

Putting the City back into Citizenship: Civics Education and Local Government in Britain, 1918-1945¹

Abstract

This article is about inter-war Britain, civic education, and the theoretical and practical expression of local citizenship. Building upon recent analyses in urban history that have reassessed the perception of municipal and civic decline, I argue that historians must now also challenge the historiography that views citizenship as indivisible from national identity. It was indeed actually common for both children and adults to be taught that it was in the local and the city especially, that the rights and responsibilities of citizenship were received and enacted. I trace this distinctive conception of citizenship to the ideological resilience of the Victorian idealist philosopher Thomas Hill Green. Drawing on his justification for state intervention to ensure individual liberty, educators positioned municipal government as the guardian of the life and health of individuals and communities – an educational approach they termed civics. This was apparent in organisations such as the National Association of Local Government Officers, Workers’ Educational Association, and the Association for Education in Citizenship, and expressed through the flood of civics textbooks published following the First World War. Using a case study of Manchester I unpick the points of contact between these organisations and the individuals connected to Green, and show how civics was applied in both formal and informal sites of education. While this discourse of citizenship was damaged by the social democracy of the post-1945 welfare state, I conclude that, in the interwar period at least, citizenship was still very much local and urban based.

¹ This is the final peer-reviewed accepted version of this article (pre-proofing and printing). To see the final version, see <http://tcbh.oxfordjournals.org/content/26/1/26>

This research was funded through an ESRC 1p3 scholarship: ES/I903089/1, for which I am very grateful. My thanks go also to Simon Gunn, Paul Readman, and Mark Freeman for reading through earlier drafts and providing helpful criticism, and the anonymous referees for their incisive criticisms and suggestions.

In 1937 the general secretary of the National Association of Local Government Officers, Levi Hill, asserted that it was ‘more important that people should know who collects their refuse than who cut off Anne Boleyn’s head.’ Writing in *The Citizen*, the magazine of the newly formed Association for Education in Citizenship, he then listed a multitude of educational experiments in Britain using municipal administration as the basis for citizenship instruction.² Hill was essentially describing a particular brand of civics: the study of rights and responsibilities in the three-way relationship between the individual, society, and government. His enthusiasm for this aspect of citizenship, instead of national identity, culture, or history, epitomized a prominent facet of citizenship discourse in the inter-war period. While Hill was speaking as the publicist of an association whose members depended on local government for their livelihood, and through an organisation agitating for the inclusion of citizenship studies in the curriculum, he nonetheless reflected a widespread and pervasive current of thought, derived primarily from the Victorian idealist philosopher Thomas Hill Green.³

Though Green had died in 1882, his dedicated followers, many of whom he had taught at Balliol College, Oxford, continued to draw upon his justification for government intervention to ensure individual liberty. Positioning the local, controlled by municipal government, as the site where the state enabled citizenship to be received and enacted, inter-war educators used the logic and language of Green as the basis for citizenship lessons. While the extraordinary impact of Green upon the social policy and philosophy of the first half of the twentieth century is well known, including his influence upon the extension of education

² Levi Hill, ‘School children and local government’, *The Citizen*, No. 3 March, (Published by the AEoC, 1937), 16-7.

³ NALGO was founded in 1905 to lobby on behalf of local government officials; by 1936 it had 80,000 members. Jacquie L’Etang, *Public Relations in Britain: A History of Professional Practice in the Twentieth Century* (2004), 19; ‘British perspective on local government’, *National Municipal Review*, XXV, no. I (1936), 4.

and philosophical discussion of the state, there has been little attention given to the resilience of his ideas in the application of civics, or the local articulation that this took.⁴ This article redresses the balance by putting local government, the city, and Green firmly back into our understandings of inter-war citizenship.

There are historiographical reasons for the lack of attention given to local civics. Existing work on citizenship in the twentieth century has been mostly seen through the lens of the national, at the expense of the city, as country and empire assumed cultural dominance, and ‘Englishness’ overpowered localism and provincial identity.⁵ In this work citizenship and national identity are seen as ‘virtually indivisible’, denoting belonging and responsibility to the nation and the empire, encouraged through nationwide cultural institutions, events, and days of remembrance.⁶ Part of this understanding rests implicitly upon the established historiography of decline in local autonomous civic and municipal culture. Late nineteenth-century middle-class suburbanisation, according to this viewpoint, was culpable for the city’s

⁴ For an overview of Green’s influence see Raymond Plant, ‘T.H. Green: citizenship, education and the law’, *Oxford Review of Education*, 32, no. 1 (2006), 23-4. For Green’s relationship to patriotism, see Julia Stapleton, ‘Citizenship versus patriotism in twentieth-century England’, *The Historical Journal*, 48, no. 1 (2005), 158-162. See also Edmund Neill, ‘Conceptions of citizenship in twentieth century Britain’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 17, no. 3 (2006), 4-5. For education see Peter Gordon and John White, *Philosophers as Educational Reformers: The Influence of Idealism on British Educational Thought and Practice* (Abingdon, 1979) and David Watson, ‘Idealism and education: T.H. Green and the education of the middle class’, *British Educational Research Journal*, 8, no.1 (1982).

⁵ Anne B. Rodrick, *Self-Help and Civic Culture: Citizenship in Victorian Birmingham* (Ashgate, 2004), 205-6; Brian Doyle, ‘The invention of English’ in Robert Colls and Philip Dodd (eds), *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920* (London, 1986). For an exception see Paul Readman, ‘The place of the past in English culture c.1890-1914’, *Past and Present*, 186 (2005), 149-150.

⁶ Richard Weight and Abigail Beach, ‘Introduction’, *The Right to Belong*, 1; S. Nicholas, ‘From John Bull to John Citizen: images of national identity and citizenship on the wartime BBC’ in Richard Weight and Abigail Beach, *The Right to Belong: Citizenship and National Identity in Britain, 1930-1960* (London, 1988), 39; Jim English, ‘Empire Day in Britain, 1904-1958’, *The Historical Journal*, 49, no. 1 (2006), 247-8; Brad Beaven and John Griffiths, ‘Creating the exemplary citizen: the changing notion of citizenship in Britain 1870-1939’, *Contemporary British History*, 22, no. 2 (2008), 211-2. Stapleton, ‘Citizenship versus patriotism’, 164-6.

inter-war dearth of ‘active’ middle-class citizens,⁷ while central state growth engulfed local government autonomy.⁸ The conclusion that has emerged from the combination of these arguments can be summarized by John Griffith’s contention that, by 1910, ‘citizenship discourse had left the city, soon to be followed by civic leaders’.⁹ The First World War theoretically clarified and accelerated these trends, with the result that, in the following decades, citizenship was tied wholly to the nation, leaving both local government and civic culture weakened.¹⁰

Scholarship in the last decade however has begun to challenge the municipal and civic decline aspect of this conclusion. Case studies have uncovered vibrant local cultures;¹¹ shown how local authorities retained autonomy in the delivery of services despite central funding controls;¹² challenged the accusation of municipal lethargy in public health provision;¹³

⁷ John Garrard, ‘1850-1914: the rule and decline of a new squirearchy?’, *Albion: a Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 27, no. 4 (1995), 612. Tristram Hunt, *Building Jerusalem: the Rise and Fall of the Victorian City* (London, 2004), 466-9; Richard J. Morris, ‘Structure, culture and society in British towns’ in Martin Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain: Vol. III* (Cambridge, 2000) and Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority in the English Industrial City, 1840-1914* (Manchester, 2000), 187-197.

⁸ Derek Fraser, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State: a History of Social Policy since the Industrial Revolution*, 4th ed. (Basingstoke, 2009), 209-10; John Davis, ‘Central government and the towns’, in Daunton, *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, 272.

⁹ John R. Griffiths, ‘Civic communication in Britain: a study of the *Municipal Journal* c. 1893-1910’, *Journal of Urban History*, 34, no. 5 (2008), 17.

¹⁰ Nicoletta F. Gullace, *‘The Blood of Our Sons’: Men, Women and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship During the Great War* (Basingstoke, 2002), 4; Matthew C. Hendley, *Organized Patriotism and the Crucible of War: Popular Imperialism in Britain, 1914-1932* (Montreal, 2012), 3; Jay M. Winter, ‘British national identity and the First World War’ in S.J.D. Green and Richard C. Whiting (eds), *The Boundaries of the State in Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2002).

¹¹ Charlotte Wildman, ‘Urban transformation in Liverpool and Manchester, 1918-1939’, *The Historical Journal*, 55, no. 1 (2012); Siobhan Begley, ‘Voluntary Associations and the Civic Ideal in Leicester, 1870-1939’, PhD Thesis (University of Leicester, 2009).

