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Education for citizenship: the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and the educational settlement movement

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Introduction

Education, according to the Quaker Francis Pollard, addressing the Yearly Meeting in 1932, is about developing the 'inborn resources of the human spirit' and equipping the spirit with tools to make choices.[1] In order to make good choices, one must be free to practise, and to be given responsibility for decisions about one's own life militates against stagnation.[2] The upshot of this argument is that democracy, the ability to make choices about how society is run, is both a pre-condition and an outcome of good education. One cannot have knowledge or spiritual enlightenment without freedom. This Quaker philosophy underpinned the work of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT) and the educational settlement movement in the first half of the twentieth century. The Rowntree family, who were mainly responsible for the administration of the JRCT in this period, were closely associated with the educational settlement movement and the Educational Settlements Association (ESA). Joseph Rowntree (1836–1925), who established the JRCT and the other Rowntree Trusts in 1904, was an admirer of the social settlement movement pioneered by Canon Barnett in the late Victorian period, and insisted that a substantial proportion of his philanthropic resources should be directed towards educational settlements.[3] His nephew Arnold Rowntree (1872–1951) was president of the ESA from its inception in 1920 until 1948 and was one of the most influential figures in adult education circles throughout this period. Joseph's second son Seebohm Rowntree, although better known for his pioneering social research, was also interested in adult education; Joseph's eldest son John Wilhelm Rowntree, although he died in 1905,

1 F.E. Pollard, *Education and the Spirit of Man* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1932), 57.
2 Ibid., 52.
3 [Luther Worstenholme?], 'Joseph Rowntree (1836–1925): A Typescript Memoir, and Related Papers', F10; Joseph Rowntree, memorandum of 16 April 1919, inset in JRCT Minute book, No. 1, 241–2. Both at The Garden House, York. On the social settlements, see for example Asa Briggs and Anne Macartney, *Toynbee Hall: The First Hundred Years* (London: Routledge, 1984); Standish Meacham, *Toynbee Hall and Social Reform 1880–1914: The Search for Community* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987); Ruth Gilchrist and Tony Jeffs (eds), *Settlements, Social Change and Community Action: Good Neighbours* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2001).

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remained an important intellectual influence on the movement. Nevertheless, from the late 1940s onwards the involvement of the JRCT in adult education, and especially in educational settlements, dwindled, and today neither the JRCT nor the other Rowntree Trusts have any association with adult education. This article will argue that the reasons for this withdrawal can be located in the failure of the educational settlements to advance the Rowntrees' aims for them, a failure which stood in marked contrast with the success of other forms of adult education, especially those provided by local education authorities (LEAs), and the developing community centres movement from the 1930s onwards. Building on Mark Freeman's account of the early development of the educational settlement movement,[4] the article will address five issues. First, it will examine the Rowntrees' conception of adult education and its importance for democracy; second, it will explore the practical implications of this educational philosophy for the practices of the educational settlements; third, it will explain how and why the settlements largely failed to promote the kind of education for citizenship that the Rowntrees wanted them to; fourth, it will note the concomitant failure of the settlements to provide an educational service for the Society of Friends; and, finally, it will discuss the terms of the withdrawal of the JRCT from the support of adult education in the light of these failures.

I

Joseph, Arnold and Seebohm Rowntree had a fairly consistent understanding of the relationship between education and democracy. In 1907 Joseph quoted the eighteenth-century French statesman Ann-Robert-Jacques Turgot, arguing that '[t]he study of citizenship should be the foundation of all other studies', and claiming that no curriculum could be complete which did not deal with the foundations of national well-being.[5] Arnold Rowntree, the pioneer of the educational settlements and the ESA's first president, saw the gradual concession of democracy in Britain as necessitating a response from adult educationists. In 1913, considering the adult school movement from which the first educational settlements evolved, he declared: 'The fundamental question of the time is the education of the democracy, not only in intellect but in character, and it is an urgent necessity that this should at least keep pace with the growing exercise by the democracy of its political power'.[6] Seebohm Rowntree took a similar view of education in industry. Millions, he said, 'cannot express themselves for lack of education . . . bound by the thraldom of ignorance',[7] and he believed that industry was obliged to do more than simply provide the education necessary for the acquisition of adequate factory skills. Through education, industry had to facilitate 'the actual creation of opportunities of culture'.[8] Moreover, to have democracy without education was to 'court disaster': a high standard of education was a 'fundamental condition of good government in a democratic state'.[9] For the Rowntrees, then, whose educational ideals and financial support lay behind the

4 Mark Freeman, '"No finer school than a settlement": the development of the educational settlement movement', *History of Education*, 31 (2002), 245–62.

5 Joseph Rowntree, 'Education in relation to civic and national life', presidential address to the Friends' Guild of Teachers, Scarborough 1907, Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) library, L/ROW.

6 Arnold Rowntree, 'Private memorandum on the present condition of the adult school movement' (1913), JRF library, LG/ROW.

7 *Yorkshire Gazette*, 16 October 1915.

8 B.S. Rowntree, MS notes on 'Education', Borthwick Institute of Historical Research (BIHR), Rowntree papers LEC/7/1.

9 B.S. Rowntree, 'How shall we think of society and human relations?', 13, BIHR Rowntree papers ART/11/2.

development of the educational settlement movement, education was a vital resource both for economic development and for democracy. Settlements were viewed by the JRCT as a vital element in the promotion of education for these ends. Speaking at a JRCT meeting in 1919, the trustee and adult school leader William C. Braithwaite claimed that 'a truly democratic education will involve the wide use of Settlements and Educational Guest Houses and a general development of Adult School work'.[10] These principles guided the work of the JRCT, and the settlements that it funded through the ESA, throughout the period of its involvement in adult education.

