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

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Integration to Part I,
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326) It is necessary to specify that «[The] Highway» – where Toynbee published Items 928, 928, and 941 in S.F. Morton's *Bibliography* (*The "Preliminary Question"*, I-III, I. *The Break with the Past*, VIII, 85, October 1915, pp. 2-3; II. *The Two Problems in Collision*, *ibid.*, 86, November 1915, pp. 22-24; III. *Nationality and Its Solution*, *ibid*., 88, January 1915, pp. 56-58 – was «A Monthly Journal of Education for the People», e.g. the official journal of the Workers' Educational Association. This is not an irrelevant detail because the socio-cultural composition and presumed ideological orientation of the review's reading public is clearly reflected in the argumentative strategy according to which, on that particular occasion, young Toynbee chose to articulate his theses about the underlying reasons for the First World War and the problems of post-war reconstruction.

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

THE "PRELIMINARY QUESTION"

By Arnold J. Toynbee

I

THE BREAK WITH THE PAST

The War has roughly deflected the energies of the nation from their old paths. Industry has ceased to supply the general needs of civilisation, in order to concentrate upon a few essential unreproductive outputs of military necessity. In politics, we have postponed the thorough reconstruction of our social system, which we were preparing with such high hopes, and have hastily begun to acquaint ourselves with problems external to our national life. The influence of the war has been ubiquitous, and the W.E.A. has been affected by it as much as any other group in the community. Since the war began, the summer schools have practically ceased to study the social history of England and the economic forces revealed in it, and have devoted themselves to international relations and racial geography.

It is impossible to take for granted this sudden change of outlook. We are bound to question whether it has been good and whether it has been inevitable; and if we decide that it could not have been otherwise, we have still to examine its cause and its meaning.

In the first place, it hardly needs proof that the dislocation is not good in itself. It has indefinitely delayed the accomplishment of the most urgent task in our national politics. During the last century and half we have been passing through an economic revolution that has put out of date the whole inherited and gradually evolved structure of our social life. We found ourselves in face of such a grave disharmony between our social system and our new economic environment, that its continuance was clearly disastrous. Before the war came, we realised that thorough-going social reconstruction was a matter of life and death, and now we must face the fact that the war has not permanently eliminated the problem, but only made it infinitely harder to solve. After the war, as before it, it will still be the supreme

question of national politics, but we shall have less time, less wealth, and less human energy to give to its successful solution.

To this extent, the dislocation has been purely evil and negative in its character, and there is no one who does not wish to return to normal courses as soon as he may, or, in other words, to set the earliest possible termination to the war. Disagreement begins on the question of ways and means towards bringing a settlement about. It is hardly necessary to deal with the opinion that the war is a "red herring", deliberately drawn by the vested interests of Capital across Labour's threatening course towards economic enfranchisement – a social conspiracy, which has only to be exposed in order to be defeated. In the first place, the chief economic effect of the war is the pure destruction of an infinite amount of wealth, by which exploiters and exploited are each losers, according to the proportion in which the wealth of the world is, on the present unreformed system, divided between them. In the second place, the mischief, whatever its origin, is already done. The workers of the different nations are tragically engaged in mutual slaughter, and the fraud, if fraud it was, has succeeded in producing such a grim reality, that something far more positive than exposure is necessary to its cure. The war is no cunningly staged illusion but the most appalling and all-pervasive fact in the contemporary world.

A fact, however, may have no rational place in the universe it disturbs. It may come, like an earthquake or a tornado, from causes which no one can control, and leave no effects but those of destruction. In other words, it may be a quite meaningless catastrophe, and the only reasonable policy may be to put its storm and stress behind us as quickly as possible, and then set to work to obliterate its traces. There is a strong tendency among thoughtful people in Great Britain to regard the war from this point of view not as the deliberate machination of this group or that, or even as the result of criminal negligence on the part of all alike, but as a hideous anomaly, an outbreak of chaos, which has no real relation to our normal life, and which we must simply bring to an end in order, as far as possible, to take up our life again at the point where it was broken off. Form this point of view, "Stop the War" is the alpha and omega of right policy, so far as the war is concerned.

