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Kate Bradley

Growing up with a City': Exploring Settlement Youth Work in London and Chicago, c.

1880–1940

The first university settlements were founded in East London in 1884, bringing young graduates to the area to live and to work for the benefit of impoverished local communities. The settlement model was soon adopted by social reformers around the world. This article considers the question of whether settlements should be seen by historians as a coherent body with shared values, or as institutions whose character and interests were uniquely shaped by their local neighbourhoods — and thus what the study of individual settlements can contribute to our understanding of working-class life in East London and elsewhere. This is examined through a comparative study of settlements in London and Chicago and their work with children and young people. This article also considers how settlements attempted to develop associational cultures and social capital among children and young people. The study of 'settlements', where middle-class university graduates could live and undertake social work in poor urban districts, provides a means of examining historical attitudes to young peoples' lives in the metropolis. The first 'settlements', Toynbee Hall and Oxford House, were founded in East London in 1884, and by the end of the century settlements had spread across the UK, Europe, Scandinavia, Asia and North America. The settlements represented an attempt to alleviate the social problems of the overcrowded, insanitary industrial cities. As a model for the organisation of social work, settlements had great appeal to the young and

idealistic. Settlements were relatively easy to establish — one could take a room or house with a few friends in a slum area, as Hannah Morten did in Hoxton in the 1880s¹ - and offered the opportunity to become a leader of the community and the potential to influence national policies and practice.² Settlements also represented a means by which to escape the parental home and the confines of bourgeois behaviour for both men and women.³ Young graduates from around the world were attracted to the settlements to find inspiration and a conduit for their idealistic impulses: Jane Addams encountered Toynbee Hall during a trip around Europe in her early twenties and founded Hull-House on her return to Chicago in 1889.⁴ Despite their geographical spread and cultural diversity, the settlements had many points of similarity, one of which was an engagement with the needs of children and young people. This particular concern intersected in both the UK and America with the rise of maternalist welfare politics⁵ and especially with the development of specialised judicial bodies for the young.⁶ These concerns were neither new nor limited to settlements, but through an examination of the settlements' work with young people it is possible to explore broader questions about the nature of urban voluntary work before the establishment of postwar welfare states and systems. By adopting a comparative perspective, it is possible to identify those points that are common to both cases and those that are unique. In this article,

¹ Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850 - 1920* (London: Virago, 1985), 222.

² See Katharine Bradley, "Creating Local Elites: The University Settlement Movement, National Elites and Citizenship in East London, 1884 – 1940," in *In Control of the City: Local Elites and the Dynamics of Urban Politics, 1800 - 1960*, ed. S. Couperus, C. Smit, and D. J. Wolffram (Leeuven: Peeters, 2007).

³ Vicinus, 220; Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

⁴ Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, ed. James Hurt (Urbana: Prairie State and University of Illinois Press, 1990).

⁵ See especially Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, "Womanly Duties: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States in France, Germany, Great Britain and the United States 1870 - 1920," *American Historical Review* 95 (1990); *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States* (London: Routledge, 1993).

⁶ For the USA, see Anthony M. Platt, *The Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969); Elizabeth Clapp, *Mothers of All Children: Women Reformers and the Rise of the Juvenile Courts in Progressive Era America* (Philadelphia: Penn State University Press, 1998). And for the UK: Harry Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England 1872 - 1989* (London: Routledge, 1994).

London, the founding home of the settlement movement, will be compared with Chicago. Although the first of the US settlements was founded in New York in 1886, the efforts of Addams and those around her quickly made Hull-House the most well-known settlement house in the nation. Addams presented Hull-House as the ideological centre of the US settlements, both in contrast and in sympathy with the positioning of Toynbee Hall as the centre of the British and world movements. By comparing the two, it is possible to identify what was an integral part of an internationalising social work movement, and what was specific to the local environment. For the purposes of those researching London, we can thus drill down to identify the specific nature of youthful existence in the city in this period. Through an exploration of settlement youth work, this article will seek to answer the following questions. How did the dynamics of specific urban environments impact upon what social reformers saw as the needs of the young? Should we think of the settlement movement as a coherent body with shared values, or should we rather think of it as a diverse body, shaped by local issues? The answers to these questions are also relevant to ongoing debates about the nature of social relations, and specifically to the role of voluntary work, citizenship and 'social capital'. Settlement youth work lends itself to such analysis, as it was directly concerned with the creation of 'good citizens' and the place of the young in society. This effort ran in parallel with the settlement workers' own involvement in the middle-class public sphere, their discussions with other social workers, with local, state, national and federal government, with philanthropists, and with researchers and theorists, and their participation in popular debates. This engagement with the active Habermasian public sphere intersected with the transference or encouragement of social capital among young people. The notion of social capital — or one's contacts, networks and friendship groups — has been handled with regard to social relations, urban life and voluntary associations by a number of theorists, including Jane Jacobs, Pierre Bourdieu, Richard Sennett and Richard Putnam, and is an

important organising framework.⁷ Through clubs, Boy Scouts, summer camps and the like, it can be said that the settlements offered opportunities for the young to participate in associational life and culture, and thereby to make friends and contacts that would be of use in the future. These opportunities had the potential to enrich or replace those relationships available with the local community; settlement fare also opened up the possibilities of acquiring fresh cultural capital through learning new skills and enjoying new sporting or artistic activities. In addition to those questions highlighted above, this article will explore the manner in which settlements in London and Chicago attempted to develop an associational culture among young people, through the creation of youth clubs and through the policing of young people through juvenile court mechanisms.