¹² Shane Ewen, ‘Power and Administration in Two Midland Cities’, PhD Thesis (University of Leicester, 2003), 246-7; Nick Hayes, ‘Civic perceptions: housing and local decision-making in English cities in the 1920s’, *Urban History*, 27, no. 2 (2000).

shown how imperial discourse was filtered through the perspective of localities;¹⁴ and questioned the decline of middle-class governance.¹⁵ If local government and culture were not moribund, as previously thought, we must now also question the historiography of national citizenship that those claims partially supported. I aim to achieve this by arguing that the importance of local government extended to and shaped the definition and widespread practice of inter-war citizenship education. Civics, drawing on Green, partly supported a definition of citizenship as loyalty and pride in the nation, yet also encouraged the individual to think of the local, and the city especially, as the site where rights and responsibilities were received and enacted, due to the local states guaranteeing of the life and health of the population. This was apparent both in the theoretical writing of educators and the sites of inter-war education.

The first section of this article accounts for the persistence and nature of Greenian idealism in inter-war civics. The second section complicates the story by relating idealism to popular pressure groups such as the National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO) and the Association for Education in Citizenship (AEoC), as well as supposedly anti-idealist intellectuals such as Harold Laski. It also marks out the 1930s as the zenith of local government civics. The final section takes this general and ideological history to the local level, using Manchester's experience to illustrate the filtering down and utilisation of civics. While concluding that local and civic citizenship was challenged in the post-Second World War era, I emphasize the rehabilitation of the city and the municipal in popular citizenship conceptions during the inter-war period.

¹³ Martin Gorsky, 'Public health in interwar England and Wales: did it fail?', *Dynamis*, 28 (2008).

¹⁴ Brad Beaven, *Visions of Empire: Patriotism, Popular Culture and the City, 1870-1939* (Manchester, 2012), 208.

¹⁵ Nick Hayes, 'Counting civil society: deconstruction elite participation in the provincial English city, 1900-1950', *Urban History*, 40, no. 2 (2013).

Civics Textbooks and the Local State

Green's reputation as one of the most influential thinkers of the late nineteenth century is cemented.¹⁶ Partly taking up the mantle of John Stuart Mill, he elaborated the virtues of the republican practices of ancient Greece, and posited democratic participation in the local community as the process through which civil liberties flourished.¹⁷ His lasting contribution to idealism was in the further importance he attached to the state in the maintenance of these civil liberties. In 'Liberal legislation and freedom of contract' (1861), the most influential of his publications, he maintained, with reference to work, education and health, that it was the 'business' of the state to not directly promote 'moral goodness', but 'maintain the conditions without which a free exercise of the human faculties is impossible'.¹⁸ Green favoured intervention in the locality through municipal bodies since, without the securing of the minimum of material conditions, individuals could not reach their full capacity to exercise rights.¹⁹ He saw civic engagement as a beneficial and necessary consequence of liberty, serving himself as a city councillor in Oxford, and argued that citizens had a 'political duty'

¹⁶ See Matt Carter, *T.H. Green and the Development of Ethical Socialism* (Exeter, 2003); Denys Leighton, *The Greenian Moment: T.H. Green, Religion and Political Argument in Victorian Britain* (Exeter, 2004).

¹⁷ Eugenio F. Biagini, 'Liberalism and direct democracy: John Stuart Mill and the model of ancient Athens' in Eugenio F. Biagini (ed.), *Citizenship and Community: Liberals, Radicals and Collective Identities in the British Isles 1865-1931* (Cambridge, 2002 [1996]); Peter Clarke, *Liberals and Social Democrats* (Cambridge, 1978), 26.

¹⁸ T.H. Green, 'Liberal legislation and freedom of contract' in T.H. Green, *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation and other Writings*, Paul Harris and John Morrow (eds) (Cambridge, 1986), 202. Avital Simhony, 'T.H. Green: the common good society', *History of Political Thought*, 14, no. 2 (1993).

¹⁹ Carter, *T.H. Green*, 40; Green, 'Liberal legislation', 202; T.H. Green, *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation* (London, 1913), 126.

to ‘take part in the work of the state’ through voting for or acting as a member of ‘supreme or provincial assemblies’, ensuring the maintenance of the freedoms of the country.²⁰

Green provided a language readily adopted by late nineteenth-century reformers arguing for increased state intervention to maintain individual liberty.²¹ In this way the distinctive attitudes of individualism and communitarianism were reconciled through state intervention: localized service provision that enabled citizens to improve themselves, yet also form communities based on shared rights and responsibilities.²² Green’s impact was explicit in the ‘Rainbow Circle’ meetings in 1894 that brought together the mix of Liberal, Independent Labour Party, and Fabian progressives from which the New Liberalism sprung.²³ His philosophical and ethical views also inspired a commitment to public service; over 90% of Balliol undergraduates, many enthused with his ideals, entered public service at the local, national or colonial level in the 75 years before 1914.²⁴ Sociological and political thought that drew upon Green was not confined to intellectuals, central policy makers, or administrators; it also spread into popular and vernacular contexts such as workers’ education. Green’s importance to public administration therefore was merely the ‘tip of an iceberg’.²⁵

Though idealism came under attack during the First World War, it was not totally discredited, and Green’s emphasis on common social purpose and fellowship between the classes seemed well-suited to dealing with the class politics and social problems of inter-war

²⁰ Green, *Lectures*, 130.

²¹ Clarke, *Liberals and Social Democrats*, 15.

²² Green, *Lectures*, 244. Sandra D. Otter, “Thinking in Communities:” Late nineteenth-century Liberals, Idealists and the retrieval of community’, *Parliamentary History*, 16, no. 1 (1997).

²³ Clarke, *Liberals and Social Democrats*, 58.

²⁴ Plant, ‘T.H. Green: citizenship, education and the law’, 23.

²⁵ Jose Harris, ‘Political thought and the welfare state 1870-1940: an intellectual framework for British social policy’, *Past and Present*, 135 (1992), 123;

Britain.²⁶ His influence lasted well into these decades and, despite declining in philosophical circles in the 1930s, formed the backbone of university social science.²⁷ Two important and related fields of thought directly related to citizenship instruction emerged from the resilience of idealism. Firstly, that the relationship between state and citizen was framed around the construction of an environment that did not compel the individual to do well, but provided the means for cooperation and the creation of the ‘common good’.²⁸ Secondly, and taking the city-states of ancient Greece as a model, the city and the municipal were the preferred channels for the production of this environment, maintained through the civic-mindedness of the community.²⁹ One way to gauge the lasting impact of these themes, and the resilience of local government in conceptions of citizenship, is through an analysis of civics materials and citizenship instruction. As Jose Harris has argued, though crucially without drawing attention to the local basis, the ‘tidal wave’ of civics texts that emerged in the 1920s was ‘overwhelmingly... couched in idealist or quasi-idealist terms.’³⁰

The post-First World War years were regarded as particularly necessitous of citizenship instruction.³¹ Franchise extension to almost universal suffrage in 1918 and 1928 engendered a spirit of democratic idealism, but also amplified existing anxieties about the

²⁶ Matthew Grimley, *Citizenship, Community and the Church of England: Liberal Anglican Theories of the State between the Wars* (Oxford, 2004), 59-63.

²⁷ Jose Harris, ‘Platonism, positivism and progressivism: aspects of British sociological thought in the early twentieth century’ in Biagini (ed.), *Citizenship and Community*, 356; Harris, ‘Political thought and the welfare state’, 123; Lawrence Goldman, ‘Intellectuals and the English working class 1870-1945: the case of adult education’, *History of Education*, 29, no. 4 (1999), 291.

²⁸ Carter, *T.H. Green*, 188.

²⁹ Harris, ‘Political thought and the welfare state’, 130-2.

³⁰ Jose Harris, ‘Political thought and the state’ in Green and Whiting (eds), *The Boundaries of the State*, 20. Using the British Library catalogue as a crude barometer, one can see the rise of civics materials. Before 1918, twenty-one books that concentrated upon ‘civics’ and ‘citizenship’ were published; in the following twenty-one years there were fifty-four.

³¹ Peter Brett, ‘Citizenship education in the shadow of the Great War’, *Citizenship Teaching and Learning*, 8, no. 1 (2013), 56-64.

health of the body politic. Emerging technologies of mass communication, such as the wireless and the continued growth of the popular press, melded with both right-wing fears of American cultural imports, and left-wing dismay at the potential of the working classes for xenophobic hysteria or political apathy.³² Party political marketing, using a wide range of media propaganda strategies to target working-class voters, was a tactic used by both the Conservative and Labour parties.³³ Civics was a similar, but non-party political, response to the same issue. In this sense it was comparable to the General Post Office Film Unit (GPOFU), established in 1933 - a 'socially purposive cinema' that the reformist social democrat and filmmaker John Grierson believed could 'inform and educate the newly enfranchised mass electorate to function in a participatory democracy'.³⁴

Civics books were designed to deliver an authoritative pedagogic account of what was considered to be a suitable field of political discussion, employed by educators to communicate knowledge and morality.³⁵ They were most commonly used in state school classrooms, but also in some municipal and workers' adult education classes, voluntary association study groups, and as self-study guides. Each chapter formed the basis of a lesson,

³² Helen McCarthy, *The British People and the League of Nations: Democracy, Citizenship and Internationalism c.1918-45* (Manchester, 2011), 21-22.