It is very natural that this feeling should assert itself in Great Britain, because, from our own political point of view, the war is nothing but an interruption of our social task. But to

combat and exorcise an evil it is necessary first to understand it, and as soon as we study the war, no longer from the British standpoint, but from the standpoint of Europe as a whole, we find that it is a turning point, either for good or for evil, in European history, and that, whatever the settlement may be, it must leave the Continent, at any rate, in a profoundly different state from that which prevailed before the war began.

By comparison with her European neighbours, Great Britain has been singularly fortunate in her development, and has advanced in it singularly far. This may sound strange to anyone acquainted with the Industrial Revolution and the social evils it has brought into being. Yet if the evils have been immense, we have at least had opportunity – till the outbreak of the war – to devote our undivided energies to grappling with them. However complex the problem was in itself, it was not complicated still further by the intrusion of other problems side by side. But Europe as a whole contains communities at widely different stages of historical development. Only a few in the West, like France, Belgium, Holland, and the Scandinavian countries, are concerned almost exclusively as we with the industrial problem. South-east of Vienna there are regions so primitive that the Industrial Revolution has hardly yet affected them at all, while in Central Europe, just as in Ireland, our nearest neighbour, there are societies so unfortunate that they have been overtaken by the full tide of industrial change while still in the throes of preliminary crises which had been surmounted and forgotten in Great Britain well before the Industrial Revolution began.

It may be worth while to glance shortly at the relation between the preliminary problems and the social question in such countries as these. Their inter-action there was the immediate cause of the general war in Europe, and the irresistible way in which we were drawn into the war ourselves has proved that the creed of isolation we cherished for a century was an illusion, and that when a real European crisis occurs, we are as intimately affected as our continental neighbours. We will reserve this study for another article, and will draw our material principally from the recent history of Austria.

II

THE TWO PROBLEMS IN COLLISION

Anyone inclined to despair over the complexity of British problems will be comforted by comparing notes with a student of Austria-Hungary. The Dual Monarchy is baffling in its inward inconsistencies. Viewed from one aspect, it presents all the political and social features with which we are familiar in Great Britain. Its territory forms an organic economic unit. An agricultural region in the East supplies raw materials and food stuffs for industrial districts in the West. These complementary halves are knit together by an elaborate system of railways, and find a common point of commercial contact with the rest of the world at Trieste, the great port at the head of the Adriatic. When we turn our attention to the centres of industry, we find in progress the same social development through which we have been passing ourselves – a rapid exploitation of latent resources accompanied by an equally rapid growth of population and a consequent social derangement of an acute kind. Social reconstruction in Austria may be half a century behind our own – sweating, for instance, has hardly been restrained, and the housing conditions are appallingly worse than any that survive in British urban districts – but all tendencies to improvement are at work. For eight years the Austrian Parliament has been elected by universal suffrage, and in the first parliament convened in 1907, under the new law, the Socialists and Christian Socialists between them commanded 30 per cent. of the seats, the largest proportion yet acquired by any Socialist party in any parliament in Europe.

That is one side of the picture, but when we turn to the other, it is difficult at first to believe that it reflects the same country or the same people. The Socialist parliament met, but it did not govern; in fact, it did not even influence the government's attention to problems of real moment to the electorate it represented. When we survey the history of the Austrian government, we see the same monotonous spectacle. Whether the nominal régime be centralist or devolutionary, absolutist or constitutional, we find the Dynasty, and the clique of intimates at court, exercising an undefined, irresponsible sovereignty, administering the Empire like a private estate. Parliament may talk of social and political reconstruction to its heart's content. The Government does not mind. It has no interest in these projects, and it has only to maintain a negative attitude towards them in order to be sure that they will fall through in time. It is interested in two things alone – the army and the bureaucracy – and

