

ADDITIONS, INTEGRATIONS, CORRECTIONS AND SUPPLEMENTS
TO THE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ARNOLD JOSEPH TOYNBEE*

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Integration and Addition to Part I, Works by Arnold J. Toynbee

1968, 1969

290) Arnold J. Toynbee, *Earth's Morality Gap*, in «Providence Sunday Journal», January 5, 1969.

NOTE

This article most likely corresponds to no. 26028, p. 215, in S.F. Morton's *Bibliography (Ocean exploration is more important than the moon*, syndicated newspaper article, 31 December 1968, «About famine») which I have not been able to find until now.

291) On the proposal of Senator Clairborne Pell (D, R.I.), Toynbee's article was also printed in the U.S. Senate «Record» (*Toynbee Urges Priority for World Ocean Development*, in *United States of America. Congressional Record, Proceedings and Debates of the 91st Congress, First Session, Volume 115 – Part 2, January 22, 1969, to February 4, 1969, P. 1381 to 2274*, Senate, January 22, 1969, pp. 1489-1490).

NOTE

Sen. Pell justified his request as follows «"Mr. President, I have long admired the works of Arnold Toynbee and consider him our leading contemporary historian. He is a man who sees events in proper perspective. In a recent article, Dr. Toynbee commented on the priorities assigned to some of our great human endeavors. He concluded that a very high priority should be assigned to exploring and developing the resources of the oceans and to establishing some kind of regime for the governance of ocean space. I am delighted that a man with his breadth of knowledge and his wisdom has arrived at these conclusions and holds these views. I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the 'Record' the column by Dr. Toynbee entitled *Earth's Morality Gap* from the 'Providence Sunday Journal' of January 5, 1969". There being no objection, the column was ordered to be printed in the "Record" [...].».

* *A Bibliography of Arnold J. Toynbee*, compiled by S. Fiona Morton, with a Foreword by Veronica M. Toynbee, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1980.

EARTH'S MORALITY GAP

by Arnold J. Toynbee

We should be inhuman if we were not thrilled by the moon flight of Apollo 8, but we should be sub-human if we left it at that. This exploit raises, insistently, the fateful question of the order of priorities on our agenda.

The astronauts' courage is on a par with Da Gama's and Columbus'. We rejoice that, like those two discoverers of the New World, the three Americans have come back alive, and have not suffered Magellan's fate (we do not yet know what scientific information the astronauts have brought back; but we do know that human eyes have never before seen the moon at this close range). We admire the dedicated cooperativeness of the brave astronauts' "backroom boys" (their number is said to run to six figures). The technology has been as superb as was that of the pyramid builders.

But these two amazing technological achievements raise an identical question: What is our verdict on the uses to which we have been putting the slender surplus product that man has succeeded in wringing out of nature within these last 5,000 years?

TORTURED WORLD

Egypt in the third millennium B.C. and the United States today have each been relatively affluent. Yet, even in the present-day United States, 10 or 20 per cent of the population consists of poverty-stricken squatters in slums. In the present-day world as a whole, only one-third of the rapidly growing population is properly fed. In mankind's grim economic plight, are not pyramid building and moonmanship follies that are also crimes? They are not such heinous crimes as war making, on which all but a small fraction of our surplus has been spent by us since the surplus first occurred about 5,000 years ago.

Yet today the world is being tortured by three simultaneous wars and by industrial strikes, student uproar, and acts of terrorism – all prompted by the bitter experience that, if any

human being has a grievance, however just and however urgent, violence (shame to say) is the only means by which the plaintiff can be sure of exhorting his fellow men's attention.

The Russians and Americans have been cordial in congratulating each other on their rival feats of spacemanship, yet their rivalry is a fact, and it is also the cause of the folly. If there had not been two competing political super-powers on this small planet, probably this folly would not have been committed. The institution of local sovereignty, which is the mother of such foolish competitions, is also the mother of war – an institution that has become suicidal since science, applied to technology, has harnessed atomic energy for weal or for woe.

The point has been put, apropos Apollo 8, by President Johnson:

«Whether we stand first in these endeavors matters to our momentary pride, but not to our continuing purpose [...] the race in which we of this generation are determined to be first is the race for peace in this world [...] what really counts is whether we can keep people from dying on the Vietnam battlefield.

«People», not only «Americans». The President has thrust his hand into mankind's «morality gap», and there is no «credibility gap» here.

Since the date of our earliest surviving records of human affairs, there has been a widening gap between mankind's ever increasing technological prowess and the obstinate moral inadequacy of our social performance. Our technological history has been a dazzling "success story"; our moral history – the history of our relations with each other – has, so far, been the story of a shocking failure. This is our «morality gap», and, since 1945, the gap has become wide enough to give room for the broad way – a veritable «throughway» – that «leadeth to destruction».