³³ David Jarvis, 'British Conservatism and class politics in the 1920s', *English Historical Review*, CXI, 440 (1996) and 'Mrs Maggs and Betty: the Conservative appeal to women voters in the 1920s', *Twentieth Century British History*, 5, no. 2 (1994); Laura Beers, 'Education or Manipulation? Labour, Democracy, and the Popular Press in Interwar Britain', *The Journal of British Studies*, 48, no. 1 (2009), 131.

³⁴ Jeffrey Richards, 'John Grierson and the lost world of the GPO Film Unit', in Scott Anthony and James G. Mansell (eds), *The Projection of Britain: A History of the GPO Film Unit* (London, 2011), 2. It is also worth noting the gendered response to enfranchisement. See, for example, K. Hunt, 'Rethinking activism: lessons from the history of women's politics', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 62, no. 2 (2009);

³⁵ Chris Stray, 'Paradigms regained: towards a historical sociology of the textbook', *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 26, no. 1 (1994), 2. Patrick Brindle and Madeleine Arnot, "'England expects every man to do his duty": the gendering of the citizenship textbook 1940-1966', *Oxford Review of Education*, 25, no. 1, (1999), 119.

arranged to be studied in sequence.³⁶ Textbooks are useful since they reflected the social conditions of their production; they were a ‘composite cultural commodity... standing at the crossroads of culture and pedagogy, publishing and society.’³⁷ While not ordinarily representing an outlet for new knowledge, they indicated the field’s development.³⁸ While there has been some work published on British school textbooks, it has been more concerned with race, the urban-rural divide, and the nation, and based primarily on the investigation of history and geography texts.³⁹

It is, however, in civics textbooks that the legacy of Green, and his connection to local and municipal citizenship, can be seen. In some cases, such as in *Government & People: An Introduction to the Study of Citizenship* (1921), this was explicit. Written by Conrad Gill with the collaboration of C.W. Valentine, respectively Reader in Constitutional History and Professor of Education at the University of Birmingham, *Government & People* went through two further editions in 1931 and 1933. Gill made clear the debt owed to J.H. Muirhead, retiring Chair of Philosophy and Political Economy, for his ‘kindness in reading through several chapters’ and ‘many valuable suggestions based on wide knowledge and experience’.⁴⁰ Muirhead was a prominent former student of Green, describing the philosopher as ‘undoubtedly the deepest influence’ upon his thinking.⁴¹ He also epitomized the local ‘active citizen’; previously involved with Toynbee Hall in London, he extended his civic

³⁶ Foster McMurray and Lee J. Cronbach, ‘The controversial past and present of the text’ in Lee J. Cronbach (ed.), *Text Materials in Modern Education: a Comprehensive Theory and Platform of Research* (Urbana, 1955).

³⁷ Stray, ‘Paradigms regained’, 4.

³⁸ David Klein and William L. Smith, ‘Historical trends in the marriage and family textbook literature, 1887-1980’, *Family Relations*, 34 (1985), 211.

³⁹ Stephen Heathorn, “‘Let us remember that we, too, are English’”: constructions of citizenship and national identity in English elementary school reading books, 1880-1914’, *Victorian Studies*, 38, no. 3 (1995); John Ahier, *Industry, Children and the Nation: An Analysis of National Identity in School Textbooks* (Lewes, 1988).

⁴⁰ Conrad Gill, *Government & People: An Introduction to the study of citizenship* (London, 1921), vii.

⁴¹ J.H. Muirhead, *Four Lectures on the Political Teaching of T.H. Green* (London, 1908), 2.

activism in Birmingham through the University Extension Scheme, the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), and the establishment of secondary schools following the 1902 Education Act.⁴² In his 1908 *Four Lectures on the Political Teaching of Green*, Muirhead laid out Green's thinking regarding the positive relationship between the state and the individual, and liberty and citizenship, while also highlighting the importance of active citizenship in relation to the state.⁴³

With Muirhead's support and influence *Government & People* engaged with citizenship from a viewpoint that prioritized the beneficial nature of the relationship between the state and the individual. Gill recognized the increased importance of citizenship due to the expansion of social welfare in the previous two decades and, in particular, the 'great extension of local government' for 'the welfare of all'. Everyday local affairs thus provided the beginning of his study. Gill described the environment created and maintained by local government, and how it was 'devoted, not to ruling, but to serving, the public; relieving poor people, trying to prevent disease and to ensure healthy conditions of life' and 'not merely a matter of law and order' but 'quite as much a matter of welfare.'⁴⁴ As national models of citizenship in the inter-war period continued to stress the importance of the body and physical fitness for national efficiency, education that pointed the citizen towards the health provisions of local government had particular purchase.⁴⁵

Gill directly cited Green for his notion of state intervention to ensure individual liberty. Freedom was provided through action that gave 'the opportunity for a full growth of talents and character' – particularly through 'local councils' that educated, provided 'better

⁴² David Boucher, *The British Idealists* (Cambridge, 1997), xl.

⁴³ Muirhead, *Four Lectures*.

⁴⁴ Gill, *Government & People*, 2-5.

⁴⁵ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Building a British superman: physical culture in interwar Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 41, no. 4 (2006).

surroundings’, and gave ‘contact with beauty and culture.’⁴⁶ In other civics texts lacking citations, the idealist intellectual legacy was still evident. In the conclusion of *Citizenship: Its Privileges and Duties* (1919), by the history master Frederick Worts, the chapter ‘The Ideal State and its Citizens’ described a ‘contract’ based on the state’s ensuring of ‘full freedom and movement of action’ and its safeguarding of ‘the welfare... and healthiness of all citizens.’⁴⁷ While Worts took the level of state intervention to a higher degree, like many of Green’s followers, the similarities between his analysis and Green’s ‘Liberal legislation and freedom of contract’ are striking.⁴⁸

Complex textbooks such as *Government & People* and *Citizenship: Its Privileges and Duties* were aimed at educators and syllabus-producers well-versed in citizenship discourse, aiming to provide a theoretical basis for the practical use of teachers.⁴⁹ Other textbooks, especially those designed for the classroom, employed rhetoric, stories, and photographs. What remained clear, even in simpler texts, was the importance of the relationship between local state, the city, liberty, and active citizenship. *The British Citizen: A Book for Young Readers* (1920), by the educator John Ronald Peddie, approached the young reader paternally, and located citizenship directly within the city. Describing the affection, shared loyalty and ‘local patriotism’ soldiers during the First World War felt towards their home cities, which provided them with health and recreation, he highlighted urban community, defined as a group which had in common the privileges of municipal provision, as the

⁴⁶ Gill, *Government & People*, 246-9.

⁴⁷ Frederick R. Worts, *Citizenship: Its Meaning, Privileges and Duties* (London, 1919), 276.

⁴⁸ ‘Liberal legislation’, 202 especially. For a similar emphasis see Arthur T. Phythian, *The Ethics of Citizenship: A Universal Basis from which to determine progressively the Rights and Duties of Citizenship* (Manchester, 1923); Phythian was a Liberal industrialist in Manchester.

⁴⁹ Gill, *Government and People*, v-vi. For another teachers manual, see M.M. Penstone, *Town Study: Suggestions for a Course of Lessons Preliminary to the Study of Civics* (London, 1910).

foundation of individual freedom.⁵⁰ Peddie's analysis closely correlated to Green's; citizenship was the individual freedom secured by the state, particularly local, in turn supported through communities of citizens.⁵¹ As M.M. Penstone, a school headmistress, also argued in *Town Study: Suggestions for a Course of Lessons Preliminary to the Study of Civics*, that 'T.H. Green has well said that the collective morality of a community is expressed in its civil institutions'; vital, then, was the coming together of communities to improve 'the civic life' of the town.⁵²

The Good Citizen: An Introduction to Civics was even more explicit in the prioritization of rights and services received as a benefit of the city. Written by Charles Strachan Sanders Higham, a historian, the book went through five editions in the 1930s. He concentrated on the environment of the 'ordinary citizen', starting with the work done by local authority employees such as dustmen, road-menders, and tram-drivers.⁵³ The first section, 'The Citizen and the City', the city was synonymous with urban municipal infrastructure and service provision. Balanced against the health and recreational 'rights' of citizenship were 'responsibilities' such as obeying the law, paying the rates, and doing ones 'civic duty' in keeping the city clean.⁵⁴ Higham used a Whiggish narrative of progress to represent the gradual and triumphant regulation of the everyday, from 'dirty and unhealthy' towns to 'beautifully clean' cities, where the individual could attain the healthiest and happiest life possible – the fundamental purpose of citizenship.⁵⁵ In the conclusion he

⁵⁰ Peddie's approach partially tallied with the wartime propaganda of the National War Aims Committee, which recognized the affinity soldiers felt with home. David Monger, 'Soldiers, propaganda and ideas of home and community in First World War Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 8, no. 3 (2011), 332.

⁵¹ John R. Peddie, *The British Citizen: A Book for Young Readers* (Glasgow, 1920), 5-6.