these are the only two permanent, effective institutions in the State. When an army credit is demanded by the General Staff, the ministry bestirs itself (the ministry is responsible not to parliament, but to the crown, and the presence of a representative in it is exceptional). All the cog-wheels of the machine are set in motion, and the credit is quite sure to pass. Within a year of its convocation, the Socialist parliament ratified without a murmur an enormous credit for the mobilisation entailed by the gratuitous and discreditable "annexation" of Bosnia in 1908; while in 1914 its still more orthodox successor passively allowed the Government to precipitate the Monarchy into a war which has already brought more misery upon its inhabitants than upon those of any other belligerent State, Belgium and Serbia not excepted, and which is likely, before its close, to destroy all their social and economic developments of the last fifty years.

What are the aims of a bureaucracy and a militarism which absorb and exploit the energies of such a great population with a complete disregard for the task on inward social construction which in Great Britain we assume to be the purpose of the State's existence, and the supreme goal of its political activity? Nothing transcendental occupies the Hapsburg régime. It is simply concerned to maintain its own existence against the will of its subjects within, and these same subjects' neighbours and kinsmen without, while the primary political object of these subjects and neighbours in their turn is either to abolish the Hapsburg system altogether, or, at any rate, to transform it out of all recognition.

Austria-Hungary, so uncompromisingly industrialised in her material life, cannot give her mind to the problems industrialisation has raised, because she is chronically engaged by the same preliminary question which has been occupying Great Britain, exceptionally, since the outbreak of the War. There are eight languages current in Austria-Hungary, six of which are spoken outside as well as inside her frontier, and these diifferences of speech produce at least eight distinctions of national consciousness among her inhabitants, not to speak of sub-nationalities distinguished by dialectical variations within each group. The problem of nationality absorbs the whole energy of the country. The Hapsburg system is the negation of nationality, and exists to combat it, either by pitting one nation against another and deflecting their strength into an internecine struggle, or, where the national group is small and isolated, by direct and brutal oppression. With misplaced ingenuity the government

succeeded, until the present cataclysm, in separating the Serbs in Bosnia and Hungary, and the Italians in the Trentino and at Trieste from the national life of Serbia and Italy which they long to share, and in yoking them with antipathetic majorities of Magyars, Croats, or Germans, which threaten their national individuality. And such vigour in the people themselves as is not either blighted by the paralysing life-in-death of Hapsburg militarism and autocracy, or taken in toll by their exigencies – conscription, taxation, and restriction as an end in itself – is spent in the effort to defend their nationality against the government, or to impose it, with the government's connivance, upon their neighbours.

This obsession of nationality has had a direct and disastrous effect upon social politics. Why did the imposing Socialist block returned to the first parliament of universal suffrage achieve practically nothing for the social betterment of Austria? Because within a year of the parliament's convocation the international socialist party of Austria had been shattered by a series of national secessions, headed by the solid block of the Tchechs, a break-up which not only annihilated the political power of Socialism in Austria, but even affected the local struggles of trades-unionism against capital in the industrial districts of Bohemia. And as we glance back over Austrian history we read the same story. The German Liberals, who forced their way to power when the government was discredited by the military disasters of 1866, cherished the same programme of elementary but essential reform as the British Liberals of 1832: but before they could carry out a fraction of their policy, they were overthrown by the clerically minded nationalism of the Austrian Slavs, and superseded by a ministry which played off the nationalities against each other and marked time. The same Slavs had been the saviours of the Dynasty in the revolutionary years 1848-9, when they jealously fought to crush the Germans and the Magyars, who had seized the reins of government, and dreamed of realising – no doubt at the Slaves' expense – their individual national aspirations. The disastrous possibilities of nationality have been witnessed most tragically of all in Hungary, where in 1849 the Magyars struggled heroically for the fundamental principles of political liberty. But since Hungary obtained her rights by a grant of autonomy and parliamentary government in 1867, political, not to speak of social progress, has gradually come to a standstill. The Magyars have devoted themselves to "Magyarising" their Serb, Rouman, Ruthene, Slovak and German neighbours who form half the Hungarian population, and the

threatened nationalities have become absorbed in the effort of self-preservation. Hungarian politics, which started with such a fine tradition, have degenerated in fifty years into a struggle of brute force.

