

YMCA 175

History Papers

Author Clyde Binfield

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Body, Mind, Spirit – and Civic Engagement too?

I

Introduction: Civis Romanus Sum

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I am told that I have forty minutes, if I am to leave time for questions or discussion. You are here under the impression that this is a space for History. First, however, you need to know where I stand and then how I plan to make what I say fit the title that I have given you.

Where do I stand? Let me introduce you to a great, if now inevitably forgotten historian. Edward Hallett Carr's fascination with History began in the British Foreign Office. As a young man, still in his late twenties, he was at the Paris Peace Conference, a backroom boy engaged in drafting the Treaty of Versailles which concluded the Great War and in so doing prepared the ground for another great war. You could not be more engaged than that and for the next twenty years he rose in the ranks of the British Foreign Office, a classicist turned historian whose books initiated the science of international politics. He had a mounting fascination with Russia. He was too good a historian to be a Marxist historian but he was a Marxist nonetheless. He left the Foreign Office for academic life and there his monumental achievement was a fourteen-volume history of Soviet Russia. He was, I think, not so much convinced as gripped by Soviet ideology. He lived simply. He could be thoroughly awkward. He had two unhappy marriages. His immediate fame, however, lay in his volume of lectures, What is History? (1961). Outsiders might think that History is facts. For Carr, History began with the historian. "The facts", he said, "are like fish on the fishmonger's slab. The historian collects them, takes them home and cooks and serves them." It is not an entirely pleasant picture, but it fits.

I hope that I am too good a historian to be a Christian historian but I am a historian who is a Christian. Historians must be innately sceptical, they are trained to be discriminating, they have to be selective, for how else can they communicate their discipline? But what they cook and serve is bound to be flavoured; to be palatable it must be flavoured. My flavouring this afternoon takes me back to the middle of the first century and a rare essay in what one can only call civic engagement.

Paul was travelling in Rome's empire. The culture of many of the places that he had so far visited was more Greek than Roman; his own contact points were invariably Jewish, and good Jews could never be wholly Greek or Roman; and the visible power points were unmistakably Roman. Philippi, for example, was a Roman city, full of veterans, planted there as colonists. That nearly did for Paul but it also saved him.

Rome tolerated others – Jews, for example – provided they kept themselves to themselves. Proselytising, however, on the part of any minority group, was forbidden. There were not many Jews in Philippi – too few males, it seems, to justify a synagogue. Even so, Paul was running close to the wind in preaching to those, notably women, who were there. Nonetheless, things were going swimmingly until Paul lost his temper with an excitable slave girl who had been stalking him. His outburst ruined the scam that the girl's exploiters had devised and provided the pretext for his imprisonment. Paul had been proselytising; he had disturbed the peace, the famed Pax Romana. He was beaten and imprisoned.

Paul was irrepressible. An earthquake made it the easiest thing in the world for him to get out of gaol free but he stayed put, and when in fact he was properly pardoned he stirred, with perfect timing, to splendid effect. He let it be known, at that point, that he was a Roman citizen. And he had been scourged – in Roman Philippi. And the scourging of a Roman citizen was an offence which made those responsible for it liable to heavy penalties. Ruin stared the justices of Philippi in the face. They begged Paul to go quietly and he sweetly agreed, provided that they escorted him out with due deference, for he was, it seemed, unlikely though it must have seemed, a Roman citizen: Civis Romanus Sum.

