

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

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Addition to Part I, Works by Arnold J. Toynbee

Item 2315 – Arnold J. Toynbee, *The Changes in the United States Position and Outlook as a World Power during the Last Half-Century*, in *Man, Science, Learning and Education. The Semicentennial Lectures at Rice University*, edited by S.W. Higginbotham (*Rice University Studies*, XLIX, Supplement 1), Houston, William Marsh Rice University, 1963, pp. 1-20 – was also published, under the title *Address by Professor Toynbee*, in *The Semicentennial Convocation*, in *The Inauguration of Kenneth Sanborn Pitzer and Semicentennial Ceremonies at William Marsh Rice University, October 10-13, 1962*, edited by S.W. Higginbotham (*Rice University Studies*, XLIX, Supplement 1), Houston, William Marsh Rice University, 1963, pp. 40-57. Toynbee's address was given as a kind of keynote speech before the Semicentennial Convocation of Rice University at the Houston Music Hall on October 11, 1962. This second volume includes a full description of the entire ceremony and some illustrations, among which, following page 48, two pictures showing Toynbee receiving the Semicentennial Medal of Honor and Certificate of Merit for Distinction in History and addressing the Convocation and his photographic portrait as recipient of the Award.

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

**THE CHANGES IN THE UNITED STATES POSITION AND OUTLOOK
AS A WORLD POWER
DURING THE LAST HALF-CENTURY**

by Arnold J. Toynbee

We have gathered here at Rice University this week to celebrate one of the notable achievements of the last half-century. Within these last fifty years, Rice University has made its passage from birth to maturity. There can be no greater change than that; it is the greatest change conceivable, and it has taken place within a span of time that is short on any standard of measurement. A half-century is shorter even than that proverbial symbol of brevity, the average span of a human lifetime; it is shorter, indeed, than the present average length of a working lifetime between childhood at one end and senility or death at the other. In this room at this moment there must be among us a number of Rice alumni who graduated in the first class. I am sure these have all retained their native Texan vigor, including their full powers of memory. If one is in one's early seventies today, and if one has kept his wits, one has more to remember, I should guess, than any previous generation has ever had. Our lifetime has been crowded with events. The magnitude of the change that has taken place on this campus within this last half-century is matched by the magnitude of the contemporary change in the rest of the United States and in the whole world.

My subject this morning is, as you know, the change in the United States position and outlook during this last half-century. It may seem audacious for a foreigner to offer to talk to an American audience about this. A foreigner's view is inevitably superficial, and he is sure to overlook many important points that are obvious to American eyes. I have been emboldened by two things. One of them is that an inside view, such as my audience has, may sometimes miss seeing points that are visible to an outsider, such as I am. An outsider's attention may sometimes be caught by points that are ignored by Americans because these points are so familiar to American minds that they take them for granted. My second reason for choosing this subject is that, within these last fifty years, the United States position and

outlook have ceased to be just the private concern of the people of the United States and have become one of the major public concerns of the human race. This has been an awkward change for both the United States and the world. It is unpleasant to lose one's privacy; it is also unpleasant to lose one's independence and to find one's fate hanging on other people's decisions, and no longer just on one's own. These two awkward changes have, between them, revolutionized the relations between the United States and the world in the course of the last half-century, and, in revolutionizing them, have put a considerable strain on them. This particular change is at the very heart of my subject, so I shall be coming back to consider it more than once before I have done.

I have perhaps one slight personal advantage for discussing the change in the United States position since 1912. I have known the United States since that year. It is true that I did not set foot in the United States till 1925, but in 1912 I met the United States in Greece and got my first sight of her, as a foreigner should perhaps get it, through the eyes of immigrants. In 1912 Greek emigration to the United States was at its peak, and every Greek village was full of emigrants who had made enough money on this side of the Atlantic to pay for a visit to their home in Greece. The more remote and the less prosperous the village was, the larger the percentage of its population that had crossed the Atlantic to improve its condition.

By 1912 the flowing tide of Greek migration had just reached the Middle West. As I talked to people in the village store in the evening, Kansas City and Omaha, which had been only names for me before, became vivid and thrilling realities. I could now picture their beautiful asphalt sidewalks, along which one could walk with impunity in glacé-kid shoes. Anyone in this room who has walked over the mountains of Greece will appreciate that a city where one could tread smoothly seemed, to a Greek immigrant, like some incredibly glorious New Jerusalem. This was the first account of the United States that I had had from firsthand witnesses, and their report was enthusiastic. Here was a land of promise; and the best thing about it was that the access was entirely free. You could just take a passage and go there (an immigrant's fare was cheap even by Greek standards at the time). What a contrast to a benighted country like, say, Turkey, where you were not allowed to land without showing a passport and being examined by the police. I shall come back to this question of immigration, too. One of the major changes in the past half-century is concerned with that.

To appreciate the extent of the change in the United States position during this last half-century, one must find some yardstick for measuring it. There are two obvious yardsticks for the purpose. One can compare this last half-century in the United States with the same half-century in the world as a whole, or one can compare it with the preceding half-century in the United States itself.