What, then, is this force of nationality, which has taken possession of Austria-Hungary, and prevented her inhabitants from entering upon any fruitful social construction, just as its remoter workings have interrupted our own social policy at its most critical phase? Is it a will-o'-the-wisp, which its devotees follow to their destruction, or are they right in their unreasoned conviction that it is the primary goal for which they must sacrifice all other apparently more rational and fruitful aims? Consideration will show that their instinct is sound. Social development, for Austria no less than for England, is undoubtedly the ultimate object of politics; but a social policy implies a political society – a group of people organised in a permanent framework within which social developments can work themselves out. Without such a framework political activity cannot take place. When we describe our own political efforts as "social reform" or "reconstruction", we do not mean that we are reforming or reconstructing the life of humanity in general. We imply that our work is confined within the framework called Great Britain, a framework notably well suited to advanced political action; only we do not think of mentioning the framework because we have possessed it so long that we take its existence for granted. We can see, however, that if the framework were damaged or removed, our politics would become impossible, and our first essential task would be to build up another framework in its place. But this is precisely the problem before the various inhabitants of Austria-Hungary. For some reason – we will leave it undefined for the moment – the Hapsburg system does not give them the corporate organisation necessary for grappling with the social problem of the Industrial Revolution, and they are bound to kick against the pricks – to beat against the wall of the prison-house and jostle within it against one another – until they have sorted themselves into some freer grouping which answers to their needs. This is the problem of nationality which has distracted them so long, and it is in effect a problem of demarcation. Just as trade unions cannot act effectively on behalf of their particular categories of workers until each has settled what the proper extension of its own category ought to be, and has delimited its membership against the remainder, so, on a higher plane, States cannot grapple with the general social problem

till they have satisfactorily demarcated the social group of their own citizens from such as owe citizenship to their neighbours. Demarcation disputes between unions are often set-backs to the cause of labour, but no one who understands the labour problem would maintain that they were gratuitous, or that labour could ever begin to make progress until the unions were rightly enrolled and marshalled. The same thing is true of nationalist controversies. To belittle or ignore them is no short cut to the ultimate social problem. On the contrary, the settlement of that problem will always be postponed or interrupted until the preliminary question of nationality has been rightly solved. The present catastrophe should not tempt us to anathematise nationality for the ruin it has already brought – that is now irrevocable – but it should inspire us to discover and apply the right principle of national demarcation, so that its frustration may bring ruin no more.

III

NATIONALITY AND ITS SOLUTION

In a previous article we discussed the collision between two political forces – nationality and social reconstruction – and concluded that nationality was an essential preliminary which must be settled by any political society before it could effectively take the social problem in hand. We defined this preliminary question as one of demarcation, and we have now to examine what the right principle of national demarcation may be. The extraordinary diversity of opinion prevalent on this point among the people of Europe has been one of the most direct causes of the present war, and until this controversy is cleared up, we shall never win freedom to devote ourselves to that ultimate problem which cannot – without disaster to our civilisation – be indefinitely postponed – the problem of social reform.

Our review of the situation in Austria might seem to provide us off-hand with a formula for national demarcation. Geographically and economically the Hapsburg Monarchy is as closely knit as any other continental State – it is only in language that it is divided against itself, and yet these differences of speech have been potent enough to create so many national movements, which impel the various peoples of the Empire to pull down about their

ears, like Sampson, the common edifice that affords them economic shelter and prosperity. Austria-Hungary is not a nation because it is not united in its speech, and that is the essential difference between it and such indisputably national states as Germany, Italy, and France, which bear the same name as the homogeneous German, Italian, and French languages of their citizens. The exceptions prove the rule, for those districts of Germany which are not German in soul are precisely those where an alien language is current – the Polish-speaking border on the East, Danish-speaking Schleswig, and French-speaking Lorraine.

The test of language carries us a long way, and yet, if we apply it widely enough, we shall find that it breaks down.

