who wrote the introduction to the study. It also reflects the fact that the book had been commissioned by the Toynbee Fund. Given the context of the settlement's publication, there was clearly a vested interest in promoting the work of Toynbee Hall and its contribution to the publication. Barnett's remarks nevertheless convey the settlement's aspirations as a collaborative research centre. According to Barnett, Russell and Lewis 'had at their command the resources of Toynbee Hall' and received assistance from Toynbee residents. He described an environment where settlers 'have been ready to put their information at the service of the essayists' and 'when it has been possible, provided an open door by which the inquirers could enter'.¹³⁶ Barnett argued that settlers had personal knowledge and insights that could inform an individual resident's research projects. Social investigators in Toynbee Hall had, he wrote, 'the use of many eyes, ears and minds in forming their judgments'.¹³⁷

The Investigators' Key Findings and Conclusions

Despite their engagement in a variety of different social issues, Toynbee Hall investigators not only shared resources and networks in common, but they also came to similar conclusions. In particular, two general themes may be identified in the research undertaken by Toynbee men. First, there was a common understanding of poverty as a social and economic problem rather than as an individual failing. This reflected a discernible shift in the late nineteenth century from early Victorian views of poverty as an individual condition caused by moral failure and weakness of personal character to a conception of poverty as a systemic problem to be investigated scientifically. As we have seen, this view was evident in William Beveridge's study of unemployment in

¹³⁶ Barnett, introduction, Lewis and Russell, *The Jew in London*, xxix.

¹³⁷ Ibid, xxx.

which he argued that lack of work was the result not of personal weakness but of a significant fault in the industrial system. R.H. Tawney, too, rejected assumptions about poverty as a problem of character, a view which had informed the treatment of pauperism since the New Poor Law of 1834, and which had been perpetuated by writers such as the biographer Samuel Smiles who subscribed to the proverb that ‘sloth is the key to poverty’ in his 1859 book on ‘self-help’.¹³⁸ Tawney challenged such views in a lecture at the London School of Economics in 1913 (he was resident at Toynbee Hall between January and April of that year). According to R.M. Titmuss, a student in the audience, Tawney asserted: ‘The problem of poverty ... is not a problem of individual character and waywardness, but a problem of economic and industrial organisation. It had to be studied at its sources and only secondly in its manifestations.’¹³⁹ This emphasis by Tawney was not unique to Toynbee Hall. It reflected a growing recognition among social reformers that the responsibility of social welfare fell on society as a whole.

This idea was closely linked to the second general conclusion put forward by Toynbee Hall investigators – that, due to the limited capacity of philanthropy, state welfare was ultimately the only effective method of dealing with social problems. Investigations at Toynbee Hall were conducted at an important transitional time for social policy and settlers’ views on this subject reflected broader ideas in the field of social work about the role of the state in providing social welfare.¹⁴⁰ Beveridge, for example, argued that the alleviation of poverty and unemployment should be the responsibility of a state-run ‘department of industrial intelligence’.¹⁴¹ Similarly, Attlee identified a key role for enlarged and organised social services. Noting the change in

¹³⁸ R.H. Tawney, ‘The Theory of Pauperism’, *The Sociological Review* (October 1909), 361-374; Samuel Smiles, *Self-help, with illustrations of character and conduct* (London: S.W. Partridge and Co., 1859), 229.

¹³⁹ R.M. Titmuss, ‘Social Administration in a Changing Society’, in *Essays on the Welfare State* (London: Unwin University Books, 1958), 18.

¹⁴⁰ On this role, see Katharine Bradley, *Poverty, Philanthropy and the State: Charities and the Working Classes in London, 1918-1979* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2009).

¹⁴¹ José Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 171.

outlook from the early nineteenth-century charity worker, who focused on individual action, to the modern social worker, who recognised ‘the responsibility of the State for the citizen’, Attlee described the ‘social worker’ as an advocate of collective and state action: ‘Today the social reformer is less apt to rely on his own individual efforts than to endeavour to arouse the nation to act by passing laws to prevent the occurrence of certain abuses or to empower local authorities to take action.’¹⁴²

This did not mean that philanthropy no longer had a role to play. Social reformers argued that voluntary social work was a necessary adjunct to the welfare state and should not be replaced by it. This was a subject of particular concern to Edward Urwick. Although Urwick shared with his mentor, Samuel Barnett, a commitment to ‘practicable socialism’, which implied the intervention of the state in social welfare, he was concerned that the state’s increased role in this arena threatened the potential of community-based social work. Urwick baulked at the suggestion of state-funded old age pensions and the idea of local governments using poor rates rather than private charity to feed impoverished families.¹⁴³ He wanted to sustain the influence of voluntary institutions such as the church, clubs and the settlement houses in the organisation of welfare.¹⁴⁴ For reformers like Beveridge and Attlee, however, state welfare was intended to be a safety net rather than an all-encompassing entity. After his residency at Toynbee Hall, Beveridge highlighted the importance of a strong voluntary sector and maintained that philanthropy had an important role to play in the new welfare state. In his 1948 report, *Voluntary Action*, he presented a blueprint for the development of private philanthropy alongside the expansion of state welfare.¹⁴⁵ He highlighted areas where

¹⁴² Attlee, *The Social Worker*, 5, 81, 12.

¹⁴³ See Edward Urwick, ‘Underfed Children’, *Toynbee Record* 14, no.2 (November 1901), 24.

¹⁴⁴ Edward Urwick, ‘The Future of Voluntary Social Work’, *Clare Market Review* [student magazine of the London School of Economics and Political Science] 9, no.2 (February 1914), 48.

¹⁴⁵ See William Beveridge, *Voluntary Action: A Report on Methods of Social Advance* (New York: Macmillan, 1948).

needs were not being met by public agencies that could be addressed through voluntary action. Attlee, too, emphasised the need for both individual and collective social action. Speaking as President of the Toynbee Hall Council in 1947, Attlee asserted: 'This nation will never become the people of an exclusive and omnipotent State. I believe we shall always have, alongside the great range of public services, the voluntary services which humanise our national life and bring things down from the general to the particular.' He added: 'Our democracy depends not just on a governmental machine but on the participation of all citizens in every kind of activity.'¹⁴⁶ Attlee's belief in the importance of 'voluntary services' no doubt stemmed from his own experiences of social work as a settler in East London.

Conclusion

For men interested in social research and investigation, Toynbee Hall functioned as a 'laboratory', a centre where they could study urban social problems and consider schemes for their amelioration. The settlement contributed to the professionalisation of social work in this period and the construction of a new type of social reformer who not only provided charity and social welfare, but who engaged in serious-minded research and inquiry. The research projects and investigations conducted by settlers reflected and contributed to a number of components of modern British social work. First, there was a common focus on systematic research and a scientific method. Secondly, Toynbee Hall investigators emphasised the sense of community and neighbourliness advocated in the settlement movement and in the wider milieu of social work. Their investigations had a distinct personal dimension that came from living in the local district. And thirdly, settlement

¹⁴⁶ Quoted in Asa Briggs and Anne Macartney, *Toynbee Hall: The First Hundred Years* (London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), 35-36.

research highlighted the structural causes of urban poverty and the importance of state welfare.

Research and investigation were critical components in the making of social reformers at Toynbee Hall. Settlers acquired knowledge and formulated theories and ideas that prepared them for future careers in the field of social reform as educators, sociologists, civil servants, politicians or policy makers. Historians have already examined the contributions that Toynbee Hall settlers made in the field of social reform *after* leaving the settlement.¹⁴⁷ This chapter has focused on their development as investigators *within* the settlement itself. The importance of this formative period in the Toynbee Hall ‘laboratory’ was clearly reflected in the subsequent work of the key architects of the welfare state. Clement Attlee and his Labour government (1945-1951) made a significant contribution to British social welfare by introducing family allowances, national insurance, the National Health Service and free state secondary education.¹⁴⁸ After moving into a civil service post in the Board of Trade in 1908, Beveridge spent the next three years working closely with the Board’s permanent secretary, Hubert Llewellyn Smith, to implement the ideas about labour exchanges that he had envisaged in *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry*. He and Smith drew up the Labour Exchanges Act of 1909 and the second part of the National Insurance Act of 1911, which established an unemployment insurance scheme.¹⁴⁹ According to Roger

¹⁴⁷ See for example, Ruth Gilchrist and Tony Jeffs, *Settlements, Social Change and Community Action: Good Neighbours* (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2001), 12; Pat Thane, *The Foundations of the Welfare State* (Routledge, 2016), particularly p.60; and Denys Leighton, *The Greenian Moment: T.H. Green, Religion and Political Argument in Victorian Britain* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2004), 275.

¹⁴⁸ Steve Cunningham and Jo Cunningham, *Social Policy and Social Work: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Los Angeles: Learning Matters, 2017), 15; Robert Pearce, *Attlee’s Labour Governments, 1945-51* (Routledge, 2006), 50.

¹⁴⁹ See Derek Fraser, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State: A History of Social Policy since the Industrial Revolution* (Springer, 1973), 159; K. Williams and J.A. Williams, *A Beveridge Reader* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1987). Also see José Harris, ‘Beveridge, William Henry, Baron Beveridge (1879–1963)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-31871?rskey=vfH7pO&result=3> (accessed 29 September 2018).

Davidson, Llewellyn Smith's 'connections with the trade union movement and with the social scientific community' (many of which were formed at Toynbee Hall) provided a strong foundation for his later career. Smith's investigation of (and participation in) East London industrial disputes during his residency at Toynbee Hall was particularly relevant. In his different positions within the Board of Trade, Davidson writes, Smith would 'preside over its extension into the fields of industrial conciliation and arbitration, unemployment policy, and minimum wage legislation'.¹⁵⁰

Each of these men made a significant contribution to British social policy and, significantly, each of them had served an apprenticeship in research and investigation at Toynbee Hall before embarking on these careers. As the following chapter will show, the career making of settlers was not restricted to the field of social research. Chapter Five draws upon the metaphor of a clubhouse in order to argue that the networking of settlers was also a significant aspect of the settlement houses' programs more generally.

¹⁵⁰ Roger Davidson, 'Smith, Sir Hubert Llewellyn (1864–1945)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-36147?rskey=Oa16vd&result=1> (accessed 29 September 2018).

Chapter Five

A Clubhouse in the East End: Settlement Networking

Beveridge has been made leader writer on the *Morning Post* . . . at £500 a year . . . Maynard is sec[retary] of the new Central Body on the Unemployed Fund. Nunn . . . is on the Royal Commission in [the] Poor Law. Toynbee men to the front!!!

Samuel Barnett in a letter to his brother, 1905.¹

Those who are leaving us are going to disperse themselves in true English fashion. Mr Carleton returns to his home in Canada; Mr Sawbridge hopes to take up Lay work for a year in connection with the Grahamstown Railway Mission in South Africa, where Mr Hewett is working, and from where Mr Rogers has just returned. Rumour has it that Mr Watson is proposing to visit Australia, to which Continent Mr Waddy will be returning this Autumn. Mr Thursfield will soon be on his way to take up journalistic work in India, so that representatives of the Oxford House workers of last year will soon be found in every Continent.

‘Notes for the Month’, *Oxford House Chronicle*, 1900.²

The settlement houses’ role in the lives of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men often came at a critical juncture when they were contemplating or embarking upon their careers. This chapter examines the settlement houses’ vocational programs between 1884 and 1914 in order to argue that social and professional development was a significant part of the ‘making’ of settlers. Settling was conceived as an important milestone in the careers of young men and news items like the above ‘notes of the month’ from the *Oxford House Chronicle* and Samuel Barnett’s letter to his brother were a regular feature of the reportage and correspondence produced by Toynbee Hall and Oxford House. Their circulation conveyed the settlements’ interest in the individual progress of university settlers as they moved away from the East End. The quotations above also draw attention to the different career paths typically taken by settlers. The social and civic purposes of

¹ Letter from Samuel Barnett to Frank Barnett, 25 November 1905, F/BAR/349, Samuel Barnett Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

² ‘Notes for the Month’, *Oxford House Chronicle* 14, no. 9 (September 1900), 1.

Toynbee Hall and the religious and evangelising purposes of Oxford House were generally reflected in the career choices of settlers. While the archetypal Oxford House man was a clergyman and missionary, Toynbee Hall settlers entered a wider range of educational, social and political positions. This chapter examines the place that Toynbee Hall and Oxford House occupied in the broader trajectory of men's careers. Within the settlements, residents could make plans, receive guidance and forge connections. In many ways, this chapter argues, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House functioned as networking centres, or clubs, for a future generation of British bureaucrats and clergymen, respectively.

The settlement houses were often likened to gentlemen's clubs, which were popular venues in the late Victorian period.³ Many elite Englishmen prided themselves on being 'the most clubbable of animals'.⁴ Drawing upon this appeal, Toynbee Hall promised that men who joined the settlement would be admitted to 'the usual privileges of a West-end club'.⁵ According to one annual report, Toynbee Hall was not only a centre of education and social effort, but also a 'club-house in Whitechapel, occupied by men who do citizens' duty in the neighbourhood'.⁶ Such comparisons were commonplace in settlement house literature. William Beveridge, for example, wrote that a 'settlement as it was perceived by Canon Barnett, and established in Whitechapel in 1884, was to be first and foremost a residential club'.⁷

The metaphor of a clubhouse highlighted the role that both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House could play in the networking of settlers. Samuel Barnett emphasised the

³ On Victorian clubs, see Amy Milne-Smith, *London Clubland: A Cultural History of Gender and Class in Late Victorian Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) and Barbara Black, *A Room of His Own: A Literary-Cultural Study of Victorian Clubland* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012).

⁴ Anonymous, 'Anecdote and Gossip about Clubs', *London Society Magazine* (February 1867), 102-103.

⁵ Henrietta Barnett, *Canon Barnett: His Life, Work, and Friends by his Wife in Two Volumes with Thirty-Nine Illustrations* (London: John Murray, 1918), 2:37.

⁶ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1890, 7.

⁷ William Beveridge, *Voluntary Action: A Report on Methods of Social Advance* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 130.

social advantages of clubs: 'They encourage associated action, they promote sociability, and they offer a field in which ideas may be planted.'⁸ Like a club, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House were social and cultural meeting places. Oxford House was, in addition, a religious venue. Networking was often more varied in Toynbee Hall as Oxford House retained its religious approach and its more selective criteria for residency. Samuel Barnett believed that Toynbee Hall's broader basis of membership brought the settlement into touch with men who were reluctant to join an institution that upheld a particular religious ideology.⁹ According to Toynbee Hall's annual report of 1904, the settlement provided 'a neutral platform' where different classes could 'meet and thresh out common problems, and submit to being permeated with each other's ideas'. It was a centre 'where difficult, and often conflicting idealisms' could 'grind each other into some practicable shape'.¹⁰ This function was an important aspect of the settlement agenda between 1884 and 1914, and beyond. A 1919 Toynbee memorandum described the settlement as 'a common meeting ground'. In his 1935 account of Toynbee Hall, Pimlott reflected that if 'a settlement served no other purpose than that of a recruiting ground for voluntary workers of the right type, and a neutral meeting-place for administrators, social workers, and members of all political parties it would more than justify its existence'.¹¹

Drawing upon the notion that Toynbee Hall and Oxford House resembled clubhouses, this chapter examines the importance of 'careering' in the settlements' programs. That is, it focuses on ways in which the settlement houses actively sought to prepare or guide men in their present or future professions. This preparation involved various forms of mentoring, the promotion of careers within the settlement, and the establishment of a networking system comprising of settlement leaders, residents and

⁸ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:71.

⁹ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:25.

¹⁰ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1904, 22.

¹¹ J.A.R. Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress, 1884-1934* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1935), 263.

visitors to the East End.

Previous scholarship has widely recognised that the settlement houses were nurseries for political and social leaders, many of whom occupied prominent positions after leaving Toynbee Hall or Oxford House. As Standish Meacham observed, the settlement movement generated a ‘new kind of elite, no longer to serve as disinterested mentors at the head of a local community but to assume instead positions of disinterested leadership within the expanding national bureaucracy’.¹² In acknowledging the career benefits that could be derived from settling, historians have frequently cited the criticisms of the working-class socialist and Labour politician, George Lansbury, who accused the settlements of recruiting too many careerists.¹³ In 1928, Lansbury asserted that the one solid achievement of Toynbee Hall had

been the filling up of the bureaucracy of government and administration with men and women who went to East London full of enthusiasm and zeal for the welfare of the masses, and discovered the advancement of their own interests The interests of the poor were best served by leaving East London to stew in its own juice while they became members of parliament, cabinet ministers [and] civil servants.¹⁴

Historians have considered the careers of settlers in reference to philanthropic and state programs aimed at the poor. Emily Abel argued that a study of residents’ careers in Toynbee Hall illustrated the settlement’s changing direction. She argued that the decrease in the number of clergymen in favour of professions in the civil service, education, business, journalism and law, reflected Toynbee Hall’s growing interest in social

¹² Standish Meacham, *Toynbee Hall and Social Reform, 1880-1914: The Search for Community* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), xi.

¹³ See, for example, Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 241; Kenneth Inglis, *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England* (Routledge, 2013), 172; and Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), 286.

¹⁴ George Lansbury, *My Life* (London: Constable and Co., 1928), 129-31. George Lansbury led the Labour Party from 1932 to 1935. He once wrote that his ‘sympathies are always with the left wingers and those who stand for principle’. See the *Daily Herald*, May 21, 1921.

investigation rather than moral reform.¹⁵ More recently, Katharine Bradley has argued that networking relationships between local and national politicians, philanthropists, social researchers and the voluntary sector contributed to the formation of national social policy in the twentieth century.¹⁶ Like Abel, Bradley's work is concerned with the influence that the settlers had on the East End. Settlement house scholarship in general has focused on the *effects* rather than the *processes* of networking and career making within the settlements. It has noted the career paths of settlers in order to analyse the evolution of the settlements' work to assist the poor, rather than focusing on the vocational training and experiences of residents themselves. Certainly, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House actively encouraged men to pursue their careers with the view that if they attained positions of social and political influence they could potentially improve conditions in both London and the wider British Empire. However, this chapter is concerned not with the social and political contributions of settlers in their professional lives, but with the techniques of training and networking that occurred within Toynbee Hall and Oxford House.

The Career Pathways of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House Men

Settlers were encouraged to continue to work in the field of social reform after their residency and a number of men did so.¹⁷ However, while both settlements functioned as clubhouses, each was seeking to 'make' a different type of social reformer. The careers of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men reflected each settlement's particular ethos and

¹⁵ See Emily Abel, 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', (PhD diss., University of London, 1969), 138-139.

¹⁶ Katharine Bradley, 'Poverty and Philanthropy in East London, 1918-1959: The University Settlements and the Urban Working Classes', (PhD diss., University of London, 2006), 2.

¹⁷ This included, among others, Bolton King and Cyril Jackson as educational administrators; T. Hancock Nunn, a member of the 1909 Royal Commission on the Poor Law; Ernest Aves, a researcher who assisted Charles Booth; E.J. Urwick, first director of the London School of Sociology; and Hubert Llewellyn Smith, first head of the Labour Department at the Board of Trade.

vocational ideals. For example, all of the Oxford House heads between 1884 and 1914 were ordained. Of the 59 residents who lived in Oxford House between 1884 and 1894 and whose careers have been identified in the course of this study, 39 were clergymen. Six men pursued educational work, five joined the law and four chose a political career. Three Oxford House men worked in a business or in administration and two became journalists.¹⁸

While Oxford House retained its religious ethos, the number of clergymen in Toynbee Hall gradually declined during the late decades of the nineteenth century as the civil service became an increasingly popular destination for settlers. In its first 10 years, at least 17 residents of Toynbee Hall were (or later became) clergymen. However, of the men living at Toynbee Hall between 1900 and 1914, it has been possible to identify only two clergymen.¹⁹ This decline in numbers can be largely attributed to the appeal of Oxford House for more religious university settlers. It also reflected broader social trends. Many Oxbridge graduates decided not to enter the church due to growing religious doubts and to the growing opportunities in government, education, business, journalism and law. These trends were still evident in the 1930s. Of the 27 settlers who resided in Toynbee Hall between 1930 and 1939 and whose careers have been traced in this study, only three pursued religious work. Of the remaining settlers, five worked as social reformers, one joined a civil service department, two pursued political careers, seven worked in the field of education and the arts and five undertook administrative or business work.

¹⁸ These statistics and those that follow have been compiled by researching the careers of individual residents of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House whose names were published in the settlements' annual reports. The names of the men who resided in Toynbee Hall between 1884 and 1934 were also listed by J.A.R. Pimlott as an appendix to his study, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress 1884-1934*. It has not been possible to identify all settlers and their careers and the men who can be traced usually achieved some prominence in their fields. The Oxford House records present several challenges in tracing career trajectories. First, the settlement listed its residents by initial only. Secondly, Oxford House did not always distinguish residents from other volunteers in their lists of workers. Finally, some Oxford House reports are missing from the archives and have not been located. The Oxford House annual reports for 1908, 1930 and 1939 are not extant and a list of residents was not compiled in 1938. Nevertheless, clear trends can be determined from the existing data.

¹⁹ Humphrey Phillips (1911-1912) and Leonard Patterson (1909-1910).

Additionally, there was one lawyer, one doctor and two journalists.

The news bulletin from the *Oxford House Chronicle* at the beginning of this chapter reflects the settlement's connections with the British Empire. The British colonies became a popular career destination for both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men. In the settlements' first 10 years, at least seven Toynbee Hall men and eight Oxford House settlers pursued careers in British colonies.²⁰ More than 50 of the men who resided at Toynbee Hall and Oxford House between 1884 and 1914 subsequently worked, at least for a time, in a colony of the British Empire.²¹ Toynbee Hall's involvement in imperial affairs was usually in a social, political and civic capacity. In its third annual report, Toynbee Hall revived 'pleasant memories' of their parties and *conversaziones* which had been held throughout the year. It reported on a party of 'colonial guests' who had been entertained at the settlement. The settlement hoped that this interaction had forged 'a few fresh links' in the 'chain which binds the Colonies to the Mother Country'.²² Other 'links' were formed by the movement of settlers into British colonies. Four of the seven chairmen of Toynbee Hall between 1884 and 1945 pursued work in the empire or in associated political positions. This included Philip Lyttleton Gell (president of the British

²⁰ This included the following Toynbee Hall men: Philip Lyttelton Gell (Director and President of the British South Africa Company), Edmund Beale Sargant (educational administrator, Transvaal), Henry George Rawson (Director of a polytechnic in South Africa), John Sinclair (Governor of Madras), Patrick Duncan (Colonial Secretary, Transvaal), Harry Osborne Buckle (magistrate in South Africa) and Cyril Jackson (Head of Education Department, Western Australia). From Oxford House, it included: A Chandler (Bishop of Bloemfontein), W.G. Boyd (Head of Mission at Edmonton, Alberta), R.D. Ringrose (Mission to Calcutta), W.K. Firminger (Assistant Priest in the Cathedral, Zanzibar, East Africa), H.F. Le Fanu (Archbishop in Perth, Australia), J. Hallward (Priest in Cala, Kaffraria, South Africa), Rev H. St J.S. Woollcombe (Australia) and E.J. Urwick (Professor of Political Economy, University of Toronto).

²¹ Settlers who worked in the British Empire included: Stanley Addison, C.R. Ashbee, John Edward Gregory Alford, Reginald Charles Ashfield, Ernest Harry Aves, Harry Osborne Buckle, George Woodall Cadbury, Herbert Summersell Davis, Norman de Lancy Davis, Sir Patrick Duncan, Sir Charles Elliott, P.L. Gell, Bertram R. Hawker, Sir Eldred Frederick Hitchcock, Sir Cyril Jackson, Hubert Richmond Kemp, Bryan Earle King, George Lavin, Maxwell Studdy Leigh, Alfred Milner, Ernest Lewis Matthews, D. Molteno, William Arthur Moore, Sir Robert Laurie Morant, Louis Rasminsky, Henry George Rawson, John Walter Richardson, John George Richey, Austin Robinson, C. Russell, E.B. Sargant, F.N. Schiller, John Sinclair, Gilbert Slater, John Stevenson, Mark Stone, H.E. Sturge, George Tatham, John Allan Thomson, Sir Francis Patrick Fletcher Vane, Ernest S. Watkins, The Earl of Listowel, Lord Peel, George Knight-Bruce, A Chandler, H.F. Le Fanu, Richard Feetham, W.K. Firminger, J. Hallward, Herbert Henson, R.D. Ringrose, Arthur Winnington-Ingram and Henry St John Stirling Woollcombe.

²² Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1886, 21.

South Africa Company)²³, Lord Peel (secretary of state for India)²⁴, Sir Charles Elliott (administrator in India)²⁵ and Lord Alfred Milner (high commissioner of South Africa)²⁶.

The subject of empire was, however, more prominent in the reportage of Oxford House which highlighted the religious vocations of its settlers. Four out of nine Oxford House heads in this period undertook work in British colonies or engaged with the subject in their study and teaching. These men were George Knight-Bruce (Bishop of Mashonaland)²⁷, Herbert Henson (Bishop of Durham)²⁸, Arthur Winnington-Ingram (Bishop of London)²⁹ and Henry St John Stirling Woollcombe (Bishop of Whitby)³⁰.

Residents, too, went into the empire. This news item from 1904 conveys the evangelising aims that were typical of Oxford House:

Several old Residents of the House are now in the Foreign Mission Field. The Rev. H.F. Le Fanu has accepted the post of Archdeacon of Brisbane, and is now on his way, with his bride, to his new sphere of work. The Rev. John Halward has been appointed Rector of Buluwayo, and the Rev. F.A. Rogers sails shortly for

²³ See *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*,

<http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-95571?rskey=BwdvQ9&result=5> (accessed 29 September 2018).

²⁴ Alex May, 'Peel, William Robert Wellesley, first Earl Peel (1867–1937)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*,

<http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-35453?rskey=327hRw&result=2> (accessed 29 September 2018).

²⁵ David Washbrook, 'Elliott, Sir Charles Alfred (1835–1911)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*,

<http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-33004?rskey=gyZgSe&result=1> (accessed 29 September 2018).

²⁶ Colin Newbury, 'Milner, Alfred, Viscount Milner (1854–1925)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*,

<http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-35037?rskey=WvYfSP&result=1> (accessed 29 September 2018).

²⁷ E. I. Carlyle, 'Bruce, George Wyndham Hamilton Knight- (1852–1896)', rev. Lynn Milne, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*,

<http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-3731?rskey=pZVMHW&result=1> (accessed 29 September 2018).

