



4-1-2012

The 1961 Conference of the ISCSC: Notes and Summaries

Michael Palencia-Roth
University of Illinois

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/ccr>

Recommended Citation

Palencia-Roth, Michael (2012) "The 1961 Conference of the ISCSC: Notes and Summaries," *Comparative Civilizations Review*: Vol. 66 : No. 66 , Article 10.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/ccr/vol66/iss66/10>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Comparative Civilizations Review* by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

The 1961 Conference of the ISCSC: Notes and Summaries

Michael Palencia-Roth
University of Illinois

Introductory observation: It was at this 1961 conference in Salzburg, Austria, that Arnold Toynbee, Pitirim Sorokin, Othmar Anderle and others founded the ISCSC. Sorokin became its first president. After a couple of meetings, the Society experienced financial and organizational difficulties; because of that, Anderle sought in 1968 to transfer the Society to the USA. The transfer was successfully accomplished in 1971 through the efforts of Roger Wescott, Benjamin Nelson (the first American president), Vytautas Kavolis, Matthew Melko, David Wilkinson, Robert Park, and C.P. Wolf.

The American incarnation of the ISCSC, begun in 1971, has continued without interruption to the present day.

This summary of the 1961 conference was begun in the spring of 2009, left unfinished in June 2009, and then finished in May and August 2011. *The Problems of Civilizations* is a trilingual text (English, French, and German), most of it not translated except for brief summaries of discussions. I have translated and paraphrased from each original language. The language of each speaker is identified at the end of this document. The use of quotations indicates an exact citation.

This summary should be read in conjunction with my essay, "On Giants' Shoulders: The 1961 Salzburg Meeting of the ISCSC," *Civilization in Crisis: Proceedings of the 39th International Conference of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations*. Edited by Laina Farhat-Holzman and Thomas Rienzo (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 2009), pp. 58-73.

Anderle, Othmar F. *The Problems of Civilizations: Report of the First Synopsis Conference of the S.I.E.C.C.* Salzburg, 8-15 October 1961. The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1964.

SIECC = Société Internationale pour les Études Comparées des Civilisations
[International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations]

pp. 5-6 -- **Preface by Pitirim Sorokin**, as President.

Two different lines of study have developed in recent years. One is the “microsociological” approach, or the study of small groups and smallest social units. The other is the “macrosociological” and “macrohistorical” approach, which study “cultural wholes” (5).

Cultural wholes: “N. Danilevsky calls them ‘the culture-historical types’; O. Spengler terms them ‘the High Cultures’ (die Hochkulturen); A. Toynbee refers to them as ‘the civilizations’ or ‘the units and intelligible fields of historical study’; A.L. Kroeber, as ‘the high-value culture patterns’; N. Berdyaev, as ‘the great cultures’; F.S.C. Northrop, as ‘cultural systems’ or ‘the world cultures’; I call them ‘the social and the cultural supersystems’. Whatever the name, all investigators of these vast ‘sociocultural continents agree in that *they* are real, causal-meaningful wholes, different from the state, or the nation or any other social group. Ordinarily, the boundaries of such a cultural entity transcend the geographical boundaries of national or political or religious or racial or ethnic groups” (5).

The investigators agree, moreover, that these “civilizations” or “cultural supersystems” are like deep ocean currents that determine the patterns and intensity of the cultural waves on the surface (5).

At this critical point in human history, knowledge of “the structural and dynamic properties of ‘civilizations’ or ‘great cultures’ has become particularly urgent for the very survival of the human race as well as for continuation of its creative history.” Hence, the establishment of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations and the first congress devoted to the ‘basic problems’ of civilizations or *Hochkulturen* (6).

This volume of the proceedings gives a somewhat abbreviated account but it also should give a good idea of the prevalent views on civilizations and cultural systems, as well as the points of agreement or disagreement. "It is hoped that the second and subsequent congresses of the society will substantially develop each of the main problems discussed in this volume" (6).

Sorokin thanks UNESCO Paris, the Austrian UNESCO Commission, the governments of Salzburg as city and region, and the patron of the society, Dr. Eli Lilly, who gave generously for the publication of this volume. [End of Preface]

From the last page of the book, following p. 460:

Main topics for discussions in each of the six successive days, with Thursday as a rest day:

- 1) Monday, 9 October: The reality of civilizations
- 2) Tuesday, 10 October: The study of civilizations
- 3) Wednesday, 11 October: Civilizational encounters
- 4) Friday, 13 October: The problem of universal history
- 5) Saturday, 14 October: The future of civilizations
- 6) Sunday, 15 October: ONE WORLD: The contribution of the human sciences to the peaceful unification of humanity.

pp. 13-37 -- **Einführung [Introduction] by Othmar E. Anderle:**

Anderle begins by quoting Lao-Tzu (or Lao-tse), “The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.” This congress is the first step of a possibly very long journey, a journey for which we have a sense of the direction. However, nobody knows its outcome. Like all such journeys, it entails great risks, for many reasons (13).

It was unclear that many scholars would accept the invitation to come to the conference. The questions that concern us here have long been a part of both public and private discussions. However, “die Wissenschaft” [that is, formal academic discipline] has been skeptical toward analyzing these problems or even downright hostile. That is understandable because in no other field of study does the dilettante and littérateur consider himself to be in his element. Self-respect discourages entering the field of competition with such contestants (13). This does not alter the fact, however, that the problematic itself is vital and that it belongs to a legitimate field of study (13-14).

Because our times have been poised at the edge of an immeasurable abyss during the thousand wounds of the Second World War, we feel justified in demanding of this field of study that it lead to the instruction, enlightenment, and the illumination of situations as pre-requisites for significant decisions, significant actions, and life-enhancing behaviors or attitudes (14).

For good or ill, we have to take up the struggle against the littérateurs and the dilettantes. The main danger or risk in the integrative and interdisciplinary way of posing the questions is that it pushes prematurely toward synopsis (14). But synopsis is necessary if one is going to consider cultures as a whole. Yet individual disciplines are resistant to synopses because such disciplines are biased toward the concrete.

There is also a risk in how the congress has been organized because we have not followed the usual pattern of finished papers being delivered one after the other; rather, we have opted for panels and round-table discussions. We thus have opted for a freer and more open congress. Because of its form, this congress is unique in the history of learned societies and therefore “path breaking” (16).

The problematic of “high cultures” or civilizations also has its history (17).

“As is commonly known, the consideration of world history from the perspective of “high cultures” began with Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) (17). To be sure, Vico did not use the term ‘civilization’ to mean ‘high culture’; rather he spoke of ‘the people’ and of ‘nations’. Vico was the first cultural ‘morphologist’ in that he was less interested in the ‘what’ than in the ‘how.’ Vico tried to move the focus from ‘the nation’ to ‘the

culture', in pursuit of a more holistic approach to history and historical change. This conception of history 'went underground' (18) after Vico and surfaced only periodically in figures like Karl Friedrich Vollgraff (d. 1863), Ernst von Lasaulx (d. 1861), Nikolaj Jakowlewitsch Danilewskij (d. 1861), as well as in essays by Alexis de Tocqueville, Juan Donosco Cortés, and Jacob Burckhardt (18).

For many centuries, the West had viewed its history in terms of national history and had forgotten to view it as a whole. The last common threat from the outside was the Turkish siege of Vienna in 1683. The idea of 'Europe' became identified with 'civilization', and both became identified with 'Christianity' (19). Although these identifications were value-driven, the main accent lay with the civilized-noncivilized polarity, not with the West-Nonwest one. These polarities were not the same.

It took the two wars of the 20th century for the West to realize that it was threatened as a whole and that the old equivalence of West and Christianity was no longer valid. The result was in some ways a change in consciousness from a national orientation to a broader more cultural one. Spengler was instrumental in this change of consciousness (20-21).

In terms of scholarly activity, a number of practitioners of holistic history did not come from the established disciplines but rather from outsiders and loners. Charlatans also entered this field of activity. The reaction from the academy was one of scorn, silence, ridicule, and downright discrimination. From the other side, the outsiders often did battle against 'official' and 'academic' study, declaring it to be overspecialized, self indulgent, small minded and blind toward the large defining questions (21).

The main issue of the conflict between the two sides was the question of "integration," namely how the parts fit into the whole and vice versa. The question was whether one built one's analysis from the parts to get to the whole or from the whole down to the parts (22).