Urban environments and the young

Let us return to the issue of why settlement workers were interested in the young people of London and Chicago. First, the urban environments in which the children lived were in stark contrast to the worlds in which the settlement workers had themselves grown up. Both the Whitechapel and Near West Side areas were heavily overcrowded by the middle to late nineteenth centuries, with poor sanitation; they were almost entirely working-class districts and were home to major immigrant communities. By 1890, London's East End was increasingly populated by eastern European Jewish communities fleeing persecution,⁸ alongside smaller Dutch, German⁹ and Chinese communities,¹⁰ as well as pockets of Lascar

⁷ Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 2002 ed. (New York: Random House, 2002); Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Richard Sennett, *Respect: The Formation of Character in a World of Inequality* (London: Allen Lane, 2003).

⁸ Chaim Bermant, *Point of Arrival: A Study of London's East End* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1975).

⁹ Panikos Panayi, *German Immigrants in Britain During the Nineteenth Century, 1815-1914* (Oxford: Berg, 1995).

¹⁰ John Seed, "Limehouse Blues: Looking for Chinatown in the London Docks, 1900-40," *History Workshop Journal* (2006).

seamen stranded by — or escaping from — their ships.¹¹ There was also considerable migration to the area from within the UK, notably from Ireland and East Anglia. Chicago saw its greatest period of immigration from Europe between 1880 and 1920, when 2.5 million Europeans arrived in the city. The neighbourhood around Hull-House was dominated by the Italian community. The Italians came from poorer areas of Italy, and thus did not arrive with significant resources to support them. New arrivals found homes with friends and family who had already made the trip, a practice known as *campanilismo*, and also transplanted many customs from ‘home’ to Chicago.¹² By 1915, the Italian community had been joined by a Greek community, as the process of movement in and movement on continued.¹³ The evolving nature of the Near West Side was not unique, as the city as a whole continued to experience significant immigration from both within and without the USA. However, the migratory dynamic of London’s East End was much less pronounced than in Chicago. This was largely due to English anxieties and prejudices about Jewish migration, which led to the passing of the Alien Act in 1905,¹⁴ and a 42-year gap between that and the invitation of peoples from the British Commonwealth to help rebuild Britain after World War II. In both cities, working-class children were highly visible. With household space at a premium, children in both cities resorted to playing on the streets. This could present far more creative possibilities than playing in the ‘safer’ environments experienced by middle-class or upper-class children, with children drawing upon the brisk pace of life around them.¹⁵ Yet

¹¹ Rozina Visram, *Ayahs, Lascars and Princes : Indians in Britain 1700-1947* (London: Pluto, 1986); Caroline Adams, *Across Seven Seas and Thirteen Rivers: Life Stories of Pioneer Sylhetti Settlers in Britain* (London: THAP, 1987).

¹² Robert G. Spinney, *City of Big Shoulders: A History of Chicago* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000), 132-3.

¹³ Natalie Walker, "Chicago Housing Conditions. X. Greeks and Italians in the Neighbourhood of Hull-House," *American Journal of Sociology* 21 (1915): 286.

¹⁴ David Feldman, "The Importance of Being English: Jewish Immigration and the Decay of Liberal England," in *Metropolis - London : Histories and Representations since 1800*, ed. David Feldman and Gareth Stedman Jones (London: Routledge, 1989), 56-84.

¹⁵ See, for example, Anna Davin, *Growing up Poor: Home, School and Street in London 1870-1914* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1996).

settlement workers worried that the children on the streets were neither being supervised by responsible adults nor being sufficiently protected from abusive or corrupting adults.¹⁶ Thus, there was an opening for intervention by settlement workers, especially those with maternalist inclinations.¹⁷ By being on the streets, children were susceptible to accidents caused by playing near traffic or industrial works. They were also vulnerable to inadvertently breaking the law while playing: many children were taken to court each year in London, having been caught playing cricket, playing football or gambling on the streets.¹⁸ It was relatively easy for the young to commit the kinds of crimes that Jane Addams described as the 'deeds of adventure', for crossing the line between amusing themselves and becoming a nuisance,¹⁹ or breaking the law by stealing or trespassing. Basil Henriques, a magistrate at the East London Juvenile Court and warden of the Bernhard Baron St George Settlement in Stepney, noted in the early 1950s that the boys committed crimes in gangs,²⁰ a similar example of the evolution of fun into something else. J. J. Mallon, the warden of Toynbee Hall, and also later a magistrate at the East London Juvenile Court, drew together the concerns of his own workers and of those in both cities:

The lot of the East End boy is not a happy one. He is mentally vigorous. He possesses a genius for adventurous play, but is denied opportunities. His district is not furnished with playing grounds; he is too poor to provide apparatus for games. He is cut off from the country and natural things. In these circumstances much of what is healthy and fine in him decays or is deflected into wrong channels. He takes to the streets. He makes evil friends and imitates bad models. He loses any ambition he may have cherished and finally may have only one: the ambition to possess money without

¹⁶ E. West, *Growing up in Twentieth-Century America, A History and Reference Guide* (Westport, CT: 1996)

¹⁷ Clapp, 9.