Joseph Rowntree's belief in the importance of political education was, according to his first biographer, a distinctive feature of his political outlook.[11] A democracy, he believed, must be an informed democracy. Education, for Rowntree, was a tool for shaping 'spiritual fellowships' and for the 'widening of the mental horizon'.[12] Following this philosophy in Rowntree's lifetime (he died in 1925) and beyond, the JRCT devoted a third of its expenditure to the educational settlements between 1905 and 1939, and was the main source of funding for the ESA.[13] The ESA, founded in 1920 as a national organization as a result of the availability of JRCT funding, grew out of the group of people, mostly but not exclusively Quakers, that Arnold Rowntree drew together.[14] The objective of the ESA was the development of adult education through educational settlements and 'people's colleges', both residential and non-residential. Educational settlements differed from residential colleges in that they had a larger membership and a more flexible curriculum: instead of individuals fitting into a curriculum, the settlements hoped to meet the individual at the point 'where his interests are alive'. The goal, 'which is never finally reached—is the full development of the unique powers of the individual for service in the world'.[15] This focus on the individual within his or her social context reflected the Quaker dimension of the education Rowntree sought to promote. The educational settlements were established partly as a resource for the Quaker adult schools,[16] and Arnold Rowntree claimed in 1913 that education for democracy and the needs of the Society of Friends were deeply interrelated:

> Friends when they have really felt the need of a first-hand knowledge of God, and have grasped the great central truth of the Inner Light, and of the way God works through personality, will realize that perhaps the greatest contribution that they can make to the State at the present time, and one that may bring many to a true understanding of spiritual worship, is by providing the democracy with extended opportunities of education and fellowship on lines which Friends have found by practical experiment largely to meet the needs of the time.[17]

The adult schools and the early educational settlements were aimed not only at educating for citizenship but also at strengthening the Society of Friends, both by providing able Quaker leaders and by drawing more attenders and members to the Society. The following three sections examine how the settlements approached these goals and how far they were successful in promoting the Rowntrees' educational philosophy.

10 JRCT, minute book, No. 1, 241.
11 Worstenholme, 'Typescript Memoir', G8.
12 Joseph Rowntree, memorandum of 16 April 1919.
13 B.S. Rowntree, 'Report on the work done by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust 1905–1939 and suggestions regarding future policy' (1941), JRF Basic Documents, 14.
14 On the early history of the ESA see A.J. Allaway, *The Educational Centres Movement: A Comprehensive Survey* (London: NIAE, 1961), 15–27.
15 Arnold Rowntree, *Colleges for the People* (London: ESA, 1929), JRF library LG/ROW.
16 On the relationship between the settlements and the adult schools, see Freeman, 'No finer school', 249–50.
17 Arnold Rowntree, 'Private memorandum'.

II

The educational settlement model, pioneered in 1909 at St Mary's in York and the Swarthmore settlement in Leeds, spread rapidly and underwent considerable modification in the aftermath of the First World War. Originally conceived as resources for the Quaker adult school movement, the early settlements concentrated on the provision of courses in 'Bible Study, Comparative Religion, Ethics and Economics', as well as training for adult school teachers.[18] It was recognized that the Sunday morning adult school offered limited opportunities to acquire a range of education; as a result a larger educational institution, with permanent premises, holding evening courses throughout the week and some day-long courses at weekends, was conceived. (Some afternoon courses were held, mostly aimed at female students.) By the early 1920s, as well as occasional Bible classes, the St Mary's settlement housed courses on art, world history, French literature, Esperanto, German, industrial history, economics and English literature,[19] having adopted what a later historian of educational settlements called 'the kind of subjects we associate with Local Education Authority Evening Institutes'.[20] At this time there were fourteen settlements affiliated to the ESA, some of which had developed from the social settlement movement.[21] Some students at the settlements were full members, paying a composite fee that entitled them to attend a range of courses; some paid a one-off fee for an individual course; others attended Workers' Educational Association (WEA) or university tutorial classes, which were often held on settlement premises. The numbers of members and attendees at courses varied; in the interwar years the average annual attendance at St Mary's was around 500.[22] None of these students was full-time, and as many attended courses only for a short period the development of a settlement identity among the student body was difficult, but in most settlements students' associations were formed and a range of non-educational social activities were promoted. As one of the guiding ideas behind the settlements was 'fellowship', common rooms were provided, although not all students used them; and a range of additional activities such as music and drama clubs, as well as debating societies and study circles, all helped to raise the profile of settlements locally.[23] However, the settlements' attempts to attract members from throughout the working classes were no more successful than those of the WEA or the university extension movement: skilled and non-manual workers dominated the settlements, which were limited largely to 'the intellectuals only of labour'.[24]

This was the basis of the settlements' educational activities; however, the education for citizenship at which they aimed was also conceived partly in practical terms. Although settlements held courses on 'civics' and politics, and many held political discussions on their premises, a no less important feature of settlement life, in many places, was the opportunity to engage in social or community work of some kind. The social settlements, such as Toynbee Hall, provided the model for social service that was borrowed, and modified, by the educational institutions. As Mark Freeman has explained,[25] the non-residential character of the educational settlements distinguished them from their

18 Allaway, *Educational Centres Movement*, 10.
19 Freeman, 'No finer school', 260.
20 Allaway, *Educational Centres Movement*, 10.
21 Ibid., 17.
22 A.J. Peacock, 'Adult education in York 1800–1947', in *Essays in York History*, edited by A.J. Peacock (York: Sessions, 1997), 297.
23 Freeman, 'No finer school', 253–4, 258.
24 JRCT conference, Cloughton, 17–18 April 1926, visitors' memorandum, JRF JRCT93/VI/3.
25 Freeman, 'No finer school', 250–6.