Fast forward 1800 years. We are still in Greece, though now in Athens. It is 1847. There has been an anti-Jewish riot. As a result a merchant – an elderly man, sixty-three years old – has had his house destroyed. Naturally he asks the Greek government for compensation, which is refused on the ground that the claim is grossly inflated. The case drags on. Then it catches the attention of the British Foreign Secretary, and he – as one does – sends a naval squadron to Piræus, the port of Athens, and seizes all Greek vessels. It is now 1850. The Chancelleries of Europe are aghast; so are most responsible Britons. The over-reaction is patent, it is blatant. That elderly merchant in Athens, Don David Pacifico, is a Portuguese Jew who, because he had been born in Gibraltār, turns out to be a British citizen. It is as tenuous as that; and given all the prejudices of that age what on earth possessed that British Foreign Secretary to take it up? On 29 June 1850, in a speech lasting four-and-a-half hours, he defended himself in the House of Commons. And at the end of it were these words:

...as a Roman could say 'Civis Romanus Sum', so also a British subject, in whatever land he may be, shall feel confident that the watchful eye and the strong arm of England will protect him against injustice and wrong.

It worked. That Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston, who within a few years became British Prime Minister, knew who would be listening to him. His private life was louche, to say the least, he drove his colleagues to distraction, but listening to him in the House of Commons, reading his words in the next day's newspaper, would be men who knew their Bibles as well as their Classics, immediately picking up that reference to the power of Roman citizenship. Don Pacifico was no Apostle Paul, he was as unlikely a British citizen as Paul had been a Roman citizen, but as such he had rights. Pax Romana, Pax Britannica, today – who knows, though for how much longer? – Pax Americana.

II

Universal Human Rights? I Am Because You Are

Let me widen my canvas. Last year (2018) was the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That Declaration has been much criticised. I have a friend, whose public life is a model of civic engagement, who has no truck with people who insist on their rights and bang on about their human rights. There is a phrase, whose etymology I have never quite understood, about wrong doers being "banged to rights". I suspect that my friend would like to see all who insist on their rights being banged to rights, and the Declaration that set it all off has been variously criticised as vague, naïve, a back door to socialism, yet at the same time as a Western and therefore capitalist artefact, by no stretch of any imagination a product of the real world.

In fact it was a product of the real world at a terrible time. It was adopted on 10 December 1948. Forty-eight sovereign states signed up to it. None opposed but eight

abstained. It had been presented by the person who chaired the drafting committee. That person was an American, which might colour the accusation that this was a Western and therefore generically Christian as well as capitalist artefact. Even so, thirty-four of the forty-eight signatory states were not geographically Western; the drafting secretary was Lebanese; advice had been sought from Confucian, Hindu, and Islamic traditions, and the foundational principle was a Zulu concept. And that American chairperson merits a second look. She was Eleanor Roosevelt. She may have been the widow of an American President but the current American Secretary of State, George Marshall, who gave his name to the Marshall Plan which provided life-support for so many countries, was at first opposed to what her committee proposed. Mrs Roosevelt's gender was important. At first the draft included the words: "all men are born free and equal". Thanks to another woman, Hansa Mehta, who was from India, there was the gentlest, simplest, most powerful tweak: "all human beings are born free and equal".

Now anybody who has ever served on a YMCA committee – and I am coming, in my roundabout way, to the YMCA – knows that drafting can be the devil. This Declaration's drafting committee agonised, for example, over "rights" and "duties". These are very closely related but which should come first? Mahatma Gandhi, assassinated at the beginning of the year which closed with the Declaration, had argued that "duties" came before "rights". Others, however, feared that that would encourage governments, which are naturally hot and strong about the duties of citizens, to over-ride the rights of critical citizens. Their view prevailed. Rights came first – but so drafted that duties were inseparable. The drafting was meticulous. The rights to conscience, freedom of speech, religion, thought, privacy, were so drafted as to embrace health care and housing, standards of living, the rights of women and of children, the right to enjoy art and culture, all communicating the underlying understanding that a person is a person through other people, that "I am because you are". That is the Zulu concept. All were woven into one draft by Rene Cassin, a French Jew who had lost members of his family in Auschwitz but himself survived to preside over the European Court of Human Rights.