²⁸ Matthew Grimley, 'Henson, Herbert Hensley (1863–1947)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*,

<http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-33825?rskey=Q94Q1f&result=1> (accessed 29 September 2018).

²⁹ Jeremy Morris, 'Ingram, Arthur Foley Winnington- (1858–1946)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*,

<http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-36979?rskey=5YG9iW&result=1> (accessed 29 September 2018).

³⁰ 'Woollcombe, Rt Rev. Henry St John Stirling', *Who's Who 2018 & Who Was Who*, <http://www.ukwhoswho.com/view/10.1093/ww/9780199540891.001.0001/ww-9780199540884-e-233709;jsessionid=EF23CD48F25E83ECC78F65B795473BA3> (accessed 29 September 2018).

South Africa, to resume for a time his work on the Railway Mission.³¹

News of settlers' careers was recorded in both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House and each settlement endorsed particular career paths. By circulating news of former residents, both settlements hoped to inspire settlers with a sense of duty and ambition in their own careers.

Promoting the Settlements: A Prelude to a Career

The bulletins published by Toynbee Hall and Oxford House are a rich source of material for commentary on settlers' career paths. It should be noted, however, that these publications were an important medium for promoting the settlements and recruiting residents. The commentaries of settlers within Toynbee Hall and Oxford House publications were mediated by the settlements and consequently they tend to present settling in a highly positive light. The fact that the settlements deliberately emphasised their role in inspiring and preparing men for their future positions shows that career advancement was a significant aspect of their appeal to residents.

In their personal writings, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men often presented settling as a significant phase in the course of their careers. Many settlement alumni were recalling their settling experience some years later when they were established in their chosen professions, and certain patterns can be identified in their writings. While settlers often emphasised the sacrifice and strong personal convictions that were needed to join the settlements, the period they spent in the East End is usually presented as the starting point of their career. These recollections could be influenced by the benefit of hindsight. This may have been the case when settlers wrote that they had inspired fellow residents

³¹ *Oxford House Chronicle* 18, no. 12 (December, 1904), 1.

who had gone on to enjoy successful careers.

Nevertheless, a common theme across surviving records is that the settlement house was a prelude to a successful life for the university graduate. Promotional material issued by Toynbee Hall assured prospective residents that they would be ‘better and more useful citizens for the season spent in practical work and friendly intercourse with the working classes of East London’.³² *The Spectator* expressed the view that the men who enjoyed success would probably be those who had been ‘in touch with the wants and the worth, the likes and dislikes’ of the poor.³³

Settlement leaders believed that Oxbridge graduates were particularly well suited to philanthropic work. These men were regarded as potential future leaders and reformers who carried a responsibility to redress social problems. The settlement philosophy was that assisting these men to obtain positions of social and political influence could contribute to reformist efforts in the East End in an effective way. As Philip Lyttelton Gell wrote in 1886:

The seed sown will, it is believed, bear fruit in years to come, when the undergraduates of to-day are the administrators, the landlords, the journalists, the law makers, the clergy, the public opinion of their time. . . The solution of the Social Question lies in the thought of the young men of England, and no one who knows them at the Universities can doubt that it needs but contact with the positive facts of city life to stir their sympathies, and to make the condition of the people one of the deep-set problems of their minds.³⁴

Henrietta Barnett shared this view, observing that while settlers ‘left behind them marks of their residence’ in the form of settlement activities, the knowledge and experience they gained in Toynbee Hall would eventually lead to wider improvements in social policies

³² For this quotation, see *The Universities’ Settlement in East London – Prospectus* (Undated), 3, A/TOY/009, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives. Quotation also cited in R.A. Evans, ‘The University and the City: The Educational Work of Toynbee Hall, 1884-1914’, *History of Education* 11, no. 2 (1982), 113-125.

³³ ‘Fifty Years at Toynbee Hall’, *The Spectator*, December 21, 1934, 5.

³⁴ Toynbee Hall, *Annual Report*, 1886, 7.

and state administration. She observed that residents ‘came into touch with the poor and ignorant, and thus into their large and influential spheres carried the knowledge of the Esaus of the earth’, translating the needs of the poor into ‘Acts of Parliament and codes of education’.³⁵

It was envisaged that residing in London’s East End would in some way change settlers’ ideals and perspectives and affect the ways in which they lived and worked. Toynbee Hall reported that settling in the East End could influence not only a man’s future career, but his way of thinking:

The Prime Minister in later days spoke of Toynbee Hall as a social laboratory, and under Canon Barnett’s guidance it performed that office supremely well for a large number of young men who were going into public or official life or into journalism, or who were presently to make careers in new countries. They saw and realised at first hand a great many things which other people only know from books and hearsay. A man whose experience it has been to visit and take precise notes of a thousand slum houses condemned as uninhabitable by medical officers, will think or write of the housing question very differently from the man who has only read the details in Blue-books.³⁶

Samuel Barnett believed that ‘he who has, even for a month, shared the life of the poor can never rest again in his old thoughts’.³⁷ His wife agreed: ‘If men, cultivated young thinking men, could only know of those things they would be altered.’³⁸ For these reasons, the Barnetts wanted the settlers to feel that they had certain obligations to fulfil. Henrietta Barnett recorded the following conversation between two Toynbee men to illustrate their expectations of settlers:

‘Is Barnett sincere?’ asked the elder, a man about thirty years old, who had recently come into residence. ‘He seemed to flatter one.’
‘Did he?’ was the reply of the Resident who knew my husband intimately. ‘If you

³⁵ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:38.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 1:323.

³⁷ Samuel Barnett, ‘University Settlements’ in Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, *Practicable Socialism: Essays on Social Reform* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1895), 270.

³⁸ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:302.

think, you will see his flattery consisted in expecting great things from you.’³⁹

The importance of the young Oxbridge man in the settlement agenda meant that the character and motivations of incoming residents to Toynbee Hall and Oxford House were closely scrutinised. Werner Picht argued that ‘the cause is of more importance to the resident than his or her career’.⁴⁰ Yet according to Henrietta Barnett, Toynbee Hall’s growing reputation in wider social circles meant that the settlement could tempt men whose motives were not ‘of the highest’. In an effort to discourage self-seeking philanthropists, Toynbee Hall required prospective residents to explain their reasons for settling. Henrietta insisted that the ‘very suspicion that a man proposed to join the settlement because it provided good society or offered means of introduction’ was enough reason for Toynbee Hall to reject him.⁴¹ However, while social advancement was not considered an acceptable motivation for joining the settlement, residents did, in fact, accrue the benefits that Henrietta Barnett had outlined.

The Barnetts also sought to allay potential concerns from university men that residency would delay or disrupt their careers. In an address at St John’s College in Cambridge, for example, Samuel Barnett emphasised that ‘residence would not be a halt; it might be the part of a man’s career most rich in teaching, be his end Parliament, science or business’.⁴² Barnett told one incoming resident who was to serve as his private secretary that he could be ‘assured of a year’s training which I don’t think will be lost whatever you do’.⁴³ Henrietta Barnett also maintained that all residents should have a profession that was ‘not philanthropy’.⁴⁴ This goal was made clear in a discussion

³⁹ Ibid, 1:317.

⁴⁰ Werner Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914), 135.

⁴¹ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:38.

⁴² Samuel Barnett, ‘Settlements of University Men in Great Towns’, *Cambridge Review* (7 May 1884), 308; quotation also cited by Abel, ‘Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall’, 142.

⁴³ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:124.

⁴⁴ See Quasi-Autobiography of Dame Henrietta Barnett: Biography written in longhand by friend,

Henrietta had with Benjamin Jowett, the Master of Balliol College, about Bolton King, a Toynbee man. She recorded the following dialogue:

‘Do you know that you have taken the best history man of his year, Mrs. Barnett?’ said the Master of Balliol to me in a solemn tête-à-tête talk to which he had invited me in his study.

‘What are you going to do with him in Whitechapel?’

‘Show him how to make history,’ I replied. ‘It is better than either writing or reading it.’⁴⁵

According to Henrietta, Jowett later remarked to her: ‘I used to be afraid of sending my men to you, not knowing what you would do with them; but now I safely send them, for you are ambitious for them. A man’s career should be his first concern.’⁴⁶

In this anecdote, Henrietta Barnett presented Toynbee Hall as *the* driving force behind the residency of young men in the East End and emphasised the settlement’s role in advancing their careers once they left Oxford. In doing so, she somewhat elided the role of Benjamin Jowett who was, in his own right, a potent force behind the careers of Oxford men in social and imperial service. Far from playing a secondary role as Henrietta implied, Jowett may be credited with discerning and then creating the career paths of Oxford men as they increasingly rejected traditional careers in the church.

Oxford University in this period had a significant influence on the future careers of its graduates as it provided vocational mentoring to young men. Balliol College, in particular, was devoted to selecting and preparing students for high office and, through the college network, assisting them to obtain their desired positions. As master between 1870 and 1893, Benjamin Jowett (see Figure 22) was a key figure in the career

companion and literary executrix, Marion Paterson, LMA/4063/006, Henrietta Barnett Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

⁴⁵ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:26-27.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 2:23.



Figure 22: Portrait of Benjamin Jowett. Elliott and Fry, chlorobromide print on cream card mount, 1890, National Portrait Gallery, London.

advancement of Balliol men.⁴⁷ Peter Hinchliff and John Prest emphasise Jowett's effectiveness as a tutor, his personal concern for his pupils, his kindness towards them and his interest in their careers.⁴⁸ A tutor's first duty, Jowett believed, was 'to look after his men'.⁴⁹ He wrote that there was 'nothing sadder in this world' than 'lost or wasted lives'.⁵⁰ Jowett commented that when they arrived at the university, many young men brought with them 'no high aim in life'.⁵¹ He fostered in them a sense of loyalty to the college and fired his pupils with ambition and an enthusiasm for public service. Undergraduates were known to work hard under his mastership.

Jowett aimed to make Balliol 'an ideal college' which would be closely linked with active life.⁵² His friend and correspondent, Florence Nightingale, believed he was successful in 'connecting university education with a man's future career' and 'making university the entrance to life'.⁵³ Jowett devoted a great deal of his time to pupils who were likely to occupy positions of influence in British public affairs. He had a knack for spotting young men of talent, inspiring them with a sense of duty and ambition and providing them with an education and networking system that would assist them in their chosen careers. Jowett invited promising students to reading parties in the long vacation that combined country holidays with study sessions. He also became known for his

⁴⁷ As well as supporting and promoting the careers of his pupils, Jowett himself had a distinguished academic career. He gained a scholarship to Balliol College and went up to Oxford in 1836. He remained at Oxford until his death as Master of Balliol in 1893. Jowett graduated BA in 1839 and took his MA in 1842. He held several notable positions at the university. He was a Balliol tutor between 1842 and 1870; Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford between 1855 and 1893; and vice-chancellor of the university between 1882 and 1886. He was an Examiner of Classical Schools in 1849, and again in 1853. Jowett was a classical scholar and became known in particular for his translations of Plato's dialogues. See Peter Hinchliff and John Prest, 'Jowett, Benjamin (1817-1893)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-15143?rskey=PqwrKa&result=2> (accessed 29 September 2018).

⁴⁸ Peter Hinchliff and John Prest, 'Jowett, Benjamin (1817-1893)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-15143?rskey=PqwrKa&result=2> (accessed 29 September 2018).

⁴⁹ Norman Rose, *Harold Nicolson* (London: Jonathon Cape, 2005), ix.

⁵⁰ Benjamin Jowett, *Success and Failure* (Herrin, IL: Trovillion Private Press, 1945), 15.

⁵¹ See *Dear Miss Nightingale: A Selection of Benjamin Jowett's Letters to Florence Nightingale, 1860-1893*, ed. Vincent Quinn and John Prest (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 139.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 188-189.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, xxxv.

special parties, called ‘Jowett’s Jumbles’, at which carefully selected undergraduates were introduced to figures who were eminent in their intended professions.

Jowett acquired a reputation for selecting, training and placing young Oxford men in positions of influence, particularly in the field of British politics and the civil service. Hinchliff and Prest encapsulate Jowett’s role in shaping men’s vocations as follows:

‘Recruit by ability. Train character. And then launch your students upon the world.’⁵⁴ For Jowett, the teaching and character formation of undergraduates destined for careers as rulers and servants of Britain represented ‘the pinnacle of educational wisdom’.⁵⁵ Jowett viewed the empire as a promising source of employment for pupils and he was consulted about the reform of the Indian Civil Service (ICS) and the manner in which its recruits were selected and trained. Jowett regarded the ICS as a fine career for ‘the picked men of the universities’. It would, he wrote to Gladstone in 1853, be an answer to a question so often asked by undergraduates: ‘What line of work shall I choose with no calling to take Orders and no taste for the Bar and no connections who are able to get me forward in life?’⁵⁶ Many young men undertook their probationary training for the ICS at Balliol.

There was, according to Hinchliff and Prest, a very real sense in which Jowett used his friendships and connections as a means to influence society more broadly.⁵⁷ He created and cultivated a network of prominent and influential friends. In 1873, Jowett wrote to Florence Nightingale: ‘I should like to govern the world through my pupils.’⁵⁸ While this was a humorous exaggeration, the Balliol College network was remarkably

⁵⁴ Peter Hinchliff and John Prest, ‘Jowett, Benjamin (1817-1893)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-15143?rskey=PqwrKa&result=2> (accessed 29 September 2018).

⁵⁵ Melvin Richter, *The Politics of Conscience: T.H. Green and his Age* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), 145.

⁵⁶ Benjamin Jowett to W. E. Gladstone, 1853; in Symonds, *Oxford and Empire: The Last Lost Cause*, 184.

⁵⁷ Peter Hinchliff and John Prest, ‘Jowett, Benjamin (1817-1893)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-15143?rskey=PqwrKa&result=2> (accessed 29 September 2018).

⁵⁸ Quinn and Prest, ed., *Dear Miss Nightingale*, 249.

pervasive. Jowett's Balliol was a kindergarten for politicians, diplomats and colonial officials. A number of Jowett's pupils at Balliol were prominent figures or later became so. During his time as master, the college produced a future prime minister, Herbert Henry Asquith; a secretary of state for India, Sir John Brodrick; Foreign Secretaries, including Lord Lansdowne and Sir Edward Grey; and three future viceroys of India, Lords Lansdowne, Elgin and Curzon. Balliol graduates also included future Members of Parliament and civil servants.

Jowett was committed to the interests of his past pupils throughout their careers and he valued their friendship and loyalty. His pupils, in turn, often acknowledged Jowett's influence and kept in contact with him. Alfred Milner regularly visited Jowett at Oxford and informed him of the progress he was making in his career. When he decided to abandon a career at the Bar, Milner justified himself in a letter to Jowett, writing, 'I mean to do you some credit yet'.⁵⁹ Henry Charles Keith Petty Fitzmaurice, the fifth marquess of Lansdowne (known as Lansdowne), also acknowledged a debt to Jowett. Lansdowne, who embarked on a public life that lasted over 50 years and included the posts of under-secretary for war, under-secretary for India, governor-general of Canada, viceroy of India, secretary of state for war and foreign secretary, reflected that had it not been for Jowett, 'he would have done little with his life'.⁶⁰ Jowett also influenced the undergraduate career of T.H. Green. Melvin Richter records an occasion when Jowett felt he needed to give Green an incentive to succeed in his studies: 'If you do not get your First [in *literae humaniores* or *Greats*], Green, I shall have a good deal to answer for.' This remark, Green later recalled, was a turning point in his life. Knowing how much the prestige of the college meant to his tutor, Jowett's words appealed to Green's sense of

⁵⁹ Quoted in Peter H. Sutcliffe, *The Oxford University Press: An Informal History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 68.

⁶⁰ See Margot Oxford, *More Memories* (London: Cassell, 1933), 187.

duty.⁶¹ Green did in fact achieve a first in Greats and graduated BA in 1859.⁶² Jowett retained connections with various students right up until his death in 1893. He died, in fact, while staying at the home of a former pupil, Sir Robert Wright.⁶³

In many ways, Toynbee Hall was a vehicle for realising Jowett's vision of Oxford men filling the higher reaches of government, imperial service and civil society. In this regard, Jowett was a supporter of Toynbee Hall because it gave Balliol men experience of the world and careers in social research, social service, local government and politics.

The Making of a Career in the Settlement

In both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House, residents were encouraged to actively plan for and pursue their intended professions. However, settling in the slums involved some sacrifice of time and expense on the part of Oxbridge graduates. Settlers were not paid for their services, but covered the expense of their own board and lodging.⁶⁴ Some men gave up, or at least delayed, employment in the prime of life in order to work unpaid in the East End. Henrietta Barnett said that one resident, Edward Leonard, at the age of 24, 'gave up a promising career to work in Whitechapel, where he lived on his small private means'. Leonard was one of the first settlers of Toynbee Hall and he remained in the East End until poor health prevented him from continuing his work.⁶⁵ By entering Toynbee

⁶¹ Richter, *The Politics of Conscience*, 75.

⁶² Andrew Vincent, 'Green, Thomas Hill (1836–1882)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-11404?rskey=keEAEt&result=2> (accessed 29 September 2018).

⁶³ Peter Hinchliff and John Prest, 'Jowett, Benjamin (1817–1893)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-15143?rskey=FxixnT&result=2> (accessed 29 September 2018).

⁶⁴ According to Werner Picht, Oxford House men paid 30 to 33 shillings a week, while Toynbee men paid 26 to 38 shillings a week. See Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, 233, 235. In a later study, Pimlott cited lower figures, referring to a rent which varied from 22 shillings a week for a sitting room and bedroom to 10 shillings and sixpence a week for a single bedroom. See Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 46.

⁶⁵ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:98.

Hall or Oxford House, some men sacrificed lucrative professions that they could have obtained by the nature of their class, education and family connections in order to pursue careers in the civil service which offered a more modest salary. This did not seem to trouble many of them. As A.P. Laurie lightly wrote: ‘Considering we all had our living to earn, we succeeded in pursuing many activities outside the necessity of obtaining bread and butter.’ He added: ‘There was not much butter on the bread, but that did not trouble us.’⁶⁶ J.A. Spender, meanwhile, observed that ‘not a few of us were running about our allotted task of relieving the unemployed with a cheerful doubt whether we should not ourselves be subjects for relief in a few weeks’ time’.⁶⁷ Such remarks convey certain financial and career disadvantages involved in settling in East London. However, the notion that settlers were at risk of becoming paupers is not to be taken too seriously. As men from the professional middle class, settlers generally earned a comfortable living while residing in the East End.

For Clement Attlee, settling was no financial sacrifice at all, but an alternative to a well-paid but otherwise dissatisfying profession in the law. The son of a solicitor, Attlee grew up in a prosperous household. After graduating from Oxford in 1904, he entered the Lincoln’s Inn chambers of Sir Philip Gregory, a leading conveyancing lawyer, and was called to the Bar by the Inner Temple in March 1906. He also worked briefly in his father’s firm of solicitors. According to R.C. Whiting, Attlee ‘devoted no great energy’ to the law and had found little purpose in his career. He was, Whiting suggests, ‘idling his life away in congenial London company, insulated from most practical cares by living at home’.⁶⁸ In Attlee’s own words, his interest in the law was ‘very tepid’.⁶⁹ After the death

⁶⁶ Arthur Pillans Laurie, *Pictures and Politics: A Book of Reminiscences* (London: International Publishing Company, 1934), 81.

⁶⁷ J.A. Spender, *Life, Journalism and Politics: An Autobiography* (London: Cassell and Co., 1927), 30-31.

⁶⁸ R. C. Whiting, ‘Attlee, Clement Richard, first Earl Attlee (1883–1967)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*,

of his father in 1908, Attlee received a small inheritance. He now had the financial freedom that exempted him from the need to earn a professional salary. Attlee took advantage of the opportunity to abandon his brief legal career and devote himself to social work in East London.

Although not all settlers enjoyed the same opportunities as Attlee, the general lack of financial concern among settlers may be attributed to their comfortable background. It also reflected Victorian ideals of gentlemanly voluntary work. By definition, a ‘gentleman’ was not required to work for a living. His wealth was instead based upon land or financial dealings.⁷⁰ Such men could afford to undertake voluntary work. This was the case for MPs in Britain who did not receive a salary until 1911. Possession of independent financial means was therefore virtually a prerequisite for a man’s election to the House of Commons and this was one of the main reasons why the House was dominated by gentlemen from the aristocratic and landed class.⁷¹ With the growth of the professional middle classes in the nineteenth century, a gentleman was increasingly defined by his moral standards rather than by his inherited wealth. He could have a paid occupation.

As ‘gentlemen’ of the professional middle and upper classes, settlers pursued careers and had the financial security to undertake voluntary work. A salary of £250 was assigned to the Toynbee Hall warden at a time when most professionals earned between £300 and £1000 a year. Most lawyers, physicians, engineers, administrators, teachers and civil servants received salaries on this scale. Lower social classes tended to receive less than £300 per annum, including tradesmen, shopkeepers, clerks and minor civil

<http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-30498?rkey=RC1W4z&result=1> (accessed 29 September 2018).

⁶⁹ C.R. Attlee, *As it Happened* (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), 26.

⁷⁰ Richard Aldrich, *School and Society in Victorian Britain: Joseph Payne and the New World of Education* (Routledge, 2012), xviii.

⁷¹ Terence Jenkins, *Parliament, Party and Politics in Victorian Britain* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1996), 3, 84.

servants.⁷² That settlement leaders who were entitled to a salary often chose to forgo any payment is indicative of their financial means. Samuel Barnett devoted these funds entirely to settlement work in an effort to foster the settlement's 'voluntary spirit'.⁷³ Jimmy Mallon, who accepted the position of warden in 1919, also declined the salary. Toynbee Hall experienced some financial difficulties during Mallon's time at the settlement. In January 1923, the Toynbee resident, John Dale, reported that he was 'making very poor progress in raising the Warden's salary fund'. He stated that it would be 'disastrous if we could not raise Mallon's salary, and I think that if it has to be paid from the general fund, we shall place Mallon in a very disagreeable position of having to raise his own salary'.⁷⁴ However, Mallon was in a position to accept this uncertain financial situation for the rest of his wardenship. Oxford House men were men of similar means. Guy Clutton-Brock of Oxford House was offered £900 a year as salary, which he rejected with the comment: 'I thought it was very high, so I said no, we'll put this in a common fund and we'll all have the same, which we did.'⁷⁵

For young men embarking upon their careers, settling could be not only a financial disadvantage but a source of parental disapproval. James Adderley wrote that his father was 'old-fashioned enough not to like the idea' of his settling in Bethnal Green.⁷⁶ Arthur Winnington-Ingram's father also objected to his son entering Oxford House. He wrote that he would be 'very sorry' to see his son become the head of the settlement. Ingram told his son that he had already made his 'mark' as a chaplain and he insisted that a clergyman belonged in his parish. He was also concerned that the position

⁷² These figures were compiled by Mak Lanver who compared the salaries of English social classes at home with Britons in Egypt. See *The British in Egypt: Community, Crime and Crises, 1882-1922* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 118.

⁷³ Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, 32.

⁷⁴ Letter from J.A. Dale to Lord Milner, 19 January 1923, A/TOY/006/049, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

⁷⁵ Quoted in Mandy Ashworth, *The Oxford House in Bethnal Green: 100 Years of Work in the Community* (London: Oxford House, 1984), 41.

⁷⁶ James Adderley, *In Slums and Society: Reminiscences of Old Friends* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1916), 17.

offered no financial security and that his son's health would suffer due to 'the strain of bad air'.⁷⁷ Basil Henriques's family was initially opposed to his decision to commit to social work, but they agreed to support him.

Despite Henrietta Barnett's strictures about the motivations of Toynbee men, settlers often justified their decision to live in the East End by presenting it as a launching pad in the pursuit of their professions. William Beveridge faced much disapprobation from his parents, but justified his decision by insisting that Toynbee Hall offered 'everything that my parents could have desired for me of launching on a career'.⁷⁸ In 1897, Beveridge went up to Balliol College where he gained first-class honours degrees in mathematical moderations, classical moderations and *literae humaniores*. He subsequently studied in the chambers of a London commercial barrister and in 1902 he was awarded a fellowship at University College, Oxford. The following year he received a civil law degree. At this juncture, it seemed that Beveridge would have a promising career in either academia or at the bar. Beveridge's parents urged him to continue with his legal studies in order to be not a 'mere practising lawyer, but a jurist . . . or a Professor of Law'.⁷⁹ While he was at Oxford, his mother suggested that he find a job in a 'good house of business' before pursuing political work. However, Beveridge felt that his Balliol experience had not educated him for such a career.⁸⁰

Despite his parents' objections, Beveridge decided to abandon the law and devote his efforts to social investigation. He wrote to his mother that he wanted to do something

⁷⁷ Edward Winnington-Ingram to Arthur Winnington-Ingram, 29 October 1888, MS 3406, f.14, The Fulham Papers of Winnington-Ingram, Lambeth Palace Library.

⁷⁸ William Beveridge, *Power and Influence* (New York: Beechurst Press, 1955), 36-37.

⁷⁹ Letter from Henry Beveridge to William Beveridge, 29 January 1903, Beveridge/2A/3, Beveridge Papers, British Library of Political and Economic Science, London School of Economics.

⁸⁰ Letter from Annette Beveridge to William Beveridge, 20 October 1900, Beveridge/2A/18, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics; William Beveridge to Annette Beveridge, 23 October 1900, Beveridge/2A/47, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics.

that would be ‘directly useful’ to society.⁸¹ He argued that a lawyer ‘in no way leaves the world either better or worse than it was’, describing law as a profession which was ‘both worldly in the extreme and remote from reality’. He added that ‘it has nothing to do with any real problem or difficulties’.⁸² His mother sympathised to an extent with his ‘wish to do real and not parasitic work’, but his father denounced this decision as sentimental philanthropy, referring disparagingly to the idea of Beveridge working in ‘soup kitchens for the proletariat or trying to be social to people with whom you have little in common’. In a letter to his son in 1903, he wrote: ‘I don’t think you are cut out for influencing horny-handed mechanics.’⁸³ However, Beveridge countered: ‘I am not going to Toynbee Hall to devote myself to such things.’ Rejecting the cultural ideals of Matthew Arnold, Beveridge was distrustful of ‘the saving power of culture and of missions and of isolated good feelings’.⁸⁴ He intended instead to study social problems in a scientific way in order to propose solutions and he was seeking ‘to make Toynbee Hall and kindred institutions . . . centres for the development of authoritative opinion on the problems of city life’.⁸⁵

Beveridge’s personal motives were also highly pragmatic. He believed that the sub-wardenship of Toynbee Hall would benefit his career and he was anxious to make his mark through his involvement with the settlement. Seeking to convince his parents of the advantages of the position, he presented the settlement as a ‘meeting place’ which occupied a significant position in British national life. He also highlighted the social networking of the settlers, which could have a very practical benefit in the form of introductions and recommendations:

⁸¹ Letter from William Beveridge to Annette Beveridge, 13 February 1898, Beveridge/2A/45, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics.