⁵² Penstone, *Town Study*, 11.

⁵³ C.S.S. Higham, *The Good Citizen: An Introduction to Civics* (London, 1934), iii.

⁵⁴ See *ibid.* 17-8, 43 and 47.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

returned to rights and responsibilities, and the importance of the local. Invoking the spirit of the Ancient Greek city-states, he urged that, to deserve the protection of his life and property, the ‘good citizen must make some personal sacrifice to help his fellow-men’, and ‘still further the Greek ideal that he should play his part in affairs and feel himself a citizen of no mean city.’⁵⁶ For Higham, and other civics authors, it was the municipal city where the citizen truly received rights, and had the potential to perform their responsibilities.

Bridging the Local/National Divide

Civics carved out an important space for the local and the municipal in notions of citizenship. This did not mean, however, that there was a conflict between local and national citizenship. For Florence West, writer of the self-study guide *Stepping Stones to Citizenship* (1923), citizenship was split across three tiers: 1) as a citizen of the town or district of residence, 2) A citizen of the Kingdom, and 3) A citizen of the British Empire.⁵⁷ This method of placing citizens in a set of ‘expanding addresses’ was common, originating in the teaching of Geography at the beginning of the century.⁵⁸ With the inception of the League of Nations Union in 1918, international citizenship was added to these addresses, as League supporters sought to internationalise the school curriculum – arguing that the story of the evolution of mankind was a narrative common to all peoples.⁵⁹ League speakers, however, did not deny

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 184.

⁵⁷ Florence E. West, *Stepping Stones to Citizenship* (Exeter, 1923), 9.

⁵⁸ Ahier, *Industry, Children and the Nation*, 125. Richard Wilson, *The Complete Citizen: An Introduction to the Study of Civics, Based upon History, Literature and the Interests of Everyday Life* (London, 1920), 12.

⁵⁹ McCarthy, *The British People and the League of Nations*, 104-106.

multiple allegiances; instead, they were synthesised into an ‘enlightened patriotism’.⁶⁰ A similar ethos informed the documentary film movement which, rather than presenting a ‘fixed, homogeneous and central ‘Britishness’... presented the nation as the sum total of its many parts.’⁶¹ While there was no conflict between these ‘addresses’ or parts, in the case of civics they were not placed on an equal footing. For Richard Wilson, as with many other civics authors, it was in the local and as part of a body of citizens ‘acting as a unity’ that the interests of the ‘community’ were realized.⁶² This focus was further supported by the followers of the pioneering sociologist Patrick Geddes, who saw the city as providing an organic and almost religious expression of belonging – a belief that he fed into his definition of civics.⁶³ While the Civic Education League, the main channel of the promotion of Geddes’ ideas, was not long lived or successful, and had limited influence from the mid-1920s, its ideals survived through prominent civics enthusiasts such as the academic Eva Minerva White.⁶⁴ In the dominant idealist narrative of civics, however, it was the relationship of local to central government that meant the city was the primary location of citizenship creation. As Worts explained, echoing Green, governing the modern state was ‘so immense a task’, and local conditions so varied, that welfare was ‘best safeguarded by its authoritative control being in the hands of men who know and live in it.’ Local Government was ‘thus a natural development as well as a social, governmental and State necessity.’⁶⁵ The question of the

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁶¹ Scott Anthony and James G. Mansell, ‘Introduction: the documentary film movement and the spaces of British identity’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 23, no.1 (2012), 5.

⁶² Wilson, *The Complete Citizen*, 149.

⁶³ David Matless, ‘Regional surveys and local knowledges: the geographical imagination in Britain, 1918-39’, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 17, no. 4 (1992), 472. Geddes, in common with Green, looked to ancient Athens for the ideal civic community.

⁶⁴ Brett, ‘Citizenship education’, 62-3; Eva M. White, *The Philosophy of Citizenship: an Introduction to Civics for Adults* (New York, 1921); David Evans, ‘Le Play House and the Regional Survey Movement in British Sociology 1920-1955’, unpublished M Phil Thesis, City of Birmingham Polytechnic (1986), 20.

⁶⁵ Worts, *Citizenship*, 101.

conflict between local and central was accordingly solved through the balancing of national needs with the autonomous and cooperative existence of municipal government and the local community.

This theoretical bridging also went beyond those who unequivocally connected themselves to Green. Harold Laski, political scientist at the London School of Economics (LSE), was, in his early writings, a prominent detractor of the enlarging state, lamenting that state sovereignty curtailed pluralism and individual liberty.⁶⁶ Yet, even in his period of state critique, he made some concessions. In a 1921 lecture to the Society of Civil Servants he recognized the state's purpose in securing a 'minimum standard of civilized life and... the conditions which guarantee that standard' as 'necessary and beneficent', though he still saw this as a 'resented intervention'.⁶⁷ Resentment, however, could be mitigated through the mobilisation of civil servants into institutions of direct contact with Parliament to 'reveal to the legislator the substance of the administrative process' and aid in the creation of public knowledge about government administration. Such action provided a check on the 'secrecy and anonymity' of state centralisation, and the consequent 'decay of local energy' he had argued against in 1919.⁶⁸ While Laski stated that the purpose of *A Grammar of Politics* (1925) was to 'dismiss the idealistic cannon of T.H. Green and Bosanquet', his relationship to idealism was thus more complicated; on occasion he did, according to a former pupil, 'put a good word in for Green', and his thinking owed more to idealism than he recognized or

⁶⁶ Arnold A. Ekirch, 'Harold J. Laski: The liberal *manque* or lost libertarian?', *The Journal of Libertarian Studies*, IV, no. 2 (1980), 140. See Harold J. Laski, *Studies in the Problem of Sovereignty* (New Haven, 1917), *Authority in the Modern State* (New Haven, 1919), and *The Foundations of Sovereignty* (New York, 1921).

⁶⁷ Harold J. Laski, 'The civil service and parliament' in *The Development of the Civil Service: Lectures Delivered before the Society of Civil Servants, 1920-1921* (London, 1922), 23.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 24-5. Harold J. Laski, *Authority in the Modern State* (Kitchener, 2000 [1919]), 32.

acknowledged.⁶⁹ At any rate, as Michael Freedon has argued, Laski had become ‘reconciled to the idea of a more actively engaged state’ by the mid-1920s, ‘resurrecting the modified utilitarianism of the new liberals and Fabians’.⁷⁰ Laski tended in some respects, eventually, toward a similar frame of analysis as Green. Importantly, it was in his concentration on positive freedom and the role of decentralized administration that this was most evident.

In 1935 Laski could thus agree to NALGO’s’ request to edit, with other LSE academics, *A Century of Municipal Progress*, published to mark the centenary of the Municipal Reform Act of 1835. Mostly a triumphant description of the quality of life bestowed by municipal intervention, it also contained glimpses of centralisation and the begrudged stripping of local authority autonomy.⁷¹ In this sense its ‘boosterism’, an aspect not missed by reviewers, reflected a more general insecurity regarding the lack of interest in municipal matters.⁷² Charles Masterman, a prominent social critic, New Liberal and politician, argued in 1921 that active interest in municipal life had never been so low - blaming the numbing experience of war.⁷³ Even more worrying to Levi Hill was his instinct that the electorate was not just apathetic, but increasingly resentful. While he believed that ‘centuries of propaganda’ against local services had dulled their sense of value for money in the eyes of the public, the Great Depression had led to suggestions that local officials could be replaced with the unemployed at half the cost, and even that rates and taxes had contributed significantly to the crisis.⁷⁴ NALGO hoped to overcome this resentment by

⁶⁹ W.H. Greenleaf, ‘Laski and British socialism’, *History of Political Thought*, 2, No. 3 (1981) referenced in Carter, *T.H. Green*, 167.

⁷⁰ Michael Freedon, *Liberalism Divided: A Study in British Political Thought 1914-1939* (Oxford, 1986), 303-5.

⁷¹ John Willis, ‘Parliament and the local authorities’ in H.J. Laski, W.I. Jennings, W.A. Robson (eds), *A Century of Municipal Progress: 1835-1935* (London, 1935), 111.

⁷² H.L. Beales, ‘A Century of Municipal Progress’, *The Political Quarterly*, 7, no. 1 (1936), 100; A.M. Carr-Saunders, ‘A Century of Municipal Progress: Review’, *The Economic Journal*, 46, no. 181 (1936), 153.

⁷³ C.F.G. Masterman, *How England is Governed* (London, 1921), ix.