The question of the threats to our culture [by this Anderle means *Abendland*, the West] has a number of facets, both inner and outer. Inner: structural change, new orders, social questions, the challenge of technology, the religious problem. Outer: the relationship of our culture to other cultures, which culminates in the problem of colonialism, and then in decolonization. The issue that overshadows all others is the relationship of the "free" West to the communist East (das Verhältnis des 'freien' Abendlandes zum kommunistischen Osten), specifically the Soviet Union. Is the issue, as some would have it, that of the conflict between the kingdom of Satan or the Antichrist and that of the children of God? Is it a question of one ideology against another or the conflict between two social and economic systems? Alternatively, is it a question simply of two political power groups? (24)

Is the Soviet Union a culture in the process of the being born (*in statu nascendi*--Spengler) or is it a particular and newly developing member of our own culture? [Abendland] (25)

Given this enormous abyss between the “new thought in terms of cultural patterns” and the traditional specialized and concentrated disciplines, it is an accomplishment of the first order to be able to get such extraordinary scholars together in order to discuss ‘the problems of civilizations’. All this is a promising development for the study of cultures (25).

The first series of questions [for the first day] concerns the “reality” of high cultures (civilizations, civilizations). Is there such a reality and how does that reality come about? In addition, how should we define “high culture” in order to make it coincide with that reality? Are high cultures primarily structures, processes, actions, accomplishments, units of sense, abstract systems, essences? How are they to be differentiated over and against cultures that are more primitive? What are the boundaries between them and the worlds around them temporally and geographically? In any case, cultures are highly complex structures, that is to say ‘processes’. Are they the result of accumulated occurrences or of some kind of patterned organization? (26)

A second series of questions, related to the first, is that of the methodology of the research into high cultures. Such research requires more complex methodologies, not simply different methodologies (26).

There is not a single high culture, but a number of them, and that of course is related to the question of encounters between and among them. How do cultures actually make contact with one another? Are cultures windowless monads or does contact with another culture lead to a give-and-take? What does the study of the past teach us about the present? (27)

The concept of “high culture” has become the dominant historical-sociological category (27).

The problem of Universal History is the following: it may be nothing more than the total biography of high culture, as Spengler said (28).

The question of universal history is also linked to that of the future of high cultures. What kind of future does the West have? Does the type “High Culture” have a future or is it dying? Is the time of high cultures over and are we standing at the threshold of a global world culture? (28)

The “One World” problematic has a special relationship with “thinking in cultures”: namely, that it threatens to do away with the problematic entirely. That cannot be

surprising, for the stronger the vision of a single humanity, the weaker is the emphasis on the differences that separate cultures from one another. Whereas in times gone by the dominant ideology and view of history came from Christianity; then it came from nationalism; recently it has come from culture; and now the dominant view comes from humanity itself. If thinking in cultures is already a bit passé, then isn't the problematic of high cultures also already a bit outmoded, also something like yesterday's news? One must deal with this as a possibility (29).

It is possible that the West's embrace of the one-world vision is nothing more than a compensation --and justification-- for its own loss of the hegemonic position in the world. Such an embrace will only accelerate the progress toward one-world and will result in the enforced suicide of the West (30).

Of course, it cannot be the task of congresses to treat the problematic of high cultures exhaustively or to look for completely valid solutions for specific areas. Rather, such congresses should bring together scholars from both areas of interest, the panoramic and the detailed, as well as encourage international and interdisciplinary cooperation (30).

Even on the first substantive day of the congress, the concept of "High Culture" could not be satisfactorily defined, and yet, despite all the disagreements, there was unanimity among the participants in speaking about high cultures as particularly distinct, historico-socio-cultural manifestations. There was general agreement that Toynbee's concept of cultures as "intelligible fields of study" was useful. However, the issue of the stock-taking of high cultures was neglected for lack of time (31).

On the second day of the congress, which dealt with the study of civilizations, there was common agreement that this problem called for the integration of individual fields of study. However, everyone also agreed that one could not simply add different methodologies together in order to reach the goal of an integrated field of study. The difficulty, everyone agreed, lay in HOW the different methodologies were going to be integrated. Anderle introduced the concept of "holistic integration" into the debate and recommended it for particular cases in which the integration problem concerned whole structures (31-32).

For this second day, also, the issue of cultures as totalities or not became a particularly difficult question.

In addition, the same question again made its presence felt at the opening of the third day, on intercivilizational encounters. The issue came down to how cultures interacted, either as wholes or in parts. Swiftly, consensus was reached that the concept of monadic cultures in Spengler's sense should be put to one side. That is, cultures did not encounter each other as wholes. Many of the participants in the discussion brought up individual

cases in which only a part of a culture (say a traveler or an educational system or a missionary incursion) encountered another culture (32-33).

As was to be expected, the concept of intercivilizational encounters came up again in the session on Russia and its particular place between East and West. The issue was not one of communism *per se* but rather Russia as alien to the West, or as a convergent even heretical variant of the West (Sorokin, Toynbee, Romein). All this led, of course, to the issue of the final day, the One World issue or that of a unified humanity (33).

But before we got to that, we had to concern ourselves with the problematics of the next day, the problem of Universal History (34).

One question was whether or not there are culturally transcendent powers that gave universal history sense. And if so, which ones? In addition, there was strong unanimity that religion was one such culturally transcendent power. Some questioned the extent to which one could talk about a religious “metahistory”. Because, however, this was not a congress of theologians but of cultural historians, other factors were brought into the mix, such as geographical determinism, metahistorical or ideographical perspectives. It was agreed that a universal history that corresponded to new aspects and new approaches to history was one of the most pressing intellectual matters of our time. Although no solutions to the problems were found, it was agreed that we should continue searching for solutions (35-35).

As impressive as the debate was on universal history, a new high point was reached with the debate on the future of civilizations. We started by asking to what extent historical prognostication [what some might call futuristics] could be a *Wissenschaft*, that is, have a certain scientific validity. Anderle proposed that such prognostication be restricted to “holistic” structures and aspects and not to details. This proposal found much agreement. Then the question was raised, whether “wholeness” referred to a partial closedness of a culture or to a specific wholeness quality concerning cultural processes, which were themselves modified by other criteria of wholeness. Anderle objected to the watering down of the concept of wholeness, and so two opposing viewpoints were aired, without being resolved: the wholeness concept must be utilized in a strict sense when speaking of cultural morphologies; or it must not (35).

Members of the congress in general were convinced that we were historically at the end of the epoch of high cultures and humanity was entering a new epoch, that of One World, and that this transition should influence our behavior in a variety of fields: culture, society, politics, and religion. In addition, this conviction led naturally to the desire that our discipline, the comparative study of civilizations, be of use in the peaceful unification of humankind. There was general agreement that the fate of human beings could be manipulated, in a general sort of way, and that it was possible to steer people in a certain direction. Because of the development of technology and the atom

bomb, humanity was psychologically prepared to accept as a fact the slogan “one world or no world”. It is the task of science, in particular the human sciences, to awaken humankind to the consciousness of this kind of responsibility. Both Sorokin and Toynbee were strong on this point, but they also had to contend with dissenting opinions from the audience, people who complained, warned, doubted but were still hopeful. All this left a deep impression, as it concerned two of the most honored figures among contemporary scholars (36).

This note of “personal engagement” left a deep impression on everyone. Although from the beginning to the end of the congress, the “factual” was always part of the discussions, there was something else, which was also present: an inescapable tone of an inner participation (and commitment). There was the sense that although the congress was through and through “scientific”, it was also concerned with the contemporary world. This is why President Sorokin, in his closing address, said the following: “This is the first International Scientific Congress for the Comparative Study of Civilization which has taken place in human history. . . We have made something unique and for the first time After the seven days of discussion everyone of us has become aware, that it is exactly those problems . . . that are on the agenda of history and that their scientific comprehension is perhaps the most important task of today’s and the future’s social sciences” (37).

The society that was brought into existence by this congress can see in these remarks not only a justification but also the encouragement to pursue the “most important task” which is the comparative study of civilizations. [End of the **Einführung**]

pp. 39-42 -- **Gesamtbericht über den Verlauf des Kongresses (General report on the course of the congress):**

The first “Synopsiskongress der Internationalen Gesellschaft für Vergleichende Kulturforschung” took place from the 8-15 October 1961 in Salzburg. The meeting was dedicated to the problematics of high cultures. More than 200 people took part; of those 200, there were scholars in academic positions from 13 different countries: Belgium, West Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, the People’s Republic of China, the Netherlands, Austria, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States.

The congress was organized by Othmar F. Anderle, with the principal assistance of the Austrian UNESCO commission. The ceremonial opening on the 8th of October was presided over by the president, Pitirim A. Sorokin. The official work of the congress began on Monday, the 9th of October. Each day was devoted to a main topic, divided into five discussion circles, concluding with a roundtable discussion by the main participants of the day so that tentative general observations could be made. This way of proceeding pleased the participants, for it also allowed interventions from the audience.