⁸² Letter from William Beveridge to Annette Beveridge, 19 January 1902, Beveridge/2A/49, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics; Letter from William Beveridge to Annette Beveridge, 25 January 1903, Beveridge/2A/50, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics.

⁸³ Letter from Henry Beveridge to William Beveridge, 28 April 1903, Beveridge/2A/3, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics.

⁸⁴ Letter from William Beveridge to Annette Beveridge, 11 May 1903, Beveridge/2A/50, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*; also see letter from William Beveridge to Henry Beveridge, in Beveridge, *Power and Influence*, 17.

Toynbee Hall is prospectless if you actually stick to it. . . But just because it is not a mission but a residence and meeting place of men doing work it is not a cul de sac. It is known among men of position; I think the list of past residents would surprise you. I will however give you the one instance of Morant (who might have been Balfour's private secretary and has been suddenly rushed up very high in the Education department) yet he was first a resident with no other work at Toynbee Hall . . . He got his chance simply because he was known to Canon Barnett to have done excellent educational work . . . and Canon Barnett knew great educational people. Toynbee is a force in the same way that Balliol is.⁸⁶

As this remark illustrates, settlers like William Beveridge regarded Toynbee Hall within the context of their individual plans and goals. A necessary condition for settling was that men 'live their own life' and most men devoted their evenings to settlement work after pursuing their own interests during the day.⁸⁷

The settlements were used by individuals at different stages in their careers. J.A. Spender observed that 'you were encouraged to go on with your profession, if you had one, and to give what time you could to the work of the settlement'.⁸⁸ This was the experience of men like Alfred Milner whose association with Toynbee Hall featured as a brief phase in the course of a far-reaching career. One of the founding members of Toynbee Hall, Milner was part of the committee appointed to identify a suitable location and warden for the settlement.⁸⁹ Subsequently, Milner pursued an active political and imperial career, including his notable position as High Commissioner in South Africa and Governor of Cape Colony between 1897 and 1905. In 1912, hoping to 'retire from active public affairs', but wanting to devote some part of his 'leisure to social work', Milner became chairman of the Toynbee Hall Council, a position he held until 1925.⁹⁰

Other Toynbee Hall leaders had already established a career, or at least

⁸⁶ Letter from William Beveridge to Annette Beveridge, 11 May 1903, Beveridge/2A/50, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics.

⁸⁷ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:312.

⁸⁸ *Westminster Gazette*, June 19, 1913.

⁸⁹ First Annual Report of the Universities' Settlement in East London (Oxford, 1885), 5.

⁹⁰ Alfred Milner to Henrietta Barnett, 6 October 1917, A/TOY/006/021, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

considerable experience in the field of social work, before entering the settlement. Samuel Barnett was familiar with the East End from his work in St Jude's parish while his successor, Thomas Harvey, had previously served as warden of Chalfont House Settlement. Similarly, John St George Heath had been warden of the Neighbour Guilds Settlement at Sheffield and had worked as a lecturer at Woodbrooke settlement in Birmingham. He had also served as an official of the Workers' Educational Association, as a member of the British Committee of the International Association for Dealing with Unemployment, and as secretary of the Land Enquiry Committee. When Jimmy Mallon was appointed warden, it was announced that he possessed 'an intimate knowledge of settlement work'. He had served as treasurer of the Workers' Educational Association and had lectured at the London School of Economics. A Toynbee Hall report stated that leaders like Mallon were already entrenched in the settlement's network, and that his 'many friends among past and present residents and adherents of Toynbee Hall' welcomed his appointment.⁹¹

The settlements also offered work, society and affordable accommodation to men who were without a chosen profession or who were uncertain about the direction of their careers. This was the case for William Beveridge who opened his memoirs with the reflection: 'Four years at Oxford left me at twenty-two with no clear idea as to what I should do next.'⁹² After deciding not to pursue a legal profession, Beveridge claimed he had been indecisive: 'My New Year resolution of 1903 was purely negative – with no clear idea of what I should do instead of the bar.' He 'wrote vaguely of doing something in education and even more vaguely of getting into "some piece of government machinery, preferably local or municipal"'. He frankly acknowledged that his 'first

⁹¹ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1916-1919, 8.

⁹² Beveridge, *Power and Influence*, 9.

thoughts were not of Toynbee Hall'.⁹³ In July 1902, the Balliol don, W.H. Forbes, asked Beveridge if he would consider going to Toynbee Hall for a salaried post, but he declined. Instead, he decided to explore the field of education. However, he found that the Education Office was 'rather inaccessible without certain qualifications of teaching experience' and that this was the case for 'all reasonably good local work'.⁹⁴ It was at this point that Barnett offered him £200 a year to serve as sub-warden of Toynbee Hall, a role which Beveridge believed would be a useful qualification.

Like Beveridge, James Adderley felt a need for practical experience after graduating from university and before beginning his career. Before entering Oxford House, Adderley was daunted by the task of district visiting. He wrote: 'I shall never forget the terror I experienced when I first knocked at the doors in Pimlico to ask people to come to church.'⁹⁵ When he was placed in charge of a club for boys in St Alphege's parish in Southwark, Adderley felt ill-equipped for the position: 'Honestly, I was terrified by those boys, and I know that I did them no good whatever. I could not keep any order amongst them. How could I, straight from Christ Church?'⁹⁶ Adderley believed that Oxford House could provide him with skills in working with the poor.

The practicality of joining a settlement was often accompanied by a need for personal support or guidance felt by recent Oxbridge graduates. In *Life, Journalism and Politics: An Autobiography*, J.A. Spender presents his residency in Toynbee Hall as a temporary retreat from a disheartening lack of progress along his career path. Spender achieved a second in 'Greats' at Oxford, which he considered a 'downfall'.⁹⁷ According to Spender, it was part of the 'family compact'⁹⁸ that he would be provided for while he

⁹³ Ibid, 15.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 16.

⁹⁵ Adderley, *In Slums and Society*, 14.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 15.

⁹⁷ Spender, *Life, Journalism and Politics*, 27.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 25.

was at school or university, but he was expected to support himself afterwards. However, he felt his prospects were limited:

Failing a Fellowship, there was nothing to do at Oxford; the Bar was closed to the impecunious, and so far as my education fitted me for anything, all that remained seemed to be schoolmastering, which I could never think of as my work in life. In my last year at Oxford (1885), I often lay awake at night thinking out the problem and going round in a circle from which I saw no escape. That somehow, some day, I would earn my bread with my pen had become a fixed intention, but I saw no way of starting on it that would even keep me in pocket money for the next year or two.⁹⁹

Spender decided to pursue a career in journalism, but wrote that he received little encouragement from his parents who hoped to prepare their son for an academic career. Spender wrote: 'My uncle and godfather, Edward Spender, always said that I ought to be a journalist, but my father said sharply that I was not to listen to him.'¹⁰⁰ Benjamin Jowett at Balliol College advised Spender to go to the bar, but after graduating, Spender was instead employed by his uncle, William Saunders, to write for the *Eastern Morning News*. Saunders eventually dismissed him on the grounds that he was not suited to the position. After an introduction to Le Sage of the *Daily Telegraph* and an interview with him, Spender was invited to submit some leading articles for the consideration of the editor. However, he was again met with disappointment as he was told that his writing did not meet the standards of the newspaper. At this time, Spender questioned journalism as his future profession. He wrote in his memoirs that he had felt 'deeply dejected and in the gravest doubt whether I had not mistaken my vocation'.¹⁰¹ Spender put his name down at scholastic agencies for an immediate appointment. He did not believe that this was his vocation, but resignedly wrote that 'it would be bread and butter'. He later acknowledged that it was due to 'two friends who were inexhaustible in sympathy and encouragement'

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 6.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 30.

that he did not take this ‘line of retreat’.¹⁰² One of these friends was the historian, York Powell. The other was Samuel Barnett.

At Barnett’s invitation, Spender settled in Toynbee Hall in January 1886. In his memoirs, Spender described Toynbee Hall as an emotional lifeline, presenting the settlement as a space where he found the encouragement he had not received either at home or university. He reflected that Barnett encouraged his journalistic work and offered suggestions for his articles: ‘Again and again when I have been at a loss for ideas or subjects to write about, I have been to Barnett and come away refreshed and encouraged and ready to set to work again.’ He added: ‘What Barnett was to young men setting out in life can never be told.’¹⁰³

The way in which the settlement could be the making of a young man’s career is evident in the experiences of R.H. Tawney who, like Spender, experienced disappointment at Oxford. Tawney received a first class in Classical Moderations in 1901. Expected to graduate with a first class degree in Literae Humaniores (‘Greats’) as well, he took a second in the summer of 1903.¹⁰⁴ Tawney was profoundly disappointed as was his father who, after hearing of the result, apparently asked: ‘How do you propose to wipe out this disgrace?’¹⁰⁵ Tawney had hoped to pursue a fellowship at Oxford; now he had to find another avenue of employment. He dismissed the civil service as an alternative career path but briefly considered joining the Charity Organisation Society. Tawney’s quandary came to an end when Samuel Barnett (through his friend William Beveridge) suggested that he take on the role of secretary of the Children’s Country Holiday Fund, which was based at Toynbee Hall. Tawney accepted the position in 1903 and resided at Toynbee Hall for almost three years, returning as a resident briefly in late 1908 and in

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 46.

¹⁰⁴ Lawrence Goldman, *The Life of R.H. Tawney: Socialism and History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 22.

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in Anthony Wright, *R.H. Tawney* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 3.

1913.

In his recent biography, Lawrence Goldman argues that Tawney's failure to obtain a first class degree, by 'closing off one very obvious route, and pitching Tawney first into the life of the urban poor, and then into contact with the respectable working class', was in fact 'the making of him'.¹⁰⁶ Tawney was uncertain about his career when he left Oxford, but his residency at Toynbee Hall gave him time to think and to plan his future course. By September 1905, Tawney had decided that 'teaching economics in an industrial town is just what I want ultimately to do'.¹⁰⁷ Residency in East London likely impressed on Tawney the importance of educating the poorer classes. His association with children and their welfare in the Children's Country Holiday Fund, in particular, may have provided him with insights into the educational needs of the young. Tawney was keen to educate British workers to enable them to participate fully in society.

Tawney's residency at Toynbee Hall was an important episode preceding his career in working-class education. It was there that he had his first experience of lecturing to an adult audience. He lectured on social and economic topics, including the 'Social Aspects of Industry', 'Trade Unions (Principles)' and 'Cooperative Trading'. He also lectured with Beveridge on 'Social and Industrial Questions' and gave a course on 'British Political Institutions'.¹⁰⁸ As well as gaining this practical experience, Tawney forged some valuable social connections. Samuel Barnett became a mentor to Tawney during his residency and supported him in the progression of his career. Significantly, it was Barnett who introduced Tawney to Albert Mansbridge of the Workers' Educational Association, paving the way for Tawney's position as a tutor in university adult

¹⁰⁶ Goldman, *The Life of R.H. Tawney*, 24.

¹⁰⁷ Letter from R.H. Tawney to William Beveridge, 20 September 1905, Beveridge/2A/106, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics.

¹⁰⁸ Ross Terrill, *R.H. Tawney and his Times: Socialism as Fellowship* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 32.

education.¹⁰⁹ This position in turn, Goldman writes, ‘laid down many of the bases of his subsequent career: his focus on economic history, attachment to working people, commitment to socialism, and advocacy of universal education’.¹¹⁰ Tawney’s introduction to Mansbridge and the WEA through Barnett is typical of the social networking that occurred within the settlement houses and that furthered settlers’ careers.

Gathered Around the Tea-Table: Social Networking within the Settlements

Like clubs, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House were social centres. They both functioned as meeting places for Oxbridge students and graduates, particularly men who felt that their usual social circles were inadequate. Samuel Barnett felt that he had ‘made the mistake of using my time at Oxford to grind at books rather than to know men’.¹¹¹ This sense of missed opportunity was shared by an early Toynbee resident who wrote of the ‘unplumbed depths of pleasure we deny ourselves by enjoying only a few layers, and those often the shallow ones, of what is known as “Society”’.¹¹² The settlement houses also filled a void for university men. According to Werner Picht, some settlers, particularly younger ones, ‘willingly exchanged the inconvenience of living in a poor district for the release from a lonely bachelor existence’.¹¹³ These feelings of loneliness or regret contributed to the social agenda within Toynbee Hall and Oxford House.

¹⁰⁹ Terrill, *R.H. Tawney and his Times*, 37. The Workers’ Educational Association was discussed in Chapter 2, Settlement Pedagogy: The Role of Settlement Peers and Leaders in Shaping Residents, and Chapter 3, The Settlements’ Pedagogical Methods.

¹¹⁰ Lawrence Goldman, ‘Tawney, Richard Henry (1880–1962)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-36425?rskey=OdH3Ta&result=1> (accessed 29 September 2018). Tawney assumed a number of other educational positions throughout his career as an historian and political thinker. He was appointed as director of the Ratan Tata Foundation, established in association with the London School of Economics (LSE). He took up a teaching post at the LSE in 1920 where he became a reader in 1923 and professor of economic history in 1931. He was briefly a fellow of Balliol at the end of the First World War (1918–1921) and was elected an honorary fellow of the college in 1938. Tawney is also known for his work for the Labour party as an adviser, draftsman and propagandist.

¹¹¹ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:10.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 2:77.

¹¹³ Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, 103.

Upholding the philosophy that ‘everything passes by contact’, Samuel Barnett sought to create a settlement community, providing opportunities for men to meet and to widen their social circles.¹¹⁴ Oxford House, too, was a venue for introductions and social intercourse. James Adderley believed that settling could offer men more ‘varied’ society than the university. He remarked that public schools and universities were ‘too much of one type’ and that a ‘very great deal has to be unlearned before an Eton and Oxford man makes a good parson’.¹¹⁵

As we have already seen, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House each sought to ‘make’ a certain type of resident within a largely masculine sphere. On most occasions, Toynbee Hall promoted wide social networking, but when Samuel Barnett wanted to bring men closer together within the settlement house, he believed in excluding women, asserting that they were ‘too distracting for each other as well as for the men’. Toynbee Hall’s ‘Pals parties’, as they were called, excluded women entirely.¹¹⁶ Oxford House had a more distinctly all-male character than Toynbee Hall, forming few ties with female associates. Due to such gender restrictions, homosocial institutions like the settlement houses were at times criticised in the contemporary press for disrupting or threatening the traditional domestic sphere and men’s relations with women. These concerns were raised by one writer in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1886 who suggested that communal residency constituted a danger to home life: ‘There can be no home in which there is no marriage and the test by which the new social arrangements will be judged will be the extent to which they facilitate and multiply opportunities for the free and open association and friendship of men and women.’ The author insisted: ‘What we want is not barracks but homes.’¹¹⁷ Despite such concerns, many Toynbee Hall settlers married, including J.A.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 95.

¹¹⁵ Adderley, *In Slums and Society*, 228.

¹¹⁶ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:78.

¹¹⁷ ‘Communism in the Home’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, September 9, 1886, 1.

Spender who was residing in Toynbee Hall when he met his future wife. They were married in the East End.¹¹⁸ Increasingly, Toynbee Hall catered for the needs of married men. After World War One, Balliol House was renovated to serve as married quarters for the settlement.

Socialising was a significant component of settlement life (see Figure 23). The social activity of Oxford House was largely focused on its working-class clubs where settlers could also spend their evenings. Toynbee Hall, particularly under the Barnetts, hosted a wider variety of functions. The importance of entertainment in Toynbee Hall is reflected in the news bulletins and financial details found in the settlement's annual reports. Under Barnett's wardenship, entertainment involved an expenditure of several hundred pounds a year – nearly as much as the settlement's educational work. In 1886, for example, an appeal was made for a sum of £400.¹¹⁹ The needs of the Entertainment Fund were estimated at £250 per annum in 1904.¹²⁰ The settlement arranged entertainments and parties or, more commonly, simpler and more informal social gatherings which had the sole purpose of bringing men together. One evening a week was set aside as a 'guest night' which visitors from both the East End and the West End could attend.¹²¹ These informal events took place in a domestic setting. As Samuel Barnett remarked: 'St Jude's and Toynbee Hall and the Exhibition are all built on my wife's tea-table.'¹²² The drawing room, Henrietta Barnett wrote, was designed to lend itself to conversation, furnished with settees, low lounge chairs and small, easily moved stools. Like her husband, she characterised these social meetings by drawing upon the symbol of her 'little tea-table surrounded by lecturers, residents, associates, and old friends'. She called them 'delightful opportunities for introductions between delightful people, and

¹¹⁸ Spender, *Life, Journalism and Politics*, 30.

¹¹⁹ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 73.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 101.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 50.

¹²² Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:115.



Figure 23: A Reception in the Toynbee Hall Drawing Room. Robert Woods, 'The Social Awakening in London', *Scribners* (1892), 411.

ever wider became friendship's circles'.¹²³

Toynbee Hall was a more notable venture among contemporaries than Oxford House. Its networking circles were correspondingly larger and more prestigious. Settlement gatherings at Toynbee Hall were intended to be opportunities for networking among pre-eminent social and political figures, fellow settlers and working men. Settlement leaders encouraged the intermingling of people of different backgrounds. This was a tradition that continued into the twentieth century. To introduce new friends at Toynbee Hall, for example, Jimmy Mallon organised 'at homes' on Tuesday evenings. Politicians, trade unionists, groups of employers, local school teachers, welfare workers, leaders of the scout movement and other groups attended them by invitation. Neighbours from adjoining tenements were encouraged to 'drop in' when they liked.¹²⁴ Henrietta Barnett recalled her husband arranging seating plans for Toynbee parties to extend settlers' connections as much as possible: 'He did it always sitting on the floor, moving slips with the guests' names into their places round the great horse-shoe table. Subtle was his sympathy and sometimes wicked was his enjoyment in bringing the widely sundered together.'¹²⁵ Guests from 'normal refined homes' were included to enable residents to 'enjoy the domestic society of their peers'.¹²⁶ One guest list for a Toynbee dinner party included men and women of title and leading figures in their profession, such as Benjamin Jowett, Walter Besant, Herbert Asquith, the Duke of Devonshire, Herbert Spencer, William Morris, Ben Tillett, Lady Battersea, Lord Goschen, Lord Bryce and Octavia Hill.¹²⁷

In their writings, settlers often listed some of the acquaintances they made. Jimmy Mallon, for example, recorded that he met the economist and historian, G.D.H. Cole, at

¹²³ Ibid, 1:358.

¹²⁴ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1926, 20.

¹²⁵ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:82.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 2:35.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 1:216.

the warden's lodge in 1914.¹²⁸ Although the occasion was not officially recorded by the settlement, William Bowman, a former Balliol House resident, recorded an occasion in 1902 when Vladimir Lenin attended a debate on 'Our Foreign Policy'. Writing in 1957, Bowman recalled: 'There were half a dozen East Enders present, including a stranger who, although shabby, was rather better dressed than his colleagues. Afterwards, I learned that he was called Richter, and although we did not know it, it was, in fact, Lenin.'¹²⁹ Bowman claimed that Lenin participated in the discussion, offering a scathing comment on British Christian missions abroad:

What is the use of you coming to the East End and talking about your foreign policy? Who there understands or cares about it? Go down to Limehouse or Shadwell and see how the people live. Their slums, bad food, low wages, impoverishment, degradation and prostitution! That's where your foreign policy should lie. They are the victims of your capitalist organisation which is just as powerful and cruel as the force of arms. What does your Government's foreign policy consist of? I'll tell you. You, together with other capitalist nations, look round the world until you find a delectable place and then you send your Christian missionaries out there. They preach to the natives, 'Dear brother', they say, 'there is nothing on this earth worth living for. Look to Heaven and prepare to wear the golden crown and play the harp that awaits you'. Then, when you have got the poor black man looking into the heavens, you send your armies and you take their land away from them. That's your foreign policy!¹³⁰

Because Bowman recorded this anecdote more than 50 years after the event, the above dialogue cannot be regarded as a verbatim account. Nevertheless, Lenin's presence within the settlement house indicates Toynbee Hall's status as a hub for a variety of visitors. Another notable settlement guest was Mohandas Gandhi who delivered an impromptu speech at Oxford House during his visit to the Round Table Conference in Britain in 1931.¹³¹

Toynbee Hall and Oxford House sought to achieve a 'social blending of East and

¹²⁸ James Mallon, 'Introduction', in Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, xii.

¹²⁹ William Bowman, 'Lenin in London', *Contemporary Review* (June 1957), 336.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Harriet Salisbury, *The War on our Doorstep: London's East End and how the Blitz Changed it Forever* (London: Ebury, 2012), 97.

West' London in the settlement and settlers were encouraged to engage with poorer visitors.¹³² Samuel Barnett observed in 1879: 'There is nothing which people find so interesting as their fellow-creatures. It is in company that most among us find our amusement and enlarge our minds.'¹³³ Henrietta Barnett's account of Cyril Jackson's farewell party in 1896 as he prepared to leave the settlement for Australia illustrates some of the connections that residents could form with East Enders. Henrietta recorded how Jackson comfortably welcomed East End visitors to the settlement on this occasion with greetings such as 'Ah, Jim! That's right, you managed to get away?', 'What, Will, come without the Missus?' and 'Better, I see, Mrs. Jones. I am glad'. Such casual conversation reflected his friendship with East Enders.¹³⁴ Such interactions could, however, be tinged with varying levels of condescension. According to James Adderley, settling provided men with an opportunity to interact with 'typical specimens of the upper grade of the East End society'.¹³⁵ For one early resident, the juxtaposition of social classes was a source of much amusement:

Do you remember the time when my aunts came to dine with me at one of the Toynbee dinners, and my anxiety when I found one of the dear old ladies was seated next to a radical pawnbroker? It went off all right. But it was high comedy to see the Tory old lady, with her white hair and refined features, looking like a French 'Marquise de l'ancien regime', unbending to her plebeian neighbour, as she found him well-behaved and well-informed.¹³⁶

This resident's obvious merriment reflects the light-hearted, personal and informal nature of the 'tea-table' networking within the settlements. While this man seems to have regarded this social occasion primarily as a source of entertainment, settlement networking could also have a more significant influence on residents. Toynbee Hall's

¹³² Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:216.

¹³³ Samuel Barnett, *Worship and Work: Thoughts from the Unpublished Writings of the Late Canon S.A. Barnett*, ed. Henrietta Barnett (Letchworth: Garden City Press, 1913), 82.

¹³⁴ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:87.

¹³⁵ Oxford House, Annual Report, 1886, 5.

¹³⁶ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:77-78.

1897 annual report stated that the settlements were sites where ‘simply and naturally, without undue conventional restraints and wearying etiquette’, settlers could form friendships.¹³⁷ Henrietta Barnett referred to the ‘hotel side’ of Toynbee Hall as residents invited family members, friends or colleagues to the settlement.¹³⁸ Settlements leaders believed that this social life of the settlements had the potential to encourage and enthuse settlers as they were able to discuss their aims and widen their interests. They often commented on the emotive or ‘spiritual’ effects of the settlements. Samuel Barnett, for example, believed that ‘through intercourse comes friendship, through friendship comes love of men, and through love of men comes love of God’. Robert Woods, a visitor to Toynbee Hall, similarly referred to the ‘educational fellowship’ of the settlement and the ‘Christian motive behind it’.¹³⁹

The settlement houses provided men with social and emotional support as they planned or commenced their careers. J.A. Spender wrote of the ‘delightful companionship’ found within Toynbee Hall, while James Adderley later recalled his ‘very happy time’ in Oxford House where he formed many ‘lasting friendships’.¹⁴⁰ One resident reflected that it was ‘very refreshing after a strenuous week amid depressing surroundings to accept Mrs. Barnett’s and the Warden’s Monday invitations’. He recalled the ‘beautiful drawing-room’, the welcomes he received, the refreshments, and the ‘first-rate common talk on a previously settled subject’.¹⁴¹ Another man reflected upon the social dialogue within Toynbee Hall which not only held ‘entrancing interest’ for an evening, but which also carried other ‘significant potentialities’. He asked: ‘Who can calculate how many of the ideas and aspirations thrown across the room in one of our hostess’s bursts of enthusiastic insight, or intersected in one of the Warden’s epigrams,

¹³⁷ Ibid, 2:83.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 2:46.

¹³⁹ See Ibid, 2:38.

¹⁴⁰ Spender, *Life, Journalism and Politics*, 30; Adderley, *In Slums and Society*, 19.

¹⁴¹ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:63.

has not found its way on to the Statute book or into the region of practical politics?’ He added that in ‘his sphere’ he was able to ‘trace more than one result of those Monday evening talks’.¹⁴² As this resident suggested, settling could be a pragmatic activity that could influence the later careers of young men. After all, a key characteristic of a social or political club is the forging of new contacts.

Professional Networking

Despite warnings against cynical careering, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men used settlement networks in a highly practical way which had the potential to advance their professional life. As Sergeant Gardner of the Royal Engineers wrote to Mallon, ‘the word “Toynbee Hall” was an open sesame in every circle’.¹⁴³ Most residents viewed their work in the settlements as a temporary job rather than as a permanent career. The average length of residence in the settlements was two years and, for men seeking to achieve prominence in public life, this was a time to forge connections and further practical skills. When he graduated from Oxford in 1905, John St George Heath, who later became a Toynbee warden, wrote to William Beveridge, then sub-warden of Toynbee Hall, seeking his advice on participating in the settlement movement. His remarks illustrate that, while he had no fixed career in mind, he viewed settling as a career opportunity. He believed it would increase his knowledge of social problems and develop his leadership skills. Heath wrote:

I meant to stay up at Oxford a fifth year and take history but I have just received an offer which tempts me very much. Some of the residents in the West End of Sheffield, (principally business people but some connected with the University) are starting a settlement or Hall, something on the lines of Toynbee and have

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Quoted in Asa Briggs and Anne Macartney, *Toynbee Hall: The First Hundred Years* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), 130.

asked me to become the first Warden . . . I should have a great deal of initiative, more than I could hope to get elsewhere, at the age of twenty three . . . All that I want is to make myself more or less master of the social problems and this seems to me an excellent way of doing so.¹⁴⁴

Heath followed Beveridge's example, becoming warden of the Neighbourhood Guild Settlement in Sheffield. When he requested advice from Beveridge, a fellow settler, Heath was using a networking system which was present within the settlement movement.