⁷⁴ Levi Hill, ‘Advertising local government in England’, *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1, no. 2 (1937), 63.

showing the overlooked value of local government to the life of the citizen.⁷⁵ *A Century of Municipal Progress* was just one part of the publicity machine set in motion with a new public relations policy in 1932, other initiatives during the centenary year including an essay competition: ‘What do we owe to local government?’; 8000 articles in newspapers, magazines and journals; and exhibitions across the country showing local government work.⁷⁶

NALGOs new policy reflected a wider interest in municipal public relations in the early 1930s, epitomised in 1931 by the new publication *Civic Progress and Publicity*, a non-technical magazine about municipal development, and the Local Authorities (Publicity) Act, which enabled public bodies to use a half-penny rate for publicity abroad.⁷⁷ For Charles Higham municipal publicity could call upon ‘local pride, ability, and civic sense’ to ‘mould a really practical civic intelligence.’⁷⁸ Similar ideas were also present in the documentaries of the GPOFU. As Thomas Baird, an official of the Unit, pointed out, films portraying public services could be used as civics discussion aids in the classroom.⁷⁹ Travelling units took GPOFU films to universities and colleges, public exhibitions, rural institutes, adult education groups, and civic societies, and, Baird believed, ‘created a well-deserved respect for the Post Office... reflected in goodwill and cooperation.’⁸⁰ Documentary films, such as *Housing Problems* (1935) and *The Londoners* (1939), juxtaposed the dilapidated and chaotic city with well-planned alternatives, calling attention to the work of progressive local authorities while

⁷⁵ Laski, Jennings, Robson, ‘Introduction’, *A Century of Municipal Progress*, 11.

⁷⁶ Hill, ‘Advertising local government’, 65.

⁷⁷ ‘Oyez! Oyez!’, *Civic Progress and Publicity*, 1, no. 1 (1931), ii; ‘By your leave’, *Civic Progress and Publicity*, 1, no. 1 (1931), 3.

⁷⁸ ‘Sir Charles Higham on community advertising’, *Civic Progress and Publicity*, 1, no. 1 (1931), 25.

⁷⁹ Thomas Baird, ‘Films and the public services in Great Britain’, *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 2, no. 1 (1938), 98.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 99.

promoting further social reform.⁸¹ Other producers also engaged with civics. The Manchester Film Society made films on sewage and municipal parks, while the Beckenham Cine Club created shorts on local social welfare provision.⁸² Some city councils commissioned their own films, such as Glasgow Corporation's *Glasgow's Castlemilk and Housing Programme* (1922) and Bermondsey Borough Council's *Some Activities of the Bermondsey Borough Council* (1931).⁸³

For NALGO the linkage between civics and citizenship was a necessary method of supporting local government administration in light of the enlarging central state, accusations of inefficiency and waste, and a lack of positive civic engagement from the populace. Similar fears of a lack of interest in government inspired the formation of the Association for Education in Citizenship (AEoC) in 1934 by E.D. Simon and Eva Hubbock. Simon, a Liberal, and later Labour politician, reformer, and philanthropist, saw his civic duty to be the instilment of local citizenship, articulated through the cooperative relationship of citizens with their municipal authority, of which he was a councillor from 1912. In tune with popular sociological currents, he stressed ancient models of citizenship, declaring 'Every Athenian citizen profoundly believed in and loved his city, and was prepared to work and, if necessary, die for her.'⁸⁴ This is not surprising considering his intellectual connections. Tracing his political 'coming of age' to the Liberal social reforms, 1906-1914, when he was looking for a framework to realize his 'religious' civic duty, he had been drawn into the world of the Fabians through Sidney and Beatrice Webb.⁸⁵ Linked to the idealism of Green, though with a

⁸¹ Toby Haggith, '“Castles in the Air”: British Film and the Reconstruction of the Built Environment, 1939-51' PhD Thesis (University of Warwick, 1998), 17-18.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 24.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 63-65.

⁸⁴ E.D. Simon, *A City Council From Within* (London, 1926), 234-5.

⁸⁵ Mary Stocks, *Ernest Simon of Manchester* (Manchester, 1963), 23-4. Rob Freathy, 'The triumph of religious education for citizenship in English schools, 1935-1949', *History of Education*, 37, no. 2 (2008), 299.

much stronger commitment to collectivism, the Fabians gave Simon a connection to other Green-influenced thinkers, such as Graham Wallas and J.A. Hobson.⁸⁶ Simon was also closely affiliated with the unfalteringly New Liberal *Manchester Guardian*, where Hobson was also a writer, through his links to the editor C.P. Scott.⁸⁷ In the inter-war period these connections were cemented through the Liberal Summer School, which Simon was instrumental in forming in 1921.⁸⁸ Also involved in both the Summer School and the AoEC, the latter as president, was the leading educational reformer W.H. Hadow – another figure who traced his thinking to Green.⁸⁹ Reacting against the rise of fascism on the continent, the AoEC argued that the decline of educated interest in the affairs of the state paved the way for political extremism, with the working classes being particularly susceptible.⁹⁰ As well as campaigning for curriculum change and publishing civics texts, the Association brought together a variety of agencies who were working towards instilling local patriotism and civic duty, as well as linking up with other broader citizenship movements, like the League of Nations Union, with which the Association shared many personnel.⁹¹

The 1930s thus saw the coalescing of several linked developments: the increased publication of civics textbooks that had a local conception of citizenship; the formation of the

⁸⁶ Carter, *T.H. Green*, 166.

⁸⁷ Stocks, *Ernest Simon*, 37.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 69

⁸⁹ Julia Stapleton, *Englishness and the Study of Politics: The Social and Political Thought of Ernest Barker* (Cambridge, 2006), 117.

⁹⁰ Guy Whitmarsh, 'The politics of political education: an episode', *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 6, no. 2 (1974), 134. Simon was particularly concerned about the new working-class municipal estates and their susceptibility to fascism; he had no corresponding concern about middle-class areas. Andrzej Olechnowicz, 'Civic leadership and education for democracy: the Simons and the Wythenshawe estate', *Contemporary British History*, 14, no. 1 (2000), 4.

⁹¹ AoEC, *Experiments in Practical Training for Citizenship* (Letchworth, 1937); Hill, 'School children and local government'; AoEC, *Education for Citizenship in Secondary Schools* (Oxford, 1935); McCarthy, *The British People and the League of Nations*, 116.

AoEC; and the self-interested, though undeniably civic, publicity of NALGO. Through these connections the ideals of local and municipal citizenship, originating from Green, reached a theoretical high-point. It was in this context that Levi Hill could make, at first glance, such an odd claim about refuse collection and citizenship. Judging the practical results of these trends is difficult. Existing work on citizenship education in the period has played down the success of citizenship movements.⁹² Certainly the Board of Education was cautious of embracing direct citizenship education in schools.⁹³ In their 1926 report on *The Education of the Adolescent*, the Board recognized the ‘need for instruction in civics or citizenship’, yet thought it more apt to let the ‘consideration of the responsibilities of the individual towards the community’ arise implicitly out of the history syllabus.⁹⁴ According to Peter Brett this view was due to a combination of a conservative mind-set in the higher circles of policy making; a distrust of politically biased education; the dependence upon older notions of ‘muscular Christianity’ emerging from sport and games; and the opposition to secular political education emerging from powerful religious interests.⁹⁵ The League of Nations Union, too, found its impact weakened by such opposition.⁹⁶ With the Board of Education’s *Report of the Consultative Committee on Secondary Education* in 1938, little had changed for either organisation. Acknowledging the influence of Simon and the AoEC, and the importance of giving pupils knowledge of ‘national and international affairs and, not least,

⁹² Brindle and Arnot, “England expects every man to do his duty”, 104-6.

⁹³ Derek Heater, *A History of Education for Citizenship* (London, 2004); W.Y.Y. Jessie, ‘Continuity and Change in Citizenship Education in England in the Twentieth Century’, PhD Thesis (University of Liverpool, 1991), 44-6.

⁹⁴ Board of Education, *Report of the Consultative Committee on the Education of the Adolescent* (London, 1926), 196.

⁹⁵ Brett, ‘Citizenship education’, 64-70.

⁹⁶ McCarthy, *The British People and the League of Nations*, 116.

about local government', it still maintained that it was through history teaching that this could be best achieved.⁹⁷

Judging the impact of discourses of citizenship education through the central Board of Education, however, has its limitations.⁹⁸ While the Board influenced teaching through issuing recommendations, curriculum responsibility was devolved to LEAs.⁹⁹ Precise statistics are not available, but short reports given to the AoEC indicate the widespread reach of civics in the 1930s. In some cases civics was directly given; in the Higher Grade School of Edmonton in London, for example, from 1935 fifth year students were given ninety minutes of lessons concerning methods of government and justice to promote interest in 'local affairs'.¹⁰⁰ At other schools civics activities were extra-curricular. In Wigan, for instance, pupils were invited to attend Council meetings and departments, with municipal officials visiting schools to deliver talks. Similar exchanges took place in Birmingham, Birkenhead, and Godalming.¹⁰¹ Other towns held special events. In Nelson, Lancashire, there was a 'Scholar's Local Government Week' each year in the 1930s, where a shield, paid for by NALGO, was presented to the elementary schoolchild that wrote the best essay on civics.¹⁰² Teachers were even specially trained to give civics lessons – in Southampton for example, where civics was included in the Certificate Examination from 1928.¹⁰³ Such initiative was mostly new – as the American educator John M. Gaus could attest. Visiting Britain in the

⁹⁷ Board of Education, *Report of the Consultative Committee on Secondary Education* (London, 1938), xxxvii; Gary McCulloch, *Educational Reconstruction: The 1944 Education Act and the Twenty-First Century* (Abingdon, 1994), 103.