The pace of change in the United States since 1912 seems headlong when one measures it by the pace during the fifty years before 1912. That was the half-century between the end of the War between the States and the beginning of the First World War; and that was a relatively stable half-century in the history of the United States. The result of the War between the States (may I call it – as foreigners do call it – the Civil War, for short?) – well, the result of that war was, I suppose, to confirm a number of long-term tendencies in United States history. It confirmed the Union; and, within the Union, it confirmed the ascendancy of the North and, still more, of the northern way of life. This northern way became, in fact, the United States way, except in the Old South – and, even there, the northern way was gaining ground. Other features in the landscape, too, remained unaltered. The foreign policy of the United States was still Washington's and Monroe's; if, at the turn of the century, anyone had forecast Wilson's and Franklin Roosevelt's foreign policy, he would not have been believed; if he had forecast Truman's and Dulles' and Kennedy's foreign policy, he would have been thought to have gone out of his senses. At the political level, the policy was one of self-insulation: no entangling alliances for the United States with European powers; no interference by European powers in the American hemisphere.

This policy of self-insulation was not, of course, thoroughgoing. Even on the political plane the phobia of foreign entanglements did not, if I am right, ever inhibit this country from entangling itself across the Pacific. For instance, the Spanish-American War did not arouse in American minds those misgivings and repinings that followed American participation in the First World War. Moreover, the shrinking from European entanglements was the American reaction to political European entanglements only. The people of the United States never thought of disentangling themselves from Europe economically. The United States achievement of political independence did not check the growth of her transatlantic trade; and, throughout the nineteenth century, European capital and labor were the instruments

that the United States used – and used without stint – for developing the resources of her immense national domain. The inflow of European investments and European immigrants in the nineteenth century enabled the American people to win the West. If the United States had not continued to draw upon Europe's resources in these two ways, I dare say the frontier of settlement might not, even yet, have reached the Rio Grande and the Pacific Coast. We might have been meeting here today to celebrate the laying of the foundation stone of Rice University, instead of celebrating the University's jubilee year in these splendid buildings.

Economic relations are, of course, by their very nature, a two-way system of communications. The nineteenth-century United States was an underdeveloped country; but unlike some of the countries that are still in this stage today, the United States did always pay her way; and the means of payment that she found produced economic repercussions in the home countries of her European creditors. Europe's first experience of the United States economic power was the flooding of Europe with cheap American wheat in and after the 1870s. This was a boon for Europe on balance. It brought timely economic relief to the rapidly growing population of Europe's industrial cities, but it depressed the standard of living in the European countryside. In Britain, this remained depressed till the Second World War. Denmark met the same agrarian crisis with greater intelligence and energy. She met it by going over from mixed farming for home consumption to skillfully managed specialized agricultural production for export. But, in one way or another, most European countries' lives were affected by those massive imports of American foodstuffs from the 1870s onward. This was an indication of the importance of the role that American economic productivity was going to play, first in Europe and then all over the world, in the half-century of the world wars.

What would have been the picture of the United States that would have been painted for me in 1912 by her own citizens if, in 1912, I had been traveling in the United States and not in Greece? It would, I believe, have been much the same – put in less simple-minded terms – as the picture of the United States that I was actually given in Greece in that year. Americans too, I fancy, would have depicted the United States in 1912 as being a Promised Land for wanderers in the European wilderness. Here, they would have told me, was a country in which ex-Europeans could make a new start with a fairer prospect. By crossing the Atlantic,

they could jump clear of the old evils of Europe. They could escape from Europe's inveterate follies and crimes: the senseless European international power game; the burden of competitive armaments and the bloody and destructive wars which this power game made inevitable; the political oppression of subject nationalities and of liberal movements by reactionary-minded governments; the economic oppression of tenants by landlords and of workers by employers. Here was a country where every man was his own master. Americans describing the United States in 1912 could cite, as witnesses, a host of American citizens whose grandparents had taken refuge in the United States from the famine in Ireland in 1846, and from the repression of the revolution in Germany in 1848, and from half a dozen other nineteenth-century European calamities and atrocities.

This pre-world-wars self-portrait of the United States was, I should say, true to life as far as it went, but I can think at once of two features of nineteenth-century American life that it left out.

This picture portrayed the United States as being unaggressive and unoppressive by comparison with contemporary Europe. Yet there were witnesses who would have given a different report: for instance, the survivors of the American Indians, the grandchildren of the Mexicans of the generation of 1846, and the tardily emancipated descendants of the Negro plantation slaves. These had been victims of the United States, not of any European power; so, for them, the United States would have been the symbol of colonialism, imperialism, and economic and social injustice. The war that the United States made on Mexico, and the sweeping annexations that followed it, were, in fact, a classical example of imperialism. The War between the States was the greatest and most bloody war of any in the nineteenth century anywhere. The abolition of slavery in the United States in 1863 was anticipated by the abolition of serfdom in Russia in 1861; and, compared with the American slave's lot, the Russian serf's lot had been an enviable one.

