

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

by Teodoro Tagliaferri (University of Naples Federico II)

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Addition to Part I, Works by Arnold J. Toynbee

1950

302) Maggie Bernt, *History Does Make Sense, Toynbee Tells 2,500*, in «The Stanford Daily», Friday, October 20, 1950, p. 1, columns 1-8.

NOTE

Report of and excerpt from *Does History Make Sense?* – a lecture given by Toynbee in the Memorial Hall of Stanford University on Thursday morning, October 19, 1950, during his 1950 five-days visit. Toynbee's speech was recorded on tape in order to be aired the next week on the KZSU radio station (see nos. 303, 304).

303) *Sound recording of Toynbee speech made in Memorial Auditorium, Stanford University, Stanford, California, 1950, October 19* (three disks, digital version available), first of three *Sound recordings of speeches by Arnold Toynbee in San Francisco and at Stanford University, 1950, relating to the prospects for Western civilization*, Hoover Institution Library and Archive, Stanford University, Toynbee (Arnold Joseph) Miscellaneous Papers, 1921-1950. Cp. no. 302, Note.

NOTE

According to the description of «Scope and contents» of no. 303 (https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt4489r674/dsc/?query=toynbee#aspace_484a06a3b94027272119084621368936), «Toynbee states his ancestors would say history makes sense because one can see the will of God in history. However, other events challenge this Christian assumption. The study of natural law has produced a philosophy of this law existing on its own, not as handed down from God. Cycles play an important role in life. Wars occur in a cycle, business goes through booms and busts, and the generational cycle is important to changes of nationalities».

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

HISTORY DOES MAKE SENSE, TOYNBEE TELLS 2500

History makes sense, Professor Arnold J. Toynbee told 2,500 attentive listeners who packed Memorial Hall yesterday to hear the noted British historian answer the question «Does History Make Sense?».

He cited examples of clearly defined cycles in history that form a definite pattern from which the student of natural science can find much that is sensible.

He compared the thought of this school with the school of the historian which, Professor Toynbee said, interprets the facts for what they are and makes no attempt to relate one event in history with another.

«I believe the modern Western historians are mistaken – at my own peril – in saying history is sense-less», he declared.

In the past, there was no question at all whether or not history made sense, according to the professor. History was considered the working of the will of God. This classical view of history prevailed until the end of the 18th century, when it became such a caricature of itself that it was rejected by the Western world and replaced by a secular viewpoint, with two schools of thought.

Students of the school of natural law who previously had only logic, the science of the intellect, developed many studies related to human science – anthropology, economics, and then sociology.

By applying the principles of these sciences to the facts of history, they showed that there is a sensible relationship between historical events.

«Modern historians, forming the second school of thought, say history does not repeat itself; that history does not make sense», he said. «I believe that historians are wrong in denying the existence of many of the uniformities in history found in the human sciences».

Professor Toynbee went on to mention cycles in business. «On the basis of the last century and a half since the Industrial Revolution, economic scientists have worked out a series of cycles well established in alternating prosperity and depression».

The cycles of war and peace have also been worked out, according to Professor Toynbee. The cycle begins with a world war, followed by a peace of exhaustion. Then come secondary, subordinate wars fought to settle issues brought up by the first war. Then follows a lull of peace and another world war.

The professor warned, however, that because the cycle had been repeated in the past, it did not necessarily have to be repeated in the future.

«The rhythm cycle has been broken by two World Wars in our life-time», Professor Toynbee pointed out. «That is why we are so alarmed about the possibility of a third».

Here Professor Toynbee drew the parallel between non-human and human cycles. «Cycles of civilization are to some degree uniform. Look at psychology. It takes about three generations for people to change their nationalities. This rule can be applied also to a religious or social scale».

The same order applies to civilizations as well as individuals, said the professor. «Breakdowns of civilizations take the form of more and more wars, resulting in final conquering by one nation and universal empire. This process takes about three or four centuries.

What does this mean? It means it has taken people about 400 years to realize that they must abandon local and national gods and uproot national sovereignty from their hearts in order to band together for world government.

When we've found all explanation in human history, will we have all the answers? I believe that modern Western historians are mistaken when they say history is senseless. They would be more correct if they said that after we've found all explanation in human history, there is something left over, some residue, that cannot be explained.

Does this residue make sense, sense of a different kind? This brings us back to the old concept, the view of the will of God. But the Christian idea of God today is not of a God Who imposes His will but is rather one of a God Who gives man the freedom to choose what he wants.

We in the West today feel this responsibility of choice weighing upon us. If God imposed His will upon us, we would not have this feeling of responsibility».