⁹⁸ For curriculum change, see Gordon Batho, 'The history of the teaching of civics and citizenship in English schools', *The Curriculum Journal*, 1, no. 1 (1990).

⁹⁹ McCarthy, *The British People and the League of Nations*, 109-110.

¹⁰⁰ T.H. McGuffie, 'Citizenship at a central school (Edmonton)', *The Citizen*, no. 1 (May 1936), 10.

¹⁰¹ Hill, 'School children and local government', 16-17; and 'A practical civics project for secondary schools', *The Citizen*, no. 5 (November 1937), 19.

¹⁰² Hill, 'School children and local government', 16-17.

¹⁰³ P. Ford, 'An Experiment in Training Teachers in Civics', *The Citizen*, no. 5 (November, 1937).

mid-1920s as part of an ambitious project to chart civic education around the world, led by the University of Chicago political scientist Charles E. Merriam, Gaus had been dismayed by the lack of enthusiasm he found for direct citizenship education.¹⁰⁴ Returning in the mid-1930s, however, he was encouraged to find the older indirect emphasis ‘increasingly supplemented by a more direct and conscious inclusion in the content of the course of study of material relating to public questions and civic life in general.’¹⁰⁵

By 1937, then, Levi Hill was justified in declaring that, while the ‘ideal’ of ‘universal teaching of civics to schoolchildren’ had not been reached, ‘a good start’ had been made as a range of educational ventures across Britain started to use local government focused materials, or lessons that aimed to make the school child consider themselves as part of a local community.¹⁰⁶ By further studying the expression of citizenship education in a case study of one place, and its several areas of formal and informal education, an appraisal of local civics beyond the curriculum can be given, and the inter-connected nature of idealism, citizenship, and the local, more clearly seen.

Civic Culture and Citizenship Education in Manchester

If the city was the locus of civics it seems apt to use the prototypically urban Manchester to elucidate the reality of citizenship instruction. Throughout the nineteenth century the local state had grown in size and, by 1927, 25,000 people were employed by Manchester City Council (MCC), meaning that 10% of the city’s population was supported by public

¹⁰⁴ John M. Gaus, *Great Britain: A Study of Civic Loyalty* (Chicago, 1929).

¹⁰⁵ John M. Gaus, ‘Civic education in the English schools’, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 182 (1935), 170.

¹⁰⁶ Hill, ‘School children and local government’, 16-7. See also AoEC, *Experiments in Practical Training for Citizenship* (Letchworth, 1937).

wages.¹⁰⁷ The Victorian pattern of speculative investment continued in the inter-war years, supported by a vibrant civic culture.¹⁰⁸ Recalling the role in the economic and social life of the city that nineteenth century projects such as the ship canal or Thirlmere reservoir represented, the first licensed municipal aerodrome in Britain was established by the MCC in 1929 at Wythenshawe, followed by a permanent municipal airport at Barton-on-Irwell in 1930, as well as an ambitious reservoir scheme of Haweswater, Cumbria, in 1929 – symbols of progress, technological achievement, and a manifestation of the MCCs concern for its citizens.¹⁰⁹ The MCC also continued to invest in less spectacular enterprises; between 1895 and 1925 expenditure, in real terms, increased from £0.6 million to £1.1 for education, and from £0.8 to £1.3 for public health.¹¹⁰ By 1938 the Manchester Municipal Officers' Guild observed with pride that Manchester's annual budget was about £20 million and larger than the governments of such nations as Bulgaria, Chile, Finland and Mexico.¹¹¹ By the inter-war period a strong municipal tradition had thus been built into Manchester's civic culture.

Manchester's spirit of municipal intervention formed the basis of citizenship instruction in the city's educational culture along the lines of the local rights and responsibilities narrative established by Green and his intellectual descendants. The *Manchester Guardian Yearbook* (1925) was the first publication in inter-war Manchester to espouse the connections between citizen and local state, arguing that, without the MCC, 'dirt,

¹⁰⁷ Simon, *A City Council*, 1.

¹⁰⁸ Tom Hulme, 'Civic culture and citizenship: the nature of urban governance in interwar Manchester and Chicago' (PhD University of Leicester, 2013).

¹⁰⁹ Colin Simmons and Viv Caruana, 'Enterprising local government: policy, prestige and Manchester airport, 1929-82', *The Journal of Transport History*, 22, no. 2 (2001) 137; R.A. Schofield, *Manchester Airport* (Stroud, 1998), 5; 'The airport debate', *MG* (26 July 1934), 11; 'Keeping abreast of the times', *MG* (16 September 1930), 15. Owen G. Roberts, 'Waterworks and commemoration: purity, rurality, and civic identity in Britain, 1880-1921', *Continuity and Change*, 22, no. 2 (2007), 322.

¹¹⁰ Simon, *A City Council*, 4.

¹¹¹ W. Barker (ed), *Your City: Manchester 1838-1938* (Manchester, 1938), 50; Arthur Redford, *The History of Local Government in Manchester: Vol. III the Last Half Century* (London 1940).

darkness, disease and lawlessness would turn Manchester into a city of Horrible Night.’¹¹² Facts about local government therefore aimed to ‘inspire a prouder and more intelligent citizenship.’¹¹³ The *Guardian*, under the stewardship of Scott, continued to reflect its Liberal identity in the period.¹¹⁴ Such was its influence that, when it argued that public ignorance of MCC activities was creating bad citizens, the MCC responded with a new handbook: *How Manchester is Managed*.¹¹⁵ Published annually it discussed the range of activities undertaken by the council. According to the first edition in 1925, ‘The Corporation does more than purvey gas, electricity, and street transport... It nurses and shields us from the cradle to the grave: we may begin our career in the lap of the Corporation midwife and end it with the Parks and Cemeteries Committee.’¹¹⁶ Municipal administration was the epitome of modernity; as the book declared, ‘As soon as you get beyond the sweep of the scavenger’s broom you are outside the machinery of civilisation.’¹¹⁷

How Manchester is Managed was popular, with annual updated versions getting ‘fatter and more informative’; by the 1930s 10,000 copies were printed annually.¹¹⁸ Copies were given to schools, libraries, local conferences, and were available for individual purchase.¹¹⁹ In various educational settings it provided a foundation, such as the New Lecture

¹¹² *Manchester Guardian Year Book* (Manchester, 1925), 12.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, foreword.

¹¹⁴ Reba N. Soffer, ‘Review: intellectuals and intellectual history’, *Journal of British Studies*, 39, no. 4 (2000), 532.

¹¹⁵ *Manchester Guardian Year Book* (Manchester, 1925), 13.

¹¹⁶ M. Anderson (ed.), *How Manchester is Managed: a Record of Municipal Activity* (Manchester, 1925), 2.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹¹⁸ ‘In Manchester’, *Manchester Guardian* (2 November 1929), 15 and ‘Classified ad 102’, *Manchester Guardian* (23 April 1938), 5.

¹¹⁹ George Montagu Harris, *Municipal Government in Britain: A Study of the Practice of Local Government in Ten of the Larger British Cities* (London, 1939), 270; ‘In Manchester’, *Manchester Guardian* (12 November, 1930), 11.

Series at the Byrom School in 1934-35, aimed at working men.¹²⁰ The MCC also worked directly with schools, such as the Manchester Grammar, to provide civics lessons in the 1930s.¹²¹ Engaged amateurs similarly used the text; in 1937, concerned with the apathy of the electorate, the rector of Withington and former city councillor, Ronald Allen, started a weekly course of study on civic affairs, attended by thirty young men, taking the theme of ‘What the city does for me and what I can do for it’.¹²² As well as *How Manchester is Managed*, Allen’s civics class used *A City Council from Within* (1927), written by the most important citizenship figure in Manchester’s civic culture: the aforementioned E.D. Simon. Simon’s thoughts on civics were most clearly articulated in this detailed exposition of city government. The preface was provided by Graham Wallas, who foreshadowed the main points of Simon’s text:

For the average English citizen the possibility of health, of happiness, of progress towards the old Greek ideal of “beautiful goodness,” depends on his local government more than on any other factor in his environment.¹²³

Simon outlined the benefits of city government, such as gas, electricity, water, a police force, fire brigade, public health department, and municipal transport, to the middle-class suburbanite – a figure he hoped to encourage back into local government.¹²⁴ Municipal provision, he believed, could inspire a civic dedication and engagement of Athenian

¹²⁰ Manchester Education Committee, *A Survey of the Facilities for Adult Education Available in Manchester 1934-35* (Manchester, 1935), 6-7.

¹²¹ Hill, ‘School children and local government’, 16.

¹²² ‘The municipal life of Manchester: apathetic electors’, *Manchester Guardian* (14 October 1937), 13.