¹⁸ E. St John Catchpool, *Candles in the Darkness* (London: Bannisdale, 1966), 116.

¹⁹ D. Nasaw, *Children of the City: At Work and Play*, (1935), 23.

²⁰ Basil L. Q. Henriques, *The Indiscretions of a Magistrate: Thoughts on the Work of the Juvenile Court* (London: Non-Fiction Book Club, 1950), 57.

working for it. At this stage the boy is in grave danger, and what may have been an inherently strong and healthy character is marred.²¹

The settlement workers wanted to prevent children from unnecessarily falling into criminal ways from a want of something constructive to do; but they also related this to a much broader view that it was the urban environment itself that was deleterious to children and young people. Such views implied that working-class parents were incapable of or unwilling to supervise their children; they also overlooked the networks of informal supervision of children on the streets collectively operated by parents, neighbours and street traders.²² They also suggested that the imperatives of street life could hold no value. The settlement workers made few positive references to the broader cultures operating around the young people, and some of the prevailing mores of their neighbourhoods. For example, Dick Hobbs identified a 'market culture' operating in the East End of London, in which people made a living through buying and selling on items through the markets or through their networks; few questions were asked about the provenance of items.²³ Although there were strong taboos against stealing from one's neighbours,²⁴ it was easy for young people to be gradually and often unconsciously inducted into criminal or semi-criminal behaviours through running errands for bookmakers or 'pinching' things that could be sold or passed on to members of adult gangs.²⁵ But it would be incorrect to see the settlements and local communities as being in total opposition to each other. Engagement with settlement values operated along a continuum, from those who actively rejected or otherwise had no connection with the settlements to those who welcomed the opportunities on offer. For example, former members

²¹ Barnett Research Centre at Toynbee Hall (hereafter BRC), *Toynbee Hall Annual Report 1925*, 16.

²² Davin, 69.

²³ Dick Hobbs, *Doing the Business: Entrepreneurship, the Working Class and Detectives in the East End of London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

²⁴ Roger Hood and Kate Joyce, "Three Generations: Oral Testimonies on Crime and Social Change," *British Journal of Criminology* 39 (1999): 1.

²⁵ Jerry White, *The Worst Street in North London: Campbell Bunk, Islington between the Wars* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986).

of Henriques' boys clubs serving in World War II wrote back to him to say what the clubs had come to mean to them. One young man wrote that 'Over the impressionable ages of boyhood and youth, the Club convoyed me safely through the temptations that breed on the street corners of slums, where youth is like a high-speed ship without a rudder.'²⁶ Certainly in the British case, this was an issue that intersected with social class and ideas about working-class respectability. It also reflected the rich, hierarchical layering of status and respectability within the East End, between skilled and unskilled workers, and between workers within specific industries, and the ambitions of some to move beyond their original place in life. Participation in clubs — or trade unions, friendly societies, sporting activities and some religious groups — was a means of both indicating and acquiring the social capital needed to be 'respectable'.²⁷

Clubs and classes

Clubs operated in a manner of different formats and locations. Several Toynbee Hall clubs were held in school classrooms after hours, while other activities, such as the Boy Scouts (after 1909), were held wherever space was available. Other boys' clubs in the East End were considerable enterprises. Oxford House in Bethnal Green and Mansfield House in Canning Town both gave over whole houses or created purpose built accommodation for their boys' clubs. Boys' clubs formed an important part of the social lives of young East Londoners; they provided cheap and affordable sporting and cultural entertainments, as well as opportunities to socialise through dances and whist drives. Yet the club had more complex meanings. Club

²⁶ Basil L. Q. Henriques, *Fratres: Club Boys in Uniform* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1951), 117.

²⁷ 'Respectability' is a considerable theme in the social history of the working classes. Select readings in this wide-ranging debate include: G. Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship Between Classes in Victorian Society* (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1971); E. Ross, 'Survival Networks: Women's Neighbourhood Sharing in London before World War 1', *History Workshop Journal*, 29 (1985), 3-18; M.J.. Huggins, 'More sinful pleasures? Leisure, Respectability and the Male Middle Classes in Victorian England', *Journal of Social History*, 33 (2000), 585-600; and P. Bailey, 'Will the Real Bill Banks Please Stand Up? Towards a Role Analysis of Mid-Victorian Working-class Respectability', *Journal of Social History*, 12 (1979), 336-53.