Victorian predecessors, but they nevertheless adopted many of the latter's characteristics. Like the social settlements, the educational settlements became centres of civic activity, where members worked on social investigations, engaged in political campaigns and carried out social work in their neighbourhoods. These activities would cause problems for the educational settlements in years to come but in the early years of the movement this acquisition of broader functions not directly related to the educational basis of the settlements was viewed as a positive step towards wider community education. Hand in hand with the 'fellowship' that was promoted in the settlements (and by other adult education providers) went the social leadership for which the settlements and residential colleges sought to train their members. The residential colleges in particular—Ruskin, Fircroft, Hillcroft and later Newbattle Abbey and Coleg Harlech were among those affiliated to the ESA—sought to train individuals from working-class backgrounds for practical work in their own communities, the ESA's first secretary Basil Yeaxlee explaining that these institutions aimed to 'equip their students for a fuller personal life and for the service of the community'.[26]

In this context, much of the ESA's propaganda in the 1920s and 1930s pointed to the value of the close connections built up between educational settlements and the wider community. The opportunity to work with the community and engage in social service and social investigation would attract many members to the settlements. A great variety of such work was carried on: in the early 1920s, for example, the Sheffield Educational Settlement had a 'research society' dedicated to the examination of local conditions, members of the Lemington-on-Tyne settlement carried out a 'very complete historical and social survey' of their local area, Horace Fleming's Beechcroft settlement in Birkenhead housed an exhibition mounted by the Liverpool and District Regional Survey Association, and a Women's Citizenship Group was established at the Bensham Grove settlement in Gateshead. At the same time, Beechcroft had developed close links with social scientists at the University of Liverpool; like the older social settlements, it was setting out to train social workers for the service of the community.[27] The ESA saw a close link between classroom-based education and social work of this kind, defining a settlement as 'a group of men and women associated under qualified leadership for the common pursuit of knowledge, wisdom and fellowship, and for the service of the community, either by personal effort, by united action, or by influencing public opinion and participating in public life'.[28] Horace Fleming, drawing on his own experience at Beechcroft, hoped to see the educational settlements become training centres for local municipal leaders. He told an international conference of settlements held at Toynbee Hall in 1922 that 'Local Government will always halt by the way until all are equipped to take up the burden of citizenship', while another delegate to this conference believed that the more specialized kind of settlement would be 'the surest foundation of a new order'.[29]

26 Basil Yeaxlee, *Lifelong Education: A Sketch of the Range and Significance of the Adult Education Movement* (London: Cassell, 1929), 83.

27 *What Educational Settlements Are Doing* (ESA papers, No. 3, n.d. [1921?]), 13–16. For an example of work carried out at the Sheffield settlement see *The Equipment of the Workers: An Enquiry by the St. Philip's Settlement Education and Economics Research Society into the Adequacy of the Adult Manual Workers for the Discharge of Their Responsibilities as Heads of Households, Producers, and Citizens* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1919).

28 *Settlements and Their Work, from the Point of View of the Educational Settlements Association* (ESA papers, No. 2, n.d. [1920?]), 3.

29 [Basil A. Yeaxlee (ed.)] *Settlements and Their Outlook: An Account of the First International Conference of Settlements, Toynbee Hall, London, July 1922* (London: P.S. King and Son, 1922), 82, 96.

In a memorandum addressed to the JRCT in 1939,[30] requesting further financial support, the ESA presented what it claimed was evidence of its success in meeting these ambitious educational objectives. Although admitting that it was difficult to measure effects like the development of personality, liberation of the mind or awakening men and women to an appreciation of 'truth and beauty', the memorandum claimed 'with certainty' that thousands had come under the influence of settlements and 'there have been great numbers whose gain has been immense and incalculable'. In support of this claim, the ESA offered some personal tributes from students. According to one, 'I date the opening of new doors and enriching of life in countless ways for me from my first membership of the Settlement'; another said of his tutor, 'he introduced me to myself'. The memorandum also included comments from 'distinguished' people, such as Lord Macmillan—the Scottish advocate and educationist who had been chairman of the Pilgrim Trust—who described the ESA as 'a movement to bring about in the new world a new spirit'. Similarly, the former civil servant and secretary of the Welsh department of the National Council of Social Service (NCSS), Sir Percy Watkins, told the ESA that settlements interpret 'the intimate but often inarticulate mind of the people on social problems', having proved useful to both social investigators and policy makers. Kenneth Lindsay, parliamentary secretary to the Board of Education, praised settlements as the:

> . . . pioneers of a movement whose size and importance it is impossible to estimate. . . . This movement is not merely interesting, it is absolutely vital to the existence of democracy itself. There must be a much more adequate social intelligence . . . you [the ESA] are helping to create such a system.

According to the ESA, educational settlements had interpreted education in a way which allowed for the 'discovery of "the inward man", the blending of the spiritual and the intellectual in a unified life, and the reaching up to the full stature of manhood and womanhood'. How much credibility can be attached to rhetoric of this kind is questionable: the ESA was dependent on the funds of the JRCT, and it is unsurprising that it adopted the language favoured by trustees such as Arnold Rowntree and presented its activities in the most positive terms available to it. The claims made for the success of the ESA in educating the citizenry must be questioned in the light of the actual experience of the settlements in the 1920s and 1930s, an experience that was ultimately to convince the JRCT that the movement was not worthy of continued financial support.

III

By 1938, despite the optimistic noises emerging from the ESA, it was becoming clear that the settlements were failing in many respects. In an extensive and highly critical report presented to the JRCT in that year, W.E. Williams, secretary of the British Institute of Adult Education, argued that, in the environment of the early postwar years when most of them were established, the educational settlements should have flourished. Instead, he told the trustees, '[t]hey have, of course, done nothing of the kind'.[31] The overwhelming majority of citizens had proved unresponsive to the methods of the educational settlements and were more interested in 'milder forms of adult education, which do not scorn to be clubbable'.[32] By 'milder forms' he meant the WEA and the nascent community centres

30 ESA, memorandum to the JRCT, JRF JRCT93/IV/1 (d), from which the quotations below are taken.
31 W.E. Williams, 'The educational settlements: a report prepared for the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust', October 1938, JRF JRCT93/IV/2, 21.
32 Ibid., 22.