The emphasis on socio-economic rights, so carefully interwoven with more abstract rights, was inescapable. It struck a surprising number of contemporaries as opening a back door to socialism if not communism. That brings me back to the eight states that abstained from signing the Declaration. They included Soviet Russia, the Ukraine, Belorussia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Yugoslavia, all of them Communist states in 1948. There were two more. One was South Africa; however African the idea that "I am because you are", apartheid was not easily reconciled to human rights, and apartheid was South Africa's new orthodoxy. The other was Saudi Arabia. So much, then, for "socialism"; it has been suggested that a body of those "socialistic" ideas had come into the Declaration from Latin America, suggestively pre-dating that Latin American artefact, Liberation Theology.

Today there are Inter-American, African, and European Courts of Human Rights, and there is the surprising fact that in the countless cases referred to those courts, in many of which judgment is given against states, the majority of such judgments are accepted by those states. Something has been happening. There is nothing magic about the Declaration. The abrogation of human rights must today be as universal as ever it was and yet for seventy years that Declaration has justified its existence. I would go further. Although there is nothing essentially Christian about it, I would see a link between it and Civis Romanus Sum, as bombasted in 1850 and as exploited by Paul way back in Philippi. There has in fact to be a profoundly Christian, linking, illuminating, transformative dimension. "I am because you are" may be a Zulu insight, but put a Christian – indeed a Judæo-Christian – gloss on it: the Christian's understanding of

what it means to be an individual, to be me; the Christian's understanding of what it means for that individual to have a relationship with God, the great I AM; and because of that, the Christian's appreciation of other people, of the way in which a person is a person through other people – "I am because you are", those five words which express an understanding of citizenship, a summons to civic engagement, as captured in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is only a beginning; it must be worked at unceasingly – rather like that Universal Declaration – but it is an understanding which just will not go away. It is an insight into citizenship as old as Paul at Philippi, and it is one which the YMCA, that expression of Christian totality, has made its own.

III Body, Mind, Spirit – Y's Triangulation

We come at last to three key words of my title: Body, Mind, Spirit. For the YMCA they furnish an inspirational symbol of wholeness, almost too good to be true; a triangulated totality, curiously slippery, but incapable of full expression without civic engagement.

What was founded, 6 June 1844, to facilitate prayer and Bible study by a dozen or so newly converted men on the young side, was bound – because of the sort of men that they were, based where they were and given their particular economic circumstances – to impact on their evolving sense of citizenship: in London, in England, in the British Isles, in the British Empire of their day. And because of the sort of men that they were, based where they were, and driven by their commercial circumstances, this was bound to intersect, sooner rather than later, with not dissimilar young men on the continent of Europe, and with yet others in the United States of America.

These were spiritually serious young men, commercially alert, especially in Britain, intellectually alert, especially on the continent of Europe, strenuously alert and missionary-minded, especially in the United States. They were none of them, I think, military-minded. Their social circumstances were unlikely – as yet – to entangle them in war but none of them could escape its implications. It is worth pausing to reflect on this.

In the 1860s the United States almost became the Untied States thanks to the trauma of a Civil War which left long-lasting scars. Students of the British Empire liked to reflect that there were little more than two years in the whole of the nineteenth century when there was not fighting somewhere in that empire. On the continent of Europe there was war somewhere in the 1850s, 1860s, 1870s; indeed there is the story from between the two World Wars of two now elderly statesmen of great distinction mulling over their long lives and reflecting that the only point at which they could recall Europe being wholly at peace in their lifetime was in July 1914. At that point the YMCA was seventy years old. What price civic engagement for the average Christian young man? What meant, for him, Civis Romanus Sum?

The imperatives were clear. The tensions became palpable. There was the allure, perhaps the danger, of becoming part of the Establishment in Church and State. George Williams became Sir George, with a tomb in St Paul's Cathedral and a window in Westminster Abbey; his great-great-great-grandson is today (2019) British Prime Minister. Elsewhere there was the contrasting certainty of belonging to communities which could not conform to established ways: in Germany in the 1930s and early 1940s; in Russia from the 1920s to the 1980s. How, in fact, did Christian men and increasingly of course Christian women, enlivened by their discovery of YMCA, reconcile their dual citizenship?

