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Historical Sciences

METHODOLOGY OF THE COGNITION OF HISTORY OF A. TOYNBEE

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Abstract

The question of the dual orientation of the historical process is currently being sharply debated. On the one hand, in the course of history, there is a desire for unity and integrity of the human community, on the other - we see a tendency for each subject to preserve the social reality of his independence, uniqueness and individuality. This contradiction is not a product of the theoretical reflection of researchers; this phenomenon has objective grounds hidden in the dialectical essence of social phenomena, the nature of which has not been sufficiently studied. This circumstance leads to the fact that researchers disagree about the driving mechanisms and the nature of the historical process. Some highlight the idea of unity, others the idea of identity. This is where various versions of the course of history emerge, among which the most debatable in social philosophy are concepts based on two alternative approaches - linear-formativ and cultural-civilizational. Modern science can adequately and accurately describe the specific societies that existed in the historical process, but does not have the tools that would clearly define the system-forming bases of civilizations.

Thus, there is a crisis in the modern methodology of socio-historical knowledge. The methodology is designed to form the scientific and educational background for the conduct of specific historical research: from the formulation of the problem to the interpretation of the results. Closely related to the methodology are research methods, which include procedures, techniques and tools for research, analysis, validation and evaluation of data. It must be assumed that the future of the methodology of comprehending the historical process will depend on a fruitful dialogue between various approaches and models developed and developed in the field of social and humanitarian knowledge. The philosophical and historical concept of Arnold Toynbee suggests a synthesis of linear and civilizational approaches to the historical process. The article presents a brief biography of Arnold Toynbee, which allows to understand the formation and evolution of the views of the English historian. We consider the methods of knowledge of history, used in

Toynbee's philosophical and historical concept. A historian who philosophically interprets the dialectic of human development, according to Toynbee, should look for the meaning of world history.

At the same time, the comprehension of history as a definite integrity does not exclude the interest of a scientist to certain local civilizations that are subjected to morphological analysis. The result of the comparative study of the world-historical process, according to his opinion, should be not only a typology of local civilizations, but also the development of a specific set of "laws" that operate in each of them. Paradoxically, Toynbee, a fierce opponent of historical determinism, advocated a search for the "laws" of social development. In the interpretation of Toynbee, these "laws" are deprived of the status of necessity and appear as simple empirical repetitions. "The laws of the psyche" are the basis for the formulation of the "laws of history," complementing the "divine law," leading humanity to love and freedom. The special scientific part of his theoretical views is entirely subordinated to the religious-philosophical concept. The methodology of the British theorist reveals the deep philosophical basis for the evolution of great cultures, hidden behind the diversity of historical events.

Many modern scholars, historians, political scientists agree with A. Toynbee that religion is the main key to comparative research in the field of civilizations and cultures. It is precisely religious ethics that plays a decisive role in the development of the spiritual and economic foundations of all world civilizations. Knowledge of the past, as suggested by the English historian, speaks only of one of the many future possibilities, which makes it possible to avoid a repetition of undesirable developments. The course of human history, according to Toynbee, is not predetermined by anyone in advance.

Keywords: historical research, methodology, civilizational approach, linear approach.

I. INTRODUCTION

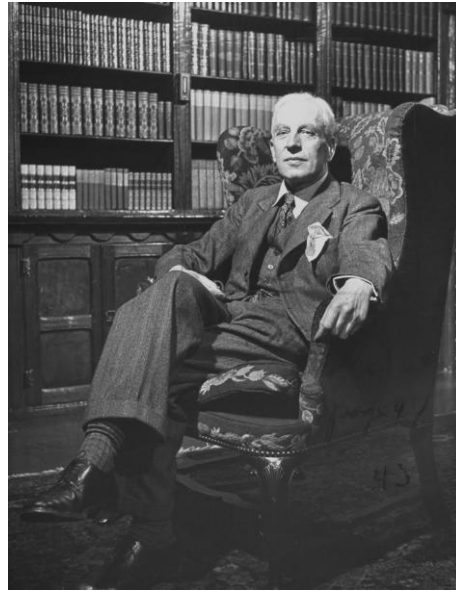
In order to understand the formation and evolution of the philosophical and historical views of A. Toynbee, reflected in his concept of local civilizations, it is necessary to refer to his biography.