movement. Of the former he pointed out that, although relations with the settlements were friendly, there was an air of mutual mistrust. Williams detected a patronizing attitude towards settlements from the WEA, which he felt undermined 'fellowship'.[33] The WEA, content to use settlements' premises, did not encourage participation in the wider activities of the common room. Similarly, local authorities, although tolerant of settlements, were largely unimpressed: certainly the settlements failed to attract LEA funding on a significant scale. This was hardly surprising given 'the microscopic size of the movement after twenty years of existence, the poverty of its premises, [and] the amateurish appearance of its administration'. Consequently, most settlements lacked 'the remotest prospect of fuller LEA support'.[34] The stuffy atmosphere of some settlements, the association of the word 'settlement' with Victorian patronage, the reliance on voluntary or poorly remunerated tutors and the rundown nature of the physical surroundings all confirmed the settlements' status as 'the slums of adult education'.[35] It was clear that, although ESA funding alone kept most settlements afloat, the level of this funding was insufficient to maintain their facilities at a suitable standard. Many did not survive: in 1961 A.J. Allaway, chairman of the ESA executive committee in the 1950s, described the committee's minutes as a 'grave-yard' of educational settlements. Even with grants from the ESA, he remarked, 'the struggle proved too much for all but a minority'.[36]

The settlements were also failing to provide the kind of education for citizenship that the pioneers desired. There was little in 1938 to suggest to Williams that the settlements were tackling the question of 'citizenship' directly, despite its centrality to the Rowntree's philosophy of education. Offering a sophisticated analysis of the social and civic functions of educational settlements, Williams rubbished the claims made for some of the ESA's member institutions:

> They do not act as civic forums, they form no spear-head of social reform in their areas, they do not develop local branches of political or social movements. Any contribution which they make to the sociology of their neighbourhood, either in discussion or in practice, is an oblique one. . . . They fall short of the expectations of those adult students who want education to express itself in social policy.[37]

Williams highlighted the exception of the settlements in south Wales, which had been established by outsiders to counter the effects of unemployment, but his generalization was intended to apply to most of the other educational settlements.[38] In making it, he perceived a dilemma for the movement: should settlements focus more completely on 'education' and abandon their social functions—thereby arguably compromising the education for citizenship on which the Rowntree pioneers had insisted—or should they maintain the 'plasticity' necessary to see their conception of education embedded within the community? Williams himself appears to have been in two minds about the correct prescription. Although he found the settlements' preoccupation with social issues, expressed in various ways, laudable, he saw the lack of a unifying approach as a serious problem for the movement. The diversity among the educational settlements, and their

33 Ibid., 139.
34 Ibid., 110–14.
35 Ibid., 101.
36 Allaway, *Educational Centres Movement*, 21.
37 Williams, 'Educational settlements', 31–5.
38 On the south Wales settlements, see Barrie Naylor, *Quakers in the Rhondda 1926–1986* (Chepstow: Maes-yr-Haf Educational Trust, 1986); J. Elfed Davies, 'Educational settlements in south Wales, with special reference to the Merthyr Tudful settlement', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, session 1970, part 2, 177–98; Pamela Manasseh, 'Quaker relief work and the Brynmawr experiment', *Woodbrooke Journal*, No. 7 (2000).

considerable autonomy of practice despite reliance on funds distributed by the ESA, meant that the ESA lacked a 'house flag': one way to overcome this difficulty would be for the ESA to emphasize its 'educational function' with more 'boldness'.[39] Yet at the same time, Williams conceded that if there were to be any concrete meaning to terms like 'education for citizenship', settlements would need to maintain some degree of social function.[40] He settled, therefore, for a compromise: settlements should have a rigorous programme of educational activities but this should be carried out in a 'club-context'.[41] By this he meant that the ESA should form an alliance with the community centres and the NCSS, which was promoting a somewhat different vision of education for citizenship.[42] Williams proposed streamlining the movement by allowing the less effective settlements to die: this proved attractive to the JRCT, which minuted its agreement that its funds were distributed to too wide a range of settlements, and that more closely targeted support might allow them to meet the objectives outlined by Williams.[43]

There were clear implications in Williams's analysis for the internal governance of settlements. Mark Freeman has shown that, despite the rhetoric of democracy employed by the educational settlement pioneers, often in the context of 'education for citizenship', most settlements only conceded a limited degree of democratic control to their members.[44] In theory, educational settlements were to be fora in which the major social and economic questions of the day could be discussed between adults with no regard for class distinction. This theory betrays the origins of the educational settlement movement in the work of the mostly Quaker adult schools, and is reflected in the ESA's constitution, which stated that a 'broad and tolerant spirit and the uniting bond of a common life are essential factors. . . . Members of the settlement . . . shall share responsibility for its government'.[45] Moreover, residential colleges (many of which were by this time affiliated to the ESA) should 'provide opportunities for students to exercise responsibility by taking an active share in the work of the college as a valuable preparation for responsible service in the community'.[46] Democratic governance, however, was slow to develop in the settlements and colleges. Williams showed in 1938 that, despite the establishment of governing councils, many settlements had not made the change 'from benevolent despotisms to democracy'.[47] The records of the St Mary's settlement in York, to take one example, demonstrate an ongoing equivocation about the degree of student governance that should be conceded.[48] Williams himself was ambiguous on this feature of settlement life, recognizing a tension between the need for firm leadership in pursuit of a worthwhile programme of education on the one hand, and the practice of democratic governance on the other. Thus, while democratic governance might check the 'autocratic tendencies' of certain wardens,[49] '[i]t is the function of Settlement leadership to persuade students to adopt a programme which has been thought out by an authority more competent and more aware of the difficulties and objectives than any student-body can possibly be. It is not fair

39 Williams, 'Educational settlements', 62–4.
40 Ibid., 120.
41 Ibid., 128.
42 Ibid., 168. See also Andrzej Olechnowicz, 'Civic leadership and education for democracy: the Simons and the Wythenshawe estate', *Contemporary British History*, 14 (2000), 3–26; Andrzej Olechnowicz, *Working-Class Housing in England between the Wars: The Becontree Estate* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 137–79.
43 JRCT, Minute book, No. 3, minute no. 558.
44 Freeman, 'No finer school', 256–8.
45 ESA constitution, JRF JRCT93/IV/8 (b).
46 Ibid.
47 Williams, 'Educational settlements', 42.
49 Ibid.