I want to focus on one particularly representative YMCA man, whose life spanned the twentieth century. Before I get to him, however, I would like to wave some snapshots in

front of you, selected – or should I say shot? – at random, two from the nineteenth century and one from a hundred years later. They crowd out so much that I might have selected. Even so, they illustrate aspects and implications of the YMCA and civic engagement.

My nineteenth-century two are placed in Sheffield, which is where I live though not where I am from.

Sheffield, in Yorkshire, like Pittsburgh, in Pennsylvania, owes most to the metal industries. From the 1850s its prosperity depended increasingly on war: on guns, shells, steel helmets. Its YMCA began at the same time – 1855 – and benefitted from men grown rich from the accoutrements of war, all of them critical to the nation's prosperity. Perhaps surprisingly, Sheffield also made sweets. In the 1850s George Bassett, still almost young and an active Methodist, began to make lozenges and drops. He made so many that his sweet-making business was amongst the biggest in the country and the next generation confirmed that success with their sweet of genius, the liquorice allsort. You can buy them still. Bassett himself moved from one big house to another until between 1875 and 1877 his successes reached their climax and reaped their reward: he became Mayor of Sheffield (his town's leading citizen) and President of Sheffield YMCA (which was still only twenty years old) and he entertained Ulysses S. Grant, a fellow Methodist, in his final year as President of the United States. That sort of thing went down well in 1877, especially in Sheffield; all that between 1875 and 1877, and then he had a stroke and never really recovered. But can't you see here a perfect example of the civic engagement of a successful YMCA man?

Fourteen years later, 4 June 1891, two days early, or so it might be thought, George Williams opened and gave generously to Sheffield's spanking new YMCA in the commercial and retail centre of the town, and two years after that, once more in the magic YMCA month of June, the British Conference of YMCAs met in Sheffield. Sheffield pulled out all the stops. There was "ravishing music", with "solos from the sweetest of our songsters", in the newly-built art gallery and there were addresses "which for brilliance and piquance have been rarely equalled". There was one address in particular which provoked a "torrent of applause" – and brought into the open a long-standing division of YMCA opinion.

Hugh Price Hughes was probably Britain's best-known Methodist in 1893. He was a minister who commanded pulpit and platform with equal authority. He was quite unafraid of political commitment, as his Sheffield speech made clear. In it he referred to a very recent demonstration in London's Hyde Park in favour of a particular piece of legislation. It was the largest yet held in that park, and alongside London's working men stood for the first time representatives of all the churches. Yet, he asked, "Why was the YMCA not represented?" That sparked a sharp exchange. "It is non-political", shouted a member of his YMCA audience. In that case, retorted Hughes, "it does not represent Christ". He gathered force:

The YMCA must take part in these things; a change has come over...Christian...England since the days of our fathers, who were...more concerned about their own souls. This is an age of practical Christianity... we must prove our loyalty to Jesus Christ by helping to stamp out the evils of our day. It is useless to pray, if we do not work.... Gambling... 'the narrow lust of gold', - the cause of purity in India, in relation to the trade in vice kept up by government officials... the question of war... these are the kind of subjects the Y.M.C.A. must deal with, if it hopes to flourish in the 20th century...

And dealing with them meant legislation and that meant political action.

Of course there was that torrent of applause from the body of the hall; and of course there was the reaction from the platform party. This is how the Conference Report put it:

There was a little breeze in Conference as to semi-political action, but owing to the ruling of the Chairman, and the opinion of Mr. GEO. WILLIAMS, all storm ceased, and today we are as non political as ever. Despite the opinions of great and reverend social reformers, we are servants of Christ and earnest devoted workers in all good movements, even though we do not blazon it forth on banners, march the streets and demonstrate.

And on the whole it has ever been thus; so now, from the 1890s to the 1970s and from one British Conference to two World Councils: the 6th, at Kampala, in 1973, and the 7th, in Buenos Aires, in 1977, one in Africa, the other in South America.