There was simultaneous translation into German, English, and French.

Because of the constant and cordial contact among the participants, because of the atmosphere, by the end of the congress everyone felt like part of a large family (einer großen Familie).

The congress was enhanced by the presence of the two most honored and prominent participants, P.A. Sorokin and A.J. Toynbee. Also unusual was the emphasis on “Denken in Kulturen” (thinking in cultures) as the main approach. It was agreed that a “new ethos” was needed for a new type of scholarly activity, all of which would take some time to develop. [End of **Gesamtbericht**]

pp. 45-96 -- **Day 1: Monday, 9 October: The ‘reality’ of civilizations, chaired by Othmar F. Anderle.**

4 sections:

- 1) Civilizations as ‘intelligible fields of study (Toynbee)
- 2) The definition of the phenomenon of ‘civilization’
- 3) An inventory of civilizations
- 4) Questions and responses

Anderle begins the session by reading some congratulatory telegrams, among them one from “Albert Schweitzer aus Lambarene”, who sends his regrets for not being able to attend the session because of the amount of work he has in Africa (Lambarene) (46).

He says, however, that he does not believe that Hochkulturen truly exist (46), and that in our cultures today, such high cultures are “underdeveloped” (46).

Professor Fischer writes from the behind the Iron Curtain, in French, that he regrets not being able to attend but goes on to say how important the entire initiative is and that in order for it to succeed, there must be peace, for it is only peace that guarantees the survival of our civilization, even of existence itself (47).

Sir Isaiah Berlin sends his regrets but in a long statement praises the conference and says that it is high time that in the 20th century we students of civilizations realize that no single “mode of behavior or culture has a monopoly, whether of wisdom or of fault, either of virtue or of vice” (48). Also, we must realize the unconscious sources of many things that we take to be objectively right and that this realization should make us more humble and more respectful of the truth. All this, also, should increase our tolerance for other cultures and reduce nationalistic fervor (48). He hopes for a “saner and more peaceful world” (48). He asks that the principles of tolerance, humility, the respect for truth, skepticism, and objectivity “commend themselves to the very distinguished scholars, all far more distinguished than myself, who are to deal with these problem” (48).

Several other scholars send their congratulations, after which Anderle praises the fruitfulness of Toynbee’s definition of civilizations as “intelligible fields of study” and asks Toynbee to be the first to speak (50).

Toynbee begins by saying that the German language has a useful distinction that English does not have, namely the difference between “Kultur” and “Zivilisation”. He follows Spengler in saying that Zivilisation has a somewhat derogatory meaning, for it refers to the merely material apparatus of Kultur, Zivilisation then being a later stage in the life

history of a culture, that is, a culture in decline. In English and French, when we say “civilization”, we mean “Hochkultur” (50-51).

He then describes how he arrived at the conception of civilizations as “intelligible fields of study”. The human mind cannot grasp the whole of reality in a single act of perception and so must break it down into its fragments. And then, bit by bit reassemble those fragments into a whole. A civilization is the largest such whole that can be usefully analyzed. Historians have been misled by studying “states” or “nations” and thus much of history is oriented toward the history of nations. But anthropologists, for instance, do not study nations but “cultures in the sense of the totality of life, in all its aspects and activities, in the particular communities in question” (52). So Graeco-Roman or Sumerian cultures are approached as wholes. Similarly, after the first century of the Common Era, western culture up to about 1700 can be studied as a whole, and that whole as equivalent to the history of Christendom. Jewish civilization and Graeco-Roman civilization are in the background of western civilization. There are relatively few such cultures, whereas there are many nations. And nations themselves, e.g. England, cannot be understood entirely within their own geographical limits. One has to go to Rome, Palestine and the entire Mediterranean in order to understand England (53).

When one is speaking of social or economic history, for instance, then “Hochkulturen” make sense as intelligible fields of study, but if one is speaking of the history of religion, then it is impossible to keep it within a single “Hochkultur”. Christianity encompasses Jewish civilization, Graeco-Roman civilization, and Western Europe.

Sorokin answers Toynbee: There are two main approaches to the study of civilizations. The one is that represented by Danilewskij, Spengler, and Toynbee, which tries to define “intelligible fields of study,” identify civilizations as a “spatially bounded entity somehow located within a part of the population occupying certain territory” (54). This conception of civilization manifests itself in a concern to classify civilizations: Danilewskij’s nine different types; Spengler’s Apollonian, Magian, Faustian and so on; Toynbee’s 21 or 26 different civilizations.

A second approach does not try so much to locate and classify civilizations; rather it disregards “the spatial distribution of civilizations” (54) and “tries to find in the total human universe of social and cultural phenomena main systems of high cultures or high civilizations as a unified body, in which each important part is interdependent and dependent on other parts, each part depends upon its whole and the whole depends upon its parts” (54-55). This second approach is illustrated by F.C. Northrop “in his fundamental division of two types of civilization, in his terminology “aesthetic and theoretic” or by the anthropologist A. Kroeber, who looks at “master types or patterns of civilization” (55).

“My own approach also belongs to this type. Namely, I am not so much interested whether a given individual civilization is located at a given historical moment within a given part of the human population. What I am interested in, rightly or wrongly, is studying an enormous number of social groups and an enormous number of various cultural systems that include scientific, philosophical and aesthetical, ethical, juridical and other systems.” These may be combined, summed up, into giant “Cultural Super-Systems”, which are vast *Ganzheiten* made up of many small and big systems, “unified into one causal, meaningful unity” (55).

Despite the differences in the two approaches, they agree on the following.

- First, civilizations or cultural super-systems “live and function” as real unities which are not identified with the state, the nation or any other social group.
- Second, their total number in the entire history of human culture is very small: 9, 10, or 21 “civilizations”; two, three, or five cultural super-systems.
- Third, each of these types is different from the others on the basis of some major premise or philosophical presupposition or (to use Spengler’s term) a prime symbol.
- Fourth, each of the great civilizations or cultural super-systems is aesthetically or logically consistent in its component parts.
- Fifth, each of these great unities is grounded in empirical reality and structured as a meaningful causal or holistic unity.
- Sixth, in terms of their general characteristics, civilizations or cultural super-systems tend to accept what is congenial to them and to reject what is not (56).

A. Hilckman, director of an institute for the comparative study of cultures at the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, answers both Toynbee and Sorokin in a lengthy speech (57-61). He advances a definition of “Kultur” as the “totality of human activity” “*Gesamtweise des Menschseins*” (60) and a definition of “civilization” as a specific kind of human activity, as a “*Sonderkultur*”.

I. Olagüe, as a historian of Spanish decadence, also responds (61-69). He says that there is a great deal of confusion about the terms “culture” and “civilization,” that culture is a part of civilization, that there can be several cultures within one civilization. No culture dies completely but instead is absorbed into a larger pattern of development.

J. Vogt speaks from the perspective of an historian of antiquity. He goes into the history of the study of “Hochkultur” as an academic discipline, something that begins with J.G. Herder, progresses through the 19th century and culminates with Spengler and Toynbee. He considers Hilckman’s definition of “culture” to be too vague and too inclusive (71). Says that the concept of “high civilization” is a useful one, for it implies the existence of writing (which unites the past with a future), the state, the independence of creative personalities, action in history that is intentional and conscious (73).

H. Kühn, specialist in prehistory, says that there are three basis criteria for high civilization: writing, cities, and commerce. He opposes the separation between pre-history and history, saying that the two are separated less in kind than in degree (77).

J. Vogt (82-84) breaks in to say that it is easy to have agreement on the major characteristics (writing, cities, commerce) of major civilizations, but the picture is cloudier when we look at cultures that are obviously not major: Mesopotamian, Hittite. When do these cultures begin and when do they end? Or take the example of Syrian culture and its daughter cultures of Iran and Arabia. At what point do we say that Syrian culture stops and the other cultures begin? The theory of civilizational beginnings and endings is all well and good, but we need practical markers, concrete historical points so that we can study these transitions scientifically.

H, Kühn responds by saying that he was not so much concerned to talk about the differences within individual civilizations but rather the demarcations that separated civilizations from cultures. And, in his view, it is cities, writing and commerce that separate civilizations from cultures, or “Hochkultur” from what is not “Hochkultur”.

When we inquire after the fundamental properties of high cultures we realize, says F. Schachermeyr, that they are dynamic, that we’re speaking of “process” and that without a process of development, no high culture can come about, can exist (85).

I. Olagüe attempts to define civilization (88-91). He concludes: “une civilisation est un ensemble d’idées-forces, conçues para une société et qui, héritées, transformées ou récemment créées, composent un tout en fonction du cadre géographique environnant, à un moment donné de l’évolution historique” (91).