to play at a democratic control which can have no real validity in such matters.'[50] The settlements' own democratic credentials, then, were questionable, and it was hardly surprising that many potential students were discouraged from entering the settlements as a place to study, preferring what they saw as the freer atmosphere that prevailed in WEA or university tutorial classes. The ESA itself was inherently undemocratic—one settlement warden, frustrated at Arnold Rowntree's personal dominance over the organisation, characterized it as 'a rich man's plaything'.[51] The lack of democracy in both the individual settlements and the ESA as a whole is an example of the gap between Quaker aspirations and Quaker practice: despite the pioneers' good intentions, force of personality and instinctive paternalism choked the potential for democratic governance, and hence limited the effectiveness of education for citizenship.

At the same time, as Williams recognized, a new and potentially more powerful instrument of 'community education', the community centre, was emerging in the 1930s. Largely shorn of the religious dimension associated with the settlements, and lacking the formal educational curriculum that the settlements offered, the community centres offered a more viable version of the 'fellowship' model than the older institutions could. The striking similarity between the language employed in the official reports of the ESA on the one hand, and by the community centre pioneers on the other, was reinforced by the early suggestions of collaboration between the two movements. When the NCSS established its New Estates Community Committee in 1928, the ESA, along with the British Association of Residential Settlements, was represented, and Basil Yeaxlee, secretary of the ESA between 1920 and 1928 and subsequently principal of Westhill college in Selly Oak, was one of the most influential individuals in the new movement.[52] Emerging as a response to the 'problem of leisure' that was being identified in interwar Britain, the pioneering community centres on new housing estates such as Becontree in Essex and Wythenshawe in Manchester advanced a broad conception of community activity which, while drawn up by paternalists under the influence of considerable class prejudice, nevertheless seemed to offer the potential for 'fellowship' to be expressed within communities in the context of a broader programme of activities likely to appeal to more than the 1% of the British population who were availing themselves of adult education in this period.[53] The evident similarities between the two movements were emphasized by contemporaries: Williams thought the settlements were 'first cousins, in an older line of the family' to the centres.[54] However, in some respects the community centres, rooted in local initiative and aspiration, were freer than the educational settlements to develop along democratic lines. In a report commissioned by a group of interested bodies[55] early in the Second World War, Flora and Gordon Stephenson remarked that '[w]hereas [community centres] aim at being democratic organisations secured and managed by their own Community Associations, settlements are planned and run by groups of charitable and socially-minded persons of a different class from those whom they hope to benefit'.[56] Although, as Andrzej Olechnowicz has shown, the early centres were sometimes criticized for following too closely the settlement model, and failed to achieve their goal of smoothing class relations

50 Ibid., 74.
51 Allaway, *Educational Centres Movement*, 45.
52 Olechnowicz, *Working-Class Housing*, 141–2.
53 Ibid., Ch. 5; Olechnowicz, 'Civic leadership', 15ff; CEdT, report 1946, JRF JRCT93/V/1 (d).
54 Williams, 'Educational settlements', 54.
55 The Leverhulme Grant Fund, the Community Centres Joint Research Committee, the Royal Institute of British Architects, the NCSS and the Housing Centre.
56 Flora and Gordon Stephenson, *Community Centres: A Survey* (London: Humphries, 1942), 92.

on the new working-class housing estates,[57] their more substantial financial support from philanthropic bodies, local authorities and the state gave them a significant advantage over the educational settlements. Williams recognized that larger charitable trusts than the JRCT were more likely to support community centres than settlements,[58] and this confirmed him in his belief that the latter should concentrate on educational activities, following the Scandinavian 'people's college' model.[59] The comparative success of the ESA-affiliated residential colleges encouraged this view,[60] and it was widely felt that closer collaboration with the NCSS in the promotion of community centres was the best way for the ESA to advance the social dimension of adult education. Although the ESA was uneasy about the absence of educational provision in the new centres and thought the purpose of the new movement was vague,[61] and although the community centres remained under-funded and developed haphazardly,[62] an opportunity was identified for 'fellowship' and 'community education' to be advanced more efficiently by the new movement. In 1938 the ESA council heard that 'the tides were [now] turning for community education', and was encouraged to follow them.[63] At the same meeting Arnold Rowntree called for a closer working relationship with the community centres in the wider spirit of 'fellowship' that had animated his own movement:

> In order to foster the true democratic spirit in the running of the [Community] Centres it was necessary to bring together the members in the relationship of the family, of friends and of neighbours, and to help them to express themselves as individuals and as members of the community. This was of vital importance and was what our Settlements had been seeking to do for the past twenty years.[64]

IV

If the settlements met with limited success in widening participation in education for citizenship, they also proved disappointing as a resource for the Society of Friends, largely failing to benefit British Quakerism as a whole. As early as 1912 Stephen Rowntree, brother of Seebohm and John Wilhelm, questioned whether the work of the early settlements was actually of any benefit to the Society of Friends,[65] and his fears appear to have been confirmed by the rapid effacement of the religious content of the curriculum in most of the education settlements. Yet at the same time, the 'atmosphere' of the institutions was infused with unattractive vestiges of Quakerism. Williams's report was scathing about the role of Quakerism. He complained that, although the settlements were not dominated by individual Friends, the ghost of Quakerism lived on in the 'jargon or religiosity' of the movement, which obscured what settlements actually had to offer. He concluded that religion was more or less irrelevant and that the religious motivations of the founders had a negative effect on participation in the educational life of settlements.[66] Joseph Rowntree had been mistaken in his belief that JRCT grants to these adult education institutions would promote Quakerism.