¹²³ Simon, *A City Council*, vii. Wallas’s only notable criticism of the ‘golden period’ of Ancient Athens was its neglect of the material infrastructure that gave convenience to the lives of citizens. Julia Stapleton, *Political Intellectuals and Public Identities in Britain since 1850* (Manchester, 2001), 39.

¹²⁴ Simon, *A City Council*, 229.

characteristics.¹²⁵ *A City Council From Within* sold just under two thousand copies by 1937.¹²⁶ Throughout the period, and especially following the formation of the AEoC, Simon put these ideals into practice in Manchester; his reputation as a key civic figure is evinced by the letters he received from local inhabitants ranging from questions about aspects of democracy, government, or citizenship, to requests for public lectures and award bestowals.¹²⁷

Though not directly involved in its work, Simon was also linked to the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), subscribing generously to the association's finances.¹²⁸ He was also in frequent communication with R.H. Tawney, a key figure in the WEA, who derived and expanded his notion of ethical socialism from Green, and gave the state a key role in maintaining true equality for individuals to be free and improve themselves.¹²⁹ As the leading secular provider of voluntary adult education in this period, the WEA absorbed the civic culture of towns and districts where activity took place, as well as expressing the Greenian nature of its leaders such as Tawney and Albert Mansbridge.¹³⁰ In the educational programme of the Manchester and District Branch of the Working Men's Club and Institute Union Ltd, a corollary of the WEA, the civics influence was clear. In the programme for 1928 the relationship between the individual and the state was crucial, as the series of talks

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* 234-5.

¹²⁶ Greater Manchester County Record Office [GMCRO], E.D. Simon Papers, M14/306, Letter to Brian Simon, Esq., 22nd December 1937.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, Letter from the Manchester Education Committee, Chorlton Municipal High School for Boys, October 30th 1935.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, Letter to R.H. Tawney, 13th December 1935. See also Stocks, *Ernest Simon*, 53.

¹²⁹ Carter, *T.H. Green*, 181.

¹³⁰ Stephen K. Roberts, 'The evolution of the WEA in the West Midlands, 1905-26' in Stephen K. Roberts (ed.), *A Ministry of Enthusiasm: Centenary Essays on the Workers' Educational Association* (London, 2003) and Bernard Jennings, 'The friends and enemies of the WEA', *ibid.*, 98. The WEA helped inspire a working-class enthusiasm for public service in this period. Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (Reading, 2001), 292.

divulged how government directly affected daily life.¹³¹ The first lecture asked ‘What would happen if all Government suddenly stopped?’, encouraging students to discuss the benefits of services such as schools, policing and recreational provision.¹³² The second lecture went further, detailing how government affected safety and health, ‘the first and most important fruits of good government’.¹³³ Benevolent government intervention enabled citizens the freedom to use their energies to their own advantage and ‘that of the nation as a whole.’¹³⁴ Following talks covered education and government, the citizen’s part in making laws, and the corresponding duty in making laws work. The final talk in the programme summarized these aspects of government and the nature of its relationship with the individual, and read as a primer of Green inspired thought: the state’s role was in the maintenance of freedom and the ability of the individual to improve oneself, for the benefit of the common good – which started within the city.¹³⁵

Civics in Manchester reached its climax in 1938 with *Your City: Manchester 1838-1938*, published to celebrate the centenary of the city’s charter of incorporation. Created by the Manchester Municipal Officers’ Guild, a local branch of NALGO, it reflected the priorities of that organisation as well as the wider civic narrative of progress propagated by Simon, the *Manchester Guardian*, the MCC, and the WEA. In *Your City* the MCC was concerned with ‘making the lives of its citizens happier and healthier’ so that they may ‘become a useful citizen in the community’.¹³⁶ Following *How Manchester is Managed*, the

¹³¹ GMCRO, Records of the Manchester and Direct Branch of the Working Men's Club and Institute Limited, GB124.G20.13, Educational Programme and List of Lectures, Talks and Lectures, The First Talk – 29th February 1928, 6.

¹³² *Ibid.* 6.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, The Second Talk – 7th March 1928 – How good government affects our safety and health, 8.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* 8.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, The sixth talk, 4th April 1928, 13-4.

¹³⁶ Barker, *Your City*, 14 and 20.

responsibility of the MCC was again described as from ‘the cradle to the grave’.¹³⁷ The services that the council provided were positioned as part of this narrative, richly illustrated with photos of municipal infrastructure such as public housing, sewers, and power stations, as well as the municipal employees who safeguarded life and health, such as nurses, policemen, and administrators. The longer and happier life that the citizen could achieve in modern Manchester was compared with the dire conditions that existed before the incorporation of the city, creating a linear narrative of progress.¹³⁸ In the concluding chapter, ‘The City of the Future: Our Civic Heritage’, the reader was asked ‘What, then, is Citizenship? What is freedom? What are the rights and duties of the citizen?’¹³⁹ According to the Municipal Officers Guild, it was a simple question of the obligatory responsibilities required due to the rights of municipal government:

In return for our right to vote for the representative of our choice, for a host of public services, and for freedom, we should pay our rates without protest (but not without criticism), exercise our right to vote, and respect the laws which our representatives make for us.¹⁴⁰

The *laissez-faire* approach of the central state to citizenship education in the first half of the twentieth century had thus left a space for officials, urban elites, and academics to interpret the purpose of education as they saw fit.¹⁴¹ Across Manchester a range of institutions, governmental and non-governmental, provided different sorts of education.¹⁴² In those lessons and lectures that concerned citizenship, the relationship between the services of the

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* 16.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 5-13.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 54.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 54.

¹⁴¹ Beaven and Griffiths, ‘Creating the exemplary citizen’, 203.

¹⁴² Manchester Education Committee, *A Survey of the Facilities for Adult Education Available in Manchester 1924-25* (1926).

state, especially local, and the life of the citizen, was a common way to encourage an ethos of self-improvement and civic duty. This was a shared narrative disseminated through an interlinked network of organisations and individuals, many with links, direct and indirect, to idealism and the political thought of Green. It was, in the sense of citizenship and civic culture, a high point in the city's history; the role of the state that Green had postulated some eighty years previously had found its greatest ideological expression in the inter-war city council. Yet, with wartime developments and the foundation of the post-1945 welfare state, the ability of this local civics narrative to maintain power in citizenship discourse was considerably tested.

Conclusion: Challenges to Local Citizenship

If the authors of *A Century of Municipal Progress* were aware of the growth of the central state in 1935, they could not anticipate the eventual shift away from local rates and trading incomes towards government grants, and the consequent weakening of municipal independence.¹⁴³ Before 1945 Labour had still viewed local government as capable of coping with the issues of post-war reconstruction, and initial plans for the National Health Service were municipally-based.¹⁴⁴ Herbert Morrison in particular, leader of the London County Council from 1934 and the personification of local government, fought hard for local authority control of health services.¹⁴⁵ The hostility of voluntary hospitals and the medical profession to local control however encouraged a centralized solution and Aneurin Bevan, as Minister of Health, questioned the efficiency of local hospital service and the inequity of

¹⁴³ Doyle, 'The changing functions of urban government', 289-311.

¹⁴⁴ Alys Levene, Martin Powell, John Stewart, and Becky Taylor, *Cradle to Grave: Municipal Medicine in Interwar England and Wales* (Oxford, 2011), 22-25.

¹⁴⁵ Jerry White, 'From Herbert Morrison to command and control: the decline of local democracy and its effect on public services', *History Workshop Journal*, 59 (2005), 76.

relying on the rates.¹⁴⁶ After Bevan gained the support of Clement Attlee the Cabinet followed, and Labour MPs and local authorities mostly accepted the reversal of party policy.¹⁴⁷ More generally, the defence of local government suffered from a lack of enthusiasm for serious restructuring; as local government specialist Winston Crouch put it in 1950, ‘the Labour Government’s heart was not in this vastly complicated undertaking’.¹⁴⁸ Whatever the reasons for Labour’s change in policy, the outcome was the same; between 1945-51, former municipal services such as gas, electricity, and healthcare, were nationalized and governance transferred to regional boards. As these services were important expressions of the former narrative of municipal progress, this was a damaging blow to local conceptions of civics.¹⁴⁹

The new social democratic welfare state, in articulating social provision as a universal legal right of citizenship, arguably also projected different citizenship values.¹⁵⁰ While inter-war intervention had elements of the doctrine of social democracy, defined as the universal rights received as the benefit of citizenship, they were still entwined with liberal conceptions of individual responsibility and self-improvement.¹⁵¹ In T.H. Marshall’s classic contemporary citizenship treatise ‘social rights’ were now the entitlement to a civilized state of living, given to all those marked as members of a *national community*, and not based on the performance

¹⁴⁶ James A. Chandler, *Explaining Local Government: Local Government in Britain since 1800* (Manchester, 2007), 169; Martin Daunton, ‘Payment and participation: welfare and state-formation in Britain 1900-1951’, *Past and Present*, no. 150 (1996), 207.