I. Olagüe asks what he terms an innocent question that may focus the discussion: “Is a civilization the product of a society or not”? (95)

pp. 97-169 -- **Day 2: Tuesday, 10 October. The study of civilizations, chaired by Ignacio Olagüe.**

Four sections:

- 5) The problem of synopsis and of interdisciplinary synthesis
- 6) Summation and teamwork, induction and statistics
- 7) Holistic integration (the analysis of structure)
- 8) The possibilities of international and interdisciplinary cooperation

Anderle opens the discussion on Day 2 by asking how it is that we come to study civilizations. It is the work of a lifetime to come to know only one civilization. Therefore, when one tries to add a second civilization to that, in order to engage in comparative civilization analysis, one is engaging in an impossible task. And yet the knowledge of two civilizations is not enough to support the comparative study of civilizations. Even Toynbee is aware of these gigantic difficulties. A partial solution to these difficulties is to do research in teams. Another is to seek interdisciplinary teams (98-101).

Toynbee answers: "I have had a certain experience of these problems. . . . I think Eduard Meyer was probably the last historian who was able to have first-hand experience of several cultures. Ed. Meyer had some knowledge of Egyptology. He could read some Egyptian hieroglyphs. He had also some knowledge of Assyriology, and of course he was completely at home in Greek and Roman studies. This gave him a first-hand multiple basis for studying, not indeed the history of all civilizations, but simply the Ancient History of the western part of the Old World, west of India, which is a very small part of the history of civilizations."

However, it would be, Toynbee says, a *reductio ad absurdum* to be stifled by the advance of knowledge to restrict ourselves to the extent that we refuse to take "a holistic view." Toynbee says that it is "essential that a synoptic student should have thorough detailed knowledge at least in a single field." In this case, if one is master of "the first-hand information" of one's field, then one is more likely to be able to distinguish, in other fields, "between more reliable and less reliable sources of information" (102). The accident of his birth and education, Toynbee says, has made him knowledgeable in Greek, Latin, and in western civilization generally. If he had been born and raised in China, then his perspective would have come from Chinese. This kind of limitation is inevitable. One should try to take remedies against this problem, not simply declare it unsolvable.

As far as the question of teamwork is concerned, it is possible to produce a work from a unified point of view if there are two authors only. But if there is a large group of

authors, then such unity is impossible to achieve. The analogy is, “no committee has ever written a poem” (103).

Olagüe responds that everyone is being too pessimistic and that we should take as our models those investigators of natural history of the 19th century who went ahead with studying individual species despite the fact that they were overwhelmed by the number of new species being discovered in their day. In every case, they sought to relate the new species to the known or familiar ones. In other words, they thought in terms of structures that were already present. Civilizationists should do the same (103-104).

M. Rassem (104-109) discusses the issues of synthesis, teamwork, cooperation etc. as problems limited by the individual human minds that deal with them. Civilizations can be misunderstood because people are not capable of understanding them properly. But we must also remember that there is no thought that is not also at the same time at least implicitly a theory or a philosophy of history. And any such theory is nurtured by the collective knowledge of a culture.

I. Olagüe answers that it is impossible for any one person know everything there is to know in his culture. Even Aristotle did not know everything, and Ptolemy did not visit every city for which he derived coordinates. A major problem for civilizationists is that our knowledge of cultures will always be incomplete, and many cultures that we deal with have many gaps, some of which will never be filled by documentation. If all this is true in the case of western cultures, it is even truer in the case of the antiquity of certain Asian cultures like India and China. It is enormously difficult to arrive at a historical synthesis of these cultures, or even to synthesize the current state of their sciences. So let us rather have perhaps more modest research goals and let us study materials that are more concrete. For instance, it would be most interesting to study the production of food in different cultures, different diets, whether vegetarian or carnivorous (India or the West), and what those diets, studied from comparative civilizational perspectives, call tell us about culture, about health, about biology (109-110).

Sorokin says: “By synthesis, I mean not ideographic description of various civilizations, of various historic events, but the nomothetic discovery, formulation and proof of a uniformity given in various societies in various periods, a uniformity, which may be more general and less general, but anyhow uniformity, giving us a knowledge of repeated relationship of the events in a human universe” (111).

Sorokin continues: Great discoveries are not made by groups. They are made by individuals, in a flash of insight that is then fleshed out by logic and study. Toynbee’s initial insight about civilizations was like this.

“If we mean by synthesis in history or other social sciences a discovery, formulation and then empirical corroboration of respective uniformities with their preliminary

hypotheses, then there are three stages in that work. The first two stages are the work of the respective capable person, graced by this creative intuition and by a well-developed rational mind, but the third stage requires in most cases teams of co-workers, especially when they may be arranged to work over the points of empirical verification, outlined and determined clearly by the master, who conceived the respective idea” (113),

“It is the purpose of the comparative study of civilizations not merely to give an ideographic description of various ideographic details whether Babylonian, Minoan or Greek or the ideographic biography of Caesar or Antony or Ignatius Loyola or some other person, but the discovery, formulation and corroboration of uniformities” (113).

Toynbee answers: “I agree with Dr. Sorokin that one must start with intuition and then test the intuition in the light of the detailed facts. One will get nowhere if one tries to start with an infinite number of facts and, by assembling these, to arrive at general ideas.” Toynbee then calls for approaches that are as intellectually provisional as those of science are; any scientist may advance a hypothesis but then must be willing to discard it if it proves untenable. One should act in the same manner with approaches to history, whether they be Jewish, Christian, Islamic or Marxian. We should treat these approaches “not as dogmas, to which the facts must be made to conform, but as hypotheses, which open up the way to the facts, but which in themselves must be modified, and very drastically modified, by the light which the facts throw on them” (114-115).

Sorokin agrees that intuition is never enough (115).

Toynbee says that it is difficult to persuade the specialist historian that civilizationists are not enemies, that in fact “we are necessarily allies.” Every specialist works within a framework of generalization, whether or not he realizes it. “Every generalist ought to be a bit of a specialist; every specialist ought to be a bit of a generalist. We ought to work together.” This “civil war between the specialists and the generalists is really as foolish as an atomic third world-war would be” (115).

Olagüe tries to steer the discussion to the issue of summation and teamwork (116ff). J. Vogt maintains that there should be no talk of “inequality” between the specialists and the generalists, for both are necessary to each other. Toynbee agrees and says that Coulborn’s work would not have been possible if he had not been a member of a research group. In the same sentence, Toynbee regrets that “Dr. Coulborn is not with me” (118). The question of intuition comes up again and M. Rassem states that even intuitions are based in one way or another on a “Weltbild” (122). Everything is contextual.

B.J. Chu comments (124-126) that a major problem is that of bias based on one’s national origin and the languages that one knows. For instance, few in the West know

much about the history of Chinese science, and Chinese scholars have many gaps in their knowledge of Western cultures. Chu mentions Joseph Needham at Oxford as someone who, with a research team, is trying to put together the history of Chinese science. We know that history tends to be written by the victors (125). We can overcome some of these difficulties by working in teams.

E. Betti brings up the matter of the hermeneutic circle (126-135) and criticizes Gadamer's notion in *Wahrheit und Methode*. Gadamer, says Betti, relies too much on subjectivity to get to objective historical truth.

pp. 171-253 -- **Day 3: Wednesday, 11 October. Civilizational encounters, chaired by Joseph Vogt.**

Four sections:

- 9) The problem of civilizational encounters in the past
- 10) The Indies, between the Islamic Orient and China
- 11) Orient and Occident [East and West]
- 12) The Soviet Union between the Orient and the Occident [The East and the West]

Anderle begins the day by saying that historically a majority of existing cultures have encountered other cultures. There is a rich array of problems. We have chosen to explore this problem concerning cultures of antiquity, such as the meeting of India with, on the one side, the Islamic East and on the other side with the Far East, the meeting between East and West, between the Near East and the Far East, and, in conclusion, the difficult problem of how to interpret Russian history, placed as Russia is between the runoffs from the Asiatic and the European world (172).¹

Olagüe thanks UNESCO and the UN for sponsorship.

Schachermeyr begins the substantive part of the discussions by talking about the ethnic and cultural migrations out of Africa, the Near East, and Iran, migrations that were complicated by the “superposition” of the Indo-European and Semitic peoples. Every new civilization has its origins in the encounter with another civilization, and it is this encounter that is the fertilizing element (173-177).

Schmid, departing from an observation by Toynbee in *A Study of History*, wants to distinguish, in Russia, between an Orthodox Christian civilization and a Slavic one. He is answered by Vogt, who doubts that a religious collectivity and a Slavic collectivity can be classed as civilizations (183).