The Toynbee Hall and Oxford House networks operated in various ways, including through connections formed amongst peers. During his two-year sub-wardenship of Toynbee Hall, Beveridge was part of a peer-to-peer network. Beveridge formed friendships with some of the residents he met at Toynbee Hall, staying on close terms with some of them for the rest of his life. His friends included R.H. Tawney, H.S. Lewis and Henry Ward. As he had anticipated when he entered the settlement, Beveridge found Toynbee Hall useful. During his residency, he met various reformers, many of whom advocated state action to address social problems. He was particularly inspired by Sidney and Beatrice Webb and their proposals for a national minimum wage.¹⁴⁵ When Beveridge was invited to join the editorial staff of the *Morning Post*, Samuel Barnett urged him to accept. At the time, Beveridge believed (wrongly) that Barnett had suggested his name, but he had in fact been recommended by Edward Caird, the Master of Balliol.¹⁴⁶ That Beveridge thought Barnett was responsible for his new position is evidence of the influence the settlement could have on a man's career.

Having secured the post, Beveridge decided to leave Toynbee Hall. However, he regarded his new position as a means of furthering the influence of the settlement and its

¹⁴⁴ John St. George Heath to William Beveridge, n.d, Beveridge/2B/4, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics.

¹⁴⁵ Beveridge, *Power and Influence*, 70.

¹⁴⁶ José Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 96.

efforts to reform the upper classes. According to Beveridge, Fabian Ware, the editor of the newspaper, wanted *The Morning Post* to be ‘an independent organ for moving the intellectual part of the wealthy classes’. Fabian, he wrote, ‘believes them to be all patriots at heart, willing to do their duty in social matters if only it is brought home to them’. Beveridge’s comments on his new role illustrate that he intended to continue Toynbee Hall’s mission to the rich: ‘It is a great opportunity to preach to the comfortable classes doctrine which they couldn’t stand for a moment in the *Daily News* or the *Daily Chronicle*.’ Beveridge wrote enthusiastically to his mother: ‘Just think of the people I should see and the wisdom I, and the Canon through me, should pump into the comfortable public about the Poor Law, Trade Union Law, Unemployed, Garden Cities and Decentralisation.’¹⁴⁷

The results of Beveridge’s networking within Toynbee circles became clear in 1907 when he was introduced by the Webbs to Winston Churchill, the newly appointed president of the Board of Trade. It was after this meeting that Churchill invited Beveridge to join the Board as his personal assistant. Due to his time at Toynbee Hall, Beveridge already knew Hubert Llewellyn Smith, his superior at the Board of Trade.¹⁴⁸ He also enabled at least three other Toynbee men to enter the civil service. Wilfred Blakiston arrived in Toynbee Hall ‘undecided about his career’, but with Beveridge’s encouragement, he joined the Board of Trade and later worked in the Ministry of Labour.¹⁴⁹ Joseph Nicholson was invited by Beveridge to join the department of labour exchanges in 1910. Edward Bligh, who joined Toynbee Hall with an interest in social problems but no firm plans for his career, also joined the Board of Trade at Beveridge’s

¹⁴⁷ Letters from William Beveridge to Annette Beveridge, 25 and 27 October 1905, Beveridge/2A/51, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics.

¹⁴⁸ José Harris, ‘Beveridge, William Henry, Baron Beveridge (1879–1963)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-31871?rskey=F456zt&result=3> (accessed 29 September 2018).

¹⁴⁹ Letter from Mary Blakiston, 1 May 1967; cited in Abel, ‘Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall’, 145.

behest.¹⁵⁰

Similar Toynbee networking was evident in various departments of the British civil service. In 1895, the Toynbee Hall settler and educationalist, Robert Morant, secured an appointment as an assistant to Sir Michael Sadler, the director of the Office of Special Enquiries and Reports in the education department. He had been personally recommended to the office by Samuel Barnett. Morant rose to become the acting permanent secretary of the Board of Education, and in April 1903 he fully assumed the post. J.A.R. Pimlott noted that Morant's superiors and colleagues in the education department in the 1890s included at least three who were prominently associated with Toynbee Hall: Arthur Acland, Sir John Gorst and Michael Sadler.¹⁵¹ These networks enabled some ex-settlers, such as Herbert Henderson, Theodore Chaundy, Eldred Hitchcock and John St George Heath, to obtain positions in the civil service without previous experience. Pimlott argued that 'men such as these were greatly assisted by the fact that their colleagues in other departments had often been directly or indirectly associated with Toynbee Hall'. Hitchcock, for example, was chairman of the committee on Wool Textile Prices and Costs of Clothing to which Claud Guillebaud, another resident, acted as secretary.¹⁵²

The settlements' peer-to-peer networks were extensive and could assist men in obtaining positions in both Britain and its empire. Alfred Milner, for example, drew upon his Oxford associations, including his connection with Toynbee Hall, to select members for his 'Kindergarten' when he was the High Commissioner in South Africa and Governor of Cape Colony between 1897 and 1905. Patrick Duncan of Balliol College, who became a senior member of Milner's group as Colonial Secretary in the Transvaal, was a former Toynbee resident. Richard Feetham, one of the lawyers selected by Milner,

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Sir S.C. Bligh, 6 April 1967, conducted by Emily Abel; see 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', 145.

¹⁵¹ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 52.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, 190.

was also a Toynbee Hall man.¹⁵³ The educationalist, Edmund Sargant, forged a connection with Alfred Milner, which dated back to his early work in Toynbee Hall. Aware of Sargant's educational interests and experience in the slums of East London, Milner invited him to help in the 'organisation of education in the colonies'.¹⁵⁴ Sargant accepted and in 1900 became Director of Education for the Transvaal and Orange River Colony¹⁵⁵, joining Milner's informal club of colonial administrators and political activists in southern Africa. Referred to as Milner's 'kindergarten' because of their youth, these men often forged close friendships.¹⁵⁶ Living together in or around 'Moot House' they held regular meetings to discuss social reform and imperial policies. Milner's offer began a new phase in Sargant's career and established a clear link between his work in London's East End and his efforts to establish a national education system in South Africa.¹⁵⁷ When Sargant accepted Milner's offer, *The Toynbee Record* celebrated the news:

Mr Sargant, before leaving for South Africa on May 16th, met a party of old residents and other friends, at the invitation of Canon and Mrs Barnett ... He gave a short account of his scheme for leading public schools to establish daughter schools in the colonies . . . His old friends felt his power, and agreed together that his inspiration would get over many difficulties and fill out from various instruments for the best sort of empire making. It is gratifying to know that many lessons he learnt in Whitechapel, eighteen years ago, are now found applicable in South Africa.¹⁵⁸

This announcement highlighted that Edmund Sargant's settlement work was a

¹⁵³ Milner's Kindergarten included J.F. Perry, Lionel Curtis, Basil Williams, Patrick Duncan, John Buchan, Hugh Wyndham, Geoffrey Robinson, Lionel Hitchens, Philip Kerr and D. Malcolm. For an examination of the Kindergarten, see Walter Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men: The Kindergarten in Edwardian Imperial Affairs* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1968).

¹⁵⁴ L.S. Amery, ed, *The Times History of the War in South Africa, 1899–1902* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co., 1909), 12.

¹⁵⁵ A.K. Bot, *The Development of Education in the Transvaal, 1836–1951* (Transvaal Education Department, 1951), 40.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 44.

¹⁵⁷ Philip Gardner, "'There and not Seen': E.B. Sargant and Educational Reform, 1884–1905", *History of Education: Journal of the History of Education Society* 33, no. 6 (2004), 626.

¹⁵⁸ *The Toynbee Record* 15, no.9 (June 1903), 112.

prelude to broader imperial schemes. Barnett's description of 'daughter schools in the colonies' refers to Sargant's aim to extend the influence of English public schools and colleges to the British Empire. By establishing settlements, Sargant wrote, 'the colonial youth' could be trained 'for the service of our daughter states'.¹⁵⁹ After Sargant accepted the post of Education Adviser to the High Commissioner for South Africa in August 1903, Barnett again reported on Sargant's imperial ambitions, writing that Sargant was 'busy trying to induce the old public schools to start "settlements" of themselves in the colonies'.¹⁶⁰ This remark suggests that Sargant's work at Toynbee Hall inspired his subsequent educational endeavours abroad. Just as public school and college graduates formed settlements to educate the poor in East London, Sargant urged them to 'settle' in South Africa.

As well as associating with their peers, residents forged contacts with settlement leaders. Samuel Barnett, in particular, became a mentor to men who showed potential, introducing them to influential public figures and actively encouraging them in their prospective careers. In a letter to his brother in 1902, Samuel Barnett noted that he had been interviewing 'three coming men', including a Toynbee man, Charles Grinling. He wrote: 'All are at a loose end, waiting for a call. To each I have suggested Parliament in the future. They could get workmen's votes and be true.'¹⁶¹ Samuel Barnett's name was one of the most frequently cited in settlers' networking circles. One writer in a Toynbee report stated that Barnett was 'constantly urging men on to fresh enterprises, and bidding them try new roads'.¹⁶² William Beveridge, too, credited Barnett with the ability to recognise an individual's particular strengths. Writing about the appointment of Thomas

¹⁵⁹ See 'Public School and College Extension throughout the Empire', *The Times*, April 23, 1903, 4.

¹⁶⁰ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:188.

¹⁶¹ Letter from Samuel Barnett to Frank Barnett, 1902, F/BAR/281, Samuel Barnett Papers, London Metropolitan Archives. The 1867 Reform Act had given the vote to urban working men (who met a one-year residential qualification) and lodgers (who paid an annual rent of £10). See J.F.C. Harrison, *Late Victorian Britain, 1875-1901* (Routledge, 2013), 22.

¹⁶² Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1912, 22.

Harvey as Deputy Warden in July 1904, he called Barnett ‘a wise old bird’ for knowing that men should undertake settlement work which matched their interests and skills.

Barnett, Beveridge acknowledged, ‘realised almost at once that I was not the stuff of which a Warden could be made’.¹⁶³ The type of advice Barnett offered is seen in the following letter he penned to a Toynbee resident in 1899:

I have been meditating on your letter. First of all I put your career. From the beginning I have felt that Toynbee Hall ought not to take men off the lines of their life, but enable them to run better on them. If, therefore, you aim to be an inspector, I think these posts offer good training . . . But now as to Toynbee Hall, I should miss you much if you left, and I think Northey Street, the Economic Club, and Poor Law Boys would suffer. I think this so strongly and believe you care so much for these things that I should hesitate to advise you to go . . . if it meant giving up residence. I gather it does not, and that in fact you would be doing Toynbee Hall work as an official. On the whole I advise you to apply. Tell me if I can do anything . . . I think your experience fits you for what is wanted, and I am sure social work is better done by people who are, as I said, on the lines of a career.¹⁶⁴

Many Toynbee men praised Samuel Barnett for his guidance. Arthur Pillans Laurie, a Toynbee Hall resident, named him as one of the ‘five personalities to whom I owe much, and who have profoundly influenced me’. Laurie’s other sources of inspiration included his father; Professor Tait of Edinburgh University; William Holman Hunt, the English painter and one of the founders of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood; and the British Liberal politician and statesman, David Lloyd George.¹⁶⁵ Similarly, Edward Harold Spender wrote: ‘Barnett exercised for a whole generation a deep and abiding influence over the picked men of England and at the present moment our Civil Service and public life are penetrated by men who fall under his sway.’¹⁶⁶ Henry Nevinston, a volunteer at Toynbee Hall during its early years, claimed: ‘We made him our pattern to

¹⁶³ Beveridge, *Power and Influence*, 37.

¹⁶⁴ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:125-126.

¹⁶⁵ Laurie, *Pictures and Politics*, 6.

¹⁶⁶ Edward Harold Spender, *The Fire of Life: A Book of Memories* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1926), 69.

live and to die, though we did so without the smallest success.’¹⁶⁷ Pimlott states that Barnett ‘did not simply mould individuals. He helped to mould a generation’. Pimlott wrote in his account of Toynbee Hall:

Barnett was the ideal warden. This was due not only to his unrivalled knowledge of the district and of social problems and his invaluable contacts with the various social agencies of the neighbourhood . . . but most of all to his possession of a unique and invaluable gift for inspiring and directing men . . . The number of those since distinguished who have acknowledged their debt to Barnett’s inspiration is remarkable.¹⁶⁸

The experiences of John St George Heath, the warden of Toynbee Hall from 1914 to 1917, illustrate that networking could assist not only residents, but also settlement leaders themselves. Heath faced difficulties in running the Toynbee Hall settlement in Poplar during the First World War, but he had the support of Alfred Milner who was the chairman of the Toynbee Council. Pimlott records that when the Poplar experiment came to an end, Milner obtained a position for Heath in the Ministry of Labour.¹⁶⁹ According to Pimlott, his appointment was not made without some inquiry: ‘A question was asked in the House of Commons as to the appointment of a declared pacifist and a conscientious objector of military age, but the answer given was that his services were indispensable and that he had been invited to join the department because of his exceptional qualifications.’¹⁷⁰

The sharing of practical experience was central to the Toynbee Hall and Oxford House networks. It was in this way that James Adderley felt that he had influenced the future prospects of two of his fellow settlers, Herbert Henson and Cosmo Lang. As he wrote in his memoirs: ‘I always flatter myself that I had something to do with the shaping

¹⁶⁷ Henry Nevinston, *Changes and Chances* (London: Nisbet, 1923), 87.

¹⁶⁸ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 45.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 198.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 198-199.

of the careers of those two men.’¹⁷¹ Adderley wrote that he ‘started Henson on his combative career’ by sending him one Sunday evening to debate at the Hall of Science on ‘Christianity and Slavery’. Henson, ‘having tasted blood’, later took to fighting secularists. Adderley wrote: ‘He has continued to fight everybody in turn since – Dissenters, Church Army, Salvation Army, High Church Bishops, Christian Socialists [and] Army chaplains.’¹⁷² Cosmo Lang, too, was mentored by Adderley whom he met at a Sunday afternoon lecture at Oxford House. At this time, Lang was studying for the Bar and residing at Toynbee Hall. Adderley invited Lang to give some addresses to men in a mission hall. Cosmo Lang eventually served as Archbishop of York (1908-1928) and Archbishop of Canterbury (1938-1942). However, Adderley believed that Lang’s time in the East End, including his opportunities to speak on behalf of Oxford House, inspired his religious aspirations.¹⁷³ Adderley reported that Cosmo Lang

used to say that it was that which set him thinking, and eventually caused him (I do not say it was the only cause!) to join the Church of England and prepare for Holy Orders. Little did I think that not many years later I should be with him at Portsea a few days after he had received the King’s call to be a Bishop. He was soon afterwards confirmed and ordained.¹⁷⁴

The fact that Adderley met Cosmo Lang, a Toynbee man, at Oxford House illustrates that networks formed not only within, but also between, the two settlements. Although the ethos, aims and methods of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House diverged due to their religious differences, there appears to have been no feelings of antagonism at this time. James Adderley observed that the Oxford House approach to religion was very different from that of Toynbee Hall, but added that ‘in those Oxford House days we did not trouble ourselves much about theological quarrels’. He added: ‘We called ourselves

¹⁷¹ Adderley, *In Slums and Society*, 19.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid, 22.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 20.

“Church of England” and worked in connection with the parish churches of the neighbourhood.¹⁷⁵ In reference to a joint meeting of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House which was held to ‘advocate the claims of the poor’, the Barnetts also noted that there was no antagonism between the two settlements.¹⁷⁶

Networking beyond the Settlements

Just as membership of a club is often temporary, residency in Toynbee Hall and Oxford House was usually brief. Departure from the settlement houses was sometimes depicted as a form of graduation. After choosing to be ordained, James Adderley left Oxford House in 1887. He wrote: ‘I could never have settled down as a conventional parson at the head of a University Settlement. I wanted more independence.’¹⁷⁷ Arthur Laurie wrote of a similar need for independence, observing that Samuel Barnett ‘never interfered with us and let us follow very much our own ideas’.¹⁷⁸ Despite this evident desire for more freedom, both men retained contact with the settlement houses. Adderley’s successor, Herbert Henson, was an ‘old friend’ and Adderley corresponded with Henson almost every week after the latter was appointed to Oxford House.¹⁷⁹

Some former residents did not entirely depart from the communal lifestyle that they had experienced in the East End. In his study of the English settlement movement, Werner Picht imagined a ‘hopeful experiment’ whereby the ‘best and most enthusiastic social workers’ produced by the settlement houses would settle down in the neighbourhood at the end of their ‘training-period’. Picht proposed that by visiting the settlement regularly these men could share their knowledge and experience of the East

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 47-48.

¹⁷⁶ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:30.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 56.

¹⁷⁸ Laurie, *Pictures and Politics*, 72.

¹⁷⁹ Adderley, *In Slums and Society*, 60.

End with current residents, forming a link between the settlement house and its surroundings. Although Picht wrote that this networking strategy had ‘not yet been tried’ in a formal sense, the type of system he envisaged was evident among some settlement alumni.¹⁸⁰ On leaving Toynbee Hall and Oxford House, some settlers re-grouped to work in other parts of the East End, choosing to live together in lodgings or in model dwellings. Arthur Stevenson, a Toynbee associate, went to live with the librarian of Toynbee Hall, while Arthur Laurie moved into a house in Stepney Green with a few friends, explaining: ‘We liked East London, we had friends and interests there.’¹⁸¹

Some men continued to support the settlement after their residency. Clement Attlee resided at Toynbee Hall only briefly (from August 1909 until May 1910), but he remained interested in its work. In 1945, when he was Prime Minister, Attlee was named the settlement’s president, a position which was, according to the annual report of that year, welcomed with ‘immense pleasure and pride’.¹⁸² During this time, Attlee worked alongside his close friend and warden of Toynbee Hall, Jimmy Mallon. He maintained his links with the settlement until the end of his life.

Other men who had moved away from the settlement houses were welcome to return as visitors. After Samuel Barnett resigned the Toynbee wardenship in 1906, he and Henrietta retained contact with the settlement. In 1906, a writer in the *Toynbee Record* assured his readers that the Barnetts’ departure had left ‘no sense of separation’.¹⁸³ After she was widowed in 1913, Henrietta Barnett maintained contact with the settlement, contributing to its work until her own death in 1936. Settlement alumni also interacted at formal reunions. Henrietta noted that Toynbee men usually ‘kept in close touch’ with the settlement. In 1905, the members of the committee who were involved in the foundation

¹⁸⁰ Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, 135.

¹⁸¹ Laurie, *Pictures and Politics*, 73-74.

¹⁸² Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1939-1946, 27.

¹⁸³ *Toynbee Record*, July-September, 1906, 1.

of Toynbee Hall were invited to a party to celebrate the 'end of the 21st year'.¹⁸⁴ Toynbee Hall also held a party on 'Founder's Day' each year on the 8th of February (Samuel Barnett's birthday) until poor health in 1912 and 1913 prevented Barnett from attending. Current and former residents and associates were invited to these celebrations and, as settlement alumni married, their wives were also included. On Founder's Day in 1903, Samuel Barnett announced: 'Visitors have again and again testified how they have felt elevated by their visit as they have realised the lively peace of the House. Many men have formed here their lifelong friendships.'¹⁸⁵ On 8 February 1907, C. H. Grinling, one of the first Toynbee residents, sent his apologies that he was unable to attend the Founder's Day celebrations at the settlement. He wrote:

May the true spirit of comradeship be amongst you all tonight! Some of us absent ones will be with you in spirit. It seems to me like yesterday when I started a charcoal brazier in the middle of three rooms on the left hand after you get upstairs, to have a place ready to sleep in at the Hall before the Christmas of 1884. That was the first room occupied, and H. D. Leigh and I had porridge there the next morning.¹⁸⁶

Some alumni used the Toynbee Hall or Oxford House networks to aid them in their chosen work. For example, Arthur Laurie and Arthur Stevenson teamed up to purchase a weekend residence in Loughton where they established a club and a theatre for village boys.¹⁸⁷ When C.R. Ashbee left Toynbee Hall to establish a school to train young men and boys in arts and crafts, he too, found support among his fellow settlers. His Guild and School of Handicraft was formally opened on 23 June 1888 on the top floor of a warehouse in Commercial Street, close to Toynbee Hall. Ashbee was its Honorary Director and he recruited Toynbee Hall men to serve on the Guild's governing committee, including Arthur Laurie, Hubert Llewelyn Smith, Hugh Fairfax-Cholmeley and Arthur

¹⁸⁴ Briggs and Macartney, *Toynbee Hall*, 81.

¹⁸⁵ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:88-89.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 90.

¹⁸⁷ Laurie, *Pictures and Politics*, 80-81.

Rogers. In May 1889, the Guild moved to Essex House in Mile End.¹⁸⁸

Former settlers also interacted with current residents. One group of former Toynbee men visited the settlement during William Beveridge's sub-wardenship, providing him with important evidence about social conditions that he was researching. Among them were Hubert Llewellyn Smith of the Board of Trade; George Bruce and Cyril Jackson of the London School Board; Thomas Hancock Nunn who was closely involved with the Charity Organisation Society; and the barrister, Richard Kittle, who had given up legal practice to devote his time to the children and schools of East London.¹⁸⁹ Llewellyn Smith also drew upon settlement contacts for his research. Residents assisted him in preparing the first volume of a *New Survey of London Life and Labour* which he completed in 1930.¹⁹⁰ In 1898, he published a book called *Through the High Pyrenees* which was co-authored by another ex-resident, Edward Harold Spender.¹⁹¹

‘The Great Turning Point in my Career’: Settling as a Vocational Milestone

As career advancement was such a significant aspect of their appeal to residents, it is not surprising that the settlements deliberately emphasised their role in inspiring and preparing men for their future positions. According to the *Oxford House Chronicle*, one ex-resident had appropriated settlement ideas in his subsequent work with the Grahamstown Railway Mission in South Africa, where he was attempting to start a bible class for men that would be just ‘like the Tuesday Evening Classes at Oxford House’.¹⁹² Similarly, in 1901, when the *Chronicle* announced that the Oxford House settler, Arthur

¹⁸⁸ See C.R. Ashbee's history of the School and Guild of Handicraft, *Endeavour Towards the Teaching of John Ruskin and William Morris* (London: E. Arnold, 1901).

¹⁸⁹ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 136.

¹⁹⁰ See *The New Survey of London Life and Labour* (London: P.S. King and Son, 1930-1935).

¹⁹¹ Hubert Llewellyn Smith and Edward Harold Spender, *Through the High Pyrenees* (London: A.D. Innes and Co., 1898).

¹⁹² ‘Notes of the Month’, *Oxford House Chronicle* 14, no.1 (January 1900), 2.

Chandler, had been appointed Bishop of Bloemfontein in South Africa, it declared that 'East London gives to South Africa a Bishop who is at once a scholar, an experienced and very hard-working clergyman, an able organiser, and a zealous missionary'.¹⁹³ Similar claims were issued by Toynbee Hall about its residents and ex-residents as they pursued more secular lines of work. J.A.R. Pimlott referred to the 'quality of the residents', particularly under Thomas Harvey's wardenship when settlers included R.H. Tawney, and the founders of the Toynbee troop of scouts, Archibald Hogarth and Theodore Lukis. Like the *Oxford House Chronicle*, Pimlott highlighted the settlement's role in shaping these men, remarking: 'It is doubtful whether any Oxford or Cambridge college, much less any other settlement, could have produced a more brilliant and promising collection of young men than the residents of 1909.'¹⁹⁴ Pimlott implied that the settlement had been the 'making' of such men.

The emphasis on the role settlement houses played in the shaping of men's future careers can to some extent be attributed to a literary technique used by memoirists to identify some 'turning point' that changed the direction of their personal or professional life. However, the frequency of these remarks supports the argument that has been made in this chapter – that settling could, and did, advance men's careers. The vocational benefits of settling are frequently highlighted in surviving records.

Many settlers suggested that residing in the East End raised their social profile. Samuel Barnett argued that the positions men assumed in their settlement work, including roles in local government, on committees or in clubs, 'served chiefly as the means by which they have got to know and be known'.¹⁹⁵ This was the case for Arthur Laurie who listed some of the contacts he made in his autobiography, including: 'Llewellyn Smith, afterwards Secretary to the Board of Trade, Arthur Rogers, son of Professor Thorold

¹⁹³ *Oxford House Chronicle* 15, no.9 (September 1901), 66.

¹⁹⁴ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 134.

¹⁹⁵ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:94.

Rogers and Vaughan Nash, afterwards private secretary to Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith.¹⁹⁶ James Adderley served as head of Oxford House for only a year, but he reflected that the position gave him a sense of leadership and widened his social circles: ‘My headship of Oxford House prolonged my Oxford life far beyond my undergraduate days.’¹⁹⁷ He referred to the publication of *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* as marking the ‘great turning-point in my career’ as it drew his attention to the East End and subsequently to Oxford House.¹⁹⁸ Adderley believed that his social reputation was at its highest while he was at Oxford House. People were curious, he wrote, about ‘the fellow who might live in luxury in Belgravia but preferred Bethnal Green’. He enthused: ‘I have never been so important a person in the Church as in those early days of Oxford House. I was the “ecclesiastical young man”, always beloved of Bishops and Church ladies.’ He added: ‘Immediately that I was ordained, two years later, I sank into insignificance.’¹⁹⁹

According to Adderley, settling at Oxford House marked a significant moment in his life when he reconsidered his career options. He began to visit the East End when he was a law student, writing that he was chosen as the Oxford House head because ‘there was nobody else in the place who could devote the time to it’.²⁰⁰ Adderley spent his evenings in the settlement as he was working all day at a solicitor’s office. In his memoirs, he discusses the influence of George Knight-Bruce, the settlement’s vicar, who brought Adderley into contact with Archbishop Edward Benson, who in turn, advised Adderley to abandon his legal profession and join the church. Adderley argued that the headship of Oxford House was also the high point of Arthur Winnington-Ingram’s career, declaring that ‘if Ingram made Oxford House, it is equally true to say that Oxford House made him’. When Winnington-Ingram arrived at Oxford House to begin his headship, he

¹⁹⁶ Laurie, *Pictures and Politics*, 73.

