



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

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No. 403  
(November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023)

Addition to Part I,  
Works by Arnold J. Toynbee

**1949**

403) Arnold J. Toynbee, *The World Crisis. The speech that enthralled 2,700 "under eighteens" at the "Tomorrow's Citizens" Conference in London*, in «Daily News», Wednesday, January 5, 1949, p. 2. Text below.

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

## THE WORLD CRISIS (1949)

By Arnold J. Toynbee

When Professor Arnold Toynbee, the world-famous historian, spoke to 2,700 young people last week he gave an address of outstanding importance. The audience of boys and girls was spellbound. He spoke from six pages of numbered notes which the News Chronicle asked to see. This is a remarkable manuscript, a shorthand of a scholar's ideas. With Professor Toynbee's permission these notes are published today. They do not make an article and they do not make easy reading. But they will be studied, and studied again. Professor Toynbee is the most influential thinker for modern youth and on this page are the germs of ideas which will influence the coming generation.

1. These three words – “the World Crisis” – when one says them aloud at this moment, probably call up the same ideas in all our minds: a number of quite definite ideas.

1. – Will there be a third world war?

2. – If there were to be one, would it be still more terrible in its effects than the first two, owing to the invention of the atom bomb and other fearful new weapons?

3. – If it comes, will it come out of one of the local crises that are giving us anxiety now? Berlin, Palestine, China, Greece, France, Italy, Korea, Indo-China, Burma, Malaya, Java?

4. – Even if all these present troubles could be settled peacefully, are America and Russia bound to fight one another sooner or later, not because of any particular local point of friction, but because for some reason there is not room for them to live peacefully side by side in the world as it is today?

5. – What is the future of Western Europe? Will the Marshall Plan succeed in making us a going concern again?

6. – What is the future of Great Britain? Shall we succeed in paying our way again?

And, above all, in commanding the imports of food that we shall still need in large quantities, even when we have done all we can to revive our agriculture at home? By “we” I mean everybody, for no doubt the Russians have corresponding anxieties.

2. When I myself was the age that is the average age of this audience – that is, a year or so before 1914 – there were no anxieties like these in my mind or my contemporaries' minds

(though, within a few years, half my friends of my own age had been killed in the First World War).

(I was in Oxford in 1907-11; there was one debate then per annum at the Union on foreign affairs, and it was used for testing out freshmen).

People of your age in the professional and middle class in England just before 1914 took it for granted that they were living in a world that was civilized – meaning reasonable, humane, orderly, predictable.

3. This belief that we were living in a normal world survived the First World War. We took that as an accident like the loss of the Titanic or the train carried away on the first Tay Bridge – something terrible but exceptional, not altering our view of the essentially reasonable character of the world.

(Difference of atmosphere in London on Armistice Day, 1918, and VE Day, 1945).

(Difference of expectation at Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and 1946).

4. There is a great change in our lifetime. What does it mean? What is the world heading for? Something worse than the pre-1914 or pre-1939 world? A mixture of the two?

What can we do ourselves to help to steer the world in a good direction?

5. During the century ending in 1914, the position of the middle class in England – which my contemporaries and I just took for granted as being the normal thing – was a position of quite exceptional privilege.

1. – The Indian Civil Service was an almost unique opportunity.

2. – France and Southern States of U.S.A. lay under the shadow of disastrous wars – invasion and defeat – within living memory.

3. – China and Turkey: collapse of their traditional government and civilization; their humiliation; danger of partition between European Powers; need to make an entirely new start, which seemed impossible.

4. – Working class at home: only five non-public school undergraduates out of more than 250 at my own college (a particularly liberal one); no share in middle-class opportunities, no security (unemployment: I can remember the beginning of old age pensions).

6. You see, before 1914 there was a state of crisis for a great many people in the world, only we were not alive to other people's crises. «Am I my brother's keeper?».