membership records demonstrated that children and young people often joined clubs with their friends from school, and with friends from their street, because siblings were already attending the clubs, or in some cases, their parents were.²⁸ Settlement boys' clubs were often attached to dry clubs for adults, and thus family membership was common. Parents often encouraged their children to attend clubs that they had participated in themselves. Clubs were likewise popular in Chicago, but the same territorialism that marked the London clubs was accentuated by ethnic differences.²⁹ While the demographics of clubs around the East End reflected the demographics of the London streets, Hull-House clubs were, on the whole, ethnically homogeneous.³⁰ At the same time that clubs were meant as an antidote to boys running wild on the streets in gangs, they appealed to the same impulses to join together over such shared identities as could be found through the street on which one lived or the school that one attended. As Stanley Cohen and Geoffrey Pearson have both shown in their research, working-class boys were constructed as 'folk devils' in the media and popular literature, being described as 'hooligans' or connected with particular phases of violence, such as garrotting.³¹ Clubs were important not only for providing alternatives to being a menacing presence on the streets, but also for providing role models. Again, settlement workers and other social reformers appeared to be unconvinced of the ability of at least certain families to provide adequate guidance to their young. A rise in crime during World War I led to studies, such as that undertaken by Cecil Leeson of the Howard League, that linked the phenomenon to the absence of suitable role models such as teachers, club leaders, fathers and older male

²⁸ Bradley, 117. Alternatively, see Newham Local Studies and Archives, Stratford Library (hereafter NLSA), Mansfield House Boys' and Men's Clubs Address Books, 1906-1910

²⁹ See discussion of territorialism in Jerry White, *Rothschild Buildings: Life in an East End Tenement Block 1887-1920* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), 133-5.

³⁰ See Jane Addams Memorial Collection, 'Report to Social Clubs Committee' (December 1936 Report), Adena Miller Rich Papers, folder 12. Details of clubs included the nationality [sic] of each group, e.g. 'Little Women, 16-18, Females, Italian, Social', 'Frente Populaire, Adults, Mexican, Discussion', along with its age and functions.

³¹ Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and the Rockers* (St. Albans: Paladin, 1973); Geoffrey Pearson, *Hooligan: A History of Respectable Fears* (London: Macmillan, 1983).

relatives, alongside the war work of mothers and older female relatives.³² By the interwar period, other studies had demonstrated a correlation between young male criminality and a lack of suitable playing facilities or clubs in the East End.³³ These studies appeared to vindicate the efforts of the settlements and other groups of youth workers and their approach to running boys' clubs. Such clubs for boys drew upon the settlement residents to find suitably upstanding club leaders, who acted as role models; the boys were allowed to have a degree of autonomy in running their clubs, and in time acted as the next generation of leaders. This model allowed boys to have a sense of ownership of their clubs, and it also encouraged them to emotionally invest in its future survival. This model of peer-based training was well established by the interwar period, being described by many club writers as the ideal form of club leadership. The notion of taking responsibility for something at the club — such as organising a fundraising dance, running the football team or inducting a new member — formed part of the process of becoming a 'good citizen'. Being a citizen of the club was an early training for being a citizen in the wider world.³⁴ Despite the fact that many club leaders saw boys' clubs as a form of training for citizenship, boys were far more likely than girls to be able to 'play'. Boys' club activities involved all manner of indoor and outdoor sports, supplemented by talks, lantern slides and film showings. Girls, on the other hand, had narrower fare that focused more clearly on their adult roles as wives and mothers. Many clubs offered classes in needlework, cookery and childcare, but more adventurous organisations provided sports, keep-fit, beauty, dancing, and — in the case of Canning Town Women's Settlement — talks by prominent female politicians.³⁵ Yet in both London and Chicago,

³² Cecil Leeson, *The Child and the War, Being Notes on Juvenile Delinquency* (London: P.S. King, 1917), 24, 31-2, 44-5.

³³ A. M. Carr-Saunders, Hermann Mannheim, and E. C. Rhodes, *Young Offenders: An Enquiry into Juvenile Delinquency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1942).

³⁴ Basil L. Q. Henriques, *Club Leadership* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1933), 79, 92-3.

³⁵ NLSA, Canning Town Women's Settlement Executive Committee, 17 Oct 1919, 22 Oct 1930, 23 Feb 1938; see also extended discussion in Pearl Jephcott, *Clubs for Girls: Notes for New Helpers at Clubs* (London: Faber and Faber, 1943). Also Executive Committee, 24 Oct 1924, 19 Dec 1924.

tensions emerged over the working lives of teenage girls, and their entry into such workplaces as the factory and the department store rather than more traditional employment in domestic service. On one level, girls were increasingly undertaking jobs in more ‘public’ worlds, which created anxieties about their potential exposure to men who might seek to seduce and corrupt them.³⁶ While associational culture was to be encouraged among girls through the development of clubs and citizenship activities, gendered assumptions about the girls prevailed. In addition to seeking to provide for the girls’ anticipated future roles as wives and mothers, the settlements also deemed girls to be in greater need of intervention and support around their working lives.

Negotiating the working world

The Girls’ Dinner Club at Toynbee Hall was set up by Henrietta Barnett in the 1870s. It aimed to provide girls working in the Whitechapel area with a place to eat their lunch, at a time when most employers did not offer rest spaces to their employees. The premise of the club was simple: the settlement would heat up lunches that the girls brought from home, as well as selling them tea, butter, lemonade and other goods at cost price. In addition to this, music and dancing were regularly available, while from time to time the settlement residents would entertain the club members.³⁷ Other evening social activities grew out of this lunchtime facility, including a girls’ club, singing and drill, and dancing to which girls could bring boys. In the summer, the girls were able to use the Toynbee tennis courts, and made trips to the local swimming baths.³⁸ By attempting to fill a practical need, the settlement was able to reach out to girls and young women and to engage them with club life. Yet the club was not just about having something fun to do — it was aimed at girls who were undergoing

³⁶ See J. Addams, *A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil* (Chicago, 2002).