Olagüe comments on three historical facts or events:

There is the mosque at Cordoba, which was first a Roman temple, then a Christian church, then an Arab mosque. The Reconquista made it into a Christian church again.

¹ Missing from this catalogue is the New World, as it has been missing pretty much since the beginning of the meeting. Even a strong civilization like that of India, with its multiple cultures, does not make a central appearance in this conference in general. Africa is almost entirely absent. Whether or not a civilization, a continent or subcontinent is represented seems to have more to do with the culture of origin of the participants rather than with any prejudice against a particular geographical area or culture. [MPR’s note].

- 1) In the Middle Ages, particularly in the 11th century, three civilizations peacefully co-existed in Spain: the Jewish, the Arab, and the Christian.
- 2) The tolerance that existed among these three civilizations was remarkable and cannot be compared to any tolerance in the contemporary world. For instance, in the USA, a Christian cannot simply declare himself to be a Moslem in order to marry four wives. Law is above religion. But in the Spanish Middle Ages, the laws that governed were the laws of each group. Yet each came together for a common cause. For example, Alfonso El Sabio had a team of astronomers working for him who were Jewish, Arab, and Christian. They spoke three different languages at home and followed three different sets of laws. For example, some of them were polygamous, some monogamous. How does one explain that peaceful co-existence? (183-185)
- 3) Some barriers are insurmountable. For instance, pre-Columbian civilizations and Australian aboriginal civilizations lived in isolation and could not take part in the evolution of humanity. The facts are there and they seem to us to be indisputable (185). Geographical barriers created isolation and geography was either a barrier to civilizational encounter or a bridge for it. Some barriers were more barriers than others. For the Romans, for example, the Pyrenees were a barrier that they were able to traverse, but the Romans did not cross the Atlantic; nor did they cross the Sahara. (185).

Technology can overcome geographical barriers (186).

From the 4th millennium to the Christian era there was a vast area of the world which was a theatre of competition among all sorts of ideas in which new civilizations were forged. This area was bounded by the valley of the Ganges, the Indian Ocean, the desert of the Sahara, the steppes of Central Asia, and the shores of the Mediterranean.

The concept of miscegenation (*métissage*) [*mestizaje*] is important to understanding how cultures evolve, from coming into contact with other cultures. The problem is how to explain why some *métissages* are successful and fruitful and some are not (186).

Ideas can work like nature in that they can propagate in a successful climate and die in an inauspicious one. Islam was able to take root in Spain because the ground had already been prepared by certain Christian heresies like Arianism, which was anti-Trinitarian and pro-monotheist. This didn't happen all at once, as happened with the discovery of classical texts; this happened over centuries (from the 4th to the 11th). Yet these same ideas hit a wall in Asia Minor: the obstacle was not a mountain range but, rather, the presence of Byzantine civilization which maintained a Trinitarian conception of divinity (187).

As a civilization becomes technologically more advanced, the geographical barriers between it and other civilizations become less important. Another civilization may

therefore physically root itself in this civilization, especially among the masses, and from the shock a new conception might emerge (187). A certain amount of civilizational change may take place through “pseudo-morphosis” (Spengler’s term), in which, as is the case in geology, a new mineral is formed from another substance, though the outer shape remains the same. For example, a Hellenized Jew like St. Paul wrote in Greek. The language may be Greek but the spirit and world view expressed by New Testament Greek are not Greek (this is an example of pseudo-morphosis) (188). There are certain geographical zones which are fertile grounds for pseudo-morphosis to take place. For instance, in Alexandria and its school the East and the West confronted each other and became mixed.

Spain is a particularly fertile place for metamorphosis in this way, especially all during the Middle Ages (189).

Civilizational encounters occur in two ways: (1) through the long-term penetration of an “idée-force” which has insinuated itself across geographical barriers, as when Buddhism crossed the Himalayas; (2) through the existence of zones of metamorphosis, situated between two different cultures or two different civilizations. In the first instance, the “idée-force” acts like a leavening agent; in the second, one is a witness to a new culture or a new civilization (189).

Toynbee (190-192) affirms that contacts between civilizations are not only well-established historical facts but they are some of the most important. It is clear that civilizations are not “Ganzheiten,” sort of windowless Leibnizian monads, but in fact they do have windows to the outside world and to other civilizations. Civilizations do disintegrate, and that proves they are not Ganzheiten: Egyptian, Sumerian, Chinese, Peruvian all declined, even though for many years each remained “closed.”

“The era of closed civilizations is behind us, now we have to make a choice which will be a momentous one. The whole future of the human race . . . may depend on whether we can make a new integration, which, this time, will not be partial or local, but will include the whole human race.” The question before us today is “whether a world civilization, integrating the whole human race and all its past cultural treasures, can be built up, or whether this is a task which is going to defeat the human race” (191).

Sorokin comments that simpler ideas have a greater chance of diffusing through a culture, and influencing it, than complex ideas. This explains why best sellers are among the simpler artifacts of a culture and why he (Sorokin) does not read best-sellers (193-194).

E. Sarkisyanz (196-199) gives a detailed historical exposition of India’s place between China and the Islamic Near East, saying that India was more changed by Islam and it changed Islam; also that India did not expand militarily beyond the Himalayas and that

its main export was Buddhism and trade. China, on the other hand, did expand, going into Tibet and Vietnam.

W. Balekjian (199-204) brings up the example of the near-Eastern students who study at the University of Vienna. This is a civilizational encounter which presents them with many problems, as they do not understand such concepts as “academic freedom”, which they experience simply as chaos and disorder. Also, they do not realize that the advances in Western civilization are the result of hard work, achieved at great cost; the near-Eastern students tend to see these advances as simply givens, attained without much difficulty.

S.Y. Chu (205-208), [the only woman at the conference (?)] speaks: Discusses the family and the status of women. Of the five human relations that Confucius spoke of, three were about the family: father/son; husband/wife; brother/younger brother. The other two are ruler/subject and friend/friend. In order to have good family relations, one has to have good relations with oneself, in one’s own heart and mind. If the family is well regulated, then the state is well regulated. Wisdom begins at home. “The foundation of society is a disciplined individual in a disciplined family” (206).

“It has been said . . . that the culture of China was made mostly by women” (206). Mencius’ mother was a model of motherhood (207). Westernization since the 1840s has been destroying the internal cohesion of the Chinese family and thus has been diminishing the importance of women within the family while giving them “equal rights”. So one can ask if women are truly happy despite this “progress” (208).

B.J. Chu (209-211) discusses the impact that the West has had, since the 1840s, on China’s economic development. Also, he states that “the meeting of civilizations may not always mean the complete disintegration of one civilization in favor of another. There was certainly some disintegration of Chinese civilization” which was the result of some contact with the West, but the disintegration is “very incomplete” (211).

K. Yajima comments on the case of Japan (212-215): Japan is an excellent test case for the comparative study of civilizations, east and west. Contemporary Japan is the result of cross-cultural contact with two great cultures: the Chinese one, from the 6th century on, with its major influence of Buddhism and the Chinese script. China (Confucian thought especially) also influenced the Japanese way of thought [“Denkweise”]. Buddhism entered Japan not through Sanskrit but through the Chinese language and through that language influenced Japanese culture, for many Buddhist texts in Chinese were used as tools for teaching the script. Buddhism entered so easily because of its elasticity as a religion and mode of thinking.

The second encounter was with the West: first, the encounter with Catholic missionaries in the second half of the 16th century; then, the contact with European colonialism since

the late 18th century; and third, the large-scale introduction of European culture after 1868, a policy that was adopted with the intention of protecting Japan against imperialism. It is curious that Japan really needed only European technology to defend itself yet also felt compelled to take over European intellectual foundations as well. This take-over occurred with only a superficial understanding of the issues involved, for the difference between the two cultures was too great. Since the beginning of the 20th century, Japan has striven hard to understand the spiritual foundations of Europe. Japan has much to learn from Europe.

What in particular can Japan learn from the West? In a word, it can learn about the idea of man as a subjective being (214). Western thought, whatever its particular field, presupposes the subjective nature of man as the foundation of its logic. Without that subjectivity at the foundation, natural science in the Western sense cannot arise. Similarly, rational thought, systematic philosophy, law and sociology come from this understanding of subjectivity.

The subjectless quality of the Japanese mode of thought is probably related to the general character of East Asian thought, and this is closely related to the fundamental character of Buddhism. The origin of European subjectivity can be found in Christianity. Especially in comparison with Buddhism, Christianity is a religion of subjectivity. One stands before God as a person, as a subject, and salvation is personal, whereas in Buddhism enlightenment is the understanding of oneself as part of the Absolute (214). It was the subjective nature of Christianity that made possible the progress of European culture and high culture. Protestantism, as Max Weber understood, is the extreme form of subjectivity.