7. Today we are much more aware of one another's troubles in other classes than our own, and other countries.

This is in itself an improvement. It is an advance in our education in world citizenship.

What has brought about this change? Three possible causes:

1. – We have grown more sensitive to other people's needs and troubles, even when these do not affect our own interests in the selfish sense.

2. – We are more aware of the interdependence <sup>[L]</sup><sub>SEP</sub> that exists. (N.B. – Before 1914 we minimised this: Serbia. N.B. – Chamberlain on Prague).

3. – The world itself has changed, so that other people's affairs which used to have no material effect on our fortunes do have an effect on them today.

I believe all these changes have taken place.

8. Illustrate from China:

1. – For a century before 1914 China was already affected by what the Western peoples did (in economics as well as in politics and war), but the West was scarcely affected, vice-versa, by famines, wars, revolutions in China (e.g., the Taiping wars in the 1850's).

Today we all realise that it matters immensely to both Russia and the Western world whether China does or doesn't go Communist.

In 1931 and 1936 it mattered to us whether Japan was or wasn't stopped in her aggression against China – but most of us didn't realise it then (N.B. – Second World War really started with the Japanese attack on the Chinese in the autumn of 1931 – as we can see, looking back, today).

2. – At the same time, quite apart from being alive to the ways in which China's fortunes now affect our own interests, we do, I believe, have a genuinely disinterested feeling – and I think this is a new feeling – that we are our brother's keepers, just because he is our brother.

(When I was a child, we in England – where there had been no famines since the fourteenth century. I think – used to feel that famine was just something that happened in China, with which we had no concern beyond perhaps sending a subscription to a Lord Mayor's Fund. We did feel more responsible for famine in India, because we were governing India then; but even in India we expected the standard of food supply to be far lower than in England).

Today in the post-war allocation of food, we have been taking for the first time a *world* view – e.g. in the allocation of rice: a recognition that all human beings have a claim, as such, to be helped by their fellow human beings to lie above starvation level.

9. Can we now see any more clearly what is the nature of this World Crisis that we are aware of today?

What is happening, I suggest, is that the world is rapidly growing into a unity – and this in two ways: –

1. – Materially, the different peoples and countries are becoming more interdependent.
  2. – Morally, we are becoming more like a single family. "World Citizenship"; "Brotherhood of Man through the Fatherhood of God".
- has been happening gradually.

10. This is the climax of a change in human affairs that has been happening gradually and has now rather suddenly accelerated.

Trace it back through:

1. – Industrial Revolution (trade in staple goods; mechanical transport).
2. – Conquest of the Oceans since 1500 by W. European maritime peoples.
3. – The preaching of the World Religions.
4. – Alexander: «God is the father of all men, but He makes the best ones peculiarly His own».

11. If we are really on the road to making the brotherhood of man a reality, surely this is a good and happy road. How can world citizenship, human brotherhood, produce a world

crisis? And, after all, we are not anxious without reason: the anxieties I mentioned at the beginning of this talk are about real things – and formidable ones.

12. I do believe, all the same, that the world crisis is the result of our progress towards world unity. I think this movement is producing a crisis because it has now gathered such speed.

(Simile of urban refugees and country people having to share same cottages and same kitchen ranges during the war – a cause of quarrel).

Classes and nations that used to live segregated – not much affecting each other, and, anyway, not feeling responsible for each one – are now suddenly having to try to live at close quarters.

There is demanded of us, by this sudden change, a great deal of mutual tolerance and patience, give and take, self-sacrifice.

Each of us would like to see the world unified on lines that would suit *our* local ideas and convenience: hence, competing programmes and ideologies (it is in this sense that there may not be room in the same world America and Russia).

I believe patience, imagination, tolerance, self-sacrifice are the virtues we need today if we are to steer our ship into port within another disaster, which might, this time, be a fatal one.

13. There will be world unity, but by which road? Peace and co-operation? Or war and revolution?