57 Olechnowicz, *Working-Class Housing*, 143.
58 Williams, 'Educational settlements', 55–6.
59 Ibid., 150, 174–6.
60 On the residential colleges see *Common Room*, No. 33 (1934), 11–16; Walter Drews and Roger Fieldhouse, 'Residential colleges and non-residential settlements and centres', in *A History of Modern British Adult Education*, edited by Roger Fieldhouse and associates (Leicester: NIACE, 1996), 239–63.
61 ESA council minutes, 8–9 January 1938, JRF JRCT93/IV/6.
62 Olechnowicz, *Working-Class Housing*, 186–93.
63 ESA council minutes, 8–9 January 1938, JRF JRCT93/IV/6.
64 Ibid.
65 Freeman, 'No finer school', 259.
66 Williams, 'Educational settlements', 115–18, 126.

The best claim that could be made for the settlements in terms of their contribution to the Society of Friends was the recruitment of a number of influential wardens to Quakerism: Gerald Hibbert of the Swarthmore settlement in Leeds, John A. Hughes of St Mary's in York, Lettice Jowett of Bensham Grove, Arthur Le Mare of the Walthamstow settlement, and others.[67] The settlements provided careers for these people, who, Seebohm Rowntree claimed, had 'made notable contributions to the life and thought of Friends and have exercised a marked leadership in the Society, the Adult Schools, and other similar movements'.[68] In terms of bringing Quakerism closer to the working classes, the settlements failed; they even failed to strengthen the adult schools, membership of which declined sharply in the interwar period.[69]

It might be argued that the emphasis on citizenship and participation actually undermined the religious element in the settlements' curricula. If the Rowntree philosophy of education was unable to separate democracy, education and religion, the members and staff of most of the settlements saw no such necessary link. This was illustrated by Wilfrid Allott's address to a meeting of the ESA council in 1936. Allott, a Quaker himself and a lecturer at the Swarthmore settlement in Leeds, one of the ESA's flagships, described his ideal 'all-round curriculum'. He called for a broad spectrum of education to be provided, embracing history, art, science, languages, economics, political science, international law and other subjects.[70] Although invested with the language of citizenship, Allott's address did not mention religious education of any kind: the dominance of the citizenship idea had undermined the original religious purposes of the settlements. Developments during and after the war at some of the settlements marginalized the religious element even more: at St Mary's in York, for example, A.J. Peacock notes that 'more and more craft courses, do-it-yourself courses that were a response to appeals for help with the war effort' had been instituted in the early 1940s, and '[b]y the time the war ended the programme [of courses] had altered so drastically that it bore practically no resemblance' to that of the 1920s.[71] The curriculum was packed with woodwork and dressmaking, along with language classes and flourishing ballet and dramatic activities: the settlement had become 'something very similar to a modern evening centre', 'a very different place from the one Arnold Rowntree had envisaged'.[72] Changes like these entailed a reinterpretation of the ESA's continuing insistence that the 'primary function' of an educational settlement was 'the progressive development of the individual through mental training, self-effort and the exercise of personal responsibility'.[73] They also downgraded the importance of Quakerism: only Woodbrooke college in Birmingham (a Quaker residential institution affiliated to the ESA) in this period was offering much in the way of religious study, and even here the JRCT heard frequent complaints about the quality of the teaching staff and the absence of 'fellowship'.[74] While support for educational settlements would be abandoned in the years

67 JRCT, 'Thirteenth annual report: adult education and settlements', JRF JRCT93/IV/5, 2; JRCT Minute book, No. 3, minute nos 105, 110, 296 (1) (c); B.S. Rowntree, 'Report on the work and objects of the Trust', 8, JRF Basic Documents.

68 Rowntree, 'Report on the work and objects of the Trust', 3.

69 W. Arnold Hall, *The Adult School Movement in the Twentieth Century* (Nottingham: Department of Adult Education, 1985), 128, 213.

70 ESA council minutes, 4 January 1936, JRF JRCT93/IV/6 (these typed minutes are erroneously dated 1935).

71 Peacock, 'Adult education in York', 300.

72 Ibid., 300–1.

73 ESA, memorandum on educational settlements in postwar years, January 1943. We are grateful to Konrad Elsdon for supplying us with a copy of this memorandum.

74 See for example Horace Fleming, 'Interim report on the Society of Friends, etc.', appendix C, JRF JRCT93/VI/1 (e).

after the Second World War, the JRCT was to maintain a funding relationship with Woodbrooke. The failure of the settlements to promote Quakerism to the extent that had been envisaged was one factor in the withdrawal of Rowntree support, and religious education was arguably incompatible with wider education for citizenship and democratic participation. The following section will examine the continued importance of education for citizenship after the Second World War, and the realization among the Rowntree trustees that the educational settlements were not the appropriate institutions to deliver this kind of education.

V

The impact of Williams's report on the state of the educational settlements, and the full effects on settlements of the spread of community centres, were delayed by the outbreak of war. The growth and development of adult education in Britain under wartime conditions has been well documented.[75] The language used in the wartime literature on adult education was as full of the rhetoric of citizenship and democracy as in earlier years; this often echoed the language previously employed by Arnold Rowntree and Horace Fleming, which had permeated the propaganda of the ESA and the community centres movement. The universities, S.G. Raybould announced in 1951, were engaged in 'education for citizenship',[76] while the WEA's education officer called for 'education for constructive democracy' in the context of competing theories of economic organization.[77] The British Institute of Adult Education put the point even more forcefully in 1945:

> In this country we have accepted the principle of democratic government, not only in the control of the affairs of the nation, but in nearly all our smaller groupings and associations, but we have hardly, as yet, begun to realize how much this requires of us as individuals . . . [W]e have done almost nothing to ensure that we shall be equipped to make effective use of our privileges. Indeed, we are so ill-equipped as a people at present, that it is a question whether any form of democratic machinery can hold its own effectively against the growing tendency to mass regimentation in one direction or another, unless we have an immediate and widespread development of adult education.[78]