Arnold Joseph Toynbee (1889-1975), English historian, philosopher and diplomat was born in London on April 14, 1889 in a wealthy intelligent family. In the Toynbee family, certain liberal-humanitarian and religious traditions existed, which had a great influence on its formation as a person and thinker. The historian was his mother - Edith Toynbee.

Arnold Toynbee's uncle, Arnold Toynbee Sr., after whom he was named, was a well-known English economist who gained wide popularity due to his public charitable and educational activities conducted by him among the working population of industrial cities in England and, in particular, in the London East End. A. Toynbee Sr. is the author of the scientific monograph «Industrial Revolution in England in the XVIIIth Century».

A. Toynbee held his student years at Balliol College, Oxford, where he studied, above all, ancient history. In 1911, he studied at the British School of Archaeology in Athens. In the years 1911-1912. Toynbee participated in the expedition to Greece and the islands of the Aegean Basin, which allowed him, in particular, to get acquainted with the archaeological monuments of the most recently discovered ancient Aegean culture. Since 1912, Toynbee has been a teacher of ancient history and philology at Balliol College. The study of ancient history had an enormous influence on the Toynbee's later formulated philosophical and historical concept, the initial model of which was the Greco-Roman civilization.

World War I, 1914-1918, interrupts Toynbee's study of ancient history. He does not go to the front due to health reasons, and since 1915, he has been working in the Information Department of the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a scientific adviser on the historical, political and demographic problems of the Middle East. In the 1919-1920s, Toynbee participates in the Paris Peace Conference as an expert.



The First World War, according to Toynbee himself, put an end to the liberal-progressive illusions and strongly stimulated his interest in the history of humanity, taken as a whole. One of the areas of his work - the publication of documents on violence against the civilian population by Germany and its allies. The documents and oral testimonies that Toynbee had to deal with during the work on the book "Armenian Massacre. Destruction of the Nation (1915). Comprehending the results of the First World War, which brought incredible suffering and massive sacrifices to whole nations, led Toynbee to far-reaching pessimistic conclusions regarding the prospects of Western civilization and the history of humanity in general, which was reflected in its cyclical theory of history.

After the war, Toynbee returns to intensive teaching and research activities.

Since 1919, Toynbee has been working as a professor of Byzantine studies and Greek history at the University of London.

In 1921-1922 during the Greek-Turkish war, Toynbee worked as a correspondent for the Manchester Guardian newspaper, which resulted in his book *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey* (1922).

From 1924 until 1956, for 22 years, he has been serving as the main author of the annual fundamental "Reviews of International Relations" published by the Royal Institute of International Affairs. Toynbee appreciated the importance of this work for his scientific creativity as a combination of studying the past and the history of the present, without which his "Study of History" could not have appeared. As acknowledged by Toynbee, who has a fundamental character, "extra-scholarly knowledge" obtained by him in the course of his entire life experience was of great importance for him as a scientist, without which, in his opinion, a satisfactory understanding of historical data is impossible, since "no official documents" may not be informative for historians.

From 1925 until his retirement in 1956, Toynbee was a research professor in international history at the London School of Economics. From 1939 to 1943, he led the foreign studies of the Royal Institute of International Relations. During World War II, Toynbee directs the research department of the British Foreign Office.

After World War II, Toynbee participated in the Paris Peace Conference (1946) and other international conferences. In 1956, he was awarded the Order of the Knights of Honour. After retiring on age, Toynbee continues active creative scientific and journalistic activities until the last year of his life. Toynbee died in York on October 22, 1975 at the age of 86.

Toynbee's publications include scientific monographs such as "The Western Question in Greece and Turkey. A Study of the Contact of Civilizations" (1922), "Greek Historical Thought" (1924), as well as several volumes of essays and lectures published after the short sixth edition of the first six volumes of *The Study of History* was released. The most interesting publication of the Gifford lectures is *The Historian's Approach to Religion* (1956). From Toynbee's later works, noteworthy are: "America and the world revolution" (1962); "Between the Niger and the Nile" (1965); "Changing Cities" (1970) and "Constantine Porphyrogenitus and His Epoch" (1973).

II. METHODOLOGY

Toynbee called his main essay «A Study of History» (1934-1961). However, in this case it is not so much a question of rational knowledge, based on a detailed analysis, but of an understanding of history, combining logical understanding, intuition, and even epiphany.