Their location testified to the spread, indeed the grasp, of an international movement, now one of the oldest of its type. Uganda had been a British colony, Argentina, very much earlier, had been Spanish. Now Kampala and Buenos Aires were the capital cities of sovereign states, and the Presidents of those states visited the World Council and delivered appropriate speeches. Uganda's Idi Amin and Argentina's Jorge Videla, however, were the public faces of unsavoury regimes. Amin's Uganda was already notorious and his was an overbearing presence at the Council. The nature of Videla's Argentina had yet to be fully revealed, but what was already known was thoroughly disquieting and the President's sinisterly anodyne speech on Christian values was delivered in a hall guarded by armed soldiers whose stance and uniform were far from merely decorative. Was the YMCA's presence in world council in these places weak-kneed connivance or was it, viewed in the long term, a necessary essay in brave compromise, a strategic mark of dignified rebuke? Whatever it was, it was political. That YMCA presence was neither ceremonial nor wholly celebratory for there was much to discuss and decide; it was a mark of engagement.

The Councils' themes made that clear. Kampala's was "Identity and Mission" but the Secretary-General called his address "Power to Become". At Buenos Aires the theme was "Enlisted in Reconciliation". "Enlisted" and "power" were suggestive words, given the context. So was "reconciliation". At Kampala, Fredrik Franklin, the Alliance's Secretary-General, spoke out clearly about the universal problem of ethnic discrimination, open or latent, social, economic, and racial, and from Kampala there issued the Kampala Principles, a recontexting of the Movement's foundational Paris Basis and a reaffirmation of its essential Christianity. At Buenos Aires the keynote address was delivered by Paulos Mar Gregorios, Metropolitan of Delhi, Orthodox Syrian Church of the East. Here was the voice of a church older than the hills and a cast of mind profoundly challenging to the still traditional Protestantism of the World Alliance. It made such a speech as that of Hugh Price Hughes in steel city Sheffield in 1893 sound like the opening of a vicarage garden party. It spoke of conflict in the Middle East, of transnational corporations, nuclear peril, ecological problems, disarmament, capitalism, inequality. It was a summons to civic engagement.

Buenos Aires was my first World Council and I have described that speech elsewhere as "extraordinary, as long as a great river and full of cross currents". To revisit it today is to realise how agenda-setting it was and how agenda-setting the World Alliance has been with its commissions and its surveys and its consultations, its careful, cautious preparation. There is method and even bravery in fine-honed compromise. And the official, platform, response to the Metropolitan's speech was markedly similar to what was said in Sheffield back in 1893: "It is to the credit of the speaker that he spoke his

mind and to the YMCA World Council that he felt free to do so"; as for the rest, judgment was reserved. Of course it was.

Buenos Aires 1977, "enlisted in reconciliation" is a world as well as a continent away from where we are now, and yet it is for me only yesterday. General Videla died six years ago (2013); I have kept one full page obituary from the British press. It is headed "Dictator who brought terror to Argentina in the 'dirty war'." By then more than enough was known of that terror but enough was already known in 1977. I know that, because I brought with me then, among my papers for that Council, a slim dossier from Amnesty International, and it was brought home much more recently by an obituary, again full page, to Andrew Graham-Yooll, news editor of the English language Buenos Aires Herald, who had already been forced to flee (and only just in time) because of his reporting of the "disappeared". He died exactly a month ago (July, 2019). History never quite leaves you be.

IV

An Instance of Civic Engagement

I close with a representative biography, a portrait of a YMCA professional turned volunteer whose life spanned the twentieth century. He was in voice, demeanour, and method unmistakably English, yet I venture to call him representative – of a type and of a generation. His type, I suggest, has been found in each national movement. He demonstrated intelligent Christian citizenship. He was the incarnation of civic engagement.

