

HISTORY OF UNIVERSITIES SEMINAR | 18 April 2023

*Roundtable: New Research on English Universities in the 19th & 20th Centuries*

## **WAYS OF SERVING THE NATION: DEMOCRACY, PROFESSIONALISM, AND THE ORIGINS OF THE OXFORD EXTRAMURAL MOVEMENT, C. 1878-1908**

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In the wake of the rise of populism across Western democracies, recent years have seen growing scholarly interest in the collision between democratic and meritocratic principles in contemporary societies. This paper argues that the debates over the need for extramural education at fin-de-siècle Oxford had anticipated the current crisis. Between 1878 and 1908, amidst the calls to make Oxford serve “all classes of the nation,” it is notable that both democratic and meritocratic/professional arguments were put forward by Oxford intellectuals, including T. H. Green, Arnold Toynbee, and Sidney Ball. This paper suggests that the convergence of democratic and professional ideals spawned a ground-breaking and successful extramural programme and formed the basis for the cooperation between Oxford and working-class movements. However, as it will become clear, the two goals of higher education (and beyond) contradicted each other at various levels and foreshadowed later tensions between Oxford university and worker-students.

### **History of Universities Seminar**

Convened by Miles Taylor (Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany), Ku-ming (Kevin) Chang (Academia Sinica, Taiwan), Heike Jöns (Loughborough University, United Kingdom) and Tamson Pietsch (University of Technology Sydney, Australia). Hosted by the Humboldt University of Berlin on Zoom: <https://www.histgeog-uni.net/history-of-universities-seminar-2/>.