The Education Act of 1944, the establishment of the National Federation of Community Associations (NFCA) and the further development of community centres heralded a more dynamic approach to community development and adult education. The 1944 Act placed a duty on local authorities to make adequate provision for adult education: by 1948 all surviving educational settlements were in receipt of LEA grants and had won the 'warm approval' of LEAs,[79] and had therefore been freed from complete dependence on the JRCT. As early as 1939, in the wake of Williams's critical report, the JRCT recorded doubts about continued support for settlements, noting that its role was 'to give adequate help to work of a definitely pioneer character',[80] into which category the educational settlements did not by this time fall. The arrival of statutory and municipal support for the settlements, albeit on a modest scale, encouraged Arnold Rowntree to claim that the

75 See for example Roger Fieldhouse, 'An overview of British adult education in the twentieth century', in Fieldhouse and associates, *History of Modern British Adult Education*, 55ff; Roger Fieldhouse, 'The Labour government's further education policy 1945–1951', *History of Education*, 23 (1994), 287–99; Thomas Kelly, *A History of Adult Education in Great Britain* (1992 [1st edn 1962]), 321–59.

76 S.G. Raybould, *The English Universities and Adult Education* (London: WEA, 1951), 14.

77 Harold C. Shearman, *Adult Education for Democracy* (London: WEA, 1944), 26–7 and *passim*.

78 British Institute of Adult Education, *Adult Education After the War* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), 6.

79 Arnold Rowntree, foreword to CEdT and CEqT report 1949, JRF JRCT93/V/1 (d).

80 JRCT Minute book, No. 3, minute no. 558.

original purpose of the ESA had 'arrived at its hoped for end',[81] and there was therefore an opportunity for the JRCT to begin its withdrawal from the field.

The terms of this withdrawal were the result of negotiation with the community centres movement, modified by the failure of the JRCT to establish a new consensus among grant-making trusts on the value of funding community education. Arnold Rowntree was sure that 'the future of [the community centres] was very closely related to the future of our own movement'.[82] William Hazelton, Basil Yeaxlee's successor as ESA secretary, agreed with Rowntree, telling the JRCT that 'the future of Adult Education is closely bound up with the development of Community Centres',[83] and the ESA discerned substantial scope for the permeation of the centres movement with the ideals and the expertise of settlement staff, claiming in 1945 that '[t]he aim of the founders of the Educational Settlement movement has now an ampler setting, and doors to its fulfilment seem about to open'.[84] Celebrating 25 years of the ESA, Arnold Rowntree reiterated the original principle as stated by Horace Fleming, that 'the educational settlement seeks to raise the level of civic life by the energizing power of example and by the influx of its members into the fields of active citizenship'.[85] However, this active citizenship was to be expressed through the centre and not the settlement. To emphasize this the ESA finally abandoned its titular associations with Canon Barnett in 1946, changing its name to the Educational Centres Association (ECA) in a somewhat belated recognition that 'the word "Settlement" is not as acceptable to-day as it was in times past'.[86] This change was accompanied by a more substantive constitutional reform designed to give its member settlements more say in its governance to counterbalance the disproportionate influence previously wielded by Arnold Rowntree personally. In the somewhat misplaced wave of optimism for the future of adult education generated in the early postwar years, Arnold Rowntree was encouraged to prosecute an ambitious agenda through the JRCT and the other Rowntree Trusts, aiming to make adult education independent of Rowntree funding but to ensure that it retained its focus on community and citizenship. By 1950 the ECA and NFCA shared a staff and premises, and were working closely together to advance this re-energized conception of community education.[87] To support the realization of this vision, the JRCT and the Joseph Rowntree Village Trust between them proposed in 1945 to establish a new educational trust, to which they would contribute £100,000, and which it was envisaged could raise a total of £1,000,000 for expenditure on educational work, most of which would be directed towards community centres.[88] Although one trustee[89] dissented from the resolution, the remainder clearly felt that the continuance of large-scale JRCT support for adult education would be worthwhile only if directed along the new vectors of community organization, and only if given in association with other charitable trusts.[90]

The result of these deliberations was the establishment of two new trusts (separated for legal reasons): the Community Education Trust (CEdT) and Community Equipment Trust (CEqT), which between them would further the JRCT's aims in the fields of adult and

81 Rowntree, foreword to CEdT and CEqT report 1949.
82 Allaway, *Educational Centres Movement*, 41.
83 JRCT, minute book, No. 4, minute no. 394.
84 ESA, 'The Educational Settlements Association' [typescript, 1945], JRF JRCT93/IV/8 (a), 22.
85 ESA council minutes, 15–16 September 1945, JRF JRCT93/IV/6.
86 CEdT, report 1946.
87 Ibid.; Allaway, *Educational Centres Movement*, 43.
88 JRCT, minute book, No. 4, minute no. 394.
89 Arthur B. Gillett.
90 JRCT, minute book, No. 4, minute no. 396.

community education, and solicit funding from other bodies. The favourable postwar environment, it was hoped, would provide a good opportunity to lever in additional funds,[91] drawing on support from a wider range of people and organizations than might have been willing to support a Trust carrying the Rowntree name.[92] These ambitious expectations were soon deflated: postwar optimism did not translate into large-scale donations to either of the new Trusts, and the JRCT quickly recognized that expectations would need to be modified, initiating another searching examination of its place in the adult education field.[93] By this time, as Allaway has noted, Arnold Rowntree was bitterly disappointed that 'the [Educational Settlements] Association he loved so well had achieved so little', and, demoralized—and affected by failing health—he resigned the presidency after 28 years at the helm.[94] At the same time the CEdT decided to stop financing the central office of the ECA. The expenditure of the JRCT on adult education and settlements dwindled from over £10,000 in 1948 to less than £1000 in 1953. In effect, the recommendations made by W.E. Williams in 1938 were being adopted: Williams had praised the potential of the community centres and thought they would offer a forum in which educational programmes could be incorporated. He saw that they were much better financed, and much more popular, than the educational settlements, and argued that the only way for the settlement ideal to flourish was in association with the new centres, even at the risk of the liquidation of the settlements themselves and the effacement of the religious dimension of their activities. It is arguable that the JRCT, which commissioned and accepted this report, should have moved much more quickly than it did: the war and the postwar optimism for adult education delayed the inevitable for about fifteen years.