Edwin Barker (1904-1993) was pre-eminently a back-room boy. He was an enabler, a facilitator, a model of civil service. He was also an initiator and a strategist. He exercised a sustained influence in three movements, the Student Christian Movement (SCM), for which he worked between 1927 and 1937; the YMCA, which he served nationally and internationally between 1937 and 1961; and the Church of England, between 1961 and 1984, first at national level and then, but no less influentially, more locally, at diocesan level. He was persuasive in his written style and equally persuasive on committees and in seminars – there he was in his element, intelligently unobtrusive. He was accurate in expression, and yet he was no orator. His career illuminates a past world, yet peel away the past and how relevant to our present is his perception of the issues and the methods which he proposed for their consideration and resolution.

In the time that remains to me I can do little more than outline and headline his contribution to a civic and civil society. I begin with two assessments of his significance, one from the Church of England and the other from the English Free Churches. For David Edwards, a man whose Anglican eye missed little of import in his church, Barker was "devoted to facts, to action, and to people for whose sake action needed to be taken – interested in the intellectual foundations of theology and social thought, but always with a view to their practical relevance: a Christian who learned from and worked alongside anyone of good will and competence." For Kenneth Slack, a man whose Free Church eye also missed little of import in the churches, Barker was "one of those...of whom it can be said that he is far bigger and far more influential than the offices he has held...would indicate." Could there be better descriptions of the ideal YMCA professional?

Barker's formation is instructive. His background was Methodist and rural, his father "very much the 'rolling stone'", moving from farm to farm, sometimes as shepherd, sometimes as bailiff, chiefly in the English North and North Midlands. His education was good: a Derbyshire grammar school (he was a scholarship boy), followed by two northern universities, Sheffield and Leeds. These were his introduction to the world of industry.

At Sheffield, thanks again to a scholarship, he read Physics and Mathematics in sufficient depth for a Master's degree. He stayed on to train as a teacher, indeed he "did a little teaching", but a more complicated world attracted him: "The city both appalled and interested me and I became deeply involved in social studies and social work....This line of study and work became my second academic interest." It defined the trajectory of his career from the 1920s to the 1980s.

In Sheffield, teaching for six months in a "down town" school, he became a prison visitor "and many other odd things" and was for a while Assistant Secretary of Sheffield's Council of Social Service. That body, which coordinated the city's voluntary work, was making its mark at the point at which Sheffield, always a Radical city, now became a Labour city; Barker found himself elected to its Board and placed on its Juvenile Organizations Committee because he had initiated a University Settlement Boys' Club. Once on that committee he organized a survey of local juvenile work which issued in a "questionnaire to Head Masters, Church Workers and Social Workers in all districts", and led to a Handbook of useful information and good practice. By then, however, Barker had left Sheffield for Leeds and the Student Christian Movement.

That Movement introduced him to Birmingham, London, the Continent, and his future wife, as well as to Leeds. In Leeds, Birmingham, and London he was successively its Intercollegiate, Social Study, International Study, and Industrial Secretary. These were cumulative roles. From Birmingham he visited student work in most European countries, including a memorable visit to Soviet Russia in 1931. In London his task was to establish an Industrial Department for SCM, coping, as he put it, "with engineering students in universities and technical colleges who rarely joined the SCM, and who seemed to lead a life apart from the intellectual and humanities side of university life, yet who were very likely to move to various levels of management in industry by their 30s". It was eye-opening work. Five years of it brought him "into close touch with all aspects of industrial life and with all the Universities of the United Kingdom" and led to what became a steady stream of publications.

In these years, too, he was confirmed as an Anglican and he met his wife. Nancy Daldy's family had been in publishing and by serendipitous coincidence her uncle was married to a grand-daughter of George Hitchcock, in whose London drapery establishment George Williams had founded the London YMCA. Nancy's aunt (by marriage), Ellen Hitchcock, was thus the niece of Helen Hitchcock, who married George Williams.

That, no doubt, is delightfully by the way, but it will have become clear that Barker's work for the Student Christian Movement was an ideal preparation for his work as the English YMCA's Education Secretary and Assistant National Secretary and as the World Alliance's Development Secretary. The direction in which he proposed to develop the YMCA's social and educational programmes will also be clear.