¹⁹⁷ Adderley, *In Slums and Society*, 31.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 16.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 18.

was unfamiliar with East London. According to Adderley, the settlement introduced Ingram to ‘all the different circles in which since that time he has so brilliantly shone’. He asserted:

It is still Bethnal Green which comes to one’s mind when his name is mentioned; it is still from that quarter that he himself derives his enthusiasm and even his anecdotes. It was as head of Oxford House that he made himself acquainted with the character of the working-man and his difficulties, with the everyday life of the district, with the spiritual needs of East London and of the West End alike, with the potentialities of the undergraduate as a social worker.²⁰¹

From a more ‘worldly point of view’, William Beveridge felt that joining Toynbee Hall had been the ‘best choice of occupation that I could have made’. He wrote that he left the sub-wardenship ‘with the Canon’s blessing for a job that combined adequate income with abundant leisure; two years after I found jobs of all sorts being thrust upon me’. Beveridge added: ‘All these chances of earning a living by doing what pleased me came through the special knowledge I gained in Whitechapel.’²⁰²

Collectively, these remarks highlight the career benefits that could be gained from settling in the East End. While these commentators highlighted the value of joining the settlement houses, not all residents shared such positive views. As the following chapter will show, there was no single settling experience. Some men were dissatisfied with various aspects of their residency, while others felt it had little effect on either their personal life or their professional development.

Conclusion

Representations of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House as clubhouses in the East End reflected their function as networking institutions. Settling in the slums often provided

²⁰¹ Ibid, 7.

²⁰² Beveridge, *Power and Influence*, 19-20.

young men with social, emotional and practical support as they embarked upon or advanced in their careers. This chapter has examined some of the personal and professional networks formed by men during their residency and after leaving the settlement houses. Settlers formed a circle of friends and gained practical experience that they could add to their list of credentials. However, the preparation and networking of settlers was not simply a means of personal advancement as George Lansbury scathingly remarked. As men graduated from settler to settlement alumni, it was hoped that they would take with them a sense of obligation. As Toynbee Hall's annual report of 1903 stated in regard to the departure of a Mr. G.L. Bruce:

Mr. Bruce's departure makes a great blank. He has been in the House since 1886, and has thus known many generations. He would probably say that he has been a gainer by his experience, and would urge men desiring to find a satisfactory foothold in life to obey the call which tells them to live among the poor. The Council, however, can certainly say that his residence has had a special value in showing how a man with all his time at his disposal may live under the authority of duty.²⁰³

This report conveys the individual settler's dual position as both the agent and the target of a project of social transformation. While settling carried with it certain obligations or duties, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men were also presented as beneficiaries or 'gainers' in this philanthropic project. The settlements' two-fold role was subject to various interpretations both within and outside the houses. The final chapter of this study examines settlers' understandings of their position within the settlements and their responses to the various programs aimed at their development.

²⁰³ See Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1903.

Chapter Six

The Settling Experience

The gain has, doubtless, been greater than the gift.

Samuel Barnett, 1889¹

The question is whether it would not be better if the man of means remained in his natural surroundings instead of making his home in the midst of misery and need in their most visible and heart-breaking forms.

Werner Picht, 1914²

The chapters of this thesis have examined settlement programs that were directed, both formally and informally, at Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men. Collectively, they have analysed in detail a series of specific strategies used within the settlements to create a particular type of social reformer. These techniques included peer to peer modelling and networking, informal mentoring and practical experimentation. This chapter provides an account of settlers' personal responses to their residency in East London. The settling experience was a significant aspect of both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House. In the case of Toynbee Hall, this was made particularly clear in 1904 when William Beveridge, the sub-warden, gave an address at the London School of Economics on 'The Influence of University Settlements'. Significantly, the paper he delivered was devoted entirely to the experiences of the settlers. 'Only gradually', he wrote, 'did it appear that the paper was concerned with the effects of these institutions not on their surroundings but on their inmates'. Although he described the paper as 'a foolish leg-pull' which he later 'showed

¹ Quoted in Henrietta Barnett, *Canon Barnett: His Life, Work, and Friends by his Wife in Two Volumes with Thirty-Nine Illustrations* (London: John Murray, 1918), 2:94.

² Werner Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914), 98.

with great trepidation to Canon Barnett', Beveridge insisted that it was 'not wholly without point'.³ Despite his jocularly, he had clearly recognised that the settlement houses were as much concerned with the residents' personal experiences as they were with the condition of the poor. Drawing upon Beveridge's premise, this chapter examines how the settlements' programs were understood and received by Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men in the years between 1884 and 1914.

William Beveridge's focus on the influence that settlements had on the settlers themselves appears to have been a sensitive subject in settlement circles. Beveridge wrote that he had chosen rather 'perversely' to discuss the social reformers rather than consider their impact upon the East End and its inhabitants.⁴ His hesitancy in showing the paper to Samuel Barnett does not necessarily suggest a lack of conviction in his ideas, but it does reflect a concern about openly discussing this aspect of settling. As Chapters Two and Five have shown, settlers in both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House were expected to demonstrate an active interest in social work and could be denied residency if their motivations appeared disingenuous or entirely self-serving. Possibly, Beveridge was anxious that his emphasis on the advantages of settling could raise questions about his own motivations for joining Toynbee Hall. This does not seem to have been a concern for Samuel Barnett himself. He openly acknowledged the importance of the residential experience, even asserting that the gain for settlers had 'doubtless, been greater than the gift' that they offered to the poor.⁵ Henrietta Barnett, too, emphasised the 'value of accumulated experience' for settlers and its 'consequent birth of fresh intentions'.⁶ While they made no attempt to conceal the potential benefits of settling for the settlers, leaders like the Barnetts often justified the attention given to residents by presenting it as a

³ William Beveridge reflected upon this paper in his *Voluntary Action: A Report on Methods of Social Advance* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 131. He did not include a copy of his paper in this work.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:322-323.

⁶ Ibid, 2:94.

critical part of their project to reform East London. Henrietta argued that settling and the ‘intimate knowledge’ residents accrued would eventually result in improved social policies and welfare administration.⁷ It is perhaps due to this close connection between the residential experience and the settlements’ social work that settling has mostly been examined in relation to its impact on the East End.

Although residency was a significant aspect of the settlements’ programs, previous scholarship on Toynbee Hall and Oxford House has generally focused on the settlers’ social work and on the responses of local communities in East London.⁸ The efficacy of the settlements’ programs has usually been measured by the extent to which they were able to improve social conditions and bridge the gulf between the classes.⁹ While not denying these elements of settling, this chapter focuses instead on settlers’ varied responses to their residential experience, their perceptions of the East End in general and their reactions to contact with the poor.

Most settlement publications, such as the *Toynbee Record*, the *Toynbee Journal* and *Students’ Union Chronicle*, the *Oxford House Chronicle* and the *Oxford House Magazine*, presented Toynbee Hall or Oxford House as amicable and harmonious communities and highlighted the rewards of fellowship and camaraderie. However, the settlements were also subject to changing membership, negotiations and, at times,

⁷ See Henrietta and Samuel Barnett, *Towards Social Reform* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1909), 252.

⁸ See, for example, Asa Briggs and Anne Macartney, *Toynbee Hall: The First Hundred Years* (London: Routledge, 1984) and Nigel Scotland, *Squires in the Slums: Settlements and Missions in Late Victorian London* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007). On Oxford House, see Mandy Ashworth, *The Oxford House in Bethnal Green: 100 Years of Work in the Community* (London: Oxford House, 1984) and Ian Bradley, *Oxford House* (London: Oxford House, 1984).

⁹ Seth Koven, for example, cites the Oxford House clubs as evidence of inconsistencies between the settlers’ vision of brotherhood and their philanthropic work in practice. He notes the artificiality and condescension that tinged much of the contact between settlers and the poor. See Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian Britain* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), 278. More recently, Katharine Bradley has examined the settlements’ work in the fields of health, education, clubs and juvenile delinquency. While her study illustrates the continued importance of settlement houses in the post-war period, its focus remains on the effects of settling on the East End and on wider social policy-making in Britain. See Katharine Bradley, *Poverty, Philanthropy and the State: Charities and the Working Classes in London, 1918-1979* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2009). Also see Katharine Bradley, ‘Philanthropy in East London, 1918-1959: The University Settlements and the Urban Working Classes’, (PhD diss., University of London, 2006).

discontent and criticism. This chapter considers men who embraced the settlement ideals presented to them and some who rejected and criticised them. It also examines the ways in which men responded to changes both within the houses and in the field of philanthropy more broadly.

The role of the settler gradually evolved as the British State increasingly played a more prominent role in social work. In the early days of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House, as much emphasis was placed on the settlers' ethos as their work in the slums. However, from the turn of the century onwards, the ideal settler was increasingly defined and evaluated by his practical work. Most Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men adapted to changing settlement agendas, but some became disillusioned with the settlements or viewed their participation more critically in retrospective accounts. An analysis of these varied reactions of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men to the settling experience as it evolved throughout this period offers a fitting conclusion to an examination of the settlement houses as colonies that were dedicated to the making of the social reformer. While there were various interpretations of the settlers' place within these philanthropic centres, this chapter argues that residency remained an important part of both Toynbee Hall and Oxford House.

Settler Commentaries: Testimonials and Complaints

The nature of the settlements' surviving records poses a significant challenge in any attempt to analyse settlers' responses to their experiences at Toynbee Hall and Oxford House. An examination of residents' perceptions and reactions necessitates an extensive use of personal reflections that were recorded in settlement house documents. As these commentaries were mediated by the settlements, they are inevitably selective in character.

They generally provide sympathetic accounts of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House and tend to highlight the rewards rather than the difficulties of settling. The memoirs of individual settlers broaden these official accounts and reveal a greater divergence of opinion about the influence of the houses and the significance attached to settling. However, as discussed in the introduction, these sources, too, require careful consideration in regard to the purpose of the text, when it was written and the level of attention given to the settlement houses by the author. In his 300-page autobiography, *Retrospect of an Unimportant Life*, the former Oxford House head, Herbert Henson, devoted only six pages to his experiences in Bethnal Green.¹⁰ For Francis Fletcher Vane, Toynbee Hall was deemed significant enough to merit an entire chapter of his ‘memoirs and adventures’,¹¹ while for the Barnetts, the settlement movement became the subject of a considerable volume of writing. Clement Attlee’s autobiography¹² is unrevealing about many phases of his life, but his description of his life in East London is a detailed miscellany of events. This suggests that for some men, joining a settlement house was a fleeting experience that was mentioned briefly or entirely omitted from their later writings. For others, it was an experience that prompted a great deal of reflection.

Of the 65 residents who recorded their settling experience and whose biographies have been traced for the purpose of this study, 25 left little or no commentary about Toynbee Hall and Oxford House.¹³ Men like Werner Picht, Eldred Hitchcock, John St George Heath and Herbert Henson had mixed opinions about the settlements. Two settlers (C.R. Ashbee and R.H. Tawney) and one settlement associate (George Lansbury) levelled criticisms at Toynbee Hall, while at least six others re-located to other parts of

¹⁰ Herbert Hensley Henson, *Retrospect of an Unimportant Life*, vol 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1942).

¹¹ Francis Fletcher Vane, *Agin the Governments: Memories and Adventures of Sir Francis Fletcher Vane, Br.* (London: Sampson Low, 1929).

¹² C.R. Attlee, *As it Happened* (New York: The Viking Press, 1954).

¹³ This includes settlers such as Charles Herbert Grinling, William Oswald Moore Ede, Thomas Walter Manson, Laurence Prestwich Scott and Gilbert Slater.

East London due to grievances with the settlement.¹⁴ A number of these critical commentators serve as major insider sources on the settlement. Due to their discontentment with certain aspects of their residency, their commentary is sometimes flavoured with bitterness or cynicism. Alongside these negative assessments, however, are at least 27 testimonials which were issued by Toynbee Hall and Oxford House between 1884 and 1914, and throughout the inter-war period.¹⁵

In examining these accounts, it is necessary to consider the genre of the memoir or autobiography, not only as an historical account, but as a work of literature. Memoirs make use of various literary techniques, but a prominent one in the writings of settlers is the depiction of definitive moments or turning points in their narrative. The literary critic, Jean Starobinski, has argued that a necessary condition for writing an autobiography is that there should have been a ‘conversion’ of some kind in the life: ‘One would hardly have sufficient motive to write an autobiography had not some radical change occurred.’¹⁶ It is significant that for several settlers this transformative moment was presented as their decision to enter Toynbee Hall or Oxford House. The retrospective nature of many settlers’ reflections, however, should be taken into account here. For men who had established careers in social welfare and policy making, their residency in the East End was likely a convenient moment to select as a turning point, highlighting as it did their ‘discovery’ of the East End.

Clement Attlee’s account of his first ‘experience’ of poverty provides an excellent example of this literary technique. Attlee’s autobiography, *As it Happened*, was published

¹⁴ Maurice Birley, Alexander Carr-Saunders, Basil Henriques, Arthur Pillans Laurie, Edward Urwick and Hubert Llewellyn Smith.

¹⁵ This includes James Adderley, Samuel Barnett, William Beveridge, Cosmo Lang, Arthur Winnington-Ingram, Francis Vane, J.A. Spender, J.A.R. Pimlott, Hugh Legge, Henry Nevinston, Ernest Aves, Jimmy Mallon, Alfred Milner, Philip Lyttelton Gell, Henry Scott Holland, Robert Morant, Cyril Jackson, Bolton King, Joseph Lionel Hodgkinson, Thomas Edmund Harvey, Harry Woollcombe, Dick Sheppard, Edmund Beale Sargant, Lord Balcarras, Hubert Douglas Henderson, John Sinclair and Thomas Hancock Nunn.

¹⁶ Jean Starobinski, ‘The Style of Autobiography’, trans. Seymour Chatman, in James Olney, ed., *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 78.

in 1954, 45 years after his appointment as secretary of Toynbee Hall. In the book, Attlee reflected that as an Oxford student he was ‘not attracted’ to societies seeking support from undergraduates, especially in the religious field. He wrote: ‘Some of my friends were interested in the University Settlement – Oxford House and Toynbee Hall.’

Although he attended some meetings, Attlee ‘remained uninterested’. He ‘gave no real thought to social problems’, he reflected, and ‘had no political ambitions’.¹⁷ In October 1905, Attlee visited Haileybury House, a club for working boys in Stepney that was supported by his old school, Haileybury College. Attlee described the event as something that ‘was destined to alter the whole course’ of his life.¹⁸ He continued to visit the club regularly and in 1907 he was appointed manager of the house, a residential position. He wrote that ‘thus began a fourteen years residence in East London’.¹⁹ A more generic version of this transformative experience had been previously published in *The Social Worker* (1920). Attlee was clearly writing of himself when he wrote of ‘a boy from a public school knowing little or nothing of social or industrial matters’ who, at the invitation of a friend or from loyalty to his old school or because of ‘the instinct of service that exists in everyone’, decides to assist in running a boys’ club. In this new environment, the boy finds himself ‘with a new outlook and shedding old prejudices’. Attlee concluded that the ‘thoughtless schoolboy’ becomes interested in social problems and develops into a social worker.²⁰

The role that Haileybury House and Toynbee Hall played in Attlee’s account of his development as a social worker is supported by the fact that he retained contact with both voluntary institutions throughout his life (see Figure 24). However, as this anecdote shows, autobiographers and memoirists can build a narrative by using a pivotal moment

¹⁷ C.R. Attlee, *As it Happened* (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), 23.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

²⁰ C.R. Attlee, *The Social Worker* (London: G. Bell, 1920), 211-213.



Figure 24: Clement Attlee with some young boys from Stepney. Ellena Matthews, *Clement Attlee: Toynbee Hall President and Post-war Labour Prime Minister* (London: Toynbee Hall). Retrieved from www.toynbeehall.org.uk/...Toynbee_Hall/A5_Clement_Attlee_16pp_loresAW_2.pdf

or ‘conversion’ experience to account for their later interests and pursuits. Residency in East London was presented by Attlee (and others) as a turning point in their own making as social reformers.

While most existing records present settling as an influential milestone in the lives of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men, their perspectives on the value of this experience vary. Writing in 1929 of his residency in Toynbee Hall some years before, Francis Vane recognised the settlement’s role in cultivating masculine identities or, as he put it, a particular ‘breed’ of gentleman. He wrote:

Perhaps I am sceptical, but I doubt whether in these days of intensive amusement, we are breeding the class of which my old [settlement] friends . . . are so brilliant an example. There is something to be said for good old Victorian days and ideals after all!²¹

Settlers like Vane applauded the role the settlement houses could play in shaping the character and behaviour of a male social elite. While William Beveridge’s reflections at the beginning of this chapter convey a sense of unease about acknowledging this agenda, settlers’ memoirs typically depict Toynbee Hall and Oxford House as a rite of passage, asserting that their experiences in the East End had influenced their lives in a profound way.

At various points in her biography, Henrietta Barnett included glowing testimonials from settlers who felt that residing in Toynbee Hall had been a transformative experience. In her discussion of Samuel Barnett’s ‘Talks in the Study’, she recorded four positive assessments of Samuel provided by J.A. Spender, T. Harvey Darton, Thomas Harvey and Edward Urwick.²² After Samuel Barnett’s death in 1913, Henrietta received 1100 tributes. Of these, she recorded passages from 18 letters and 14

²¹ Vane, *Agin the Governments*, 69.

²² Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:316-317.

newspapers, each of which was attributed to his friends and colleagues.²³ Edward Buxton was listed among them as saying: ‘I must tell you that whatever effort or public service I have been able to effect was inspired by him [Samuel Barnett].’ He believed that the settlement’s ‘standard of work was the mark at which a multitude of us aimed, however imperfectly’.²⁴ A Mr C.M. Shiner wrote that he had lived in Whitechapel for two and a half years and had ‘carried that influence’ with him ‘over the twenty-one intervening years’. Shiner spoke on behalf of other settlers when he wrote: ‘I constantly met other men, perhaps equally obscure, who endeavoured to live faithfully to the teaching they gathered from you and the great and good man now gone to his rest. I believe that not only consciously but unconsciously to yourselves you sent out missionaries in every direction.’²⁵ At times, Henrietta Barnett also included anonymous sources such as one letter she received from ‘a man from a distant colony’ after Samuel’s death. She cited part of this correspondence: ‘He [Samuel Barnett] seemed to re-discover all sorts of my abandoned hopes and forgotten ideals and constrain me to work for them.’²⁶ Certainly, Henrietta had a vested interest in defending the settlement movement. However, the quantity of such commentary suggests there were many who viewed their experience in a positive light.

Although settlers were imagined as both the givers and the recipients of social reform, some Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men believed that they gained more from the settlements than the poor. As James Adderley reflected in his autobiography: ‘I have always found that the various places for which I have worked have taught me much more than I ever taught others therein. This was certainly true of Oxford House.’²⁷ This remark could be read as a form of literary humility on Adderley’s part, not simply a denial of his

²³ Ibid, 2:382-388.

²⁴ Ibid, 2:383.

²⁵ Ibid, 2:384.

²⁶ Ibid, 1:317.

²⁷ James Adderley, *In Slums and Society: Reminiscences of Old Friends* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1916), 19.

influence on the poor. However, in keeping with its distinctive religious ethos, residency at Oxford House was frequently portrayed as a ‘spiritually’ uplifting experience that inspired the direction of men’s careers or redefined their thinking in some way.

Emphasising the settlement’s role in shaping his religious ideals, Adderley went so far as to say that without his settling experience, he may have been ‘an atheist’ or, at the very least, a moderate ‘Anglican parson’.²⁸ Samuel Barnett also highlighted the educational benefits of settling:

They who came to teach have stopped to learn. At the feet of the poor they have realised something of what love can do and patience can bear. They have seen real troubles, a real fight for life; they have unconsciously, through daily contact, absorbed the knowledge of their neighbours’ ways of living and of thinking. They have gained in sympathy as they have felt for the poor; they have gained in humility as they have stood before the good revealed in what is called common or unclean.²⁹

The strong homiletic tone of this remark reflected Barnett’s position as a clergyman and his personal Christian ethos. Such language was more common in Oxford House but was used within both houses by religiously-minded residents, particularly by settlers who were clergymen or preparing for ordination. The description above of gentlemen humbly positioned ‘at the feet of the poor’ probably recalled for its listeners the biblical story of Jesus kneeling before his disciples. As well as being religious and moralising in tone, Barnett’s commentary highlighted the settlers’ status as a subject of social reform in the East End. Reversing conventional ideas of the social reformer as primarily the agent of social and moral improvement, the poor are presented in this passage as a moralising influence upon the settlers, transmitting particular values to them and allowing them to learn about a life that was somehow more ‘real’.

A number of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men went further in their

²⁸ Ibid, 34.

²⁹ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:94.

assessments, imagining themselves as the principal beneficiaries of the settlement program. Herbert Henson of Oxford House wrote that the temporary nature of settlement work meant that ‘a few weeks spent in Bethnal Green during the vacation might benefit the undergraduate but could hardly have any effect on the East End’.³⁰ He argued that social work required continuity and that the settlement was ‘an impossible scheme’ and would ‘in the long run fail’ to reform the East End due to the constant change in the social workers residing in the house.³¹ Similar criticisms were made in reference to Toynbee Hall. Arthur Laurie doubted that Samuel Barnett ‘ever expected it to have much influence on East London’.³² While there is ample evidence to suggest that Barnett’s vision of transformation was more wide-ranging than Laurie suggested, such remarks are indicative of the recognition among some of the settlers that they were likely to gain as much, or even more, from settling than the urban poor.

While most settlers’ retrospective accounts emphasised the benefits of settling, some Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men felt uncomfortable residing in the East End or were discontented with the settlement enterprise more generally. The most common complaints put forward by residents concerned their physical comfort and the potentially negative effects of settling on their personal and professional lives.

A number of these issues were raised by Werner Picht who resided in Toynbee Hall for several months between 1911 and 1912. Picht appears to have had ambivalent feelings about the settlement movement. While he was a resident, he wrote a letter to the *Toynbee Record*, declaring: ‘I think I feel more at home in these rooms [at Toynbee Hall] than anywhere else in the world.’³³ In his 1914 account of the English settlement movement, Picht added that a man who had ‘the privilege of being received into Toynbee

³⁰ Henson, *Retrospect of an Unimportant Life*, 1:28.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 1:31.

³² Arthur Pillans Laurie, *Pictures and Politics: A Book of Reminiscences* (London: International Publishing Company, 1934), 72.

³³ See letter to the *Toynbee Record*, October 1911.

Hall' joined a circle of friends that could enrich his life.³⁴ However, despite the ease he felt in his own room and company at Toynbee Hall, Picht also made a number of criticisms. He argued that settlers made a significant sacrifice by living in the East End. Men, he wrote, gave up the comforts of a West End home to devote their leisure hours to the poor. By making the slums his home, the settler filled 'his imagination with pictures of misery and crime, instead of with impressions of beauty and happiness'. So complete was the settler's immersion in the East End, Picht argued, that only seldom did he appear at clubs, theatres or 'in society'. Picht suggested that this absence from his usual social circles resulted in a 'loosening of social and personal ties', the 'foregoing of the prospect of an early marriage' and the 'neglect of favourite pursuits'. According to Picht, settling could also be a disheartening and depressing experience. It meant a 'sacrifice of life' for men and 'a throwing in of their personality'.³⁵ To remedy this, he suggested it might be better for a man to remain in his 'natural surroundings' instead of making his home in 'the midst of misery and need in their most visible and heart-breaking forms' in the East End.³⁶ These remarks suggest that, despite his own happy experiences, Picht felt that other settlers were at risk of being overly and negatively influenced by their residency in the East End.

The sacrifices that Werner Picht highlighted were prominent themes in settlement house literature. Moving to the East End carried with it concerns that young men were sacrificing their careers or wasting their potential at a critical time in their lives. As Chapter Five has shown, several parents disapproved of their son's decisions to join the settlement, citing the potential risks of settling to their personal health and wellbeing, their financial status and their employment prospects. These concerns were particularly evident in the reactions to Theodore Lukis's decision to join Toynbee Hall in 1908.

³⁴ Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, 95.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 1, 14, 10.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 98.

According to J.A.R. Pimlott, when Lukis founded the Toynbee Hall scouting troop ‘his career was so brilliant that some thought he was squandering his energies in his work amongst boys’.³⁷ Lukis was a medical student when he first became involved with the settlement. Having attained qualifications in medicine and surgery in 1910 and 1911, he left Toynbee Hall temporarily to go into medical residence. He returned to the settlement in 1912 and resided there at different intervals before joining the war effort in 1914. In March 1915, he was one of the first Toynbee men to die in the war. He was 29.³⁸ Theodore’s father, Sir Pardey Lukis, attributed both his son’s short-lived medical career and his decision to join the war effort to his association with Toynbee Hall. When a memorial service for Lukis was held at the settlement, the Lukis family refused to play any part in the commemoration. In a letter to the family lawyer, Lukis’s father explicitly blamed the settlement for his son’s demise:

If the Toynbee people wish to start a memorial, by all means let them do so, but I will not join in. I feel too bitter on the subject, and shall never forgive them for seducing Theo away from his proper vocation, and making him squander on their schemes the allowance I gave him to enable him to keep up his position at Boots. His has been a wasted life and I can find no justification, for a medical man, who gives up his profession of healing, in order to endeavour to kill his fellow creatures, even though they be enemies. God knows there is work enough, of the proper kind, to be done nowadays by doctors and Theo would have been far more useful to his fellow creatures if he had stuck to his profession and gone out to one of the Field Hospitals.³⁹

This letter is clearly tinged with bitterness and resentment, reflecting Pardey Lukis’s grief in the wake of his son’s early death. His accusation that Toynbee Hall was responsible for his son’s decision to enlist in the army may or may not have been justified. Some tension was evident in the settlement during World War One when the

³⁷ J.A.R. Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress, 1884-1934* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1935), 182.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 187.

