

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

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No. 1

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Addition to Part I,
Works by Arnold J. Toynbee

1936

Arnold Joseph Toynbee, *The Nature and Paramount Aim of the League of Nations*, in The Royal Institute of International Affairs, *The Future of the League of Nations. The Record of a Series of Discussions held at Chatham House*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1936, pp. 7-14.

REVIEW (of the entire volume) in «International Affairs», XV, 5, September-October, 1936, pp. 756-757. Signed K.T.

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

NOTE TO THE TEXT

The text reproduced below is Toynbee's introduction to the first of five discussions held between May 29th and July 7th, 1936, which are listed in the following Table of Contents of the volume¹.

– Preface

– The Nature and Paramount Aim of the League of Nations.

Discussion opened by Professor Arnold J. Toynbee.

– Is the League in a Position to create Peace if it is not in a Position to enforce Peace?

Discussion opened by Sir Norman Angell.

– Practical Suggestions for Reform.

Discussion opened by Sir Arthur Salter.

– Should the Membership and Obligations of the League be Extended or Restricted?

Discussion opened by G.M. Gathorne-Hardy.

– British Policy in Relation to the League.

Discussion opened by The Hon. Harold Nicolson.

– Appendix I. – *The League Covenant: Suggestions as to the Re-drafting of Certain Articles* (G.M. Gathorne-Hardy, M. C., and Sir John Fisher, C.B.E., K.C.)

– Appendix II. – *Text of the League Covenant*

According to the *Preface* (pp. 5-6), dated August 1st 1936, and signed by Lord Astor, who was the Chairman of the Council of the Royal Institute of International Affairs,

«In May of this year the Council of the Royal Institute of International Affairs appointed a Group consisting of members of Chatham House and other specially qualified persons to consider and discuss the question of the future of the League of Nations and the possible revision of its Covenant². This decision was taken at a time when events had, with an alarming suddenness, drawn world-wide attention to the problem of the future of the League system.

It quickly became known that the question of the reform of the League Covenant was likely to come before the Assembly at its September meeting and it was thus clear from the outset that the Group would, in their discussions, be faced with very definite limitations in point of time. To be of practical value, the publication of the views of those participating could not be long delayed and, in the circumstances, the task before them resolved itself

¹ The whole book can be consulted at <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.175087/mode/2up> (accessed November 1st, 2021).

² The members of the Group included Sir Norman Angell, Lord Arnold, R.M.C. Arnold (Secretary of the Group), Lt.-Col. Sir James Barrett, Rear-Admiral Roger Bellairs, Robert Bernays (M.P.), R.H. Brand, The Rev. Henry Carter, W. Horsfall Carter, Air-Commodore J.A. Chamier, Professor H. Noel Fieldhouse, G.M. Gathorne-Hardy, Lord Howard of Penrith, D. Graham Hutton, George C. de Janasz, Lord Lothian, R.W.G. Mackay, Professor David Mitrany, Harold Nicolson (M.P.), Gerald E.H. Palmer (M.P.), Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede, Sir Arthur Salter, Professor George Smith, Professor Arnold J. Toynbee, Professor C.K. Webster, H.G. Wells, Sir John Fischer Williams, Leonard S. Woolf.

into confronting, rather than reconciling, the markedly divergent views held upon the main issue by different schools of thought.

The responsibility for the actual convening of the Group was undertaken, at the Council's invitation, by Mr. G.M. Gathorne-Hardy and, as finally constituted, its membership was designedly representative of as many different standpoints as possible³. Indeed, for the purpose of this study, divergence of views between members of the Group was considered an asset rather than a disadvantage.

The Group's method of work was simple. Five meetings were held between May 29th and July 7th. On each occasion proceedings were opened by a short address given by a recognized authority on the particular aspect of the question under review. General discussion followed and comments and contributions were received in writing from members who were unable to attend the meetings.

In publishing the record of the Group's five meetings, the Council's aim has been to enable the reader to judge for himself the value and practicability of a number of widely differing views and proposals, each expounded by a highly qualified student of the subject and each exposed to the touchstone of immediate and searching criticism.

League reform will remain the subject of considerable speculation for many months to come, speculation which in some cases will be well, and in others ill, informed. The value of this record must stand or fall in such a measure as it succeeds in clarifying the complex issues with which such speculation will necessarily be concerned. (...)».

For further Toynbee's interventions in the debates see *ibid.*, pp. 30, 46, 56, 112, 119-121. This last, more substantial contribution is reproduced below (pp. 14-15), as an appendix to the main text.