The sad truth is that the Europeans who had colonized the Americas had brought Europe's evils with them to the New World; and this is not surprising. An Atlantic voyage – even a slow and painful one in a small sailing ship – is not a cure for original sin. One cannot jettison in the ocean the burden that Bunyan's Pilgrim carries on his back. The Roman poet Horace lived to learn this salutary truth. Horace grew up in bad times – times not unlike these last

fifty years of ours – and in an early poem he played with an escapist fantasy. He imagined some nonexistent western isles of the blessed for which he and his fellow Romans could set sail and so leave their civil wars behind them in Europe. In later life, Horace came to know better, and then he wrote the memorable line: *Caelum, non animus, mutant qui trans mare currunt*¹. «One changes one's clime only, not one's character, by scudding across the sea».

Another feature of nineteenth-century American life that the conventional pre-world-wars picture left out was the part played by religion. One of the things that the European colonists in the New World brought with them from the Old World was their previous religion; and they would have been horrified if it had been suggested to them that they must make a break with that if they were in earnest about their program of making a new start in life on new ground. So far from that, the colonists and their descendants and the many generations of immigrants who have followed in their wake have always cherished their Old World religion. Indeed, the motive that led some of the most notable of them to pull up their roots in Europe and to cross the Atlantic was a wish to remain faithful to their European religion without any longer being penalized on this account, as they had been penalized at home.

However, deep down, there is a contradiction between the ideal of Americanism and the ideal of Christianity on the question of what one's relation with one's neighbor ought to be. One of the aspirations of Americanism was to insulate America from the rest of the world in order to turn America into a local earthly paradise whose citizens should be «not as other men are»². One of the aspirations of Christianity is to «preach the Gospel to every creature»³, including all the publicans, harlots, and sinners. Christianity, like Islam and Buddhism, is a missionary religion; and, like them, it is this intrinsically, in virtue of its fundamental beliefs and ideals. Christianity's world-wide mission, like theirs, is part of the religion's essence; and therefore it is ultimately incompatible with sectionalism on any level – spiritual, political, or economic. The nineteenth century saw the emergence of a small band of Americans who were Christians before everything else, and who therefore recrossed the Atlantic to preach Christianity in the Old World.

¹ Horace, *Epistulae*, I, 11, v. 27.

² [Luke, 18, 11, King James Version].

³ [Mark, 16, 15-20, King James Version].

At the time, these nineteenth-century American missionaries did not attract much attention. To friendly American eyes their deliberate rejection of economic opportunities at home seemed disinterested, no doubt, but quixotic. To unfriendly eyes their conduct may have seemed un-American. To re-migrate from the American earthly paradise to the Old World wilderness came near to being an act of treason against the Promised Land – just as a whale might seem to an elephant to be a traitor to the order of Mammalia for having slithered back off the good dry land into the primordial ocean. Viewed in retrospect today, the nineteenth-century American missionary movement looks a good deal more significant. It looks like a premonition, through religious faith, of a truth that the present generation in the United States has been learning, with pain and grief, through harsh experience. This truth is that our social obligations to our fellow human beings have no limits short of embracing the entire human race. Mankind is a single family with a single destiny, for weal or for woe. In the Atomic Age, which mankind has entered in our lifetime, and in which our descendants will have to live so long as the human race lasts, a recognition of the human race's solidarity is one of the necessary conditions for the race's survival. All honor to those nineteenth-century American missionaries who recognized this truth so far in advance of most of the rest of us, and who had the faith, courage, and sincerity to stake their lives on acting in accordance with their spiritual insight. They were led to this act of self-sacrifice by their religion, and they dedicated their lives to it.

Christianity's recognition of the brotherhood of all men is a warning that a sectional earthly paradise is an unsatisfying spiritual ideal. There were more prosaic warnings that it was also not going to be a practicable objective. At about the time when Rice University was founded, Blériot flew across the English Channel in a mechanically propelled heavier-than-air conveyance, and, by then, Rutherford was already at work on exploring the structure of the atom. These were the first steps toward the forging of the annihilating intercontinental weapons that our governments now hold in their hands. By the same date a change was taking place in the balance of power in Europe, and this change was going to make the United States traditional foreign policy of avoiding entanglements in Europe no longer adequate as a means for keeping the United States secure in her own hemisphere.

From the date of Britain's recognition of the United States independence down to the rise of the Second German Reich, the United States policy of political self-insulation from Europe had been underwritten by British policy backed by British sea power. It was, I suppose, a happy chance for America that, during Britain's century of world power, Britain had the means, as well as the will, to prevent any single continental European state from gathering up the resources of the whole of Europe into its own hands and using them for conquering the world. When Napoleon was pursuing this aim, the United States did not have to bother much about him and his ambitions, because Britain – of course, entirely in Britain's own interest – was standing between Napoleon and her. In fact, Napoleon had to sell Louisiana cheap to President Jefferson, because British sea power made it impossible for France to take delivery of Louisiana from Spain. Britain could prevent Napoleon from pocketing New Orleans, but she had not the strength to wrest it out of its American purchasers' hands, as the British discovered by trial and error in 1814.