³⁹ Quoted in Dr Melvyn Brooks, ‘Dr Theodore Stuart Lukis M.D. M.R.C.P. and the Lukis Trophy, 1885-1915’, <https://www.firstworldwar.com/features/lukis.htm> (accessed 29 September 2018).

residential part of Toynbee Hall moved to Poplar. Toynbee Hall in Whitechapel participated in ‘various kinds of war work’, holding ‘recruiting meetings’ in the lecture hall and drilling volunteers in the quad.⁴⁰ However, as will be seen below (see ‘Tensions in the House: Responses to Changing Settlement Agendas’), John St George Heath, warden of Toynbee Hall from the outbreak of the war until 1917, was a declared pacifist who struggled to recruit settlers in Poplar due to the general bitterness against conscientious objectors during the war. Whether or not Toynbee Hall was responsible for Theo’s choice, however, Pardey Lukis’s comments reveal the perceived influence of the settlement movement on the lives of young men. Lukis’s depiction of Toynbee Hall ‘seducing Theo’ to the East End and ‘making him squander’ his time and money in the London slums implied that the settlement house had the ability to shape residents and direct their decisions – in this case, in a decidedly negative way. Toynbee Hall is presented here as an institution which had drained a young man of his potential and destroyed his prospects.

Settlers themselves sometimes complained that the physical conditions of East London were trying on both their health and their spirits. In his autobiography, Francis Vane described his departure from Toynbee Hall with a sense of relief. On leaving the settlement, he travelled to Europe in the hopes of forgetting the stench of the East End. He recalled: ‘I remember well that it took a week or so tramping before the smell of the East End fish shops completely left my nostrils.’⁴¹ A number of men made similar remarks about their dismal surroundings. Herbert Henson disliked the ‘hideous yellow fog’ which covered everything and made one feel ‘very miserable’. He complained that ‘the fog destroys one’s appetite; injures one’s chest [and] hurts one’s eyes’.⁴² In October

⁴⁰ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 189, 191.

⁴¹ Vane, *Agin the Governments*, 60.

⁴² Herbert Hensley Henson diaries, 10 January 1888, 4a: 7 January 1888-19 December 1890, 1. Durham Cathedral Library Collection.

1890, before embarking on a nine-month trip around the world, Samuel Barnett himself expressed a need for respite from life in the East End: ‘It does seem to us that if we are to go on we must stop for a bit to breathe. It is not that I feel tired – it is more as if I were dry – empty of force and in danger of becoming a mere actor – acting only a part written by ourselves long ago.’⁴³

The living conditions in the settlement, though intended to be comfortable, were also criticised by some residents. Oxford House, in particular, was disparaged for its simpler setting. Warden Spooner of New College, Oxford stated that some residents were ‘attacked by rats’, while ‘their luggage and belongings were carried off by thieves’ and ‘the cooking left much to be desired’.⁴⁴ Such conditions may have appealed to some settlers’ sense of fortitude, but others were clearly disgruntled. Herbert Henson wrote that ‘with no fire, the House seemed wretched. I am unable or unwilling to be even *a little too cold*’.⁴⁵ Toynbee Hall’s situation in the East End also seemed to have adverse effects on some of its residents. In 1893, Henrietta Barnett expressed a feeling of liberation when she and her husband resided briefly in Bristol where Samuel served as a Canon: ‘How we delighted in that after the cramped outlook of our Whitechapel home, where the drab and ill-kept streets were the only view, and one had to go close to the windows and look straight up to get a sight of even a remnant of sky.’⁴⁶ These commentaries convey the potentially isolating and dispiriting effects of living in the slums due to its physical conditions.

Concerns were also raised about the consequences of associating with the district’s inhabitants. Anecdotes by residents about their interactions with the poor

⁴³ Samuel Barnett to Frank Barnett, 19 April 1890, F/BAR/108, Samuel Barnett Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Koven, *Slumming*, 244.

⁴⁵ Herbert Hensley Henson, ‘Monday January 23rd 1888’, Herbert Hensley Henson diaries, Henson 4, 157, Durham Cathedral Library Collection. (*italics in original*)

⁴⁶ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:204.

sometimes convey feelings of boredom, discomfort or impatience. The tone of Toynbee Hall's social functions, which were designed to bring the settlers and East Enders together, was a subject of particular criticism. Francis Vane thought the settlement's formal parties were painfully dull, noting that few of the poorer guests spoke at all.⁴⁷ C.R. Ashbee described the tea parties at St Jude's parish, which were a precursor to the Toynbee parties, as farcical occasions for all involved. 'What makes these tea parties specially entertaining', he wrote, 'is that everybody always does the wrong thing; everybody is invited and everybody comes. It is a little embarrassing at first, but you soon get accustomed to it'.⁴⁸ Ashbee remarked that while the 'lady-helps' who served the refreshments were 'so in earnest', the 'fashionable people seem[ed] so bored'.⁴⁹ J.A.R. Pimlott bluntly referred to Toynbee Hall's formal gatherings as 'dreadful affairs'.⁵⁰ He asserted that 'far from the desired simplicity and naturalness being achieved, these parties were often distinguished by the most painful artificiality and restraint'.⁵¹ Challenging a central premise of the settlements' plans for promoting cross-class sympathy, Pimlott went so far as to say that these occasions could in fact have a negative influence on settlers. He wrote that too often 'snobbery was bred rather than corrected' when the residents came into contact with the poor.⁵² He believed that 'the spontaneity, without which an element of priggishness could not be wholly eliminated' was absent from dinner parties where East Enders and West Enders mingled.⁵³ 'A certain artificiality' about settlement life more generally was noted by Clement Attlee who argued that this impeded settlers from achieving genuine contact with the poor. Attlee suggested that training should take place at the settlement but that social workers should then move out and live

⁴⁷ Vane, *Agin the Governments*, 60.

⁴⁸ C.R. Ashbee, *The Building of Thelema* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1910), 170.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 171.

⁵⁰ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 74.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 72-73.

⁵² *Ibid*, 74.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 72-73.

in the district with the urban poor in a more ‘natural’ setting.⁵⁴

Responses to the Settlements’ Location

Where the settlements were located and *who* they worked with were sources of discontent and criticism among settlers. When Clement Attlee left Toynbee Hall in 1910, for example, it was to work in another part of East London. During his residency, he had continued to spend as much time as possible at Haileybury House, which he evidently preferred.⁵⁵ As Attlee explained in his autobiography:

I made many good friends at Toynbee Hall . . . but my affections were not in Whitechapel; they were in Stepney and Limehouse, and I was not sorry to leave Toynbee Hall at the end of the year and return to what I had come to look upon as my own district.⁵⁶

Attlee left the settlement, not because he had any particular objections to the location of Toynbee Hall (or at least none he recorded), but because his chief interest lay in Limehouse and Stepney where he had already lived and formed ties.

Other settlers felt that Toynbee Hall’s location limited their experiences of East London. Despite complaints about the potentially damaging effects of the East End, many settlers felt they could not get close enough to conditions of poverty where they were and expressed disappointment at not ‘sharing’ in the lives of the urban poor. For them, the social distance between themselves and East Enders remained too great. This was often attributed to the settlements’ geographical location. Whitechapel was a popular philanthropic destination due to its proximity to West London. Margaret Nevinson, a Toynbee Hall associate, described the ease of visiting the area, writing that ‘buses and

⁵⁴ C.R. Attlee, *The Social Worker* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1920), 214-215.

⁵⁵ C.R. Attlee, *As it Happened* (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), 40.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

trams would whirl one North, South, East and West as desired' for just a 'few pence'.⁵⁷ According to Arthur Laurie, it was due to this convenience that the settlement was established in Whitechapel and not in a more destitute area of the East End. Laurie criticised the ignorance of social reformers who only 'penetrated as far as Whitechapel with its picturesque squalor and degraded population, and imagined that that was East London'. Laurie believed that Toynbee Hall should have been built further east in a more impoverished district such as Poplar or Mile End.⁵⁸ James Adderley, too, was aware of other districts in the East End that needed more social workers. He found that the focus on Whitechapel had led some visitors to underestimate the extent of poverty in the district. He quoted one visitor's reaction to the Whitechapel High Street: 'Do you call that a slum? Why it's one of the finest streets in London. I don't believe in all this fuss about the housing of the poor.'⁵⁹ Adderley's anecdote highlights his concern that misconceptions could lead to a lack of empathy towards the poor.

Although Toynbee Hall and Oxford House made deliberate efforts to provide a comfortable space for settlers, any type of shielding from their surrounds was openly rejected by men who wanted to immerse themselves more completely in East End life. A student of Balliol College, Stephen Hobhouse, planned to take a room at Toynbee Hall, but when he visited the settlement he found that it was 'too comfortable for my present purposes, an "oasis" of Oxford and Cambridge academic life, whose doors shut one off from the drab poverty of most of the humble houses around'.⁶⁰ Wanting to settle in an unknown setting rather than a familiar one, he opted to move to Hoxton. Like Hobhouse, Arthur Laurie felt frustrated that he could not get close enough to the local community during his residency at Toynbee Hall. Speaking for himself and on behalf of his friends,

⁵⁷ See William Beveridge, *Power and Influence* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1953), 21.

⁵⁸ Laurie, *Pictures and Politics*, 75.

⁵⁹ James Adderley, 'Is Slumming Played Out?', *English Illustrated Magazine* 10 (1893), 834.

⁶⁰ Stephen Henry Hobhouse, *Forty Years and an Epilogue: An Autobiography, 1881-1951* (London: James Clarke and Co., 1951), 133.

he expressed a desire for more cross-class interaction: 'We wished a closer contact with the people and lives of East London, and, more especially, the Labour leaders.'⁶¹

Although he did not reside at the settlement himself, the Toynbee Hall associate, George Lansbury, was similarly dissatisfied with the opportunities for men to make themselves a part of East End life. Young men came to East London, he argued, expecting to 'mix with the poor' and learn about their lives: 'What a good and blessed thing it would be that rich and poor should live together!' However, Lansbury wrote that the conditions of 'living' in the East End were limited in the settlements, extending only to meetings 'in Toynbee Hall and its fine parlours, dining and other rooms'.⁶² The Toynbee sub-warden, Edward Urwick, shared this view. He likened residents who lived in Toynbee Hall for only a short time to lodgers at an inn or guests at a hotel.⁶³

In their efforts to gain familiarity with their East End setting, some men expressed a desire to escape from their usual social circles. These settlers' reflections convey a sense of frustration by the presence of West End visitors who, they felt, hampered their ambition to immerse themselves in the East End. C.R. Ashbee, for instance, was initially satisfied with his life in Toynbee Hall as he felt that he had escaped from the 'quagmires of Society'. However, he increasingly objected to the general tone of the settlement or what he disdainfully labelled 'top hatty philanthropy'. Ashbee also resented the Oxonian 'lordly charm' of the sub-warden, Thory Gardiner.⁶⁴ The East End was criticised for attracting many visitors from the 'fashionable world, to whom it was an easy means of introduction to the superficial knowledge of the East End'.⁶⁵ Ashbee seemed determined to eschew former social connections. A particular source of irritation for him and other

⁶¹ Laurie, *Pictures and Politics*, 73-74.

⁶² George Lansbury, *My Life* (London: Constable and Co., 1928), 139.

⁶³ E.J. Urwick, 'The Settlement Ideal', *Charity Organisation Review* (December 1902), 336.

⁶⁴ See Alan Crawford, *C.R. Ashbee: Architect, Designer and Romantic Socialist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 20.

⁶⁵ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 75.

settlers was the visitations of ‘casual slummers’ or, as Laurie called them, the ‘irritating flocks of gaily arrayed young men and young women’ who descended from the West End.⁶⁶ Henry Nevinson, a journalist and associate of Toynbee Hall, suggested that these West End visitors turned the settlement into a ‘scene of some absurdity and some self-righteousness’. ‘Not so much among the inmates and other members themselves’, he clarified, ‘as among the solemn people who came down to encourage our “noble enterprise”’.⁶⁷ It was this type of society that men like Ashbee had been seeking to escape in the first place.

This sense of dislocation from their urban surroundings prompted some groups of men to leave the settlements. Pimlott described a movement of ‘individual colonists’ to other poverty-stricken districts in London, usually moving further east into the slums.⁶⁸ In 1889, several residents including C.R. Ashbee, Vaughan Nash, Hubert Llewellyn Smith, Arthur Laurie and Arthur Rogers, and one settlement associate (Hugh Fairfax-Cholmeley), took a house in Stepney Green because they thought they would be in a better position there than at Toynbee Hall to learn about the East End. Their ‘sub-colony’ in Beaumont Square was known as the ‘Swarm’.⁶⁹ In 1903, Edward Urwick, Josie Cloete and William Braithwaite moved to a residence on Stainsby Road in Poplar. Although these men received the warden’s support, Samuel Barnett emphasised the advantages of a permanent settlement house over ‘a transient colony’.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, this movement of discontented settlers continued after Barnett’s wardenship. In 1913 and 1914, at least five men, including Maurice Birley, Mark Baines, Frank Hoare, Alexander Carr-Saunders and Basil Henriques, re-located to other parts of the East End.⁷¹ In 1915, when John St

⁶⁶ Laurie, *Pictures and Politics*, 73-74.

⁶⁷ Henry Woodd Nevinson, *Changes and Chances* (London: Nisbet, 1923), 78-79.

⁶⁸ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 100.

⁶⁹ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 56.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 194.

George Heath moved the residential part of the settlement from Whitechapel to Poplar, he argued that there was no longer adequate opportunity in Whitechapel for settlers to live among the poor. Heath was as much concerned with expanding opportunities for the settlers as he was with identifying the needs of the poor. He wrote in the settlement's annual report:

Slowly and steadily the conviction had been deepening that Whitechapel no longer secured for young men fresh from the universities that living experience of the need and outlook of a normal working class population which they wished to obtain.⁷²

The decisions of settlers to move away from the East End and pursue social work elsewhere also raises questions about *who* they wanted to assist. As Chapter Three has shown, R.H. Tawney became a critic of Toynbee Hall during his residency because it worked with the unskilled and uneducated poor in East London and he saw more value in teaching the working class in England's industrial north. In his engagement with this group of workers, Tawney diverged from the settlement's approach to social problems. He felt that a poor community could not be satisfied 'by a club of the cultured' like Toynbee Hall.⁷³ In 1912, Tawney wrote in his *Commonplace Book*, a journal he kept in the years preceding the First World War:

One whole wing of social reformers has gone, it seems to me, altogether astray. They are preoccupied with relieving distress, patching up failures, reclaiming the broken down. All this is good and necessary. But it is not the social problem, and it is not the policy which would ever commend itself to the working classes. What they want is security and opportunity, not assistance in the exceptional misfortunes of life, but a fair chance of leading an independent, fairly prosperous life ... It is no use devising relief schemes for a community where the normal relationships are felt to be unjust.⁷⁴

⁷² Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1915, 22.

⁷³ Terrill, *R.H. Tawney and His Times*, 37.

⁷⁴ *R.H. Tawney's Commonplace Book*, eds. J.M. Winter and D.M. Joslin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 13.

In other words, Tawney argued that it was education and not charity that workers needed to expand their opportunities. He wanted to teach the working class so that they would be in a position to help themselves, to participate in open debates and to contribute to political decisions that affected them.⁷⁵

While Tawney came to reject Toynbee Hall's philanthropy among the unskilled workers of East London, another cohort of settlers sought greater contact with the urban poor from whom they felt disconnected. Among those who were disappointed in their efforts to teach the urban poor directly was J. Churton Collins who was 'sorry to say that the fifty [students at his lectures] do not represent the East End populace, but come from places in some cases far distant'.⁷⁶ Likewise, Arthur Laurie was frustrated that the students in his university extension lectures were not poor working men; they were, he noted with some dismay, 'cussedly well dressed'.⁷⁷ According to J.A.R. Pimlott, the settlement's activities were not attracting enough visitors from among the East London poor. Instead, settlers

saw the classes largely filled with school teachers and clerks, some of them coming from distant parts, instead of with working men from the neighbourhood. They saw Toynbee Hall situated in the middle of a predominantly Jewish district, with the result that the centre of the activities of many of the residents was further east.⁷⁸

The growing Jewish presence in the East End⁷⁹, referred to in this passage by Pimlott, discouraged some settlers from working in the area. In his public and private

⁷⁵ Goldman, *The Life of R.H. Tawney*, 28.

⁷⁶ Records of the London Society for the Extension of University Teaching (LSEUT), 1887; cited in Seth Koven, 'Culture and Poverty: The London Settlement House Movement, 1870-1914', (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1987), 264-265.

⁷⁷ Laurie to Ashbee, n.d.; cited in Emily Abel, 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', (PhD diss., University of London, 1969), 160.

⁷⁸ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 100.

⁷⁹ By the late 1880s, there were more than 28,000 Jewish immigrants living in the vicinity of Toynbee Hall. See Charles Booth, 'The Inhabitants of Tower Hamlets (School Board Division), their Condition and Occupations', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 50 (1887), 326-391. For a discussion of Jewish East London, see William J. Fishman, *East London 1888* (London: Duckworth, 1988), 131-176.

writings, Samuel Barnett demonstrated respect and tolerance for his Jewish neighbours and spoke out strongly against xenophobic views.⁸⁰ Henrietta Barnett was markedly less tolerant. In the years after Samuel Barnett died, she attempted to limit the access of Jews to Toynbee Hall. She wrote that she ‘loved them not’ because of their selfishness, and seriously contemplated moving Toynbee Hall due to their presence.⁸¹ Similarly, Arthur Laurie argued that Whitechapel’s population was a mixture of immigrant Jews and semi-criminals and the settlement was irrelevant to both.⁸² When John St George Heath proposed to relocate the settlement to Poplar, he, like Laurie, emphasised the changing cultural and religious demographics of Whitechapel. He insisted that his decision to move was justified by changes taking place in the neighbourhood that had been ‘undreamed of when Canon Barnett first planned Toynbee Hall’. Heath wrote of ‘an immigrant population’ that ‘covered nearly the whole of the neighbourhood’. In agreement with Laurie’s views, he argued that the settlement’s mission did not extend to this population which was ‘very well looked after by those of the Jewish faith with its own Jewish Board of Guardians’.⁸³

In his departure from Toynbee Hall, Basil Henriques, too, was guided by his religious preferences. However, he wanted more, not less, contact with the Jewish populations of the East End. A Jew himself, Henriques had joined the liberal Jewish movement while he was at Oxford, advocating an assimilationist or Anglicised style of Jewish life. He organised English–Hebrew services and promoted the establishment of an

⁸⁰ See Samuel Barnett’s introduction to Lewis and Russell, *The Jew in London* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1900).

⁸¹ See E. F. Hitchcock to Lord Milner, October 19, 1917, A/Toy/006, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives; *Toynbee Record* (October, 1897), 30.

⁸² Arthur Pillans Laurie, *Pictures and Politics: A Book of Reminiscences* (London: International Publishing Company, 1934), 75–76.

⁸³ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1915, 22. In their study of Jewish London, Charles Russell and Harry Lewis wrote of the strong ties within Jewish society and of the various forms of charitable relief available to Jews. See Lewis and Russell, *The Jew in London*, 19.

academic post in rabbinical studies.⁸⁴ When Henriques joined Toynbee Hall in 1913, his family suggested that he concentrate his energies on work among East End Jews.

Henriques, inspired by the example of Toynbee Hall, founded the Bernhard Baron St George's settlement in East London in 1914. It was the first Jewish settlement house in the East End.⁸⁵

Responses to Religion within the Settlements

Religion was clearly a consideration for some settlers in determining who qualified for philanthropic assistance. It also affected their responses to the different religious ethos of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House more generally. As Oxford House was an Anglican institution and deliberately sought settlers who were affiliated with the Church of England, its religious ideals and traditions were unlikely to be the cause of much discontentment among its settlers. From the outset, the Anglican ethos of the settlement was clearly prescribed. At a meeting called to inaugurate the venture, Bishop Walsham summarised the settlement's agenda to potential future residents: 'The foundation of your work should be faith in our blessed Lord.'⁸⁶ Settlement leaders issued similar instructions, maintaining that the church and the settlement should be directly associated.

These expectations were, it seems, almost uniformly accepted and embraced by the residents of Oxford House. The later careers of many Oxford House men (see Chapter Five) affirm their commitment to the settlement's Christian heritage. The official organs of the settlement often put forward an image of religious harmony and goodwill. In 1911,

⁸⁴ 'Henriques, Sir Basil Lucas Quixano (1890–1961)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-33821?rskey=agsGWC&result=1> (accessed 29 September 2018).

⁸⁵ See L. L. Loewe, *Basil Henriques: A Portrait based on his Diaries, Letters and Speeches as Collected by his Widow, Rose Henriques* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), 31–36.

⁸⁶ *Work for University Men among the London Poor: Speeches*, 1884, 10.

for example, the *Oxford House Magazine* commended a number of men for their religious commitment:

We watched these men day by day in our chapel, and we watched them day by day at their work; and we saw the acceptance of the Christian religion issuing in a sense of duty which kept them at their posts, when there were few to encourage and fewer to help; and we saw that duty being carried out cheerfully, unfalteringly, and thoroughly, in spite of all the difficulties and discouragements which were known to none but themselves.⁸⁷

These remarks appeared in a self-promotional text, but there is no evidence to cast doubt upon the religious consensus among the residents of Oxford House. As clerics in training, Oxford House settlers shared a common Christian outlook and vocation. The praise that settlers gave their peers conveys their religious accord. Adderley, for example, commended Arthur Winnington-Ingram for making Oxford House an important institution in the ecclesiastical life of East London.⁸⁸ The long-standing Oxford House resident, Douglas Eyre, was also commended for his commitment to Christianity. In an obituary in *The Times*, the former Oxford House head, Canon Sheppard, remembered Eyre as someone who ‘gave himself ... wholeheartedly to the study and practice of the Christian faith and its practical application to public and private affairs’. Eyre, he reflected, was ‘a great and good man of God, of whom Oxford and Bethnal Green may well be proud’.⁸⁹

The surviving memoirs of Oxford House men frequently contain references to religious beliefs and practices and often reflect the author’s aim to devote themselves to the church. Adderley reflected that he always wanted to be ‘a sort of friar’ and described himself and his peers as ‘Christians out for the conversion of souls’.⁹⁰ Henry Ernest Hardy’s account of the impact of Oxford House on his religious convictions is more

⁸⁷ Editorial Notes, *Oxford House Magazine* 3, no.12 (October 1911), 9-10.

⁸⁸ Adderley, *In Slums and Society*, 97.

⁸⁹ H. R. L. Sheppard, ‘Mr Douglas Eyre: An Appreciation’, *The Times*, 1 November 1935, 18.

⁹⁰ Adderley, *In Slums and Society*, 66, 55.

detailed, if somewhat theatrical. In many ways, it typifies the style and tone of the particular Christian ethos of Oxford House and the religious values of its residents. Before settling at Oxford House, Hardy was bitten by a dog. He arrived in East London with ‘the fear of hydrophobia [rabies] at the back of his mind’.⁹¹ When he was in Bethnal Green, Hardy recalled that he felt overwhelmed by this fear and ‘staggered back to the settlement-house’ where he prayed fervently in the chapel until he fell into unconsciousness.⁹² Hardy reflected that this emotional episode in Oxford House marked a significant turning point in his life. When he awoke in the chapel, he felt refreshed and unafraid as he had made a ‘spiritual compact with God’.⁹³ The settlement house, for Hardy at least, made this religious ‘awakening’ possible. Hardy’s narrative is clearly melodramatic in style as he builds up a story of transformation (or his ‘Adventure of Faith’) in his memoir. Importantly though, it conveys the strength of religiosity within Oxford House at the time and provides insight into the type of men Oxford House attracted and the tone of much of their writing. Passages like this, conveying such extreme religious devotion and experience, are notably absent in the writings of Toynbee men.

Compared with the religious ruminations of Oxford House men, the subject of religion is less prominent in the writings of Toynbee Hall residents. This does not mean that they were not devout Christians. Many of them were. Anglican settlers in Toynbee Hall would have likely attended the religious services offered at the settlement and nearby parish. In accordance with Barnett’s assurances that Toynbee Hall would be a non-sectarian institution, individual settlers did not record significant difficulties in adhering to their own religious creeds.

The settlement’s religious pluralism was reflected in the choice of settlement

⁹¹ Father Andrew, *The Adventure of Faith* (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1935), 85.

⁹² *Ibid*, 85-86.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 86.

leaders. While Barnett was an Anglican clergyman, two of his successors as warden, Thomas Harvey and John St George Heath, were Quakers. When Harvey wrote to his mother to tell her of his appointment, he was light-hearted on the subject of his religion: 'I went to see Canon Barnett on Friday; he says all the members of the Council (including three residents) to whom he has told the news have been very pleased with the suggestion: Sir Charles Elliott only wishes I had been a Churchman, but otherwise is pleased, and he would much prefer a Quaker to a High Churchman, the Canon says!'⁹⁴ Before his appointment, Harvey had been warden of the Chalfont House settlement, a Quaker institution in Bloomsbury.⁹⁵ During his residency at Toynbee Hall, he continued to devote much time to the Society of Friends. In his letters to his family from Toynbee Hall, Harvey described meetings he attended and the other Quakers he met. Harvey also observed Quaker rituals and traditions during his time as a settler. For example, he wrote to ask his father's advice about attending the theatre in 1898.⁹⁶ His family discouraged him from drinking or smoking during his residency and on one occasion his grandmother cautioned him: 'We do long dear lad that thy example may be pure in every respect and I think we cannot call smoking pure.'⁹⁷

Like Harvey, Heath was a Quaker and the continued practice of his religion while he was at the settlement also reflects Toynbee Hall's non-denominational stance. Appointed as warden in March 1914, Heath had little time to make his mark on Toynbee Hall before the First World War broke out. As a pacifist at a time when conscientious objectors were subject to considerable hostility, public feeling was against him. Heath's pacifist associations alienated many possible residents, probably triggering his resignation

⁹⁴ Thomas Harvey to Anna Harvey, 19 June 1904, in Abel, 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', 191.

⁹⁵ Abel, 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', 189.

⁹⁶ Thomas Harvey to William Harvey, 16 January 1898, in Abel, 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', 186.

⁹⁷ A.R. Whiting to Thomas Harvey, 7 May 1896, in Abel, 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', 187.

from the settlement in 1917. While his religious affiliations were not questioned, Heath's experience at Toynbee Hall was a difficult one due to his political persuasions.