In his memorable comment on the triumph of Apollo 8, President Johnson has confronted us with the true order of priorities on our agenda. In the atomic age our first priority is to save ourselves from committing the crime and folly of liquidating our species. This will require the subordination of local sovereignties to an effective world government, and this is going to be a much more difficult feat than landing on the moon. Nationalism is our present-day idol, and to discard a false god calls for more than an astronaut's courage in mankind in the mass. This is a revolutionary spiritual enterprise; but we dare not shirk it.

A DEAD END

The date of Apollo 8's happy landing was also the date of China's eighth monitored atmospheric nuclear test in Sinkiang and of the sale of 50 Phantom jet fighter planes to Israel by the United States. The attack on the Israeli airline at Athens airport by two Arab terrorists had been made the day before, and the massive Israeli sabotage of Beirut airport followed a few days later.

Our second priority is to provide, before famine overtakes us, for feeding this planet's future population. We do not yet know the degree to which the population's present magnitude will have multiplied by the unpredictable date at which family planning will have become a universal practice. We only know that, for increasing mankind's food supply, we have no time to lose.

Therefore a massive increase in the production of food is the next objective on mankind's agenda after the avoidance of self-liquidation.

But spacemanship cannot contribute anything to service of this purpose either. The professor of radio astronomy at the University of Cambridge, Sir Martin Ryle, was expressing what seems to be the opinion of all eminent astronomers in his comment – apropos the performance of Apollo 8 – on the prospects of spacemanship. He is reported to have said flatly that man would never reach the stars. The nearest star was three light years away, and this would be an impossible distance for manned travel. He saw no future for the colonizing of space.

Spacemanship, then, is a dead end. In spending on it, we are deliberately incurring a dead loss in terms of economics; and we cannot ignore economics in an age in which mankind is going to starve if we squander our inadequate resources instead of doing our utmost to increase them to keep pace with the inevitable increase in our numbers.

But, if spacemanship is moved down to the bottom line of our agenda sheet and if war is deleted from it, what alternative outlet are we to find for explorer's courage, the technician's skill, and the scientist's curiosity? This question has been answered already in Japan. The alternative to war making and to spacemanship is to explore the sea and to develop its potential resources.

Unlike the nearest star, the sea is within man's physical reach. It covers more than two-thirds of the surface of our own planet and it is our greatest reservoir of still intact resources. In the atomic age we are still skimming food from the sea by the paleolithic method of hunting (fishing is another name for hunting in the water). The Japanese (and, I understand, the Americans too) have now made a beginning with farming the sea by cultivating edible seaweed and by breeding and shepherding fish, as we breed and shepherd sheep, instead of hunting fish as we hunt wild animals on land. Presumably by far the greatest part of the planet's still unrifled minerals lie beneath the sea's bottom; yet the getting of submarine coal, mineral oil, and natural gas is still in its infancy.

A VAST FIELD

Here is a vast accessible field for mankind's enterprise, and also a sure guarantee for our race's survival even if our descendants are going to be ten times as numerous as we are today. Even in these numbers, our descendants will not starve, since the quantities of edible fish will have multiplied, in domestication, far more sensationally. A female yellow-tail fish lays about one million eggs in her lifetime, and, in a wild state, three out of the million develop into mature fish that produce eggs or semen in their turn. When the same eggs are fertilized artificially by Japanese sea farmers, and when the brood is nursed and is protected against nonhuman predators, the number that matures is not just three in one million; it is 100,000.

A few hours after the triumphant return of Apollo 8, I was asked, in a transatlantic telephone call, whether I thought this was a turningpoint in mankind's history.

My answer was «No»; but it would have been «Yes» if the day's news had been that mankind had suddenly come to its senses, had subordinated its local states to a sovereign federal world government, and had appropriated the sea and the sea bottom, outside territorial waters, as a patrimony for the whole human race, to be administered and utilized by the world government for the common benefit of mankind.

We have still to reach and pass this true turning-point. A first move in that direction would be for the Soviet Union and the United States to divert to the joint promotion of human

welfare the resources that they are now wasting on spacemanship and on armaments. This act would make it practicable to raise the material standard of life for all mankind to the level already attained by 80 per cent of the population of the United States. This would be a turning point indeed, but it cannot be arrived at just by technology, in which we human beings are adept. To exploit, for mankind's benefit, the material resources latent in and beneath the sea will be a more lucrative application of technology than moonmanship; but more technology is not enough. The necessary condition for making technology bear fruit that will be sweet and not bitter is a spiritual change of heart.

«I will give them one heart and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and will give them an heart of flesh». This spiritual surgery is our crying need. Without it, our new-found virtuosity in transplanting physical organs will be of no avail, and, when we land deftly on the moon, the physical dust and ashes that we shall find there will be an ironical reminder of our unredeemed spiritual barrenness on our mother earth.