In both texts I have slightly altered the punctuation,

THE NATURE AND PARAMOUNT AIM OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Discussion Opened
by
Professor Arnold J. Toynbee¹

There are two questions which have to be considered by the Group at this its first meeting. First: *What is the League?* Second: *What, in international life, is our Paramount Aim?* And in opening the discussion under these two heads I want simply to pick out arbitrarily one or two points.

Under the question: «*What is the League?*», I should like to consider the following: First, what does the League mean to the general public in Great Britain? Second, what does it mean to the Germans? Third, what does it mean to so-called enlightened, liberal-minded opinion in democratic countries? Fourth, is the League a voluntary or a compulsory association?

Under question number two, «*What is our Paramount Aim?*», I shall discuss whether our paramount aim is peace, or sovereignty, or law and order, or security, or justice.

To take the first of the detailed points, «What does the League mean to the general public in Great Britain?», I think it means something very vague and shadowy. That is surely obvious from what has happened in the last few months. The success of the Peace Ballot and the failure to frustrate Italy's aggression against Abyssinia showed this clearly. People who voted in the Peace Ballot did not realise what they were in for, and people who wished to frustrate Italy's aggression did not realise what steps they would have to take or what risks Sanctions would involve.

I have several times been misled at some critical moment in the League of Nations' history by seeing the posters of evening papers announcing «All the News about the League», only to find afterwards that the news referred to concerned the

¹ DR. TOYNBEE is Director of Studies in the Royal Institute of International Affairs and Research Professor of International History in the University of London.

Football League. What “The League” means to most people in Great Britain is the Football League. At such moments I have asked myself: “What do I know about the Football League?”. And the answer is: “Very little!”. The slightness of my knowledge about the Football League would seem incredible to the vast majority of my fellow-countrymen. By that, I measure the extent of what this same majority know about the League of Nations.

As a matter of fact, a League of Football Clubs really explains itself. It is obviously a League in which the members get together in order to fight each other. But it is not equally obvious that a League of Nations is a League for fighting one another, especially when the people who advocate it do so very largely on the grounds of peace.

When the project of the Peace Ballot was mooted, there was a certain amount of partisan discussion as to whether a canvass of the electorate on a questionnaire, however drafted, would really throw light on the state of public opinion. I should say that what has happened since shows that there was probably great confusion and fog in the mind of the public as to the real nature of the issues.

I think, therefore, that the first thing one has to deal with is the vagueness of the meaning of the League to the great mass of the electorate of this country. At present, you have got very little leverage on the electorate, because they do not know what you are talking about; and when they are surprised, they get cold feet.

As to what the League means to the Germans, I think that anyone who has talked to Germans of all kinds – Nazis and non-Nazis, good and bad – will have gained an impression that the German public has a clearer, though of course not necessarily a truer, idea of the League than the British public. The main point about the Covenant in German eyes is that it forms part of the Peace Treaty of Versailles and that it is one of the many devices for maintaining the peace settlement which was imposed on the countries defeated in the War of 1914-18. As the Germans see it, the victors imposed peace on their defeated enemies, and, in order to maintain the settlement, decided to rope in outsiders. In German eyes, the Covenant is a kind of device for roping-in people like the Scandinavians, the Dutch and the Swiss – who had kept out

of international affairs during previous centuries and had gone in for neutrality – to keep the peace settlement as the French and British wanted it kept. It is a device, on this view, for enlisting as many people as possible against any attempt at revision, either violent or peaceful, on the part of the formerly defeated states at whose expense the settlement was made.

This view is, of course, extremely unfavourable to the League of Nations, for it represents it as an attempt to defeat Justice, since, according to the Germans, Justice demands a correction of the peace settlement. The League is also, as the Germans see it, an attempt to circumvent Nature; and its “unnaturalness” is a still more serious flaw than its “injustice” since the law of Nature is not fixity but mutability. The Germans will now rub their hands, perhaps, at what they believe – I daresay, prematurely –, to be the breakdown of the League. They will say: “What we expected has happened. The whole peace settlement was foredoomed to crash sooner or later, and the League part of it is crashing with the rest”».

We now come to what the League means to enlightened liberal opinion in the democratic countries. I think that for President Wilson, and for Wilsonians in Europe and overseas, the League is an association of democratic, unaggressive states organised for the purpose of establishing a reign of law and order in the international sphere of social relations which was formerly so anarchic. The League is an attempt to introduce into international relations a law and order and a reasonable measure of justice such as has already been achieved to some degree in the national social life of the more advanced countries of the world to-day.