Toynbee noted: "Why should we assume that the scientific method created for the analysis of inanimate nature can be transferred to historical thinking, which involves considering people in the process of their activities? When a professor of history calls his seminar "laboratory", does he not thereby isolate himself from the natural environment? Both names are metaphors, but each of them is relevant only in its own field. The historian's seminar is a nursery where the living learn to speak a living word about the living..."

According to Toynbee, the orientation of the activities of historians is partly determined by their professional experience, partly by the problems of psychological quality, and partly by the so-called spirit of the times. The historian cannot abstract in his thoughts and feelings from the influence of the environment in which he lives.

At the end of the XIX century, the work of historians was in complete harmony with the industrial system, and their views were permeated and bound by the national idea. However, the XXth century "outlined its field of research, not limited to the framework of one nationality, and scientists will have to adapt their method to broader intellectual operations."

Toynbee noted that the typical Western historians of the XIX century for the sake of the prestige of the industrial system, they were ready to turn themselves into "intellectual workers".

Since the days of Mommsen and Ranke, historians have begun to spend most of their efforts on collecting raw material - inscriptions, documents, etc. - and their publication in the form of anthologies or private notes for periodicals. Thus, the concept of "original research" was limited to the discovery or verification of any facts not previously established. There is a clear tendency to underestimate the historical work relating to universal history. Toynbee cites as an example the "Outline of History" by Herbert George Wells, accepted with undisguised hostility by a number of specialists who criticized all the inaccuracies made by the author, his conscious departure from the facts.

According to Toynbee, "they were hardly able to understand that, recreating the history of mankind in their imagination, Mr. H.G. Wells achieved something inaccessible to them, which they did not dare to think about. In fact, the significance of the book by H.G. Wells was more or less fully appreciated by the general reading public, but not by a narrow group of specialists of that time. " Toynbee was a religious thinker, or rather a Christian. For religious consciousness, truth could be given in Revelation or comprehended by reason, but the best was a combination of these two possibilities. History is the work of the Creator, realized through the existence of man and humanity, but, comprehending it, the historian also becomes involved in the process of creation. Just as divine providence (and even predestination) for a Christian does not exclude freedom of human will, for Toynbee, recognition of the divine creation of history does not destroy the role of the historian as a co-creator of the past, because only in the process of co-creation can a moment of truth be revealed. Hence the prevalence of synthesis over analysis, which is so significant for Toynbee, hence his desire for universalism, although more often he was reproached for breaking up and localizing history.

Toynbee was opposed to interpreting history as a process of movement in its classic version. He rejected the continuity of history, built by analogy with representatives of classical physics. Another analogy is not so convincing for him - the continuity of history as the continuity of Life. The continuity of history, as well as the continuity of space-time, is for Toynbee the "overflow" of the discreteness of the existence of humanity. Each moment of movement is a generating beginning of the next and at the same time a certain self-defined, internally complete integrity.

Toynbee reflected: "We hardly understand the nature of Life if we don't learn to distinguish the limits of the relative discreteness of the ever-running stream ... In other words, the concept of continuity matters only as a symbolic speculative image on which we draw a perception of continuity in all real diversity and complexity. Let us try to apply this general observation to the comprehension of history. Does the term "continuity of history" in the generally accepted sense imply that the mass, moment, volume, speed and direction of the flow of human life are constant or, if not literally constant, change in such narrow boundaries that the amendment can be neglected? If this term implies implications of this kind, then, no matter how attractive it is, we will come to serious mistakes".

This kind of reasoning methodological nature of Toynbee implies the assumption of a decisive significance for the historical study of the categories of space-time.

History exists there, and only where there is time. According to Christian ideas, human history proper did not begin from the moment of the creation of man, for his heavenly existence proceeded without essential changes, i.e. outside of history, and from the moment of the fall, disobedience to the divine will, after which a person plunges into the flow of time, becomes mortal. God is in the unchanging sphere of eternity. Thus, the first act of free choice of a person opens the way of history and puts a person in a situation of dialogue with God. This dialogue was originally captured in the Old Testament, which contains prophecies about the future. The incarnation of the divine Logos in the face of Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the early promise. From this point on, history unfolds as the process of the salvation of mankind, which is at the same time an ever more complete revelation of the human essence.