In sharp contrast to Oxford House, Toynbee Hall not only accepted non-Anglicans like Heath and Harvey as residents, but it also accepted non-Christians. The Jewish settler, Harry Lewis, is perhaps the most well known. A graduate of St John's College in Cambridge, Lewis resided at Toynbee Hall for 18 years and devoted himself to social work among the Jews of the East End.⁹⁸ He served as an effective bridge between Toynbee Hall and the nearby Jewish community. Lewis's religious background enabled him to assist Jews who visited the settlement, including Jewish East Enders who appealed to Toynbee Hall's Tenants Defence Committee. Established in 1889, this committee operated like a court. Aggrieved parties could bring their problem before the committee which consisted of a lawyer, a resident and an associate. Sometimes the Jewish parties did not speak English and Lewis was commended for his ability to 'disentangle their tales, pouring out in his turn strong advice clothed in Yiddish, or a dialect which they understood'. One resident remarked in admiration: 'Lewis, you are the best Christian of the lot of us.'⁹⁹ Such praise suggested that, in the eyes of at least one settler, Lewis shared with other Toynbee men a common 'Christian' purpose, regardless of their different religious affiliations.

Toynbee Hall, unlike Oxford House, was also accepting of residents who had no religious affiliations, including Clement Attlee. Although he was brought up in a prosperous Anglican household, Attlee became disenchanted with church attendance and religious observance. In 1896, at the age of 13, he confirmed that he adhered to 'an unobtrusive atheism'.¹⁰⁰ R.C. Whiting suggests that Attlee left Toynbee Hall after a year because the atmosphere there did not 'chime' with his socialism and because Haileybury

⁹⁸ Abel, 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', 324.

⁹⁹ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:65.

¹⁰⁰ C.R. Attlee, *As it Happened* (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), 7.

House was more appealing to Attlee as it was even more secular in tone.¹⁰¹ As we have seen, the question of religion was not among the reasons Attlee himself gave for leaving the settlement. It is true, however, that men who were not entirely satisfied with the religiosity of Toynbee Hall could simply leave.

For this reason, criticisms of Toynbee Hall's religious ethos generally came from outside the settlement house rather than from within. Some of Samuel Barnett's early supporters were concerned that the settlement was neglecting religion. This included the housing reformer, Octavia Hill, who had become a mentor to Barnett earlier in his career when he served as curate at St Mary's parish in London's Bryanston Square. Concerned by what she viewed as Barnett's lax churchmanship, Hill gave her support to Oxford House.¹⁰² Religious leaders in East London were particularly critical of Toynbee Hall's non-sectarianism. Reverend Ronald Bayne, for example, called the settlement a 'home of Agnostics' because its residents were not expected to attend the local parish. He felt responsible for this behaviour: 'I don't want you fellows to think I'm hostile to Toynbee; not at all: but I feel that it is part of my parish and that I ought to do something about the residents, but they are men of such superior attainments that it is very difficult.'¹⁰³ This criticism reflected Toynbee Hall's status as a civic centre rather than a Christian mission that would, in the words of Bayne, try to 'do something' about the religious practices of its residents. In this regard, Toynbee Hall performed a very different function from Oxford House which worked closely with local parishes to Christianise the district. While such criticisms were voiced outside the settlement, however, religion was not a source of

¹⁰¹ R.C. Whiting, 'Attlee, Clement Richard, first Earl Attlee (1883–1967)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-30498?rkey=2nRKWG&result=1> (accessed 29 September 2018).

¹⁰² Seth Koven, 'Barnett, Samuel Augustus (1844–1913)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-30612?rkey=WtS5CV&result=1> (accessed 29 September 2018).

¹⁰³ 'Interview with the Reverend Ronald Bayne, St Jude's, Whitechapel, 9 February', Booth/B221, Booth Collection, London School of Economics.

any apparent hostility among settlers themselves, many of whom reported that they felt a sense of fellowship with their peers.

Harmony in the House: Fellowship in Toynbee Hall and Oxford House

Settlers often wrote fondly of the settlements and their domestic settings. Robert Morant referred to the ‘great regret’ with which men left Toynbee Hall.¹⁰⁴ The Oxford House resident, Ernest Bramwell, recorded that his impressions were of ‘a nice house’, of the ‘splendid clubs’ for working men and of the smell of fresh fish. He remarked: ‘In the house were Oxford and many Cambridge men, and they all had different jobs assigned to them; they were all full of the Head’s enthusiasm, and there was a delightful spirit of friendship and welcome.’¹⁰⁵ Familial language within the settlements also suggests that settling could be a highly personal experience. According to Jimmy Mallon, past and present settlers collectively formed an extended family and when a resident moved away from the settlement, he was ‘still on the outer fringe of the family circle’.¹⁰⁶ When Mallon retired as warden in 1954 at the age of 80, Clement Attlee acknowledged: ‘I think when he looks back at his achievements, he will say that his great achievement has been in personal relationship, and personal friendship.’¹⁰⁷ The settlement ideal of a family home highlighted the fellowship of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House settlers. Cosmo Lang, the chairman of the Toynbee Hall Council between 1933 and 1945, wrote that the history of the settlement could be ‘described as the story of a great adventure of friendship’.¹⁰⁸

A series of obituaries, which were printed in the *Toynbee Record* during the First

¹⁰⁴ See Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:17.

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in Ashworth, *The Oxford House in Bethnal Green*, 10.

¹⁰⁶ Toynbee Hall, *Jubilee Report*, 8, A/TOY/021/008, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

¹⁰⁷ Attlee’s speech at Mallon’s retirement, 18 May 1954, ACC/2486/168, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

¹⁰⁸ Cosmo Lang, Preface, in Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, vii.

World War, suggests that this sense of fellowship extended beyond the settlement houses. During the war, the *Record* commemorated settlement alumni who had died in the conflict. As well as remembering the casualties of war, this was an opportunity for the settlement house to commend ex-residents and to celebrate a number of masculine virtues which they wanted to cultivate in settlers, including sacrifice, courage and humility. The obituaries often emphasised the qualities of Toynbee Hall men and the personal connections that had been forged between them. Charles Waddilove, who worked for the Royal Army Medical Corps, was killed in 1917. According to the *Record*, he would be remembered fondly by settlers: 'The War will end someday, and we will make some new friendships, but there will always stand out in the memories of the Toynbee men who lived with him the lovable, humble, and almost saint-like figure of Charles Waddilove.'¹⁰⁹ After the death of Francis Shirreff, Edward Blight promised that his 'friends will proudly hold him among the most exalted memories that they inherit from Toynbee Hall'.¹¹⁰ Eldred Hitchcock, the warden of Toynbee Hall in the last years of the war, similarly mourned Wilfrid Langdon: 'Toynbee Hall men who knew him admired and were proud of him.'¹¹¹

Dominating settlement publications and memoirs is a picture not only of friendship, but also of social harmony. Various residents and associates emphasised the amiability of their colleagues. Henrietta Barnett wrote that within Toynbee Hall 'men of varied opinions and many views' had 'lived harmoniously together, some staying as long as fifteen years'.¹¹² Samuel Barnett agreed. He wrote that the 'life of Toynbee Hall' was 'made by the Residents and the Associates'. He referred to their 'unity of contrasts', remarking that 'strangers are at once struck by the good feeling which is eminent, and by

¹⁰⁹ See 'Obituaries', *Toynbee Record*, July 1917.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, December 1916.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 1:313.

the diverse opinions they hear expressed'. Barnett insisted that there had been 'no divisions into parties, no antagonism which has even strained friendship or respect'. He concluded: 'The life of the place is essentially the same, happy, keen, liberal, and full of goodwill.'¹¹³ On another occasion, he wrote that though there were 'many minds at work in many directions', there was but 'one heart'.¹¹⁴

Although not all memoirs confirm these sentiments, this sense of harmony was also conveyed by later settlers. Writing in 1935, J.A.R. Pimlott stated that a wide divergence of opinion was permitted in Toynbee Hall which 'contributed to the preservation of an admirable harmony within the House'.¹¹⁵ Jimmy Mallon's impression of settlement life was 'of animation and liveliness and of certain residents in genial and continuous controversy'.¹¹⁶ He highlighted that communal living did not suppress a settler's sense of individuality or independence. There was 'a unanimity at Toynbee Hall', he argued, that 'residents should be free as individuals to act as they thought desirable'.¹¹⁷ In 1886, one unnamed resident summarised a popular impression of Toynbee Hall:

In spite of the really marvellous harmony and concord which reign at the Hall, it is the greatest mistake imaginable to look on men there as all of a colour, either in politics or religion. There are the widest and most fundamental differences of opinion on almost every subject. But I can say with truth that never during the year and a half I lived there was there anything in the nature of a jar or discord to break the peace of the family, and this though most of us were at the outset complete strangers to one another. It was a union of sympathy not of opinion. For my own part the time I spent at the Hall was perhaps the happiest in my life.¹¹⁸

While it should be recognised that testimonials of this kind were often published by Toynbee Hall and Oxford House, the volume of such remarks does convey a general sense of friendship and familiarity within the settlement houses.

¹¹³ Ibid, 2:39.

¹¹⁴ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1898, 12.

¹¹⁵ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 56.

¹¹⁶ James Mallon, Preface, in Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, xi.

¹¹⁷ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1926, 5.

¹¹⁸ *Lend a Hand* 2 (1887), 256.

Diversity within Toynbee Hall

Despite the sense of fellowship that was felt or at least expressed by many settlers, the dynamics of Toynbee Hall were, at times, more complex than official records imply. The settlement ideal of a family home raises a number of questions about the internal dynamics of Toynbee Hall. Although residents wrote of the ‘peace of the family’¹¹⁹ in the settlement, discord was also evident. As J.A.R. Pimlott acknowledged, the ‘harmony of the house’ was ‘sometimes severely strained’.¹²⁰ Toynbee Hall leaders believed they could prevent such tensions by encouraging diversity. A 1919 Toynbee Memorandum insisted that there was no need for ‘a collective Toynbee opinion’ and that ‘residents should be free within obvious limits to carry out their own ideas and work’.¹²¹ In the earlier years of the settlement, Toynbee Hall’s ‘Grand Committee’ sometimes hesitated in accepting men who had the potential to ‘jeopardise the harmony of the house’. However, Samuel Barnett advised them to ‘ignore differences’ as they would simply ‘disappear’.¹²² According to Pimlott, the assorted views of the residents were a source of pride to the warden.¹²³ The Barnetts believed that Toynbee Hall’s broad basis of membership could attract men who were reluctant to join doctrinal institutions.¹²⁴ While this non-committal approach was intended to appeal to a wider range of settlers, it also became a source of contention.

Toynbee Hall’s broad approach was subject to criticism both within and outside the settlement house. George Lansbury wrote with some frustration about the impartiality of the Barnetts. He complained that they ‘never took sides about anything, not even about

¹¹⁹ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1886, 40.

¹²⁰ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 98.

¹²¹ Memorandum, 1919, A/TOY/006, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

¹²² Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:38.

¹²³ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 96-97.

¹²⁴ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:25.

religion', adding: 'Nobody except themselves could possibly understand what they believed about God and the Christian religion, and as to politics, Socialism, Toryism, and Liberalism, all were a sort of jumble – nobody was quite right, everybody was a little wrong.'¹²⁵ This 'jumble' of ideas also dissatisfied the Toynbee Hall chairman, Cosmo Lang, who wanted to be given a clear sense of direction during his time in the East End. He compared Toynbee Hall unfavourably with Oxford House men whose Christian mission, he argued, gave the settlement a sense of 'greater simplicity and cheerfulness'. He found the atmosphere of Oxford House under James Adderley 'more congenial', 'less strained' and less 'self-conscious' than Toynbee Hall.¹²⁶ It seems that Cosmo Lang wanted the settlement to provide him with a clear social philosophy rather than experimenting with different solutions to urban poverty.¹²⁷ Like Lang, C.R. Ashbee, who resided at Toynbee Hall between 1886 and 1889, felt that Barnett's personal stance was too ambiguous. In his 1910 novel, *The Building of Thelema*, Ashbee caricatured Barnett as the Reverend Simeon Flux, the proprietor of 'the great tea-cum-service-cum-politico-economic-religious punch and judy show'. In the novel, Flux is presented as a man who refuses to stand for anything definite. Ashbee wrote of his character: 'Perhaps it was more honest of him . . . not to do this, but it lost him the love of the younger generation, who looked to him for leadership.'¹²⁸ Not only did Ashbee find fault in Barnett's leadership skills, but he also penned a poem, ridiculing Toynbee Hall's attempts to accommodate a broad clientele within the settlement:

Yes, mingle here those elements so contrary,
The man of Balliol and the missionary,
Two full-blown curates shall adorn my page
Three crawling in the caterpillar stage
Now mortals like ourselves, but soon to shine

¹²⁵ Quoted in Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 97.

¹²⁶ Quoted in John Gilbert Lockhart, *Cosmo Gordon Lang* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1949), 50.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ashbee, *The Building of Thelema*, 181, 175-176.

In cope and cassock, each a Broad divine
 True this doctrine (if they know no other)
 Don't hurt the feelings of your Skeptic brother.
 Drop not a word that might be thought unpleasant
 By those who follow Comte or Mrs Besant.¹²⁹

Not only was Ashbee suggesting that settlers were really of much the same ilk, but he was also poking fun at the settlement's efforts to bring together an eclectic mix of people – from Balliol clergymen and missionaries to followers of Auguste Comte (the French philosopher who founded a secular 'Religion of Humanity' that 'emphasised reason and logic'¹³⁰) and Annie Besant (known for her advocacy of secularism and for her involvement in the re-publication of an 'obscene' pamphlet on birth control¹³¹). The fact that Ashbee read this poem to an audience within Toynbee Hall itself suggests that his recitation was delivered in good humour and that he at least felt comfortable enough to voice critical views in a settlement forum. However, his rhyme was not without point. Toynbee Hall settlers did not all belong to the same religious sphere that he described and occasions arose in the settlement when it was deemed best to avoid 'unpleasant' subjects, including political debates. Referring to settlement life during the Boer War, Henrietta Barnett reported that she, Samuel Barnett and four residents were 'Pro-Boer', while the other 16 men were 'aggressively warlike'. She wrote that on some evenings 'we deemed it better not to dine in Hall'.¹³²

Mentions of disputes like this are few in settlement literature. A greater source of disruption in both settlements was caused by the continuous movement of men as they entered and departed the East End. Oxford House men usually stayed for a year unless

¹²⁹ Poem by Ashbee, 'Suggested Report of Toynbee Hall, November 1886', read at Toynbee Hall, Ashbee Journals, King's College, Cambridge.

¹³⁰ Christian D. Von Dehsen and Scott L. Harris, *Philosophers and Religious Leaders* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999), 42.

¹³¹ Anne Taylor, 'Besant [née Wood], Annie (1847-1933)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-30735?rskey=uYCLSr&result=1#odnb-9780198614128-e-30735-div1-d379730e347> (accessed 20 October 2018).

¹³² Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:39.

they assumed official positions within the settlement. Some stayed longer, but they were exceptional cases.¹³³ Men resided in Toynbee Hall for periods varying from three months to four years. The average stay for a Toynbee resident during the early period of its history was two to three years.¹³⁴ Again, there were notable exceptions. Wilfred Blakiston resided in Toynbee Hall for 12 years, while F. E. Douglas and Ernest Aves were each residents for more than 10 years. Cyril Jackson served as a resident for over nine years while Bolton King, a founding member of Toynbee Hall and a university extension lecturer, resided in the East End for 17 years. One settler named Henry Ward stayed for a particularly lengthy period, residing in Toynbee Hall for 28 years.¹³⁵ Samuel Barnett highlighted the importance of sustained residency, but also emphasised the role of new members in introducing fresh ideas:

There are now six men in the House who have lived in Whitechapel over five years, and this fact is of great importance. They have accumulated experience which is valuable to new-comers, and they are recognised by neighbours as neighbours. They are trusted when they appear at public meetings, take up local responsibilities, or offer themselves for election. Their age is valuable, but it is more valuable because it is associated with the youth of new residents. Men fresh from the universities, or the West End, bring in criticism, which, like fire, tries old ways and inspires new actions. They keep the House from being identified with phrases or causes, they force on it a continual readaptation of its principles to present needs. They prevent it settling down on its precedent. They keep the old young, and the old keep them from irresponsible rashness which often belongs to the certainty of youth.¹³⁶

In making this remark, Barnett identified a peer-to-peer networking system which had the potential not only to inform settlers, but also to inspire or restrain their behaviour. Barnett suggests here that interaction among settlers could temper conservatism among older residents or an 'irresponsible rashness' among the younger ones.

¹³³ Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, 224.

¹³⁴ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1892, 14.

¹³⁵ These figures have been calculated from the lists of residents which were published in the settlements' annual reports.

¹³⁶ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:95.

Tensions in the House: Responses to Changing Settlement Agendas

The process of criticism, negotiation and adaptation, described by Barnett, influenced the future direction of the settlement and its understanding of the ideal settler in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While Oxford House remained impervious to much change and retained its essential Christian ethos, Samuel Barnett from the late 1880s began to reappraise the efficacy of personal philanthropy.

Criticisms of Toynbee Hall in the contemporary press may have contributed to Barnett's reassessment of the settlement. The lavish décor of Toynbee Hall prompted derisive comments by critics that settlers were 'planning to save the people's souls with pictures, pianos, and parties'. In 1885, *The Spectator* reported that the notion that 'the inhabitants of East London' were to be 'regenerated by the efforts of undergraduates and the sight of aesthetic furniture and Japanese fans' was 'a preposterous, dull jest'.¹³⁷ The Oxford man in East London was again made a source of ridicule by *The Spectator* in 1890. He was portrayed as a 'cheery-cheeked schoolboy' who 'after a few years at the University, reappear[s] triumphant as one of those missionaries of society improving Mile End'. *The Spectator* asked: 'By what? Not by anything he had to teach, but "by contact" with his sublime person as an Oxford man.' 'Bless the boy!', the magazine added with some derision.¹³⁸ The perceived naivety of the settlement movement was also a subject of criticism for Edward Cummings from Harvard University, who suggested that settling gave men a juvenile, rose-coloured view of life. It left graduates, he thought,

with an ideal in which eternal youth, free from the ties of family life, entertains its [working-class] friends with dinners, pipes, lectures, songs and magic lanterns, in ample halls adorned with mysterious things aesthetic, and in the end discusses the evils of society over black coffee and unlimited cigarettes.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ *The Spectator*, January 17, 1885, 79.

¹³⁸ 'A Commentary in an Easy-Chair', *The Spectator*, August 16, 1890, 210.

¹³⁹ Edward Cummings, 'University Settlements', *The Quarter Journal of Economics* 6 (1892), 273.

As well as facing contemporary criticism about the value of cultural philanthropy for both settlers and the poor, Barnett was aware of a ‘change of society’ in the late 1890s.¹⁴⁰ The settlement’s annual report of 1901 commented upon a sense of impending change within the philanthropic field: ‘Times change rapidly; the spirit of the “eighties”, and even the early “nineties”, has already passed away.’¹⁴¹ Historians generally regard the appointment of William Beveridge as sub-warden of Toynbee Hall as a turning point in the evolution of the settlement.¹⁴² Prior to his appointment, Barnett had spoken of his wish for ‘a vigorous second’ to whom he would give ‘a free hand to change things to suit the present needs’.¹⁴³ In 1901, he again wrote that he was looking ‘for new men with the new spirit’.¹⁴⁴ After the more scientific and pragmatic William Beveridge arrived in the settlement, the persona of the ideal settler became more professionalised. The early settlement idea of the ameliorative value of the ‘mere presence’ of university men in the East End placed as much importance on the character of the settlers as on their active social work. Increasingly, however, settlers were defined less by their moral or ‘spiritual’ attributes and more by their practical contribution to the settlement and the local community. Pimlott described settlement residents not as squires who offered patronage in East London but as a ‘reservoir’ from which it was possible to draw assistance at any time.¹⁴⁵

The responses of settlers to these changing ideals varied, but most men seemed prepared to adjust. This was the approach later advocated by Clement Attlee in *The Social Worker* in which he argued that a settlement needed to ‘move with the times’ in order to

¹⁴⁰ Letter from Samuel Barnett to Frank Barnett, 22 January 1899, F/BAR/201, Samuel Barnett Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

¹⁴¹ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1901, 26.

¹⁴² See, for example, Abel, ‘Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall’, 172 and Briggs and Macartney, *Toynbee Hall: The First Hundred Years*, 59.

¹⁴³ Letter from Samuel Barnett to Frank Barnett, 22 January 1899, F/BAR/201, Samuel Barnett Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

¹⁴⁴ Letter from Samuel Barnett to Frank Barnett, 30 November 1901, F/BAR/235, Samuel Barnett Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

¹⁴⁵ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 227.

be ‘useful’.¹⁴⁶ Samuel Barnett expressed his intention to respond to societal change, but did so with a note of sadness and resignation. As he wrote to his brother in 1889: ‘There is nothing harder for us old pilots than to give up old methods, but I am sure it must be done.’¹⁴⁷ In 1901, he wrote that it was ‘useless to rail at the times’, that new times demanded new men and new ways.¹⁴⁸ The settlement’s 1913 annual report praised Barnett for his willingness to adapt to settlers’ interests and expectations, stating that ‘when criticism exposed weakness in his plans or methods, and when he felt that the old plans and methods had served their purpose, he was always ready, as he said, to lead a revolution against himself’.¹⁴⁹ One of Barnett’s successors, John St George Heath, on the other hand, felt that settlers had been less willing to adapt to broader social change. He wrote in Toynbee Hall’s annual report of 1915: ‘There is always a danger in old-established institutions that they become too proud of their traditions, too timorous to apply the pruning knife, too apt to let the free spirit be choked by the accumulation of the past.’ He felt that Toynbee Hall had shown such a tendency.¹⁵⁰

As Heath implied, some settlers were resistant or perhaps uninterested in Toynbee Hall’s evolving agenda. Basil Henriques resided at Toynbee Hall between October 1913 and April 1914, a time when the settlement was increasingly advocating social investigation. His comments suggest that he did not relate well to some of his fellow settlers as he described them as being overly ‘scientific, stuffy and fearfully sociological’.¹⁵¹ Maurice Birley’s wardenship in this period revealed that such differences could create tension within the settlement. Birley entered Toynbee Hall as a resident in 1904 and acted as warden between 1911 and 1914. A gentleman of independent means,

¹⁴⁶ C.R. Attlee, *The Social Worker* (London: G. Bell and Sons Ltd., 1920), 216.

¹⁴⁷ Letter from Samuel Barnett to Frank Barnett, October 1889, F/BAR/098, Samuel Barnett Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

¹⁴⁸ Letter from Samuel Barnett to Frank Barnett, 5 October 1901, F/BAR/235, Samuel Barnett Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

¹⁴⁹ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1913, 21.

¹⁵⁰ Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1915, 121.

¹⁵¹ Basil Henriques, *The Indiscretions of a Warden* (London: Methuen and Co., 1937), 36.

he represented exactly the type of leisured citizen that the founders of the settlement movement had wanted to introduce to the East End. As warden, Birley focused on the daily routines of Toynbee Hall, emphasising the importance of social intercourse and ‘making friends’.¹⁵² Birley also espoused the Barnetts’ motto of ‘one by one’ in his social work. However, Birley’s advocacy of these traditional settlement ideals raised questions among settlers about the aims and purpose of Toynbee Hall. His approach was questioned and criticised by settlers who were more interested in social investigation and framing legislation. His leadership was seemingly met with some disapproval. At the end of Birley’s tenure, a writer in the *Toynbee Record* stated that the warden had failed to obtain ‘the support and help for which he might have looked to us who have lived in the house’.¹⁵³ Pimlott believed that Birley was unsuited to the position of warden, describing him as a man who shied away from publicity. Birley had accepted the post of warden reluctantly, he said, and ‘was far from coveting it’.¹⁵⁴ In Henrietta Barnett’s forthright opinion, Birley ‘ought never to have been appointed’. She wrote to Alfred Milner, then chairman of the Toynbee Hall Council, expressing her opinion of Birley’s leadership: ‘He is a nice man and people are fond of him, I believe; but he is a poor creature, without power of organising or attracting, or keeping men.’¹⁵⁵

Birley’s wardenship illustrates the tensions that changing agendas and personalities could create within Toynbee Hall. Henrietta Barnett expressed concern about the division and uncertainty among settlers at this time. When Samuel Barnett proposed the appointment of Alexander Carr-Saunders as ‘a go-ahead forcible Sub-Warden’ to ‘supplement’ Birley’s leadership and widen the settlement’s interests, Birley apparently ‘quarrelled with him and the two did not speak, while living in the same

¹⁵² Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1912, 25.

¹⁵³ *Toynbee Record* 26, no.7 (April 1914), 81.

¹⁵⁴ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 135.

¹⁵⁵ Letter of Henrietta Barnett to Alfred Milner, 23 May 1913, A/TOY/006/1, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

house'.¹⁵⁶ Highlighting the disharmony in the settlement, Henrietta offered to return in order to 'link up the old and new' and return 'confidence to the habitués'.¹⁵⁷ Her proposal did not eventuate. Instead, a group of critics drafted a plan of action insisting on a different kind of leadership from Birley's. At a meeting of the Toynbee Council on 2 June 1913, seven residents presented a memorandum asserting the need for a reassessment of the settlement.¹⁵⁸ The writers argued that the settlement's primary goal should be social investigation.¹⁵⁹ It seems that some differences could not be resolved as both Birley and Carr-Saunders resigned at this meeting. Birley remained at the settlement until March 1914 when John St George Heath arrived as the new warden of Toynbee Hall. Birley then moved eastward to Limehouse to continue the same kind of social work that he had been engaged in at Toynbee Hall. At the time of his resignation, Milner announced that Birley was 'a strenuous volunteer, throwing himself into the breach when nobody else was willing to fill it'. Milner emphasised that although Birley had never sought the position, 'having been thrust into it, perhaps against his will', he had nevertheless 'laboured manfully' for Toynbee Hall and would 'always have a place in our grateful memory'.¹⁶⁰ Despite this commendation, it is evident that Birley's wardenship had been fraught with tension and his experience was probably dissatisfying in many ways.

This episode in Toynbee Hall's history illustrates that managing a settlement could be a challenging endeavour. The responsibilities of settlement leaders could be demanding as they superintended the management of the house and guided the work of other residents. William Beveridge, for example, found himself working long hours during Samuel Barnett's absences from Toynbee Hall. During these times, he was placed

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Letter of Henrietta to Milner, 20 September, 1913, A/TOY/006/1, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

¹⁵⁸ Memorandum of Residents, 1913, 1, A/TOY/006, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 2.