³⁷ BRC, *Toynbee Hall Annual Report 1920-1*, 26

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 21. *Toynbee Hall Annual Report 1925*, 16.

an important transitional stage of their lives. The girls were evolving from schoolchildren and domestic helpers into young women who had to abide by the rules of the workplace but who also had financial resources to spend as wisely or as unwisely as they wished. This anxiety centred upon the notion that factory girls had greater freedoms than girls in domestic service or in smaller workplaces, and thus had disposable incomes to spend on such fripperies as dances, dresses and make-up. Although research by Selina Todd has shown that many girls instead handed over their incomes to their families, the view that girls wasted their money on good times was common.³⁹ The Hull-House women were also concerned with the welfare of girls in employment. As with the girls in London's East End, the Chicago girls did not have sufficient rest facilities, and were often overworked. The Juvenile Protective Association (JPA), founded in 1907, was another Hull-House organisation that undertook research into the factors that could cause or influence juvenile delinquency. In a study of 72 restaurants undertaken by the JPA, it was found that the girls who worked there were generally off work between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m., with nowhere to go and rest quietly. For the Hull-House women, these unsupervised and rootless hours were perceived as providing opportunities for girls to be tempted into vice or crime — tired girls were easier to dupe or dope. The settlement and the JPA were also concerned with the apparent phenomenon of 'white-slavers', organised gangs who ran prostitution rings, moving their recruitment into the waiting rooms of the hiring sections of department stores. The result was that the JPA set up an employment service to place girls who might be looking for retail work in order to keep them out of the hands of these gangs.⁴⁰ A further Chicago activity was the Jane Club, a home for young working women run on cooperative lines. This club was not founded by the settlement, but by a young female working-class trade union activist, Mary Kenney, in 1891. Kenney went

³⁹ Selina Todd, "Poverty and Aspiration: Young Women's Entry to Employment in Inter-War England," *Twentieth Century British History* 15 (2004).

⁴⁰ Louise de Koven Bowen, 'The Juvenile Protection Association; in S. Matthews (ed.) *The Women Citizen's Library*, Vol. 10, (Chicago, 1913), 2505-17, on 2507 and 2509.

on to work with the American Federation of Labour, and was also one of the first women factory inspectors in the State of Illinois. She later moved to Boston, where she married and went on to found the Women's Trade Union League as well as remaining active as a factory inspector for the rest of her life.⁴¹ Kenney's project created a hostel for young working girls, but a hostel with a difference. Unlike those young women who rented in rooming houses, the Jane Club tenants were part of a quasi-settlement. Members of the Jane Club were able to become involved in the running of the club, serving for six months as president, secretary or one of the other posts available on the managing body. All residents were able to take part in the weekly business meetings, and thus to have a say in the running of the hostel. A reporter for the *Catholic World* described the comfortable surroundings that the girls enjoyed:

They have nice parlors and dining-room, piano, books, pictures, all the appliances of ease and comfort, well-furnished bedrooms accommodating from one to four persons according to size, bath-rooms on each floor, and they keep an excellent table, all at the cost of three dollars a week each.⁴²

The reporter also commented that the girls employed a cook and a chambermaid to take care of the daily meals and chores.⁴³ The cooperative lines by which the Jane Club was run allowed for young women to have a safe and pleasant place to live, as well as providing employment for other women. It provided an alternative solution to living alone in rented accommodation, which could also be of poor quality, and allowed the girls the opportunity to develop skills in management and leadership that could be of use if they, in turn, decided to enter into union or social campaigning. Historians have tended to see the Jane Club as part of a broader process of female bonding at Hull-House, other settlements and female-led organisations, as a means of bringing the classes together and of developing political

⁴¹ K. Banks Nutter, 'Mary Kenney O'Sullivan' in R. Lunin Schulz and A. Hast (eds.) *Women Building Chicago 1790-1990*, (Bloomington, 2001) 650-3.

⁴² A.T. Toomy, 'A Great Forward Movement', *Catholic World*, 58: 346 (1894), 483-8.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 485.

networks.⁴⁴ Such activities as the Jane Club or, in London, Margaret Bondfield addressing the girls of Canning Town were attempts to bridge social divides by appealing to gender. These were undoubtedly arenas in which women from different social backgrounds met, learned about each others' hopes and experiences, and found common cause in political issues. But these were also places in which social capital was exchanged, and an apprenticeship given in the methods of committee management and organisation, following the mores of the established middle-class public sphere.