It explains why French-speaking Metz should yearn towards France, but what about German-speaking Strasburg, and the whole province of Alsace? German is as exclusively current here as it is at Munich or Berlin, and yet the Alsatian is just as eager as the Lorrainer to recover his membership in France. Language does not decide nationality in this case, and there are actually cases of nations, with a very tenacious national life, that have no national language at all. The Swiss are certainly a nation, yet three languages are spoken in the country, each of which is shared by a great national State across the frontier. Why do the French, German, and Italian-speaking Swiss form a single nation, distinct from Germany, Italy, and France, while the German and Italian-speaking Austrian, for example, do not? And we have only to look at our islands to see how the solution by language breaks down. In Great Britain Gaelic is still the only language familiar to many people in the Scotch Highlands, while in Wales there is a solid block of population speaking a tongue which is no illiterate dialect, but enshrines an ancient and still flourishing literature. The English language, though spoken by the majority, has by no means exclusive possession of the island, and yet all its inhabitants, be they English, Gaelic, or Welsh in speech, are equally British in their nationality, in the sense that, in their social and political life, they all act as a single group. When the Welsh miners struck, it was not because they were Welsh, but because they were miners that the trouble arose. The question at issue was the relation of a certain economic activity – the mining industry – to the whole economic life of the country, and of the corresponding economic class – the miners – to the British people as a whole. More broadly still, it raised the general problem of the economic structure of British society – the relation of employers

and employed to each other and to the State. In other words, it was a British problem, and had nothing to do with Wales as such. But if there came news from Austria-Hungary that the Tchech miners were on strike, we could be sure that they were standing for their rights, not as miners, but as Tchechs – that they were not combating the Tchech middle class or Tchech capitalism on an economic issue, but were co-operating with Tchechs of all classes against Germans of all classes to obtain, perhaps, the employment of the Tchech language in primary schools, or to abolish the use of German in the local administration. While the crisis in Great Britain would turn on a question affecting the population as a whole, the corresponding crisis in Austria would concern the preliminary question whether the people of Austria were to form a political whole or not; and that is only another way of saying that Great Britain possesses a common national life while Austria falls short of doing so.

In spite of linguistic differences, then, the people of Great Britain form a united nation. To explain this we might abandon language for geography, and ascribe the phenomenon of British nationality to the geographical unity and isolation of our island, or else – what is only a more elaborate way of stating the results of geographical unity – to the economic interdependence of its several quarters. But the example of Austria-Hungary has already warned us that economic geography is not a strong enough factor in itself to guarantee the development of national unity, and if we turn to the neighbouring island, our rejection of the "environmental" explanation will be confirmed. Ireland is far more compact a geographical unit than Great Britain (some people plausibly maintain that the peculiar character of the Irish environment – climate or what not – impresses a common psychological stamp upon the island's inhabitants!). Moreover, it is far more homogeneous than Great Britain in language. The English tongue is more exclusively predominant there than here, and the survival of Erse has not the vitality of the Welsh or even of the Gaelic tongue. The Nationalists try in vain to foster an Erse literature and an Erse press. Readers fail them, and when the Nationalist municipality of Dublin posted the names of streets in the Erse language and alphabet, confusion reigned in the city till the English signs were restored. And yet, while there is only one nationality in Great Britain, there are two in Ireland, the British in Ulster, and the Irish in the rest of the island – nationalities so sharply opposed to one another that their demarcation dispute – even when narrowed down to the partition of

the single country of Tyrone – was in a fair way to issue in civil war. In Ireland all the Austro-Hungarian symptoms are present. The preliminary question of nationality still entirely eclipses the fundamental social problem. When, at the height of the Home Rule controversy, industrial tension provoked a strike of the workers at Dublin, the political leaders of Ulster and of the Nationalists – leaders who professed to represent between them all the political interests of the island – alike proclaimed their "neutrality" on the issue of the strike! So utterly does Ireland, as a whole, lack a common political life.