¹⁴⁷ Alys Levene et al, *Cradle to Grave*, 27.

¹⁴⁸ Winston W. Crouch, ‘Local government under the British Labour government’, *The Journal of Politics*, 12, no. 2 (1950), 249.

¹⁴⁹ Chandler, *Explaining Local Government*, 158; Charlotte Wildman, ‘A city speaks: the projection of civic identity in Manchester’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 23, no. 1 (2012), 99.

¹⁵⁰ William B. Cohen, ‘Epilogue: the European Comparison’ in *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, 411.

¹⁵¹ Vanessa Taylor and Frank Trentmann, ‘Liquid politics: water and the politics of everyday life in the modern city’, *Past and Present*, 211 (2011), 203-4.

of civic responsibility.¹⁵² Different explanations have been put forward to explain this shift in ideology. Jose Harris, in particular, has pointed towards the philosophical decline of idealism from the 1930s – replaced by various forms of positivism – and the consequent divorce of sociological theory from the promotion of social welfare.¹⁵³ Stephen Brooke, in a similar vein, has argued that the economic crisis of 1931 devalued idealist organic views of society, leaving behind a desire for a corporate planned economy.¹⁵⁴ Martin Daunton has critiqued both of these positions, and instead favoured an explanatory mix of structural and institutional factors, and the willingness of both working-class and middle-class interests to accept ‘a rhetoric of equity which legitimized central government taxation’ and state welfare.¹⁵⁵ He has further argued that the Labour party actually continued to incorporate an ethic of active democratic participation anyway, in order to ensure equality – a position supported by the work of Steven Fielding.¹⁵⁶

Regardless of the ideology underpinning Labour’s welfare state, it was still faced with an electorate ‘more interested in consumption and affluence than in active citizenship’, enabled by an increasing amount of consumer goods.¹⁵⁷ Herbert Morrison, refusing to blame his own party, also highlighted a weakened public spirit following the stress of wartime.¹⁵⁸ Campaigns that appealed to civic duty, such as the recruitment propaganda for civil defence

¹⁵² T.H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class, and other Essays* (Cambridge, 1950), 72. In practice the welfare state was a weak version of Marshall’s model, due to racial and gendered tiers of citizenship. Powell and Hewitt, *Welfare State and Welfare Change*, 40-1. Gøsta Esping-Andersen, ‘Three worlds of welfare capitalism’ in C. Pierson and F.G. Castles, *The Welfare State Reader*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2006), 162-3.

¹⁵³ Harris, ‘Political thought and the welfare state’, 136.

¹⁵⁴ Stephen Brooke, *Labour’s War: The Labour Party during the Second World War* (Oxford, 1992), 17-21.

¹⁵⁵ Daunton, ‘Payment and participation’, 207-208.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 210; Steven Fielding, ‘Labourism in the 1940s’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 3, no. 2 (1992), 146.

¹⁵⁷ Daunton, ‘Payment and participation’, 212.

¹⁵⁸ Fielding, ‘Labourism in the 1940s’, 151-152.

during the Cold War, met a population more concerned with home, family, and privacy.¹⁵⁹ In many respects however a lack of popular interest in active citizenship was not new; as a study of local government in 1939 had remarked, throughout the interwar period ‘almost everywhere... the apathy of the electors’ was ‘alarmingly general.’¹⁶⁰ The postwar years merely reflected a continuation of existing worries. If there was an intellectual shift towards viewing citizenship as a universalized relationship between the individual and the national welfare state, and a form of social integration based on a common level of material enjoyment, it had not caused an already apparent lack of general interest in active citizenship.¹⁶¹

Challenges to local citizenship however also came from other directions. Under the conditions of the Second World War the pervasiveness of national identity grew, as ‘the significance of the nation as a source and object of identity’ was exaggerated, and the state called upon citizens to unite in defence of ‘their supposedly common “way of life”.’¹⁶² Following the end of hostilities this feeling of Englishness was at its apex, as ‘the wartime experience... vindicated longer-term assumptions about the national character, which could thus be safely projected into the future.’¹⁶³ Concurrently, the active political citizenship of secular liberal progressive movements such as the AEoC were overtaken by a culturally conservative religiosity, despite the general trend of secularity, as a personal devotion to

¹⁵⁹ Matthew Grant, ‘“Civil defence gives meaning to your leisure”: citizenship, participation, and cultural change in Cold War recruitment propaganda, 1949-54’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 22, no. 1 (2011), 77-78.

¹⁶⁰ Harris, *Municipal Government in Britain*, 263.

¹⁶¹ Stapleton, ‘Citizenship versus patriotism’, 171.

¹⁶² Sonya Rose, ‘Sex, citizenship, and the nation in World War II Britain’, *The American Historical Review*, 103, no. 4 (October, 1998), 1148; Christopher Harvie, ‘The moment of British nationalism, 1939-1970’, *Political Quarterly*, 71 (2000).

¹⁶³ Peter Mandler, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (Bury St Edmunds, 2006), 197.

Christianity became the supposed key to ensuring the social and political stability of the nation. In contrast to the AEoC or Greenian informed civics, churchmen were successful in influencing the curriculum; Local Education Authorities implemented courses in Christian civics, and placed religious education and worship at the forefront of the daily life of schools, while the Ministry of Education published *Citizen's Growing Up* (1949), a pamphlet that promoted a spiritual form of education for citizenship.¹⁶⁴

The MCC still, nonetheless, attempted to construct a grand municipal narrative in the immediate post-war period, through the documentary *A City Speaks* (1947) and an ambitious city plan. Yet these projections were a hazy reflection of reality, looking backwards to an interwar municipal heyday rather than forward, and were difficult to implement in the local recovery from post-war austerity.¹⁶⁵ City councils still played important roles in the lives of urban dwellers, if only as the implementers of reconstruction and the welfare state, and the importance of publicising such work continued – especially following the formation of the Institute of Public Relations in 1948.¹⁶⁶ Yet, with the rise of central government, traditional local and municipal elites found their influence on local policies waning.¹⁶⁷ That the central state now provided services and infrastructure, rather than local government, was reflected in post-war civics textbooks.¹⁶⁸ While local participation was still sought, and local government

¹⁶⁴ Freathy, 'The triumph of religious education', 313-5. For the growth of secularism, a contentious issue, see Jeremy Morris, 'The strange death of Christian Britain: another look at the secularization debate', *The Historical Journal*, 46, no. 4 (2003).

¹⁶⁵ Wildman, 'A city speaks', 80. R. Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan* (London, 1945), 1. Chris Perkins and Martin Dodge, 'Mapping the imagined future: the roles of visual representation in the 1945 city of Manchester plan', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 89, no. 1 (2012).

¹⁶⁶ Wildman, 'A city speaks', 82; Ken Young and Nirmala Rao, *Local Government since 1945* (Oxford, 1997); L'Etang, *Public Relations in Britain*, 63-65.

¹⁶⁷ Peter Shapely, 'Governance in the post-war city: historical reflections on public-private partnerships in the UK', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (2012), 2.

¹⁶⁸ Brindle and Arnot, "England expects every man to do his duty", 108.

remained vital to the work of Whitehall, the focus upon local and municipal civics was no longer as natural or assured.

If local government and local citizenship was weakened in the postwar decades it should not, however, obscure our understanding of the inter-war period. In the analysis presented here I have depended mainly on one place to show the positive reaction of civic culture to the notion of the city and local government in citizenship. Initial research suggests that Manchester was not unique; organisations such as the WEA were active throughout the country, and many other city councils like those in Birmingham, Bristol, and London were proactive in producing civics-influenced information books.¹⁶⁹ The Board of Education's distrust of civics should therefore be acknowledged, but not taken as evidence of the lack of a widespread civics movement. Furthermore, civic education was arguably only the most obvious expression of the idealist understanding of the relationship between the local state and the citizen. These principles were also present in a variety of movements and events common to the inter-war period that remain under-researched; civic weeks, local health and education weeks, and the social management of municipal housing.¹⁷⁰ More local studies that take into account wider civic culture and the legacy of intellectual currents in local policy would shed light on whether Manchester was an anomaly or representative. It remains clear, at the least, that the local was the prism through which many inter-war educators thought about the notion of citizenship; while we should recognise the growing power of the national in this period, it must not be at the expense of the city or its government.

¹⁶⁹ See W.S. Brody, *Birmingham and its Civic Managers: the Departmental Doings of the City Council* (Birmingham, 1928); London County Council, *Privileges of Citizenship* (London, 1924); and 'H.V. Hindle, 'A city development board at work', *Civic Progress and Publicity*, 1, no. 1 (1931), 28, discusses the Bristol Development Board, 'a record of solid achievement in the sphere of Civic Publicity.'

¹⁷⁰ See Wildman, 'Urban transformation in Liverpool and Manchester' for civic weeks. Bolton, Glasgow, York, Newcastle, Islington, Stoke-on-Trent, Hull and others held civic weeks. Rugby, Walthamstow, Leicester, Manchester, Carlisle, Mansfield and others held education and health weeks.