Social capital and agency

Although projects such as the Jane Club were combinations of middle-class and trade union influences and sensibilities, it would be incorrect to see the young people as passive agents within that process. Far from it: young people actively engaged with clubs and other activities, and generated their own understandings of their importance in their lives. This process was recognised, albeit in a different form, by settlement personnel. Louise de Koven Bowen acknowledged that it was important to give the young people who came to her country club in Waukegan, Illinois, a stake in it. This was achieved by encouraging the children to pay a very small, token amount towards their camp. The camp organiser was convinced that:

It gave them a higher regard for the Club to feel that they had paid even a very small amount [. . .] even a quarter or fifty cents gives them a feeling of respect and responsibility.⁴⁵

Many other youth activities, whether at settlements or not, used some form of payment as a means of ensuring participation and commitment. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Girl Guides

⁴⁴ S. Deutsch, 'Learning to talk more like a man: Boston Women's Class-bridging Organizations, 1870-1940', *American Historical Review*, 97 (1992), 2379-404

⁴⁵ JAMC, Mrs Hicks to Louise de Koven Bowen, 26 July 1939, Louise de Koven Bowen Papers, Box 1, File 2, Correspondence 1939.

all saved towards their annual camps in the countrysde, as did those young people who were going on summer camps such as Bowen's or going away with their boys' or girls' club. It was also connected with the development of citizenly behaviours among young people, and translated into allowing youth club members to run their own clubs, to take responsibility for fundraising, and to organise their events and competitions, all of which happened frequently at Fairbairn House, the boys' club attached to Mansfield House University Settlement in London's Canning Town.⁴⁶ By the interwar period, a degree of self-autonomy had become the norm in most British clubs, and was advocated by a number of youth club experts, including the National Association of Boys Clubs.⁴⁷ Paying membership dues was important — not only did this help to keep clubs afloat financially, but it was also a form of contract by which the individual agreed to abide by the rules of the club and to enter into the process of becoming a 'club man' or 'club boy'. As Alan Knott, the paid organiser of the Fairbairn Clubs, described it:

They [the club members] have made an atmosphere, and in Fairbairn House the beginnings of gambling are soon checked, bullying is discouraged, a foul word is seldom heard, clear eyes look into clear eyes, and boys can grow up to be strong, healthy, clean-minded, helpful men. One can watch the progress. The newcomer is brought in by a pal; he is welcomed to the Club, and put in the friendly care of an older member; he is shown the glories of the place, the gym., the boxing room, the tennis court, the library.⁴⁸

Rather than being directly inducted into club ways by a settlement leader, boys were guided by their friends and peers. In return for accepting the explicit rules of the club, the boy or young man could expect to be able use the considerable benefits of the club. At Fairbairn, the

⁴⁶ NLSA, Mansfield House Fairbairn House Sports/Finance Committee 1921-1927, buying radio crystals for club use, 21 Sept 1921 and 24 Nov 1921; see also 24 Nov 1921 for decisions about profits on club dances.

⁴⁷ Henriques, *Club Leadership*, 79.

⁴⁸ NLSA, 'The Need for Boys' Clubs', *Mansfield House Magazine* (March and April 1918).

boys were able to set club rules and to police the membership — although the process was not always smooth. Fairbairn House had a standing committee drawn from its membership to manage the club, which was supported by a chairman from the settlement staff body. Their duties included disciplining club members, and there was a range of offences for which members could be brought before the committee, of which one of the most common was infrequent attendance. Two boys were expelled from the club for not turning up to play football and leaving the team short of players,⁴⁹ and another young man was called to explain his absence through holidays and a bout of diphtheria. This young man offered to pay the subscriptions that he owed from September, but the committee decided that he should be fined one shilling and made to pay his subscriptions for January.⁵⁰ Rejoining the club was not a simple matter. Five members were called before the committee in August 1945 to make an application to rejoin. The committee felt that the boys had not been sufficiently active in club activities the first time around, and demanded that they should be more active in future. They were also fined one shilling and made to pay their subscriptions for the month.⁵¹ These were strict terms of membership, requiring considerable commitment from the young men to attend each week. The boys were somewhat draconian in their approach to maintaining the membership, but this case illustrated how important the club could be to some of them; and what they expected of themselves and others.

The courts and young people

Settlements on both sides of the Atlantic were heavily involved in the development of the youth court system. This grew out of their experience of club work with young working-class people and their fervent desire to intervene in their supposed problems, along with an

⁴⁹ NLSA, 27/2 Fairbairn House Standing Committee Oct 1943 to Jul 1945, Minutes 24 Jan 1944.

⁵⁰ NLSA, 27/1 Fairbairn House Standing Committee Oct 1943 to Jul 1945, Minutes 7 Jan 1946.

⁵¹ NLSA, 27/2 Fairbairn House Standing Committee Oct 1943 to Jul 1945, Minutes 13 Aug 1945.

increasing interest in the universities, especially in Chicago, in the psychological and social development of children and young people. In Chicago, a joint campaign between the Chicago Women's Club and Hull-House led to the establishment, in 1899, of the first juvenile court, treating children and young people in ways that took into account their level of development and home conditions.⁵² The idea spread across a number of different states, and the Children Act of 1908 established juvenile courts across England and Wales. In both countries, it was striking that a large number of former settlement volunteers went on to join the movement to continuously reform juvenile justice and welfare.⁵³ In Britain, Toynbee Hall hosted a juvenile court between 1929 and 1953. In both London and Chicago, juvenile delinquency was seen as a failure of background, of leisure and of sociability, one of the remedies for which was membership of a youth club, for both boys and girls. Basil Henriques claimed that:

