

JHW

APR 24 1951

Tuesday, January 2, 1951

Professor and Mrs. Arnold Toynbee

AT and Mrs. T came in to follow up the questions raised in their correspondence, which is attached.

Their seventh and eighth books of "A Study of History" are complete. The ninth and last book is five-eighths complete. They expect to finish in about six months. With indexing and publication, it will take perhaps eighteen months. They are deeply grateful for the acceleration of their program which the Foundation grant made possible. They consider the Institute for Advanced Study the best place in the world that they know of in which to do their kind of writing.

Their next scholarly ventures are perfectly clear in their minds. They wish first to carry out a brief task that was laid upon them by Gilbert Murray in 1914. AT's original intention was to write a mainly political history of the Greek states down to the Peloponnesian War. Now AT plans to give almost as much attention to economics as to politics, and at least as much to philosophy and religion, and plans to treat the thousand years between the end of the Peloponnesian War and the break-up of the Roman Empire as fully as the seven hundred years between the first emergence of the Hellenic Civilisation out of the ruins of the Minoan Civilisation and the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. He plans to call this work "The Rise and Fall of the Hellenic Civilisation." AT's desire to do this was pointed up by a sentence in the address by General George Marshall at Princeton University a year or so ago, in which he said that it is not possible for anyone to comprehend the present issues between Russia and the United States unless they had studied the Peloponnesian War and the developments that followed. This task is all clear in T's mind and will not take a long time.

The other task is a more ambitious one, even though it too would eventuate in only one volume. The second task is described in the attached recent letter and would be a history of religion in human affairs. This would mean picturing it as a social institution among social institutions and also as a device to meet the personal need of human beings. The plan of the work is set out in the attached documentation.

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AT is not inclined to accept the invitation from the University of Chicago to become a member of their Committee on Social Thought. Just as he feared to take the Regius Professorship of History at Cambridge University (which is the top Chair of History in the British Empire and was held by Lord Acton and by Trevelyan), he fears that his chance to write and study, which is the prime purpose of his life, would be diminished. What he would like to do is to remain in England attached to Chatham House, from which his salary comes, and then come over to the United States for about three months each year (with Mrs. Toynbee, who is his chief research assistant) and really get on with their writing.

I told AT that since the drive and sharpness of their efforts had put through their "A Study of History" a year ahead of the planned schedule, I would explore what possibilities there were for a grant in aid for one additional term of three months at the Institute for Advanced Study. I told him that we were not in a position to recommend a continuance of the present arrangement for the rest of his days. Then I told him that I was interested to hear more of his proposed study, "Religio Historici." He says that possibly barring a work by Hocking, there is no adequate study of religion. There are many histories of separate religions but none of religion as a social institution among social institutions and also as something that responds to a deeply felt human need. He believes that the production of such a study would set religion in a perspective that it does not now have. He did not say so, but I think he felt that such a study could not come from any of the "religionists" themselves. For this purpose he needs no funds, but he is very greatly interested in a grant which would permit him and Mrs. Toynbee to come to the Institute for Advanced Study for three months out of the year during the period of the preparation of this book. His reasons are these:

1. The IAS affords the best combination of freedom and stimulus in the world for the kind of reflective task he wants to do.

2. AT views his life's work, both past and future, as basically a study of human relations and of the bases upon which men as individuals and in groups can work together constructively. He feels that there is more likelihood of that task being achieved in the United States than in any other part of the world. With all its naivete, it has vigor and a willingness to adventure, and its power is obvious. So AT hopes to continue a participant contact with this country and would expect to get as well as give from his continued contact with our culture.

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AT will discuss his plans with Ivison Macadam upon his return and will write the results of that talk. I told him that I would discuss this with CBF and CIB, that the logical locus of his interests in the Foundation was with Humanities, and that the results of the deliberations and the decision as to where his work and interest would rest in the future would be communicated to him.

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