In 1939 War broke into this, but it allowed Barker to develop the YMCA's educational work with the Forces and eventually in Germany with the Allied Control Commission. He seems to have gathered round him a devoted and high-spirited team, and he had a knack of attracting well-placed and thoroughly useful assistants. With the War over, he was equipped for his great work: a programme of residential education for key people in industry, from apprentices to managers. This he established in Cambridge (thanks to the cooperation of Cheshunt College, then a chiefly Congregational theological college); in Durham, under the guise of the Bernard Gilpin Society; in Kent, at Kingsgate College, where his Principal was Sir Wilfred Garrett, a former Chief Inspector of Factories; and in Sussex, at Dunford, a small country house in idyllic surroundings, where once had lived

the Victorian statesman and radical, Richard Cobden, a man who had no time for Lord Palmerston.

And now I have no time, save to tantalise you. At Dunford Barker attracted some giants of the contemporary ecumenical world – J.H. Oldham (1874-1969) as resident tutor, Rupert and Kathleen Bliss (1905-1999 and 1908-1989) – and there, it has often been said, the future of post-colonial Africa was mapped out, as well as that of the British world of work; and something of Barker's vision was also translated to an almost more idyllic YMCA concept: Schloss Mainau, so close to Lake Constance.

I close with a snapshot. In 1954 Edwin Barker was in the United States, in part to attend the World Council of Churches at Evanston, Illinois. He persuaded a friend, Francis Clark, who was General Secretary of Princeton YMCA, to secure an interview with two world famous scientists, Albert Einstein and Robert Oppenheimer, the former secure in his fame, the latter notorious because his Communist sympathies had that year subjected him to humiliation from Senator McCarthy. Barker left a meticulous, vivid account of his meetings with Einstein and the Oppenheimers; my present time only allows for the letter, dated 9 September 1954, which introduced Barker to those great men:

Mr Edwin Barker, Education Secretary of the National Council of YMCAs in London, England, is visiting the United States on a fellowship. He will be here in Princeton next Tuesday ...In connection with his responsibilities as administrator of four colleges operated by the English YMCAs, he lectures on atomic energy since his own field is physics.

These colleges are of two types: those which give training to foremen in industry, and those which over a period of years provide term courses to junior executives in industry. He also operates agricultural schools where they train boys from slum areas to work on farms throughout the Commonwealth.

It was a large part of Mr. Barker's hope in his trip to America that he might be able to meet you. Would you be able to grant him a short interview?

Francis Clark's letters of introduction did the trick. Edwin Barker met Albert Einstein that Tuesday afternoon at 4.30 p.m. and Robert Oppenheimer followed at 5.25 p.m. Their conversations were wide-ranging, yet to the point. Not a minute was wasted and Barker came away from Einstein's house feeling – these are his words – “that here was a man for whom no facts had terror, whose sense of tragedy was deeply rooted in spiritual sensitivity, and shot through and through with ‘resurrection light.’ It was as if he could talk about Good Friday because he already knew of Easter Day”. Within a year Einstein was dead.

Body, Mind, Spirit: one instance, retiring, penetrating, unassuming, effective in its day and still outworking, of YMCA and civic engagement.

CLYDE BINFIELD

Bibliographical Note:

For Section I, Edward Hallett Carr (1892-1982), David Pacifico (1784-1854), and Henry John Temple, 3rd Viscount Palmerston (1784-1865) see Oxford Dictionary of National Biography [ODNB]. For Paul at Philippi see Acts of the Apostles, 16, vv. 12-40.

For Section II, articles from November 2018 in Guardian, Prospect, New Statesman.

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For the Conference of 1893 see [British Conference of Young Men's Christian Associations, Sheffield June 13-16, 1893, 1893.](#)

For Section IV I am indebted to Mr George Barker, for access to the papers of his father, Edwin Barker.