This post-Revolutionary War international situation was a godsend for the United States. It enabled her, for nearly a century and a half, to devote all her energies to the development of her own continent – all those energies, that is to say, that she did not spend on her Civil War. But international relations are kaleidoscopic. Each successive balance of forces is precarious and short-lived. Before the close of the nineteenth century, Britain's singlehanded predominance in the world was being undermined by the rise of a united and industrialized Germany. By 1914, Britain's predominance was already a thing of the past. In the First World War, Britain, France, and Russia combined were not a match for Germany. And Germany would not have been defeated either in the First World War or in the Second if the United States had not, each time, eventually thrown her by then enormous weight into the anti-German scale of the trembling balance.

In intervening militarily in both world wars, the United States was, I believe, taking action that was indispensable for the preservation of her own independence. If she had allowed Germany to win either war, Germany would have gathered into her own hands the control over the resources of the whole of Europe and Russia, and then surely nothing could have stopped Germany from subjugating the rest of the world, including the United States. The united resources of Europe are still the biggest potential power unit in the world. This is

evident today, when western Europe is in process of uniting peacefully, by voluntary agreement, for the first time in her history. A union imposed forcibly by one European people on the rest always did, of course, arouse strong resistance, and always would arouse it. Yet, if Germany had won either war, she could have quelled the European resistance movements and then have used Europe's resources – including the colonial empires of the western European countries – as instruments for further conquests. The United States had, and still has, an Achilles' heel in Latin America. Latin American nationalism, social injustice, and natural resources are an explosive mixture. There is enough fissionable material here to blow up the whole Western Hemisphere. And a victorious Germany, once master of the Old World, could have stalked the United States by making her approach to the Western Hemisphere via the bulge of west Africa and the corresponding bulge of northeastern Brazil on the American side of the Straits of Dakar.

If I am right, the threat to the United States from Germany in both world wars was serious. Yet, as far as I can make out, the American people did not take this serious German danger to heart – not even after they had found themselves compelled twice over to go to war with Germany in order to prevent her from subjugating the world, including the United States itself. I find this puzzling, and I do not know what the explanation is. If, since the end of the Second World War, the American people had not taken the Russian threat to the United States seriously either, I should have concluded that American minds had been conditioned by the international security that the United States had enjoyed from 1783 to 1916. I should have supposed that this conditioning had gone so far that it had almost become a psychological impossibility for American minds to entertain the idea that their country's security might really be threatened. This theory, however, is ruled out by the sensitiveness and the vehemence of the present American reaction to the Russian threat. This makes the previous American complacency about the former German threat mysterious. For, in each of the two world wars, the German danger was, I should judge, much greater than the Russian danger is – or, at any rate, than it has been so far. The Germans are a great deal more efficient than the Russians are, and therefore, when the German people dedicates its efficiency to the cause of war and conquest, the German danger for the rest of us is extreme. Thank goodness that, since the end of the Second World War, the Germans have been employing their

immense practical abilities for peaceful and constructive ends. We may perhaps venture to hope that the Germans have been permanently cured of their militarism by their experience in the Second World War, as the French were cured of theirs by their experience in 1870. This lies on the knees of the gods, and, at the moment, I am concerned, not with speculations about the future, but with a matter of what I believe to be historical fact. My point is that, apparently, the American people did not take the German danger seriously in either of the world wars; and, if this is indeed a fact, it is one that has had unfortunate consequences for the United States and for the world.

The immediate consequence was that, as soon as each world war was over, the American people found themselves wondering, each time, why they had taken the part that they had taken, and resenting that they had done what they had done. After the first war they wondered why they had been at war at all. After the second war they wondered why they had not fought the Russians instead of fighting the Germans. Their action was now an accomplished fact. It could not be undone. But the United States could, and did, give vent to her postwar sense of disillusionment by taking a number of momentous steps.

Let me remind you of some of the steps that she took between the end of the First World War and the beginning of the Second. She refused to join the League of Nations, which had been founded largely on the initiative of the President of the United States. She throttled the flow of European immigration by passing the immigration restriction acts of 1921 and 1924. She tried to collect her war debts from those European countries that had been her wartime associates. And then, when the coming Second World War loomed up, the United States enacted the neutrality legislation.

These interwar American acts were all disastrous for Europe. The restriction of emigration to the United States hit Europe at the very moment when Europe needed this outlet more than ever before. Imagine the effect on those Greek emigrants to the United States, who were giving me such a glowing account of the United States in 1912, if they had been told that, within less than ten years from then, the American people were going to partially close down immigration for the future. My Greek informants' praises of the United States would, I believe, have died on their lips.

I have often thought, since, of the number of young Europeans who, in the interwar period, might have become good American citizens if they had been given the same chance as their prewar predecessors. The Germans, in particular, have usually made first-rate American citizens. I wonder how many young Germans who turned Nazi might have taken this happier alternative course if it had still been open to them.