The JRCT recognized that the ECA would continue to have a role, not only as a Responsible Body for the provision of courses, but also as an advisory and propagandist organization. Although the ECA feared that it might become 'merely a Conference calling body',[95] the JRCT still saw it as an important feature of the educational landscape, awarding (through the CEdT) over £1200 in the year to June 1948.[96] Essentially, it came to serve as 'a centre for consultation and advice for wardens' but ceased to be the channel through which funding to individual settlements was provided.[97] It is clear, however, that there was considerable confusion about the role of the JRCT and its allied trusts and associations in adult education in this period, and the dominant attitude seems to have been one of 'wait and see'. In 1950 the responsibility of the CEdT was defined as 'largely that of holding a watching brief in the field of Adult Education generally, maintaining contacts in that field, and above all, watching for new growing points and fresh opportunities'.[98] It is hardly surprising that, in this climate of uncertainty, it did not seem worthwhile to continue with the CEdT and CEqT, which were duly wound up in 1953 and 1954 respectively. They were replaced by an Adult Education Sub-Committee, reporting to the JRCT, but this sub-committee found itself unable or unwilling in 1952 to spend its limited budget of £1000 and was itself discontinued in December of the following year.[99]

91 JRCT, minute book, No. 4, minute no. 394.
92 CEqT, note of discussion with charity commission, JRF JRCT93/V/1.
93 CEdT and CEqT, report 1949.
94 Allaway, *Educational Centres Movement*, 46.
95 ECA, AGM minutes, 19 September 1948, JRF JRCT93/IV/6.
96 CEdT and CEqT, income and expenditure account, JRF JRCT93/V/1 (c).
97 CEdT and CEqT, report 1949.
98 JRCT Minute book, No. 4, minute no. 791.
99 Only £844 was spent: JRCT Minute book, No. 4, minute nos 977, 998; JRCT Adult Education Sub-Committee, summary report of activities, year ending 31 December 1952, JRCT basement archive, box 62.

By this time Arnold Rowntree, the guiding spirit of the JRCT's adult education funding across the previous five decades, was dead, and grant-making in this area had become haphazard and ill-directed under a largely new board of trustees who were not steeped in the history of the educational settlement movement and were unclear as to its purpose. The JRCT's new chairman, Roger Wilson, wondered in 1952 exactly 'who comes within the scope of what kind of education and what is its scope?',[100] reflecting the confusion and the lack of interest among the younger trustees. Indeed, the meaning of the concept of 'education for citizenship' that the educational settlements had sought to promote had always been rather inchoate, embodying 'vague, demanding criteria' by which the success of adult education was to be judged.[101] Nevertheless, the JRCT continued to give small grants to the ECA until the early 1970s, and supported the settlement in York until 1977. Only in 1978 did the JRCT's minutes record, in response to a request for £5000, that '[i]t was felt that the ECA no longer had a significant place in the adult education movement'.[102]

VI

By the early 1950s, then, five factors had led the JRCT to change its funding priorities, and to begin gradually to dismantle its funding relationship with adult education providers, primarily the educational settlement movement. First, much more substantial statutory support was now being provided for adult education than had been available when the first educational settlements were established in 1909. Second, the 'fellowship' that the settlements aimed to create had been made available through the wider community, which catered not only for adult education but for the 'social purpose' of all sections of the community.[103] Third, the educational settlements had failed to serve Quakerism in the way the Rowntrees had hoped, partly through acquiring a wider range of functions than had been envisaged at the outset of the movement, and partly through the inherent unpopularity of religious education for adults in a period where many alternative and more attractive educational and social opportunities were becoming available. Fourth, the window of opportunity identified by Arnold Rowntree for a new charitable trust to contribute in the area of adult and community education had not materialized. Fifth, the composition of the JRCT was changing: new, younger trustees were replacing the generation of Rowntrees that had run the Trust since its inception in 1904, and their interests led the JRCT away from adult education. They sought to advance the causes of political democracy and education for citizenship in new, different and arguably less outdated ways. (One example of this was their support for the emerging family welfare movement, aspects of which have recently been viewed as having much in common with the 'settlement tradition'.[104]) The failure of the educational settlements to develop independently as centres of education for citizenship can be put down to their lack of financial resources, the inconsistent and often poor level of educational and social provision in the settlements, and the outdatedness of the settlement concept in a period when the emergence of the community centres appeared to offer a version of fellowship and citizenship more appropriate to mid-twentieth century concerns. The failure of the

100 JRCT Adult Education Sub-Committee, minute book, 6 May 1952, JRCT basement archive, box 62.
101 Olechnowicz, 'Civic leadership', 19.
102 JRCT minutes 16 June 1978. We are grateful to the JRCT for permission to quote these minutes.
103 Allaway, *Educational Centres Movement*, 73.
104 Crescy Cannan and Chris Warren, 'Family Centres: In the settlement tradition?', in Gilchrist and Jeffs, *Settlements*, 194–213.

educational settlements is emphasized by the fact that they largely failed to influence the new centres in the ways their leaders wanted. A.J. Allaway regretted in 1961 that the community centres had not developed the programmes of educational activity that many hoped would be the result of the ESA's involvement in the movement,[105] and at the same time that the educational centres that continued to survive under ESA auspices had little sense of 'social purpose'.[106] He found that students had little interest in the 'fellowship' provided by the common room and little if any conception of 'adult education as a social movement'.[107] The Rowntrees' aspirations for religious and civic education had more or less disappeared from the agenda.

105 Allaway, *Educational Centres Movement*, 83.
106 Ibid., 73.
107 Ibid., 85.