It has often been said that the fundamental characteristic of East Asian thought is 'intuition'. Yajima understands this 'intuition' to be the result of an indivisible Subject-Object relationship. This fundamental characteristic of the East Asian mode of thought was an obstacle to progress in the exact sciences. But Western subjectivity is also at a dead end, for to the extent that the idea of subjectivity has spread around the globe, to the same extent there have arisen crises between very different subjects. The possibility of the integration of world cultures depends on East and West complementing each other, completing each other (214).

S.Y. Hsiao answers (215-219): It is a mistake to believe that the Chinese are not able to "think" because they do not have "logic". It is true that the Chinese do not use Aristotelian logic, but their mode of thinking is holistic, whereas the thinking of the West is specialized, particularized. We Chinese [are not separate from nature or set against it but on the contrary we speak of a] harmony between man and heaven (216). In the West, the closest equivalent to that is the philosophy of macrocosm and microcosm. Hsiao advocates holistic thinking as a way to cure the West of its overemphasis on

specialization, on particularity. Eastern culture is more “feminine,” Western culture is more “masculine” and “Faustian” (218).

K. Goldammer (219-225) breaks in to say that the idea that East and West are opposites [*Gegensätze*] is a myth which has been foisted upon all of us by and since Herodotus. It is more a necessity of historical writing than of historical fact. It does not correspond to reality and should be eliminated as a topic of historical study. In its place one should put “the true concretization of the history of humanity from the perspective on diverse civilizations” (225: literal translation from the French summary).

J.M. Romein (225-228). “East-West” is a troubling concept because one can take different geographical areas as “East.” For instance, I consider Africa, Latin America, and Asia as all parts of “the Orient”. The Soviet Union is a difficult case, as is Latin America, for it is hard to fit either of those civilizations anywhere in the contrast “East-West”.

From here (228) to the end of the day (253), there is disagreement about how to consider the Soviet Union: whether it is between East and West, whether it is a civilization of its own, whether it was originally Byzantine and then, through communism, became technologically Western (this is Toynbee’s position). Sorokin’s intervention (239-243) concerns the over-exaggeration in the concepts of East and West, for they are too large to mean much, so he prefers smaller concepts like “great culture,” and Russia is just such a great culture, with influences from Asia and, since the 9th-13th centuries, increasing Westernization, which really exploded in the time of Peter the Great and continues to the present.

pp. 255-314 -- **Day 4: Friday, 13 October. The problem of universal history, chaired by Edward T. Gargan.**

Four sections:

- 13) The transcendent forces of culture: technology, economy, politics, ideology, science, religion.
- 14) Current theories of universal history: comparison and critique
- 15) The perspectives from philosophy on history and metahistory
- 16) Universal history as a fact and as a duty (*comme fait et comme devoir*)

Gargan says that today's task is more difficult than yesterday's because of all the paradoxical problems inherent in the discussion (256).

Anderle opens the discussion (256-257) by saying that the problem of universal history is whether to consider it as history that is above and beyond the history of all individual cultures, or to consider it as the sum of all individual cultures. How does it exist? And what roles do technology, economics, politics, science, and religion play? Are these forces that are above those of individual civilizations?

K. Goldammer (258-262): the comparative history of religion was one of the first to be considered from the perspective of universal history. It played a role in Herodotus and it became particularly important in the Renaissance, in Humanism, and above all during the Romantic period. Yet the comparative history of religion is today one of the least studied fields. It requires a philological knowledge that is beyond the reach of many scholars on the one hand and, on the other, it is a field which attracts dilettantes and superficial treatment. Yet many topics can be misleadingly compared. For instance, "monotheism" is not the same in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, not to mention Hinduism and a text like the *Bhagavad-Gita* (260). Pantheism in Greece is quite different from pantheism in India. Mysticism is different in each tradition, as is the concept of sin, etc. And yet there is in mankind a striving toward religion that is "unifying", based on a kind of archetypal revelation that speaks to the dignity and worth of humanity.

Toynbee: the history of technology and the history of religion are two ways of looking at the history of mankind above and beyond that of individual civilizations. Technology has contributed to the spread of religions. There are three religions --Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam -- that are missionary religions and "have broken down the barriers between civilizations" (264). Today we are at the point where we must decide whether to go beyond our own individual local communities, and our allegiances to them, in order to go toward a new and greater unity of mankind, or whether we will

return to a kind of localism that, because of atomic weapons, is very dangerous (263-265).

E. Füter: there is no such thing as universal history at present although it is possible that there might be such a thing in the future. The model is that of the natural sciences. There may be something like “historical energies” which are energies that arise from a collectivity or an institution and exert a quantifiable influence (266-269).

O. Köhler: At certain times certain societies possessed a sense of universal history. This happened during the Middle Ages, when it was felt that the history of civilization was the same as universal history. But contemporary man has lost this sense of unity (269-274).

J. Vogt devotes his time to criticizing Karl Jaspers’ theory of the Axial Age. Jaspers identifies history in its fullest sense – that is, history is of a conscious past— with the development of writing and thus the transmission of heritages. He says that during the Axial Age, myth yields to religion and philosophy, as prophet and philosophers like Confucius, Lao-tse, Buddha and Zarathustra, the prophets of Israel and the philosophers of Greece, become influential, for it was in this time that our basic philosophical orientations were set and also the beginnings of our religious traditions -- which are still in force today. This process of spiritualization, which has been known for more than 100 years (cf. the work of Ernst von Lasaulx) is made by Jaspers into the axis of world history (274-278).

While no one would doubt that the appearance of these religious thinkers and philosophers was important, the real question is whether the focus on them as the center of all human history is justified, and therefore whether or not such a focus on the Axial Age does harm to what came both before and after (278).

First of all, the conquest of myth by means of the logos took place before the Axial Age itself, for instance in Egypt and in Babylon (cf. Amenhotep IV). So Jaspers is mistaken in his “history.” Secondly, Jaspers says that the birth of modern science and technology, which took place between 1500 and 1800, was a kind of second axial age which was inspired by the forces of the Renaissance which went back to the antiquity of the original axial age. But H. Butterfield and others have shown that the new spirituality was already present in the English Middle Ages, with the 13th-century Franciscan nominalists and in the 14th century with Nicholas of Cusa. Also, the great scientists of the 16th and 17th centuries --Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Newton -- were all united in believing that their work was an extension of God’s word in the Bible. If a deep Christian spirituality leads to modern science, then Jaspers’ theory of the Axial Age has to be suspect (278).

Vogt: “I thought it advisable to critically examine this theory of the philosopher Karl Jaspers before it is taken up as completely valid by our schoolbooks” (278).

Sorokin makes some concluding remarks about the day’s work (301-303): In order to obtain a more adequate knowledge of the human past, present and future, scholars will have to do a better job of solving three fundamental problems: that of the idiographic knowledge of the human universe (that is, the accurate descriptions of actual events, persons, characteristics, relationships); that of the nomothetic knowledge of the human universe (that is, an explanation of relationships and uniformities; these are generalizations based on idiographic descriptions); that of the metahistorical or metascientific knowledge of the human universe (that is, the largest possible understanding of human history, like that of Augustine, Hegel, Toynbee or Berdyaev). We should not confuse this last kind of knowledge with scientific knowledge, for metahistorical knowledge builds on the two former kinds of knowledge (idiographic and nomothetic). It is not physical, chemical or biological knowledge.

Anderle objects to the term “nomothetic”, for it means something different in the German tradition (304).

Then there was general discussion, without an emerging consensus, as to whether God was present in history or not, and if we should study that. Taking part were Köhler, Vogt, Fueter, Hsiao, and Anderle (306-314).

pp. 315-397 -- **Day 5: Saturday, 14 October. The future of civilizations, chaired by Emilio Betti.**

Four sections:

- 17) The possibilities of the principle of a futuristic historiography
- 18) Are civilizations open or closed processes?
- 19) The role of global forces: economy, ideology, religion
- 20) Perspectives on the future of the species 'civilization' in general and on its actual representatives in particular

Toynbee begins by saying that the question of civilizations as “Ganzheiten” is central to questions about prognostication. If civilizations are open systems, then prognostication is impossible. If civilizations are closed systems, then prognostication is possible. “I myself believe that civilizations are imperfectly closed systems” (316). We are in part free and in part not. There are some things that we can control and some that we cannot, or do not. The “frontier” is always fluctuating. “With our minds, we realize that, since 1945, war ceased to be the kind of institution that it was before 1945, that in future wars there will be neither victors nor vanquished, but all will be vanquished. In fact, we realize that the presuppositions on which wars were made in the past will no longer apply” (317).