Perhaps Hitler would never have come into power if he had not had, ready to hand, a host of these frustrated and therefore restless and bitter young Germans for him to use for his evil purpose. Perhaps Mussolini would not have come into power either. I remember how, passing through Rome at the end of the year 1920, I was disturbed at the sight of swarms of demobilized but unemployed Italian soldiers lounging about in the uniform of the so-called Guardia Regia. These were potential Italian emigrants to the United States who actually became Fascists instead a year or two later. If these unfortunate, misguided young Europeans had had the opening in the United States that their parents' generation had had, I believe they would have led lives in this country that would have been useful to the United States and to the world, as well as to these young people themselves. In giving them the chance that she had given to their fathers, the United States would have been continuing to fulfil her own traditional ideal of being a Promised Land. Instead of that, these wretched young Europeans became criminals and cannon fodder.

This was one tragic sequel to the First World War. Its financial aftermath was another. If, in this war, there had been lend-lease instead of war debts, and if, after the war was over, there had been a Marshall Plan instead of reparations, the world's history in our life-time might have taken a different turn.

The tragedy of what happened after the First World War was equalled by the irony of it. For the steps taken by the United States produced exactly the opposite results from those at which she was aiming. The American people were homesick for their prewar past. They were determined never to let their country be drawn into a European war again. They had allowed themselves to be entangled for once, in spite of Washington's warning. Their reaction was to cut themselves loose again from Europe, and this time to do this thoroughly. They were going now to insulate themselves financially and economically, as well as militarily and politically. The effect of their action was to make another world war inevitable, and this

made it also inevitable that the United States should once again become a belligerent. This, too, was inevitable because, in the Second World War, as in the First, the consequence, for the United States, of maintaining her neutrality till the war had ended in a German victory would have been to expose United States security to a risk that the American people were not prepared to run. Therefore, once again, the United States was bound to intervene when it came to the point of either intervening or letting Germany win.

Though the United States was thus certain to intervene in a second world war if Germany were to start one, neither the American people nor the Nazis seem to have foreseen this. The American people believed that, this time, they had made sure of being able to keep out. By refusing to join the League of Nations they had kept clear of political entanglements that might have involved them in war with Germany. By enacting the neutrality legislation they had insured themselves against the possibility of being drawn into war with Germany by economic entanglements with Germany's opponents. This was supposed, by one school of American historical thought, to have been the main cause of the United States involvement in the First World War. The Nazis, on their side, correctly interpreted these interwar American actions as being evidence that the American people were determined not to go to war with Germany again; but they shared the American illusion that the United States would actually find herself able to do what she wished. Both the Nazis and the Americans seem to have overlooked the truth that, in a world that is divided politically into a number of sovereign independent states, each of which intends to try to preserve its sovereign independence at all costs, this will, in the last resort, be the governing consideration for every country. Even the most pacific-minded people will go to war if and when it finds itself confronted with a choice between going to war and losing its independence.

If the American people had foreseen this from the start, perhaps they would have joined the League of Nations after the First World War and have made military alliances of the NATO type with the west European powers instead of enacting the neutrality legislation. If the Nazis had realized the same truth, perhaps Hitler would have refrained from going to war, even though the United States had taken the steps that she did take with a view to keeping out. If Hitler had recognized that the United States would not be able to keep out, however much she wanted to, he would surely have kept the peace; for a would-be

aggressor does not launch his war of aggression if he knows in advance that he is bound to be defeated. Hitler, of course, made war in 1939 in the belief that he was bound, not to lose, but to win; and this belief was reasonable on the mistaken assumption that the United States would be able to keep out. Germany would have won the First World War if the United States had kept out of that; and she would have won the Second World War as well if, this time again, she had had only France, Britain, and Russia in the field against her.

The United States took momentous steps after the Second World War, too. No more than seven years elapsed between the enactment of the United States neutrality legislation in 1939 and the proclamation in 1946 [*sic*] of the Truman Doctrine, placing Greece and Turkey under the United States aegis. Is there any other instance in history of such a dramatic reversal of policy within so short a span of time? Even after the United States had become a belligerent in the Second World War, she had refused to entangle herself in any military operations in eastern Europe and in the Levant—as if this was going to make any difference, now that she was thoroughly entangled with western Europe, northwest Africa, and the western Pacific. In still shunning entanglements in the eastern Mediterranean, the United States was trying to cling to a last shred of Washington's policy. The neutrality legislation of 1939 had been a supreme effort to maintain that policy intact in an international situation in which it had become manifestly impracticable since 1916. Since 1946 the United States has thrown her time-honored traditional policy to the winds and has adopted a new policy that is the exact opposite of it.