At first sight that picture looks extraordinarily different from the German picture, but I think that any able German controversialist would probably argue that this Wilsonian liberal definition of the League is really just their own definition dressed up in more high-flown language. We say that the pro-League Powers are democratic and unaggressive; the Germans reply that this is merely because the League Powers happen to be the sated victors of the last war. Again, when we say we want to establish the reign of law and order – and I have no doubt we do – the Germans say: “Yes, but in law and order the law has two aspects; there is the modification and

development and reform of the law, to meet changing circumstances; and then there is the repressive side. You say to us that nobody may alter the law or contravene it until the law is constitutionally changed, and that is all very well; but you have laid all your emphasis so far on this repressive side – on preventing any violent alteration of the status quo or contravention of the law – while you have not cared much for the legislative side, for peaceful change. In terms of the Covenant, Germany and other dissatisfied Powers would say that the League has been unduly keen about Article 16, and unduly indifferent about Article 19².

We now come to the question as to whether the League is a voluntary or a compulsory association. If you look at the German conception of the League and the liberal democratic conception, you will find that they both imply that the League is a compulsory and not a voluntary association. After all, any organisation for the maintenance of any international situation or régime, whether it is simply for the maintenance of the Peace Settlement of 1919, as the Germans say, or whether it is for the reign of law and order, as we say, implies a determination to enforce the Covenant upon recalcitrant parties. And, as a matter of fact, the Covenant provides not merely for the maintenance of this reign of law and order, or this peace settlement, by the coercion of those states that have taken the pledge by becoming members of the League, but also for the compulsory application of the same rules to non-members in their dealings with members. If they decline to abide by these rules, coercive measures are to be applied to non-members as well as to members. It is true that in a dispute between two non-members the League would not attempt to interfere, but it would interfere in a dispute between a member and a non-member; and this would cover the greater part of the field of international relations, at least in theory. You can see from this that the Covenant, as at present conceived,

² *Written comment by* MR. LEONARD WOOLF: «I do not think is very useful to discuss what the League means. It naturally means different things to different people. It is almost impossible to say what it means to such shadowy people as «the general public in this country» or «the Germans».

MR. WOOLF, *Joint Editor of the «Political Quarterly»*, was the principal drafter of the *Plan for a League of Nations put forward by the Fabian Society during the Great War.*

is a compulsory association. If the “revisionist” or “lawless” Power, whichever you like to call him, repudiates and defies the Covenant, we do not say to him: “You are not worthy to be allowed the privilege of keeping the rules of our beautiful Covenant. Kindly go away and follow your own nasty inclinations!”. What we try to do is to say: “The Covenant is law for you as well as for us, and we are going to take steps, if we can, to make you keep it!”. The League is not like a club, in which you allow in the man you like, and keep out the man you don’t like. The purpose of the League is not just social entertainment. It is not exclusive, it does not aim at keeping people out; its object is just the opposite. It is to keep people you do not like in, just because they are not law-abiding and you want to put the screw on them.

Arising out of that, and assuming that the League is a compulsory association, we are led to ask ourselves: “What is the qualification for membership? Is everything that you can call a state in the contemporary world necessarily a member of this compulsory association? Or must a state member be a state of a certain kind?”. Now I do not want to go into the question of universality versus a regional League in the geographical sense, for this will come up for discussion at a later meeting, and it is quite a different question from the one I want to discuss to-night, which is not whether Europe has a greater need of the League organisation than some of the outer regions on the edge of the European world, but rather the question as to what kind of state is by nature a member of an association of this kind. The Covenant itself draws a distinction between communities which are fit to be members and communities, such as the former German colonies, the Arabic-speaking provinces of the pre-War Turkey and so on, which are unable to stand by themselves under the present conditions of the world, and which are therefore to be placed under the tutelage of other states which are capable of independence. On this showing there are states which are fully self-governing in the sense of being able to look after themselves and able to participate in international relations sufficiently to take on the responsibilities of membership, and there are other states which are in a sense not fully sovereign. As a matter of fact, candidates for

admission to membership (though not the original members) have been required to give evidence that they are fully self-governing, not in the sense of having a democratic constitution, but in the sense of having an effective government which is capable of taking its proper share in the activities and responsibilities which League membership involves. I think that this is rather an important point in view of two test cases of the working of the Covenant. As a matter of fact, the two principal challenges to the Covenant have not been of the kind of which Germany is thinking; they have not been attempts on the part of the vanquished states to revise the peace settlement by force. They have been in areas which the peace settlement did not touch, or touched only very slightly and indirectly. They have been attempts on the part of two fully self-governing states to commit aggression against imperfectly self-governing states – Italy against Abyssinia and Japan against China. It has not been a case of the vanquished in the last war against the victors. In each of these cases, it has been the efficient state against the inefficient state. That suggests that although the League may be a compulsory organisation for certain kinds of states, it is not necessarily an inclusive organisation of which every state that calls itself a state should be a member. In both the cases I have quoted, the ineffectiveness of the victim's organisation has been one of the principal excuses of the aggressor, and also one of the principal difficulties confronting the League in trying to frustrate the act of aggression.