¹⁶⁰ Quoted in Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 136.

in charge of the settlement as acting warden. Even when Barnett was there, Beveridge often had to act as his representative and spokesman. As sub-warden, Beveridge later recalled, he was at Toynbee Hall 'day and night'.¹⁶¹

Some Toynbee Hall leaders, like Eldred Hitchcock and John St George Heath, left their positions due to the difficulties of their work rather than any particular grievances against the settlement. During World War One, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House faced the challenges of more limited funds and fewer recruits as potential settlers were involved in the war effort. Furthermore, fewer graduates could afford to stay a year at the settlements after leaving the universities. Both settlements sought to continue their work as much as possible. When the residential part of Toynbee Hall moved from Whitechapel to Poplar in 1915, Hitchcock supervised the settlement activities which continued at Whitechapel. He found little of the 'zest of adventure' that he felt was attached to the Poplar experiment.¹⁶² Instead, he found the settlement work demanding as he was also engaged as deputy director of Wool Textiles at the War Office and he did not have the assistance of other residents. As Pimlott wrote, there was 'much drudgery and hard work and there were few hands to perform it'.¹⁶³ Had Hitchcock not already supervised the daily administration as secretary, Pimlott added, 'it would hardly have been possible for him to combine the arduous task of running Toynbee Hall with his official duties'.¹⁶⁴ The fact that Hitchcock remained the acting warden for the duration of the war, but was unwilling for 'personal reasons' to continue any longer in the position than was absolutely necessary, may suggest that he had other endeavours he wished to pursue. Pimlott's commentary, however, implies that he had not particularly enjoyed his

¹⁶¹ Beveridge, *Power and Influence*, 23.

¹⁶² Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 199.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

leadership role.¹⁶⁵

Like Hitchcock, John St George Heath found settling to be a challenge. When he resigned the wardenship in October 1917, Heath gave as his reason the pressure of government work, but according to Pimlott, ‘his disappointment was great’.¹⁶⁶ As a pacifist, Heath found it difficult to lead the settlement in Poplar during World War One. Due to Heath’s presence, the settlement was ‘popularly regarded as a “funk hole” for conscientious objectors’.¹⁶⁷ Heath resigned the wardenship in October 1917 and residential quarters were re-opened in Whitechapel. A letter he wrote to Milner just prior to his departure conveys Heath’s sense of failure and personal disappointment:

It seems to be a disastrous thing that, after having been led into such a big enterprise as starting a second Toynbee in Poplar, we should now have to abandon it; but if this is inevitable, there is certainly a great deal to be said for trying to revive the residential character of the old Toynbee, which, personally, I never intended to get rid of altogether. At one time I thought I saw my way to keeping both as live and mutually supporting institutions.¹⁶⁸

Assessments of the Settlements’ Two-fold Mission

Residents who issued criticisms of the settlements often dwelt on the mission towards the urban poor rather than on their own experiences in the East End. At Toynbee Hall, both William Beveridge and R.H. Tawney, for example, felt that the educational impact of the settlement was limited. It introduced Oxford men to the realities of poverty and squalor, but was not so good at relieving these features of urban life.¹⁶⁹ Reflecting on his lectures, Tawney stated that ‘the direct educational value of such a series is, no doubt, not very

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 207.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 199.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 196.

¹⁶⁸ Letter from J. St George Heath to Alfred Milner, 17 September, 1917, A/TOY/006/016, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

¹⁶⁹ Lawrence Goldman, *The Life of R.H. Tawney: Socialism and History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 27.

great'.¹⁷⁰ Beveridge and Tawney also questioned Toynbee Hall's 'cultural philanthropy'. Tawney found the literature he was given to read when he became secretary of the Children's Country Holiday Fund 'monotonously benevolent' in tone.¹⁷¹ And Beveridge wrote in his autobiography that 'if anyone ever thought that colossal evils could be remedied by small doses of culture and amiability, I for one do not think so now'.¹⁷² George Lansbury concurred, writing that 'my sixty years' experience in East London leaves me quite unable to discover what permanent social influence Toynbee Hall or any other settlement has had on the life and labour of the people'.¹⁷³

The project to make a class of social reformers could be misunderstood or overlooked, particularly by contemporary observers who criticised the houses for concentrating too much on 'the elite'.¹⁷⁴ An article in *The Spectator* expressed concern that settlement houses could become 'vacation resort[s]' for 'undergraduate hotheads or frothy declaimers'. It warned against the prospect that 'boys, whose own ideas are still unsettled' could beguile East Enders with 'the rodomontade of debating societies'.¹⁷⁵ Underpinning such remarks was an understanding of the settlement movement as a reformist project directed solely at the poor. However, within the settlement houses themselves, we have seen that attention was deliberately given to the settlers. In 1932, Toynbee Hall hosted a party for Henrietta Barnett's eighty-first birthday. Henrietta, who had retained contact with the settlement long after her husband had resigned from the wardenship in 1906, spoke at this Toynbee Hall gathering. After asking those assembled if the settlement house had been a success, she proceeded to respond to her own question. She announced: 'Let the answer be in the swarming men now in the high places of this

¹⁷⁰ *Toynbee Record*, 17 (January 1905), 66.

¹⁷¹ Letter from R.H. Tawney to William Beveridge, 17 November, 1903; in Abel, 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', 287.

¹⁷² Beveridge, *Power and Influence*, 17.

¹⁷³ Lansbury, *My Life*, in Robert Holman, *Good Old George: The Life of George Lansbury* (Oxford: Lion, 1990), 196.

¹⁷⁴ Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 65.

¹⁷⁵ 'From Oxford to Whitechapel', *The Spectator*, January 17, 1885.

country who owe all their knowledge of the working classes to their Toynbee days. You find them everywhere.’¹⁷⁶ Certainly, it is not surprising that Henrietta Barnett would wish to emphasise the achievements of Toynbee Hall given the time and effort both she and her husband had invested in the settlement. However, it is significant that in highlighting its success, she described the progress of university settlers rather than dwelling upon the condition of the East End and its inhabitants. In her view, the shaping of the settlers was a key item on the settlement agenda.

While the extent to which Toynbee Hall influenced its settlers varied, Henrietta Barnett’s statement was supported by *The Spectator* in 1934, which also reflected upon the role of the settlements in shaping a generation of social reformers. It opined that Toynbee Hall had achieved its objectives towards its residents:

The reform movement of that time was pushed forward by volunteers who to influence the experts had themselves to become experts. They had to introduce themselves into the ranks of the politicians and the civil servants. Since then there have been two changes, due in no small degree to the efforts of these pioneers. Firstly, the government itself has armies of civil servants who are carrying out as officials the work of the social reformer. . . Secondly, Labour and the Labour Party have grown up; they have their own organisations, their own experts, their own lecturers who have actually emerged from those strata of life which the Toynbee pioneers set themselves to explore. So successful was the University Settlement movement that, in its original form, it has ceased to be necessary.¹⁷⁷

This comment was published only six years before the outbreak of the Second World War. In the view of the above journalist, by 1939, the need for settlement houses had been significantly reduced as its alumni entered the civil service and the political arena. The settlement houses had fulfilled the mission which has been the focal point of this study, that is, a program aimed at making social reformers.

¹⁷⁶ See the *City and East London Observer*, May 7, 1932.

¹⁷⁷ ‘Fifty Years at Toynbee Hall’, *The Spectator*, December 21, 1934, 5.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined how various Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men understood and responded to the settlement experience. Settlers' reflections demonstrate that settlement house space was never monolithic, but was subject to a continual process of construction and negotiation. Due to its more specific residential criteria, the Oxford House experience was more predictable and less contentious than its counterpart. Toynbee Hall's wider membership base resulted in a wider range of responses from settlers. Central to both settlement houses, however, was the importance placed on residency. As a 1919 memorandum stated, the 'main object' of Toynbee Hall was to establish 'a community of men, with, in the main, similar interests and ideals'.¹⁷⁸ As we have seen, the members of this community became the beneficiaries of a program that was intended to make a new generation of social reformers. While not all settlers accepted or even recognised this project, many bore marks of its impact into their subsequent lives.

¹⁷⁸ Memorandum, 1919, A/TOY/006, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

Conclusion

The gain is obvious; their gift, to themselves at any rate, seems small in comparison.

Samuel Barnett, 1889¹

This thesis has examined the ‘making’ of social reformers as it occurred within Toynbee Hall and Oxford House between 1884 and 1914. From their foundation, these settlement houses sought to recruit a select cohort of Britain’s male social elite. Residency in London’s East End was intended to be a formative experience for these men and it was conceived as an opportunity for shaping both their personal and professional lives. While a substantial body of historiography on these settlements has focused primarily on their campaign to ‘elevate’ the urban poor in various ways, this study has examined Toynbee Hall and Oxford House as sites for the cultivation, education and networking of a new breed of social reformers. These men were both the agents and the targets of the settlement houses’ attempts to bridge the social divide between East and West London.

Toynbee Hall and Oxford House encouraged young and privileged men from Oxbridge and West London to work among the poor in Whitechapel and Bethnal Green. Due to their social status and education, these gentlemen were considered to be ideal settlers who would be able to share their society and culture with the poor and assist with the self-cultivation of residents in East London. This view persisted throughout the period covered in this thesis and extended into the inter-war period as well. In a presidential address to the International Organisation of University Settlements in 1922, for example, Henrietta Barnett emphasised that ‘the young’ were the ‘driving force’ of the settlements. She concluded: ‘For the sake of all that settlements stand for, let us woo them, let us win

¹ See Henrietta Barnett, *Canon Barnett: His Life, Work, and Friends by his Wife in Two Volumes with Thirty-Nine Illustrations* (London: John Murray, 1918), 2:94.

them.’² It was also a foundational aim to ‘make’ these men. As ‘labour colonies’ for gentlemen, the settlement houses functioned as sites where members of the comfortable classes could actively contribute to social work. This was particularly important at a time when the men comprising Britain’s national elite were thought to be largely ignorant of the condition of the poor and in need of a constructive outlet for their energies that would prevent them from falling into idleness or social indifference. The residential aspect of the settlement houses meant that, once recruited, men could receive a significant level of pastoral care and guidance from their warden and fellow residents.

The ‘colony’ or ‘settlement’ was a popular metaphor to refer to the groups of men who left, albeit temporarily, their usual social circles in Oxbridge and the West End to form a community in new, unfamiliar slum districts. In many ways, this imagery suggested that the settlement houses were established to improve the character and habits of the poor. The poor were often likened to colonial subjects abroad while the slums were imagined as outposts of empire which were subject to the regulation involved in the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. The first annual report of Oxford House stated that ‘colonisation by the well-to-do’ was ‘the true solution of that East-End question’, one that was rivalling ‘the Eastern question in its complicated and momentous issues’.³ Yet if the poor were targets of intervention, this study has shown that Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men were also the subjects of a pedagogical campaign. The making of settlers in Toynbee Hall and Oxford House was regarded as a preliminary and highly significant stage in addressing poverty. The improvement of social conditions in East London depended on the creation of social reformers and policy makers who could act not only as role models for the urban poor but also as administrators and advisors in the British government.

² Henrietta Barnett, *Matters that Matter* (London: J. Murray, 1930), 15.

³ Oxford House, Annual Report, 1886, 5.

To date, the concept of a moralising or ‘civilising mission’, which was central to philanthropic discourse in the nineteenth century, has generally been examined as a project of reform aimed at either the poor at home or colonial subjects abroad. Although historians have long acknowledged that the settlement houses could benefit their residents, the programs and pedagogies that were aimed at Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men have not received sustained attention in scholarship on the settlement houses. The preceding chapters have therefore examined the attempts of the settlement houses to ‘make’ social reformers in the sense of both personal development and career advancement.

The different religious focus of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House meant that while they both sought to make social reformers, each produced and promoted their own image of an ideal settler. Oxford House was an Anglican mission developed with the explicit intent of re-Christianising the poor in London’s East End. Its residents were characterised by their Christian ethos and practices, and many of them pursued careers in the church. The more secular Toynbee Hall had a distinctly social and civic purpose and it attracted a broader cross-section of men from the gentry and professional classes. While a continuous focus on missionary ideals was evident in Oxford House in the period from 1884 to 1914, a discernible shift occurred in Toynbee Hall as settlers increasingly eschewed charity in favour of a scientific and highly pragmatic approach to social problems. The settlement’s emphasis on the importance of investigation and research saw the emergence of a new settlement prototype, that of a modern social scientist. There was no equivalent to the Toynbee Hall ‘laboratory’ at Oxford House, that is, an arena where ideas about poverty and its alleviation were scientifically researched and studied by residents, several of whom drew upon their settlement experiences in formulating social policies. Due to the prominence of its alumni in the civil service, in politics and in

professions such as education and journalism, Toynbee Hall was the more notable and successful of the two settlements at the time. Taken together, however, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House provide us with case studies of ‘labour colonies’ for gentlemen, whilst also revealing the diversity that existed within the settlement movement and the co-existence into the twentieth century of two rival models of the ideal social reformer.

Within the broader metaphor of the colony, the chapters of this thesis have referred to popular settlement images – that of the monastery, the postgraduate university (or theological college, in the case of Oxford House), the laboratory (Toynbee Hall) and the clubhouse – to analyse how the settlements served as pedagogical spaces for the education, ethical development and vocational training of settlers. As the monastic imagery examined in Chapter Two indicates, settling was a highly introspective activity that focused on the development of men through the implementation of various rituals and codes within the house.

A range of techniques was employed by the settlement houses as they each sought to make their own particular version of an ideal social reformer. This included the settlements’ communal lifestyles, weekly routines, mentoring programs, practical experimentation and peer-to-peer networking. Reversing conventional understandings of Victorian philanthropy, settlement leaders argued that residency in the East End and contact with the poor could have a positive influence on settlers. However, while the settlements emphasised the educational value of interacting with the urban poor, the relationship between the classes was clearly hierarchical. The settlers were gentlemen and they were expected to remain so. There was a perceived danger of men becoming too immersed in East End life and culture and, as Chapter Two has demonstrated, there were strategies in place within the houses to shield settlers from immoral or potentially corrupting influences in the slums. The techniques designed to influence the character, the

behaviour and the career making of the settlers within the protected space of the settlements were usually informal and were integrated in the practical activities of the settlements.

Chapter Six has shown that the program aimed at residents was subject to various interpretations and elicited a range of responses within both settlements. In some cases, the programs for residents were not recognised at all or had such little effect that the experience was not recorded by settlers. While there were several men who criticised particular aspects of the settlements, most of the surviving documentation from residents is positive in its assessment of both the houses and the settling experience.

By focusing on the making of the settlers, this thesis builds upon a body of scholarship that has explored the education, development and regulation of the British social elite in a range of institutions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Like other homosocial spaces such as public schools, universities, monasteries and gentlemen's clubs, the settlement houses each promoted particular values and codes of behaviour to 'make' new masculine identities. Neither Toynbee Hall nor Oxford House was unique in fostering ideals and values in young men. Oxbridge itself played a critical role in the formation of young men in this period. According to one contributor to the Cambridge magazine, *Granta*, in 1891, boys at the universities were 'new-fashioned into men'.⁴ The Oxford equivalent to *Granta*, the *Isis* magazine, agreed, declaring that new graduates strode away, 'leaving boyhood forever behind them and setting their faces in the direction of manhood'.⁵ As we have seen, on leaving the university, many graduates chose to move into another homosocial environment – the settlement house.

Like their university counterparts, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House were sites where men could mature. The settlement houses sought to appeal to male graduates and

⁴ 'A Greeting', *Granta* 5, no. 67 (October 17, 1891), 1.

⁵ 'The Parting of the Ways', *Isis*, no. 392 (June 20, 1908), 436.

to provide them with an opportunity to become involved in philanthropy, a field which had traditionally been dominated by women. According to Henrietta Barnett, it was ‘the fear that men, still shy in their new role, would retire if the movement was captured by women that made Canon Barnett anxious to keep the settlement movement primarily for men’.⁶ While Toynbee Hall and Oxford House were predominantly masculine spaces, settlement living did not necessarily disrupt domestic traditions. Most settlers were young and single and the settlements offered them with both physical and emotional comfort during their residency in East London.

A feminine influence was evident in Toynbee Hall due to the presence of Henrietta Barnett. Despite some support for greater female involvement in the settlement, Henrietta remained the most prominent female leader within Toynbee Hall until World War Two. In 1913, the Toynbee council considered a proposal to establish a women’s settlement, but this did not eventuate. A women’s settlement was eventually established by Toynbee Hall in Poplar during World War One, but it was discontinued. Henrietta stated that it was ‘alien to Toynbee subscribers’.⁷ As the single, dominant female presence in what was otherwise a masculine domain, she played a significant role in establishing the tone and ethos of the settlement. Her commentary has therefore been prominent throughout this thesis.

The settlement houses were quite distinct from many other homosocial environments available to gentlemen in London. Bernard Porter, for example, has described Oxford alumni spending their ‘leisure huddled together, typically in oak-and leather-bound London clubs, comfortingly reminiscent of the Adyar Club in Madras’ or

⁶ Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, 2:51. For an examination of women’s settlements, see Katharine Bentley Beaman, *Women and the Settlement Movement* (London and New York: Radcliffe Press, 1996) and Nigel Scotland, *Squires in the Slums: Settlements and Missions in Late Victorian Britain* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), chapter 7. Katharine Bradley also examines women’s settlements as case studies in ‘Poverty and Philanthropy in East London, 1918-1959: The University Settlements and the Urban Working Classes’, (PhD diss., University of London, 2006).

⁷ Letter of Henrietta Barnett to Lord Alfred Milner, November 15, 1917, A/TOY/006/031, Toynbee Hall Papers, London Metropolitan Archives.

congregating at ‘public school Old Boys’ reunions, Oxbridge senior common rooms, and the members’ enclosures at Twickenham and Lords’.⁸ While Toynbee Hall and Oxford House were staffed by men and were places of sociability, the settlers were of a very different temperament and inclination from the men Porter describes. The settlements attracted serious-minded university men who chose not to spend their leisure time ‘huddled together’ in a West End club but to live instead amidst the poverty of East London and to undertake civic and religious work among the poor. The distinction was an important one and it was very real to contemporaries. Henry Scott Holland’s description of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House as labour colonies or refuges for gentlemen, introduced at the beginning of this study, shows that the settlements were a very distinct alternative space to London clubland. Men could channel their energies into reform and social uplift rather than ‘idling’ away their time or ‘mooning’ about the wealthier districts of West London.⁹

The making of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House men may appear to be an auxiliary consequence of settling, but it was closely connected to the settlements’ wider aims to reform the East End. Both settlement houses recruited men who had the potential to attain positions of influence in the church and, in the case of Toynbee Hall, in the broader fields of the civil service and politics. It was envisaged that the settlements’ alumni would draw upon their experiences in the slums, as well as their extensive social and political networks, to contribute to reform efforts in London and in Britain more generally.

This focus within Toynbee Hall was significant given the role many of its residents came to play in the wider history of British state welfare. Significantly, many of

⁸ Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 43–44.

⁹ Anonymous, *The Oxford House in Bethnal Green: Report of Meeting Held at the Mansion House in Support of an Appeal for the Building Fund on Wednesday, 21st Jan., 1891*, 9–10.

the settlers who contributed to the settlement's research went on to become key architects of Britain's welfare state. This included Hubert Llewellyn Smith, William Beveridge and Clement Attlee. Toynbee Hall's association with state welfare and social policy making has continued into more recent times. It is significant that the British Prime Minister in 1999, Tony Blair, chose Toynbee Hall as the venue to deliver a speech declaring the Labour Party's intention to eradicate child poverty within twenty years.¹⁰ His choice of venue was symbolic, highlighting the role that the settlement had played in social welfare since 1884.

Both settlements' contribution to the development of British politics extended to foreign and imperial affairs. Toynbee Hall and Oxford House were established as 'colonies' in a period of British empire building and their affiliations with the universities brought them into wider imperial networks. As Chapter Five has shown, this included involvement in groups such as Alfred Milner's 'kindergarten' which, like the settlement houses, brought Oxbridge recruits into a close-knit fraternity. Milner drew upon his connections in Toynbee Hall and Oxford to fill senior posts in his administration, which is indicative of the career benefits that could be derived from networking among the professional elite.¹¹ Parallels can certainly be drawn between this 'kindergarten' of colonial administrators and the settlement houses which also functioned as 'nurseries' of church leaders and national and colonial bureaucrats, albeit amidst the poverty in the East End. As Oxbridge graduates, settlers' interests in domestic social reform and in missions abroad were often interconnected and this was reflected in the discourse, the ethos and the career making of settlers. Prominent settlement figures pursued imperial ambitions after

¹⁰ A copy of this speech may be found online:

<http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:q8xZACpcr-gJ:www.bris.ac.uk/poverty/downloads/background/Tony%2520Blair%2520Child%2520Poverty%2520Speech.doc%2B&cd=3&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=au> (accessed 29 September 2018).

¹¹ See Walter Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men: The Kindergarten in Edwardian Imperial Affairs* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1968).

working in the East End. This was reflected in settlement rhetoric and educational programs, particularly in Oxford House which had missionary aims abroad.

Although it is beyond the scope of this study, the settlement movement expanded after the foundation of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House. Indeed, Pimlott referred to Toynbee Hall as the ‘mother of all settlement houses’.¹² By 1911, there were 49 settlement houses in British cities.¹³ The settlement movement also spread abroad. In the United States, settlement houses were established first in New York, and soon opened in Boston, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Chicago and other cities. Settlement ideas could also be transferred to new cities by former residents. This was the case for Percy Rowland, an Oxford graduate and nephew of Samuel Barnett by marriage, who occasionally resided in Toynbee Hall and served as secretary of the Toynbee Club. After graduation, Rowland began his teaching career in Ireland in 1894 before travelling to Sydney to work as a tutor. Rowland felt very aware of the poverty in the city, writing that ‘slums exist in Surry Hills and in Woolloomooloo that would disgrace Whitechapel’.¹⁴ With Thomas Bavin, a law student (later Attorney General and Premier of New South Wales), Rowland settled in a house in Riley Street in Surry Hills.¹⁵ Like the residents of Toynbee Hall, he aimed to support the disadvantaged as they attempted to improve their economic and social conditions. Bavin and Rowland were joint secretaries of the Sydney Toynbee Guild, which Rowland regarded as ‘a modest experiment in Toynbee work recently tried in Sydney and aimed at making in the university a common ground for men of all classes to co-operate in social reform’.¹⁶ The Surry Hills settlement did not become permanent. However, when a Sydney university settlement was opened to residents in 1908, Rowland

¹² Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Progress*, 209, 223.

¹³ Picht, *Toynbee Hall and the English Settlement Movement*, 99.

¹⁴ Quoted in Roma Williams, *The Settlement: A History of the University of Sydney Settlement and the Settlement Neighbourhood Centre, 1891-1986* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1988), 11.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

was cited as an inspiration.¹⁷ In a public lecture, Rowland himself attributed his work to the example set by Toynbee Hall. A news bulletin reported:

Mr. Rowland began his lecture by tracing the idea of a University Settlement in Sydney to the Rev. J. Fordyce, and added that he felt it devolved on himself, as a nephew of Canon Barnett, the originator of Toynbee Hall, to see if any practical steps could be taken towards the realisation of that idea. He proceeds to explain how he and several other young graduates would undertake to live in Surry Hills for a period of six months, forming a settlement on a small scale, to be called 'University House'.¹⁸

Although this thesis has focused on the making of settlers in only two settlement houses, Toynbee Hall and Oxford House were significant developments in late Victorian philanthropy. An investigation of the wider settlement movement should be equally attentive to the role of the settlers and the place they occupied in social reform programs.

The themes that have been explored in this thesis still carry some gravitas in social welfare institutions today. The year 2019 marks the 135th anniversary of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House and the two houses continue to play an important role in their local communities as centres of social welfare. Oxford House is now a community centre known as 'OH!'. It is an arts venue and immigration centre that offers English language training and youth activities. Toynbee Hall continues to function as a residential settlement in Tower Hamlets. Both institutions still promote social work as a means of development not only for members of the local community, but also for their volunteers. In November 2003, *The Telegraph* published an article about Toynbee Hall as it was one of the charities selected for its annual Christmas appeal. It reported on the Toynbee experience of John Profumo who famously withdrew from politics in 1963 in the wake of the 'Profumo Affair'.¹⁹ After his resignation, Profumo retreated to Toynbee Hall where he

¹⁷ Louisa MacDonald, 'The Sydney University Settlement. Reminiscences of its First Beginnings', *The Union Recorder* 17 (October 1935), 229.

¹⁸ *Hermes* 2, no.5 (30 October 1896), 6.

¹⁹ The Profumo Affair was a British political scandal that involved a sexual relationship in 1961 between

continued to work for the rest of his life, eventually becoming one of the charity's chief fundraisers. Like many of his predecessors at the settlement, Profumo's work was voluntary and he lived comfortably on his inherited wealth. For him, the settling experience was rewarding in two ways. He contributed to the work of the settlement, but believed that his connection with Toynbee Hall also helped to restore his reputation. He declared that Toynbee Hall had 'given me more than I've given it'.²⁰ W.F. Deedes, who interviewed Profumo when a new building, Profumo House, was opened in the Toynbee Hall complex, recounted their conversation:

'Jack', I say, as we settle down in a corner of Toynbee Hall, the east London settlement, to talk about social work in a very poor London borough, 'what have you learnt from this place?' We are sitting over a sandwich lunch and a glass of wine in a handsome new building that will today be named Profumo House, as part of the celebrations for his forty years of social service there. After a pause for thought, he replies, 'humility'.²¹

Profumo's experience suggests that, as late as the 1960s, the settlement house still functioned as a site for the development of men from the upper echelons of British society. By focusing on this aspect of settling, this study has not suggested that Toynbee Hall and Oxford House were marginal institutions in the life of the East End or that they made a greater impression on the residents than the urban poor. However, an examination of this aspect of the settlements' project broadens historical understandings of the functions of philanthropic institutions. As Frank Prochaska observed in his study of British social reform: 'The provision of welfare is central to philanthropy, but it is far from being its sole concern.'²² This study has shown that settling in the slums was not merely an act of charity on the part of middle and upper-class philanthropists seeking to

John Profumo, the Secretary of State for War in Harold Macmillan's government, and Christine Keeler, a nineteen-year-old model.

²⁰ 'What Profumo did Next', *The Telegraph*, November 17, 2003.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Frank Prochaska, *The Voluntary Impulse: Philanthropy in Modern Britain* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), xiii.

address the needs of the urban poor. Toynbee Hall and Oxford House also functioned as labour colonies for the formation of a new generation of social reformers for Britain and its empire.

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