In the past, the United States sought to avoid clashes with other powers by drawing in her horns and withdrawing into her shell. Since 1946 she has risked clashes with the Soviet Union by rushing forward to meet and stop her adversary as near as possible to his frontiers and as far as possible from her own. Not only in Turkey and Greece, but in the offshore islands, in Laos, in Berlin, the United States has dug herself in at the very foot of the Communist world's ramparts. Before 1946 the United States shunned alliances; since 1946 she has been seeking them. During the interwar years, Britain and France longed wistfully for the unobtainable alliance with the United States – an alliance that would have been the one effective deterrent to a Germany that was meditating a war of revenge. Since 1946 it has been the United States who has been anxious to gain and keep allies, while Britain and

France, in their weaker moments, have sometimes wondered whether their alliance with the United States is not a more dangerous entanglement for them than they can afford. Before 1946 the American people believed that the international power game was a crime and a folly that was peculiar to the depraved nations of the Old World. Today the United States is playing this very power game herself. She is playing it with all her might, and this on a world-wide scale. There is no patch of the habitable and traversable surface of the planet, however remote and however barren, that the United States does not now feel to be her concern if it is a question of forestalling Russia in gaining a foothold there.

The reversal of the United States foreign policy on the political and military plane has been extreme. The reversal of it on the financial and economic plane has gone to equal lengths. During the Second World War, lend-lease was substituted for repayable loans to the United States associates. After this war, when Europe's economic life was at a lower ebb than it had sunk to after the first war, the United States did not again leave this European wasteland to produce another crop of noxious political weeds like fascism and nazism. She launched the Marshall Plan. At her own expense, without asking for any economic return for herself, she gave the exhausted and impoverished European peoples the means of recuperating. The Marshall Plan is the cause of western Europe's present prosperity; and eastern Europe could have been proportionately prosperous today if Russia had not prevented the eastern European states that were under her domination from accepting an American offer that had been extended to them as well. Today one of the most constructive of the economic and political movements that are taking place in the world is the movement toward European union. This is a movement that has no precedent in European history; and its origins, too, can be traced back to the Marshall Plan. American aid stimulated the western European peoples that received it to co-operate with each other for using it to the greatest common advantage. I believe the temporary European organization for implementing the Marshall Plan was the germ of the permanent European union that is now coming into existence.

The contrast between the United States reactions to the two wars is extraordinary. Her reaction after the first was a desperate effort to retreat again into the isolation that she had enjoyed in the preceding chapter of her history. Her reaction since the second war has been

a resolute acceptance of the hard fact that, in the world as it has now come to be, isolation is no longer possible. The American people have, in fact, recognized and accepted the truth that, for the United States, the age of isolation is now over. This change in the American people's outlook corresponds accurately to the change in their position in the world. It is, I should say, the most epoch-making event in the history of the United States since the achievement of independence.

How are we to appraise this stupendous change of orientation? Looked at from one point of view, it is a tragedy. The American people's immense, and immensely successful, exertions throughout the nineteenth century were largely inspired and stimulated by the ideal of building up in the New World an insulated earthly paradise, uncontaminated by the Old World's ancient evils. This long cherished American ideal has now been proved, by merciless experience, to have been an unrealizable dream. The Old World, whose dust the Americans believed that they had shaken from off their feet, has closed in on the American New World and has engulfed it. The Americans have discovered that they have to reconcile themselves to living in the Old World after all. For any people, anywhere in the world, at any time, so complete a disappointment of such fundamental hopes and expectations would have been a tremendous ordeal. The shock caused by it is bound to be great. This is inevitably a painful episode in United States history, but happily it has another aspect besides the tragic one.

To be rudely awakened from an agreeable dream is a tragedy that brings a reward with it if one is able to rise to the occasion; and the American people have risen to this occasion, I believe. Being awakened means being recalled to realities; and after the second war the American people have done, I believe, what they recoiled from doing after the first war. They have now recognized the realities of their situation, and have accepted them; they have faced them clear-sightedly and resolutely; and, being Americans, they have taken action. Obviously the United States action since the Second World War is not beyond criticism. No human action ever is. But, at least, the American people have taken note of their previous mistakes and have taken care not to repeat them. Such self-criticism and self-correction is all too rare in human affairs. When it is achieved, it is a sign of spiritual strength and maturity, and it gives promise of future success. For instance, the United States has not, this time, repeated, for herself and for Russia, the mistake that she made during the interwar period for herself

and for Germany. This time she has not allowed either herself or a potentially aggressive foreign power to be under any illusion about what the United States would do if this other power did launch a war. The United States has made it unmistakably clear that, this time, she would not only be a belligerent but would be at war with the aggressor from the start.

To be thus reinvolved in the international power game is, of course, a terrible plight to be in. It is doubly terrible when it is a disappointment of long-standing previous hopes and expectations. It is utterly terrible when it happens, as it has happened to the United States, at a moment when the invention of the atomic weapon has made the evils of war incomparably worse than they have ever been in the past. In such circumstances, it is only human that Americans should sometimes look back wistfully to the antediluvian age of isolation. This is human, but it is unprofitable, I think. Before one allows oneself to hanker after a lost isolation, there are two questions about it that one ought to ask and answer. The first question is: Was isolation ever a practicable policy for the long run? The second question is: Even if it had been practicable as a permanent policy, is it a good policy intrinsically?