The comparative study of civilizations is extremely important in identifying and explaining underlying patterns of history. But an understanding of these patterns does not permit us to determine the future. The comparative study of civilizations is not like astronomy, which is a predictive science. We, as comparative civilizationists, cannot predict whether or not the world will be destroyed (318).

Spengler, says Toynbee, has a more determinist view of history.

E. T. Gargan (319-332) delivers a long speech concentrating on Tocqueville to the effect that Tocqueville was able to see into the future, not with the exactitude of science, but nonetheless with some accuracy because the history of the West is a working out of the democratic revolution.

Sorokin says that predictions are possible, in a limited sense, and that he himself made a number of detailed predictions, at the end of vols. 3 and 4 of “Social and Cultural Dynamics” (pub. 1937), about what was going to happen to the family, the church, political organizations, the fine arts and so on. His colleagues at Harvard thought that he was “loon-ly” (*sic*: 335), that the predictions of terrible wars and so on would not come

true. Only later, after the end of World War II, did they admit that he had been right. It is (i) not possible to make predictions with regard to unique phenomena; it is possible (ii) to make some approximate and generally correct predictions with regard to mass and repeated phenomena; it is possible (iii) to make some predictions with regard to Ganzheiten as to what they, as integrated and united systems, may pass through (335).

Anderle (336-339) tries to distinguish between two sorts of prognostication. (a) A total prognostication, based on material evidence up to that point and following certain laws of causality; (b) A partial prognostication based more on formal structural elements and that corresponds to the prediction of events. Prognostication may be possible, but in the case of history and society it is impractical because of the overwhelming complexity of history and society.

M. Rassem wants to distinguish among diagnosis, prognosis and prophecy (340-344).

E. Fueter says that prognosis works in certain areas, like train schedules, governmental budgets, and the like. Theoretically, a total prognosis might be possible, but in practical matters it is not feasible. Hence it is superfluous (344-347).

F. Schachermeyr (347-352) says that he is speaking from his experience as a historian of Greek culture. The question of prognosis must be related to the question of whether civilizations are open structures or closed ones. Further, there are three kinds of causality: (a) the timeless causality of experimental science; (b) the final causality, which is biological, and the only variability in it is time or chronology (that is, when something will happen, as it is inevitable that it will happen); and (c) historical causality, which comes from our free will. In historical causality, a concrete situation acts as a given, then that given is modified by a series of human actions. But the modifications always occur within a certain structural logic, along a chain of events that leads to results that are limited by the structural logic and by the chain itself. Civilizations do have a future, but they will develop along certain lines and not others.

Toynbee, Anderle and Schachermeyr then argue about the predictability of human events; they cite this or that prognosis, both for and against predictability (352-357). Sorokin interrupts to say that he has conducted an experiment, asking groups of people to predict their own behavior one day, two days, or one month ahead. They were asked to schedule their time. The further one went from the present, the larger the errors were. Simple things like food and sleep were predicted with much more accuracy than things like reading, talking, visiting friends, etc.

S.Y. Hsiao (360) comments that prognosis was very important in Chinese history, as Chinese emperors always hired prophets in their courts to advise them on whether or not certain actions were to enhance or disturb the harmony between heaven and earth.

A. Hilckman (360-361) remarks that the question of whether civilizations are open or closed is related to the question of whether history is determined or not. This is not something that can be decided by dogmatic declaration or argument. Rather, it all depends on the empirical situation at hand.

B.J. Chu (361-362) interrupts to say that he is very uncomfortable with historians of civilizations making any predictions at all. He cites the examples of the Mexican and the Chinese revolutions of 1911. Neither of these revolutions was predicted by historians, nor did they predict their results. No one could predict that the two revolutions occurring in the same year would turn out so differently.

Anderle (363-364) says that one can't decide, on the basis of argument, whether civilizations are closed or open structures. Rather, one has to submit the question to concrete civilizational examples, one by one.

A. Hilckman (364) agrees with Anderle and quotes Spengler with disapproval: "In diesem Werke wird zum erstenmal der Versuch unternommen, Geschichte im voraus zu bestimmen". (In this work, the attempt is undertaken for the first time to predict history.) [Editor's Note: In other words, Hilckman believes Spengler to be a bogus historian.]

After listening to the discussion of a number of issues, Sorokin comments: (374) "First, I find the formulation of openness or closedness of systems of cultures or civilizations not quite fortunate. Second, I would like to replace it by the term selectivity and absorption by either a personality system or by organized social groups or by integrated cultural Ganzheiten, all the external, incessant influences to which any personality, any integrated cultural system, any organized group are incessantly subjected. Being subjected to incessant bombardments of external influences, all of these integrated Ganzheiten do not absorb all these influences but take in selectively only those which are congenial to them and reject those which are uncongenial." All cultural systems fluctuate, ebb and flow toward greater or lesser coherence. Some of them disintegrated and cannot be called "one logic-meaningful and causal unity" (375).

Anderle comments that in the argument about whether cultures are open or closed systems, there is a great deal to be said in favor of considering cultures as closed systems. Both Sorokin and Toynbee are agreed on the characterization of certain epochs of high cultures, even as they disagree on other matters. There is such uniformity concerning the development of high cultures that the argument for cultures as closed systems makes sense (376). But even this uniformity does not permit one to conceive of cultures as completely closed systems.

Toynbee comments that while in logic one may make the distinction between closed or open, such a distinction is not feasible when one is dealing with human minds and human history. A culture is really like a fruit with a soft exterior and a hard core, and

several layers in between. The hard core would be the relatively closed part of the culture; the rest would be part of the open part, which is softer and easier to penetrate. In a way, this is how Western culture has penetrated Eastern culture, particularly in terms of technological innovations; it has gone through the shallower depths, the softer parts of the fruit. The hard core, however, is more difficult to penetrate (380-381).

Olagüe remarks that if cultures are truly closed, then we should all pack our bags and go home, for then we cannot really communicate with one another. For Olagüe, cultures are structures that are open, somewhat like houses that have windows. It is through those windows that influences flow, in both directions (381-382).

Anderle defends the concept of closed cultures by appealing to Leibnizian monadology. Monads are windowless. There is something mysterious and ultimately unknowable at the heart of every culture, as there is in the heart of every stranger (382-383).

The moderator, Betti, interrupts the discussion and says, “let us take up the question of point 19, that of global powers in economy, ideology and religion” (384).

In the modern age, says Quadri, we are caught between the forces of authenticity and of conditioning (by this, Quadri means that man is controlled or conditioned by outside forces). The modern era has not been beneficial for authenticity, as the process of extinguishing the “I” has been decisive (384-387).

Goldammer follows Toynbee in arguing for the importance of religion concerning the future of civilization but says that Toynbee is wrong in saying that civilizations in decline will produce new religions. The religion of the future will be a kind of humanism in the highest sense of that word (387-393).

Olagüe answers by saying that the followers of communism and scientific humanism consider them to be true religions and that it is a mistake to interpret the future solely from the perspective of religion (393-394).

E. Fueter replies that one of the principal functions of religion at the heart of a civilization is to establish a rapport between the elite and the common folk. This is a function that neither liberalism nor communism nor scientific humanism can fulfill; therefore they will not supplant religion itself (395-397).

pp. 399-454 -- **Day 6: Sunday, 15 October. One world: The contribution of the human sciences to peaceful unification of humanity, chaired by Shi-Yi Hsiao.**

Two sections:

- 21) The role of the human sciences in the process of global integration
- 22) The theory and practice of international cooperation in the domain of the human sciences

Anderle begins (400) by stating that this group as a whole has come to the provisional conclusion that 5,000 years of Hochkultur history may be ending and that a new era is beginning in which humanity is moving toward one world. It cannot be doubted that this process is desirable, but we have to ask ourselves how we as civilizationists can contribute to it. After all, we have come together as representatives of the disciplines of humankind: history, sociology, culture, law, art, prehistory, philology etc. Each of us has to ask ourselves what we can contribute from the vantage point of our particular discipline (401). The discussion must be not only theoretical but practical.

S.Y. Hsiao comments that we are all as diverse as leaves on a tree but that we all belong to the same tree. And it is high time that we look for what we have in common. With that general thought, he turns to Toynbee (403).

Toynbee says: Most people in the room agree with Anderle that “the period of separate regional cultures is drawing to an end, that the choice is now between either one world or no world (403).

As unfortunate as the colonizing process has been, and Toynbee recognizes that he belongs to a colonizing people, it nonetheless had “a positive and valuable legacy”: “the almost compulsory unification of the World”. Although the Western domination of the World is now evaporating, Westerners “have left behind a voluntary wish for unity among all the peoples of the world” (404).