Let me now come to the second question: «*What, in international life, is our Paramount Aim?*».

First, is our paramount aim peace? I am sure that the paramount aim of the majority of the people of the world is not peace³, because even if you look at the different currents of opinion in the most democratic and unaggressive states – such as France, Belgium, the Netherlands, the States Members of the British

³ *Written comment by LORD ARNOLD*: «I am convinced that Dr. Toynbee is mistaken when he makes this statement and I should like to recall that Mr. Arthur Henderson used to say that in all matters of peace and disarmament the peoples of Europe and of the world were far in advance of their Governments».

LORD ARNOLD *held the office of Paymaster-General in the 1929-1931 Labour Administration.*

Commonwealth and the United States – you will find that “peace at any price” is the aim of no more than a tiny minority of the population. Or take the Swiss, who prize their traditional neutrality, and who yet take strenuous measures to preserve their national freedom in case they should be attacked.

I do not think that “peace at any price” is practical politics. A small minority of the electorate, it is true, advocate a policy of out-and-out pacifism but, when it comes to the point, I think the majority would prefer to fight, even though they may groan and hate it.

Then is our paramount aim the preservation of our local sovereignty and independence as a national state? I think that in almost every state in the world to-day – not only in the effectively organised ones, but in the inefficient ones also – the feeling in favour of fighting for national self-defence, for actual home territory, is probably strong enough at any rate to compel the Government to try to resist by force of arms a direct attack upon the state’s independent existence. Take two cases, China and Abyssinia. Both of them are rather rudimentary states, with a somewhat uneducated population and very little national unity according to European standards. But in both cases you had fighting. In Abyssinia you had very serious national resistance. Even in China you had quite definite resistance. It looks as if even in the unorganised, politically backward countries the majority of the population would fight in self-defence, in the strict narrow sense of the term self-defence, that is defence against an attack on their own home territory. I leave out the colonial aspect of defence as we may come to that later on.

This suggests, then, that the peoples of the world care more for national independence than for peace. But supposing one grants that premise, one then has to go on to ask if the preservation of parochial sovereign independence is the paramount aim of the states members of the League in subscribing to the Covenant and in trying to make the Covenant work. I think if you look into it, you will see that, so far from the preservation of sovereignty being the main purpose of the Covenant, the devotion of each state member to its own local sovereignty has been one of the principal obstacles to success in making the Covenant work. States whose

paramount aim, or at any rate states whose exclusive aim, was the preservation of their own sovereignty, states who did not look beyond that, would hardly have been willing, even in a moment of enthusiasm immediately after the War, to substitute League membership for the traditional system of competitive national armaments, reinforced by ad hoc alliances – a system which, after all, probably succeeded in giving each sovereign state the highest measure of security which a régime of unshackled parochial sovereignty allowed. If sovereignty is really your paramount aim, then I imagine that you would choose the old pre-League regime. It is perfectly true that one of our difficulties now is that, under the façade of the League, the old system of *ad hoc* alliances and national armaments is going on all the time, and going on more actively than ever. The old system has not been driven off the field. All the same, the fact that the nations have moved away at all from the old system towards the collective system which we have been rather feebly trying to build up shows that their object has not been entirely the preservation of their national sovereignty.

And so I come to the last point which I want to raise in opening this discussion. If our paramount aim is not peace, and is not parochial sovereignty, why have we put our heart into the League? Does the explanation lie in the fact that our paramount aim is the establishment of a reign of law and order in international affairs, such as we try to get in our social relations when they happen to lie inside national frontiers?

In any field of social relations, whether national or international, a reign of law and order implies two things. It implies effective arrangements for preventing any changes by lawless violence in the existing state of law, or in the existing state of affairs; and it also implies – and I think the two things are interconnected in international, as they are in national, affairs – effective arrangements for making peaceful changes in the state of the law or in the state of affairs. These two conditions are complementary to each other and are both indispensable for keeping the law.