Thus neither language nor geography offer an exhaustive definition of nationality. The case of Ireland will remind us of religion, and we shall indeed discover the real rift between the English-speaking Ulsterman and the English-speaking Nationalist when we convert them into terms of Protestant and Catholic. Religion will answer us in other cases as well. In Austria-Hungary we can call in not only economic geography, but the levelling and centripetal influence of the Roman Catholic Church, to explain the surprising resistance of the effete Hapsburg structure to the new growths of nationality which are riving it asunder with their spreading roots. In Bulgaria we have the dramatic contrast between the Pomaks – Thracian mountaineers of Bulgar speech but Moslem faith – of whom their religion has made fanatical Turkish nationalists, so that they carried on a desperate guerilla struggle against the Bulgarian armies during the Balkan war – and the large Turkish-speaking population in the North-Eastern provinces of Bulgaria, who were likewise Moslem in religion, but had become so firmly attached to their Bulgarian nationality during the thirty-three years of the Bulgarian State's existence, that when their Christian neighbours were mobilised for the Turkish war, they did their part by undertaking to ten the vacant farms during their owners' absence on campaign.

But religion will not carry us very far. It may determine nationality among Oriental populations, or peoples in a comparatively backward State, but when we apply it as a test to the leading European nations (obviously the proper test case) it absolutely breaks down. Germany is more intricately divided than any other country between the Catholic and Lutheran religions, and in the seventeenth century this religious division produced the devastating civil war of the "Thirty Years". Yet that religious barrier is now absolutely without

national significance, and the German people can truly boast that it is more magnificently united within than any other of the belligerent nations.

The definitions by Language, Geography and Religion have now all broken down, and we are driven to fall back upon "tradition". «Custom is the king of all», and what binds a nation together is the inherited habit of political co-operation. Yet this in itself explains nothing, for habit, in turn, must have an origin and a cause, and is indeed as conspicuously unstable, as unconditionally subject to growth and decay, as any other element in human life. In Germany itself the habit of national unity is only a generation old, and had to be substituted by force of arms for an inveterate habit of parochialism which the Germans nickname "little-state-ishness". In Italy the glowing tradition of individual sovereign city-republics like Venice and Florence – a tradition rich in the political, literary, artistic, and every other sphere of social life – has insensibly melted into a new tradition of Italian unity – an ideal to which Venice and Florence would never have sacrificed their independence a few centuries ago – by a psychological process which has been called the "Italian Resurrection". Tradition is constantly on the change, and though the immediate tradition of the Past is always a determining factor in the will of the Present, it would be fallacious to argue *à priori* from any particular phase of past tradition to the interpretation of the present reality.

"Present will" is the only test of nationality that our examination has left to us – a will to co-operate in a common political life, ascertainably existent among a given population. This will has, of course, in every case some definite stimulus – language, geography, religion, tradition, or more commonly a combination of some, or all of these – but these stimuli are merely the historical origins of national consciousness, and we shall be in danger of letting slip the essence of nationality, if we seek to define it in terms of them. Our suggested definition in terms of will may seem bald, but it has at least the merit of being simple to apply and of covering all the facts. It brings nationality into relation with democracy, by identifying the national problem with the problem of demarcation between national States; for the principle of democracy is this, that people should be free to co-operate at their own pleasure to work out their own social salvation in their own way, without let or hindrance either from inside or from out, and freedom of association is the necessary preliminary to freedom of corporate activity.

When the war draws to an end, and the resettlements is on foot, the new demarcation of groups will be bitterly contested, and the debate will be confused with a cloud of linguistic, geographical, denominational, sentimental and other conflicting arguments. But if, then, we hold fast to the principle that the only sincere and rational test of nationality is the existing will of the people concerned, we may bring order out of the chaos of controversy, and may hope to demarcate the nations of Europe on such just and natural lines, that the preliminary question may be settled as definitely on the Continent as it has been settled in Great Britain. If we cannot succeed in this, the outlook will be dark, for we shall be as fatally distracted as before from the ultimate task that confronts us – the problem of social construction.