I myself believe that the answer to both questions is a negative one. I believe that, from the beginning, the self-insulation of the United States was a wasting asset. By the time when Washington sounded his warning against foreign entanglements, the Industrial Revolution was already under way; and the Industrial Revolution, once started, was bound to result in "the annihilation of distance" and in the consequent transformation of the whole surface and the whole air-and- space envelope of this planet into a single arena for atomic warfare, if the international power game should ever take the form of war again. This is the most fearful situation in which we human beings have ever found ourselves since the date when we established our ascendancy over the other wild beasts. As we sit at the feast that modern technology has served up to us, another product of modern technology, namely the sword of Damocles, hangs suspended over our heads. Today the whole human race is exposed to this threat of self-annihilation; and in this age the American people could not have contracted out of this common human predicament, however desperately they might have clung to their vanishing isolation.

The second question cuts deeper. This question is whether it would have been a good thing for the American people to continue to enjoy a privileged position, supposing that this

had been feasible. It might require some spiritual effort to give a negative answer to this question, too. Yet I fancy that this is the answer that most Americans would give it today. The price of being privileged is to be lonely and unloved; and this is too high a price to pay for anything. Privileged persons or nations cannot even love or admire themselves. At any rate, they cannot do that with any convictions if their ancestral religion is Christianity. What Christ stands for is God's deliberate renunciation of his privileged aloofness. Christ stands for a voluntary participation in the suffering that is the creation's common lot. If Christianity means anything to us, it means that we must try to follow this example as best we can.

Since we are only human, our best efforts will be likely to fall far short of the Christian standard. Like the American missionaries in the nineteenth century, the whole American people in our postwar age has deliberately stepped out of its transatlantic earthly paradise and has re-entered the Old World. So far, so good. But there is a difference in the objectives. The missionaries re-entered the Old World in order to propagate Christianity there. The present generation of Americans has re-entered it in order to check the propagation of communism there. Both objectives are legacies from the American people's European past. *Caelum, non animum, mutant qui trans mare currunt.* America's European heritage is, however, a mixed bag. The power game, as well as Christianity, is part of it. The Pilgrim who made the passage of the Atlantic believed that he had put off the Old Man in taking leave of Europe and that he had put on the New Man in setting foot on America's virgin soil. The reversal of the United States traditional foreign policy in our day has shown that the Old Man had not really been put off; he had merely been put to sleep; and now this sleeping spirit in the American soul has been sharply reawakened.

Who is it that has reawakened it? What Hitler failed to do to America was done to her by Stalin. Hitler presented a threat to the United States without making her aware of the peril that she was in. Stalin made her intensely alive to the peril of his threat, though, as I, for one, see it, the postwar Russian danger for the United States was not, and is not, comparable to the previous German danger in real magnitude. Why, then, have the American people taken the Russian threat so much more to heart? What accounts for the difference between the respective American reactions to these two threats?

The answer to this question is not to be found, I believe, in any differences between Nazi Germany and Communist Russia. The differences between these two totalitarian powers are many and great and important, but I do not believe that the explanation of the change in the American people's attitude lies here. I believe it lies in a change in the American people's own attitude and outlook.

One cause of the vehemence of the American people's reaction to the Russian threat is simply the fact that, for some reason, it was Stalin and not Hitler whose aggressiveness made America aware that her traditional policy of self-isolation was now bankrupt. One may not be sorry to have been awakened from a dream – painful though the awakening may have been – but one does not feel grateful to the person who has jolted one back into a wide-awake consciousness of the real world. This is a well-known story. The patient is seldom grateful to the psychotherapist by whom he has been cured. There is, however, perhaps a second cause of the present violence of the American reaction to the threat from Communist Russia. Let me put this possible other cause to you tentatively. I am conscious that here I am treading on particularly delicate ground. What I have in mind is a change which I fancy that I have observed in the American attitude to life.

The American people started life as a revolutionary people, and this long before they won their political independence in the Revolutionary War. The initial act of leaving an ancestral home in Europe and making a fresh start in the New World was a revolutionary step; and some of the first settlers on North American soil were people who had made their European home too hot to hold them by taking a previous revolutionary step. They had broken with their European native country's local established form of Christianity; and one of their motives in crossing the Atlantic was their wish to be free to follow their own nonconforming Christianity in their own way. The American people thus have revolution in their blood, and this is their own traditional picture of themselves. Moreover, this American self-portrait used to govern the American people's attitude toward their fellow human beings in the Old World. American policy of non-involvement did not carry with it a suspension or repression of sympathies and antipathies. Even in their most isolationist moods, the American people have been hostile to Old World tyrants and oppressors and have been sympathetic to these tyrants' victims.