I should like to suggest – as a controversial starting-point for our discussion – that this has been our paramount aim in first helping to found, and then trying to work and preserve, the League of Nations,

But if this really has been our paramount aim, the history of the last sixteen years, since the Covenant came into force, shows that we have hardly begun to face up to the implications of the aim we have set ourselves. For the determination to prevent changes by lawless violence implies readiness to go to war, collectively, for the purpose of frustrating aggression, while at the same time renouncing war as an instrument of national policy. We have got to give up war for all the purposes for which sovereign communities have fought since war has been in existence, but we have still got to be willing to accept the risks and the losses of war for a purpose for which hitherto people have never thought of fighting. That is a tremendous change of ideas and of values which we have hardly begun to take in, let alone work out, in our own feelings and outlook and policy.

Secondly, I think that a willingness to make effective arrangements for peaceful changes in the existing state of the law or in the existing state of affairs implies a readiness to surrender the traditional sovereignty of the state by allowing the organs of the League or of any collective world organisation – a community which in any case will be far wider than any single national state – to take binding decisions that may affect the states members' vital interests and even their territorial integrity.

Abyssinia, for example, would have accepted a modicum of territorial cession to Italy if Italy on her side had been willing to accept that form of settlement, and that would have been a settlement— involving territorial change – which would have been made not by Abyssinia herself but by an international body, the Council of the League or one of its Committees. On the other hand, a nation which was stronger or more highly organised would probably have shown a determination to fight for its existence rather than surrender any of its home territory at all.

There you have the issue. If you are going to accept peaceful change, you have got to be willing to allow the interests of even the more highly organised nations to

come under the binding decision of some international body in which participating nations will have a share but not necessarily the controlling voice. If our paramount aim is really the establishment of a reign of law and order, it implies that in international affairs we must be prepared to make sacrifices. We must educate ourselves to be willing to make them. Are we prepared to do this? Do we mean business to any degree worth considering – that is, to the degree of giving the thing a chance of success? So far we have not begun to answer that question. Unless we make these changes in our outlook and in our state of mind, the failures will be flagrantly repeated and the whole thing will drop to pieces in our hands. We are faced to-day with this unpleasant alternative.

APPENDIX

TOYNBEE'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE GENERAL DISCUSSION ON «SHOULD THE MEMBERSHIP AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE LEAGUE BE EXTENDED OR RESTRICTED?», OPENED BY G. M. GATHORNE-HARDY

I think the Italian case shows the strength of the universal scheme. It seems to me that what really sent the Italians to fight Abyssinia was two things done by North American countries. The first was in 1927 when the Italians raised the point of access to raw materials and the Canadian delegate stamped on it; and the second was the passing of the two American Immigration Acts of 1921 and 1924 which produced this mass of baulked young men in Italy who had to be turned to something, good or bad.

On the other hand, I think there is an enormously strong case for special effort in Europe. Taking up Mr. Horsfall Carter's point that by Europe we mean something very real in terms of power, we may say that we are at point-blank range of each other in terms of air power. The United States and Japan may blow up to a fight, but they are at much more comfortable range from each other. But Europe consists of countries in which a dictator can show himself to all the population in the course of a week and talk to audiences face to face; countries which are highly organised. It is also a region in which the battlefield happens to be inhabited by people on whom the whole world still depends for maintaining and creating a civilisation, because certainly General Smuts would not have said that civilisation had yet flowed away from Europe. As far as original thought, spiritual ideas, and artistic creation are concerned, surely Europe is part of the world still? And therefore it is a region especially to be preserved as being especially in danger. I think that is on everybody's mind, including the dictators'.

Now the most melancholy thing about these different alternatives for securing peace in Europe is that they all seem to end up in some combination against one of these five Powers. Mr. Brand analysed our European League, when you get down to it, as an encirclement of Germany by perhaps all the other four. Now that is what we get to if we take our standpoint in London. If we take our standpoint in Berlin and see how the Germans envisage the unity of Europe, we see it as Hitler sees it – as a Europe in which Russia is the great enemy. His League ends in combination against Russia. The trouble is that Hitler's price for the unification and security of Europe is German hegemony in Europe. He is going to be the Big Boy who defends us all against communism. His price is, I suppose, a big whack out of Russia. On the other hand, our League includes Russia, and is perhaps largely moved by fear of Germany.

So my trouble here is that all these kinds of formations we are trying to get in Europe to deal with the special problem of five great Powers, jammed up together at bombing range, seem to land you in a combination of four against one. It is interesting that the particular two against whom the alternative combinations are directed are Russia and Germany. Does not that point to the fact that we are afraid of violent instead of peaceful solutions of the problems of Europe if those two single Powers are going to master and organise Europe by force?

Personally, what I am most appalled at the present moment is seeing the English and the French letting go the rudder and leaving it to be a question of whether it is the Germans or the Russians who will dominate us all.