It is true that very seldom does an active member of a youth organization appear in the [juvenile] court. But it is equally true that a very large number indeed do appear who have never belonged to or have never stuck to any youth organization [. . .] I have no hesitation in saying that the various youth organizations do much to prevent crime, so long as they are attractive and interesting enough to hold their members.⁵⁴

Yet the club was not just a means of keeping young people off the streets. Henriques argued that clubs had an essential role to play in terms of the general education of young people. He

⁵² See Gwen Hoerr McNamee, "The Origins of the Cook County Juvenile Court," in *A Noble Social Experiment? The First 100 Years of the Cook County Juvenile Court, 1899 – 1999*, ed. Gwen Hoerr McNamee (Chicago: The Chicago Bar Association with the Children's Court Centennial Committee, 1999); Elizabeth Clapp, "The Chicago Juvenile Court Movement in the 1890s," 2008 (1995); *ibid.*; Elizabeth J. Clapp, "The Chicago Juvenile Court Movement in the 1890s" (paper presented at the Centre for Urban History, 17).

⁵³ Victor Bailey, *Delinquency and Citizenship: Reclaiming the Young Offender, 1914 - 1948* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 2.

⁵⁴ Henriques, *The Indiscretions of a Magistrate: Thoughts on the Work of the Juvenile Court*, 123-4.

believed that ‘the club has to be the great educating factor in the life of the adolescent boy’.⁵⁵

More specifically, Henriques saw club organisers as those who led by example:

Club leadership stands or falls on the ability of the leader to make friends with the boys. Its characteristics are the same as those of any other kind of friendship, the description of which is to be found in the finest literature. Condescension, patronage, and superiority are as foreign to it on the one side as cringing humility, inferiority, and dependence are on the other. It must be based on equal and mutual respect and affection, equal and mutual trust.⁵⁶

Thus, by providing examples of ‘good’ adult behaviour and by attempting to build bonds of friendship between club leader and club member, the foundations for the transference of social capital could be laid. The Cook County Juvenile Court in Chicago pioneered new methods in the treatment of delinquent and needy children, and also allowed new advances in the study of child delinquency. The Juvenile Psychopathic Institute connected to the court (later the Institute for Juvenile Research) became an influential centre for psychological and psychiatric research into the behaviour of children, led by Dr William Healy, a psychiatrist who gained an international reputation through his work on delinquency in both children and adults at the clinic.⁵⁷ Following its origins within the networks of female reformers connected to Hull-House and the Women’s Club, activities around the Cook County Juvenile Court remained dominated by women such as Jessie Binford, later director of the JPA, and Louise de Koven Bowen.⁵⁸ Women were also drawn — or pushed — towards similar work with

⁵⁵ *Club Leadership*, 40.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁵⁷ For some of Healy’s works, see W. Healy, *The Individual Delinquent: A Textbook of Diagnosis and Prognosis for all Concerned in Understanding Offenders* (Boston, 1915); W. Healy, *Honesty: A Study of the Causes and Treatment of Dishonesty Among Children* (Indianapolis, 1915); and W. Healy and A. Fox Bronner, *Delinquents and Criminals: their Making and Unmaking* (New York, 1926).

⁵⁸ See entry in Lunin Schultz and Hast, *Women Building Chicago 1790-1990*, or consult online finding aid for Jessie F. Bindford, University of Illinois at Chicago Library Special Collections, <http://www.uic.edu/depts/lib/specialcoll/services/rjd/findingaids/JBindfordf.html> (accessed 15 July 2008).

children in the UK: for example, women magistrates were seen as being particularly equipped by accident of their gender for work with children and young people.⁵⁹ Yet these maternalist impulses did not discourage men from involvement in these courts, in either country. Aside from leading boys' clubs and the like, the involvement with the courts was one of the few areas in which British male settlement workers encroached on the 'traditional' work of female reformers. As Victor Bailey has noted, Alexander Paterson, the borstal reformer and later member of the Prison Commission, started his career in the Oxford and Bermondsey Settlement in South London,⁶⁰ and Charles E. B. Russell, an inspector of industrial and reformatory schools, had been a youth worker in Manchester with Arthur Norris, later a psychologist who studied the causes of juvenile delinquency.⁶¹ Cyril Burt, the author of *Juvenile Delinquent*, also worked as a young man at the Liverpool University Settlement.⁶² This network of male settlement workers with an interest in the reform of youth justice was, up to a point, self-sustaining. For example, St John Catchpool, sub-warden of Toynbee Hall in the 1920s, recollected how Paterson, an old acquaintance of his, encouraged him to become involved in work with adult male inmates of Wormwood Scrubs, Wandsworth, Brixton and Pentonville Prisons. Catchpool visited the men in their cells, spoke to them about sport, brought news from their families and read books to them, focusing his attention on those prisoners whose release was imminent.⁶³ Sir William Clarke Hall, the senior prosecutor for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and chair of the magistrates at the East London Juvenile Court, then based at the Old Street Magistrates' Court,⁶⁴ lobbied for his court to move to Toynbee Hall so that the young people and their families could

⁵⁹ See Anne Logan, "'A Suitable Person for Suitable Cases': The Gendering of Juvenile Courts in England, C.1910-39," *Twentieth Century British History* 16, no. 2 (2005).