No doubt, the American people see their present quarrel with Communist Russia in these traditional terms. A belief that, in opposing Communist Russia, they are taking the traditional American stand is, I fancy, one of the convictions that is giving the American people confidence in the righteousness of their present-day cause. The communist regime in Russia is unquestionably oppressive and tyrannical, but that is not all that there is to be said about it – as it was all that there was to be said about the Nazi regime in Germany. Communism is a tyranny that stands, paradoxically, for economic and social justice as against vested interests. Its performance evidently falls very far short of its principles; indeed, it sometimes seems positively to belie them. Yet these principles remain inscribed on communism's flag; and, even if the Communists are untrue to them, the principles themselves are a potent force in the present-day world.

They are potent because they express the aspirations of the huge depressed majority of the human race. This majority cares, I believe, for equality more than it cares for liberty; its objectives are economic realities, not political abstractions. It wants the bare necessities of life, because it lacks even these. It is becoming aware that modern technology can supply its elementary needs, and it is therefore becoming impatient of its age-old poverty. In the eyes of the poverty-stricken mass of mankind, the enemy is the vested interests of the rich minority. And this brings us to the difficulty in which an indiscriminating opponent of communism finds himself. In opposing communism intransigently, it is difficult to draw a line between opposing its tyranny and oppressiveness and opposing all its works and all its principles alike. It is therefore difficult to avoid slipping into the position of opposing economic and social justice and championing vested interests. Anyone, however, who does slip into this position may find that, without intending to, he has alienated the poverty-stricken majority of mankind. This majority knows little about the Communist and anti-Communist ideologies, and perhaps cares less about the little that it does know. But it cares immensely about the social justice for which communism professes to stand. For this reason, an indiscriminating attack on anything and everything that communism stands for is likely to have the incidental effect of making the mass of mankind feel a solidarity with communism. It may, in fact, incline them to come down on communism's side.

Therefore, I should say that when we, the rich minority, are opposing communism, we ought, all the time, to be searching our hearts. We ought to make sure that we are opposing communism for the right reason only. The right reason for opposing it is the reason for which we opposed the Nazis. It is right to oppose tyranny and oppression, wherever we encounter them. We must always remember, however, that we are exceptionally rich, and that we are therefore exposed to all the temptations that riches bring with them. We must remind ourselves of the repeated warnings in the Gospels about the snares in the path of the rich and about the special difficulties in the way of their finding salvation. If we ever catch ourselves opposing communism, not in defense of its victims, but in defense of our own vested interest in the preservation of our own wealth, we ought to take that as a danger signal and to draw back. Is our island of prosperity in the West to be a Promised Land for the poverty-stricken majority of mankind? Or is it to be a privileged minority's closely guarded preserve? Have we ascertained what is the genuine answer to this question in our heart of hearts? We cannot afford not to search our hearts for the true answer. Whatever the true answer may turn out to be, it will be decisive for the future of the United States and the West and the world.

I have mentioned the dramatic *volte-face* in the foreign policy of the United States. Since 1946 she has veered round from her traditional policy of keeping out of the international power game to a policy of involvement in it up to the hilt. There has, I believe, been a no less extreme and dramatic change in the domestic social structure of American society. The Constitution, as I read it, was intended to serve a community of citizens who were their own masters in every field of activity – in the economic and religious fields, for instance, as well as in the political field. The American community that was in the Founding Fathers' minds was a community of farmers who owned their own land, of traders who owned their own store and stock, and of professional men who were self-employed. How many of us are still self-employed in our present-day Western world? We have bigger real incomes than our forefathers, but these come to us, nowadays, largely in the form of wages and salaries. In other words, we have been buying our present prosperity by trading away some of our ancestral freedom, and I do not believe that this has been a good bargain.

When one adds these changes, within the last half-century, in the United States domestic life to the contemporary changes in her relation to the rest of the world, the total amount of change is staggering. In this flux, is there any guideline to which we can hold on?

Well, I come back, in conclusion, to my first introduction to the United States, which I described at the beginning of this talk. What was it, in 1912, that made those Greek emigrants to the United States, whom I met in their home villages, so enthusiastic about the country of their adoption? The thing about the United States that had struck their imaginations and had won their hearts was the American people's generosity. Here was a people that had crossed the ocean to carve a new world out of the wilderness; and, when, by the pioneers' hard labor, the wilderness had been transformed into an earthly paradise, the people who had created this paradise were not trying to fence it in as a close preserve for themselves. They had thrown it open for other needy Europeans to come and share it with them. Every Greek immigrant had tested this American generosity by personal experience. His praise of America was praise of this American virtue in particular. I also come back to those nineteenth-century American missionaries. Their treasure was a spiritual one; and they were ready to renounce the material treasure that was within a nineteenth-century American's grasp in order to share their spiritual treasure with their fellow human beings in the Old World.

This American generosity is, I believe, characteristic of the American spirit. Anyway, it is a golden thread which keeps on shining out in the lengthening skein of America's destiny. It shone out in Marshall aid to Europe; it is shining out again in the aid that the American people are giving today to Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Here, I should say, is something in American life that has suffered no change within these last fifty years. Here, as I see it, lies the hope for the future of the United States, and therefore also for the future of the world.

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