The unification of the world was made possible in the 15th and 16th centuries by the technological development of Portuguese sailing ships which were able to stay at sea for many months on end and therefore could travel the oceans of the world (404).

As we look at the process of unification, we can take the example of China into account. China has many diverse cultures within its borders and has had a richly divisive and warlike history, but it became unified and has remained unified for a long time (406).

Just as in order to get to know someone we should know him as he was in the past as well as in the present, so too should we study cultures. We cannot study only the present (407-408). All human action “has a time-depth” (408).

Our problem as the human race is that we have come together technologically and militarily, often against our will, but we have not come together enough in terms of culture: religion, psychology, art, “and other things that unite the human race in a positive way” (408). This enforced unification can lead to mass suicide (through atomic weapons) because “we are still comparative strangers to each other, we are afraid of each other, misunderstand each other, misapprehend each other, misrepresent each other and therefore have an animosity towards each other” (408). We are still subject to such mass misunderstandings that they threaten the very existence of the planet; we need to cease being strangers to one another. Academics have a role to play in this situation. (These remarks were greeted with prolonged and enthusiastic applause.)

Hsiao gives the floor to Sorokin: Sorokin takes up the same issues as Toynbee, but from a more abstract perspective. He speaks of the transition from Ideational to Sensate culture, which has been the culture that has dominated in world history for the past 500 years. Sensate culture is necessarily yielding, he says, to a “new Integral socio-cultural order” (411) at the same time that the creative centers of the world are shifting from Europe and North America to Central and South America, to India, China, and Japan, and perhaps Russia, a shift which is the legacy of the death of colonialism.

At the same time, the view of “man” is shifting from that of a biological being to one that is more complex, more fashioned from the “coincidentia oppositorum” (412) which is human experience itself. We human beings are not merely biological and not merely rational; we are also -- the best of us-- acquiring a super-rational dimension, a kind of knowledge and wisdom which the Chinese call a “tao-no Knowledge”.

The main danger facing us is the misuse of non-sensate values (which are the values of the great religions in their purest manifestations) for sensate purposes (413). Yet even there we see an attempt by such masters of sensate cultures as scientists to lead humankind “into a new era of creative history” in which everything would be united in “one Integral system” in the service of the “great creative spirit of man” (414). (These remarks, like those of Toynbee, were met with prolonged and enthusiastic applause.)

Toynbee agrees with Sorokin and says that now especially, “in the present atomic age our first elementary moral duty is to mankind as a whole. This must override everything else” (416).

These were the final substantive remarks by the two great lions in attendance.

Shortly after the comments by Toynbee and Sorokin, S.Y. Hsiao takes the floor to state that he is representing many at the conference not only in recommending that a full conference report be transmitted to UNESCO but also that the following resolution be adopted and transmitted to UNESCO as well:

“We would like to draw the attention of UNESCO to the meritorious activity of the INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CIVILIZATIONS, undertaken in the interest of fostering an understanding among peoples and the kind of interdisciplinary cooperation that has occurred all during the first ‘Synopsis Congress’ which has just finished on ‘The Problems of Civilizations’ and which has left all the participants deeply satisfied. In addition, we would like to request that [UNESCO] encourage the continuation of this work by granting the corresponding financial support for the establishment of ‘THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CIVILIZATIONS’ (C.I.E.C.C.), to be located in Salzburg.” (427-428)

S.Y. Hsiao then declares that, while he is not yet a member of the ISCSC, he will become a member immediately, a declaration that is met with applause. The resolution is then adopted without opposition and unanimously (428).

A variety of topics are touched on during this last day: the threatening presence of atomic weapons; Orwell’s *1984* as prophecy; the important contribution that China could make to the comparative study of civilizations by encouraging the awareness of holistic thought, which is more “circular,” as a counterweight to linear Aristotelian thought; the importance of the comparative study of civilizations as a counterweight to the emphasis on technology, for civilizational analysis is profoundly human and humanizing; the role that UNESCO can play in advancing the comparative study of civilizations (428-449).

The last intervention comes from an unknown person, identified only as “anonymous”: this person, speaking in German, advocates a kind of phenomenological/hermeneutic analysis in civilizational study through which better cross-cultural understanding can be achieved by asking how Others see us and how we see Others (“wie sehen uns die Andern, wie sehen wir die Andern”?) (450). S.Y. Hsiao answers that this question will surely be taken up in the future but not now, and that because the conference is, unfortunately, at an end (450).²

² Almost 25 years later, the question of “the Other” in civilizational perceptions was explored in a double issue of the *Comparative Civilizations Review* 13/14 (1985-1986) that appeared both as a double issue and as a book (with the ISCSC as publisher, 1985); it was entitled *As Others See Us: Mutual Perceptions East and West*. Its editors were Bernard Lewis, Edmund Leites and Margaret Case.

Sorokin himself closes the conference with some remarks that are autobiographical, ceremonial, and congratulatory (450-454). He notes his initial reluctance to attend the conference as well as his pessimism concerning its quality. But, happily, he has been surprised by the improving quality and focus of the discussions. He is coming away convinced, he says, of the necessity and importance of civilizational analysis, of the need for congresses like this one, which he considers to have been unique. He hopes for a good and well-funded future for the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations.

Participants, Inaugural Meeting of the ISCSC [SIECC], Salzburg 1961

- Othmar F. Anderle, Hon. Prof., Universität Salzburg, Director of Institute for the Theory of History, Salzburg, General Sec of SIECC [Spoke in German]
- Wahé H. Balekjian, Lecturer, Universität Wien, Simon Research Fellow, University of Manchester [Spoke in German]
- Emilio Betti, Prof., University of Rome, Director of the University's Institute of Roman Law and the Institute of the Theory of Interpretation, University of Rome [Spoke in German]
- Paul Bao-jen Chu, Principal, Workers' Education Division, International Labor Office, Switzerland [Spoke in English]
- Phyllis Shu-yuan Chu, Prof., Universität Genf, Switzerland [Spoke in English]
- Eduard Füter, Director, Swiss Institute for Research on Foreigners, Zürich, Switzerland [Spoke in German]
- Edward T. Gargan, Prof. of History, Wesleyan University, Connecticut [Spoke in English]
- Kurt Goldammer, Prof. History of Religion and History of Religious Art, Philippsuniversität, Marburg [Spoke in German]
- Heinrich Herrfahrdt, Emeritus Prof of Law, Philippsuniversität, Marburg [Spoke in German]
- Anton Hilckman, Prof., Joh. Gutenberg Universität Mainz. Director of University's Institute for the Comparative Study of Cultures [Spoke in German]
- Paul Shi-yi Hsiao, Prof., Universität Peking, also affiliated with Universität Freiburg [Spoke in German]
- Georg Iggers, Assoc. Prof. of History, Roosevelt University, Chicago [Spoke in English]
- Oskar Köhler, Univ. Prof., Universität Freiburg [Spoke in German]
- Herbert Kühn, Prof., Joh. Gutenberg Universität Mainz. Member, Academy of Science and Literature, Mainz [Spoke in German]
- Ignacio Olagüe, Independent Scholar, Vice-President, SIECC. Madrid, Spain [Spoke in French]
- Goffredo Quadri, Prof. Philosophy of Law and of Sociology, Universität Siena, Italy [Spoke in French]
- Mohammed Rassem, University Dozent, Universität München [Spoke in German]
- Jan M. Romein, Emeritus Prof., Universität Amsterdam, Director of the Seminar for the Theory of History, The Netherlands [Spoke in English]
- Hans Rotter, M.D., Salzburg [Spoke in German]
- Emanuel Sarkisyanz, Prof., Albert Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg [Spoke in English]
- Fritz Schachermeyr, Prof. of the History of Antiquity, Universität Wien, Director of the University's Institute for Ancient History, Archaeology and Epigraphy [Spoke in German]

Heinrich F. Schmid, Prof., Slavic and East-European History, Universität Wien [Spoke in German]

Pitirim A. Sorokin, Emeritus Prof., Harvard University. President of International Institute and Congress of Sociology. President, American Sociological Association. Member, American Academy of Arts and Sciences. President, SIECC [Spoke in English]

Arnold J. Toynbee, Emeritus Prof., London University. Former Director of Studies, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, London [Spoke in English]

Joseph Vogt, Prof. of History of Antiquity, Universität Tübingen. President of Mainz' Academy of Science and Literature, Tübingen [Spoke in German]

Yoshiro Yajima, Prof. of Philosophy and the History of Social Thought, University of Tokyo, Japan [Spoke in German]