⁶⁰ Bailey, 2.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 10-12.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶³ Catchpool, 131-2.

⁶⁴ NSPCC Archives, 209/8, 'Sir William Clarke Hall', *The Child's Guardian*, Vol. XLII (November 1932), 79.

access settlement services.⁶⁵ Clarke Hall had already encouraged Basil Henriques to join him on the magistrates' bench,⁶⁶ and Henriques, ex-Toynbee Hall resident and warden of a Jewish settlement in Stepney, aided Clarke Hall in moving the court to the settlement. J. J. Mallon, the warden of Toynbee Hall, also became a magistrate when the court arrived at his settlement.⁶⁷ That men should predominate in the juvenile courts was a reflection of the more general exclusion of women from the professions before World War I,⁶⁸ but it was also relevant to the concerns expressed in boys' club literature about the creation of good male citizens through leadership and team-building. Thus, it offered an opportunity for individuals such as Basil Henriques to expand their sphere of influence beyond the walls of their club to reach those 'unclubbables' in trouble with the law. The court remained at the settlement until 1953, by which time it was no longer viable for the settlement, short of space after war damage, to continue to host the court each week.⁶⁹ The court was a mixed blessing for Toynbee Hall. On the one hand, Basil Henriques and others argued that work with the courts was a tangible means by which those young people who had been failed by their families and social backgrounds could be restored to good citizenship. On the other, it associated the settlement with the exercise of external forms of power, as can be seen in the case of the young boy who stopped Mallon on the street outside the settlement to ask him, 'Please, sir, is this the prison?'⁷⁰ If the clubs offered an optional transmission of social capital, then the juvenile court attempted to force it.

⁶⁵ J. A. R. Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall: Fifty Years of Social Reform* (London: Dent, 1935), 245.

⁶⁶ Basil L. Q. Henriques, *The Indiscretions of a Warden* (London: Methuen, 1937), 233; L. L. Loewe, *Basil Henriques: A Portrait, Based on His Diaries, Letters and Speeches and Collated by His Widow, Rose Henriques* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), 72.

⁶⁷ Pimlott, 245.

⁶⁸ See Logan. *passim*

⁶⁹ For an account of its removal, see Katharine Bradley, "Juvenile Delinquency, the Juvenile Courts and the Settlement Movement 1908 – 1950: Basil Henriques and Toynbee Hall," *ibid.* 19 (2008).

⁷⁰ BRC, *Toynbee Hall Annual Report 1935-8*, 30.

Conclusion

The settlement workers' attitudes towards young people were broadly similar. In both London and Chicago, settlement staffs were anxious about the impact of the urban environment on the behaviour of young people, specifically in terms of how it had the potential to corrupt the young. The settlements placed little value or importance on the role of the children's families or of community networks in providing them with guidance and support. Rather, they took an interventionist approach that was based on providing role models in the form of club leaders, 'safe' spaces away from the temptations of the street, and direct intervention through the courts when these tactics failed. The settlements attempted to lead by setting 'good' examples, be that through running a cooperative hostel for girls in employment or by providing responsible club leaders. This was a kinaesthetic education based on the modelling of desired behaviours and an emotional engagement with the young people. The settlements wished that young people would be willing and able to opt for productive and constructive leisure pursuits, to take up opportunities for leadership and to emulate their middle-class leaders. The fruits of this labour would be a vibrant, respectable associational culture that would, in turn, distract children and young people from the pleasures of the street. The social capital that the settlements offered had the potential to act as a bridge between the working-class worlds of the children and a more middle-class world. The settlements were partially successful in achieving this, in both urban environments. The success was partial because children and young people opted in and opted out as they wished, taking what was useful and meaningful at a given time. For some, it was a life-changing opportunity; for others, it was simply there. What this comparative study has shown is that the settlements, whether in London or Chicago, held similar views on the ways in which children and young people should be dealt with. They felt that the working-class young were not getting sufficient moral or social guidance from their families and communities; that this

lack had serious consequences for law and order and communal living; and that it was the duty of the settlements to enter into these communities and to impose this order upon them. The settlements used their experience of the specific — London or Chicago — as a basis for developing a universal approach to dealing with the young. While the settlements shared a language of citizenship and support, their expertise was rooted in the localities in which they worked. For the Chicago settlements, the work involved providing a means by which migrant communities could be integrated into respectable or American ways of life, be that supporting girls who had moved to the city from the countryside or inculcating Italian children in the ways of America through clubs and classes. For the East London settlements, it was vital to engage with the fine gradations of respectability within the working classes, and to provide ‘improving’ activities that challenged the local market culture. Although these settlements did not often value the local community on its own terms, they nevertheless operated within a vibrant local culture that was open to its work. While the settlements focused on issues such as reducing crime or encouraging citizenly behaviour among the young, they did offer those who wished to try out new activities or to spend time in a warm, safe environment with their friends. Thus, settlement social capital was not simply transferred, but its recipients selected those elements that they wished to explore and adopted them in their own ways.

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