Time is the field in which and thanks to which there is a change in the states of human society, and it is through it that the content of history manifests itself. For the historian, these various states are not only connected, but also combined, the past and the present turn out to be really coexisting. Staying motionless in space, it accumulates historical time, accommodating moments, centuries, millennia in its temporary reality. It was not by chance that the ancients called the historian a "time transmitter", for he was not only the keeper, but also the organizer of time as a conditional historical space. The exceptional value in this process of "transfer" of time Toynbee assigns memory, thereby indicating the deepest naturalness of the connection of history as a sphere of accumulation and development of human experience and memory as a means of streamlining time. In this, the English thinker appears as the successor of the ancient European intellectual tradition. Recall that the function of the goddess of memory Mnemosyne included time management. At the same time, Toynbee supported the idea characteristic of the twentieth century thinking, reflecting the awareness of the relationship of time to biological and then social evolution, an idea whose modification is the noosphere change hypothesis presented by Vladimir Vernadsky, Edouard Le Roy and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

Local civilizations are milestones of time, not islands of self-contained history. In this regard, Toynbee develops the concept of "intelligible field" of historical knowledge. It conjugates ontological and epistemological, asserting the knowability of the essential aspects of history through their manifestation in the existence of various societies, "whose boundaries have been approximately established taking into account the historical context of a given country and which are presently societies with a broader extent both in space and in time than the nation states, city states or any other political alliances.

In the light of these conclusions, some more conclusions can be drawn, approaching to history as a study of human relations. Its true subject is the life of society, taken both in its internal and external aspects. The inner side is the expression of the life of any given society in the sequence of the chapters of its history, in the totality of all its constituent communities. The external aspect is the relationship between individual societies, developed in time and space".

Toynbee liked to compare a person with a two-faced Janus, one face of which was turned to the future, the other - to the past.

This metaphor perfectly captures the very essence of the work of the historian, restoring the connection between the past and the present, in order to more clearly see the contours of the future. The historical research of Toynbee himself is a visible embodiment of this connection. Trying to comprehend the prospects for the development of Western civilization, Toynbee refers to its past, his vision of modernity, as reflected in the works of the late 1940s and 1950s, is closely related to his concept of world history.

Arnold Toynbee followed Oswald Spengler and his famous work «The Decline of the West» (1918) in denying the concept of world history. He suggested instead a comparative study of cultures that reveal striking similarities in the life cycle — occurrence, development, and decay.

Oswald Spengler looked for the causes of the birth of "great cultures" and deep historical changes taking place in society, outside the Earth, in "cosmic forces", in God. The world history is reduced to them by the simple sum of separate histories of isolated from each other closed "cultures", each of which has its own specific, only its inherent "basic meaning", always one way or another connected with religion.

O. Spengler counted eight higher cultures (influencing humanity): Egyptian, Babylonian, Indian, Chinese, Greco-Roman (classical), Arabic, Mexican, western (originated about 100 years ago). Each culture has its own essence - a symbol: in Chinese it is Tao (the path of life), in Greco-Roman it is the cult of sensuality, etc. Each civilization manifests itself in certain areas of vital activity: Greek - in beauty, Chinese - in favour, Indian - in imagination and mysticism, Germanic-Romance - in science and technology. Each of them is likened to a living organism, successively passing by the will of fate through the stages of generation, youth, maturity and old age.

This concept, in turn, is close to the formulated concept of the Russian thinker of the late XIX century. N.Y. Danilevsky, relying on the ideas of J. Vico. The "life cycle" of each culture is divided into three main phases:

The pre-cultural, or "ethnographic" state is an extremely long phase, when "culture" is born from the primary "ethnographic" chaos;

Cultural period proper, subdivided into "early" and "late", when an intensive process of creation of spiritual and material values of "higher culture" takes place;

The period of "civilization", when "the cultural organism steadily and inevitably wanes, the spiritual creative power fades away".

Toynbee rejected the Spengler's theory of cultures as organisms with a life expectancy of 1000 years and cited moral degeneration and the loss of a creative approach to emerging problems as reasons for their decline.

Toynbee contrasted his own methodology with the installations of Spengler and constantly emphasized his "empiricism" as opposed to Spengler's "dogmatism."

Toynbee developed the original version of the concept of local civilizations. He identified civilizations as units of the division of the historical process, which he identified with the state of societies, in which a creative elite emerges, free from participation in the reproduction of material life.

According to Toynbee, administrators, professional soldiers and priests are endowed with the gift of a mystical impulse leading to the universalization of the world-historical process. They create the unique spiritual image of each civilization, which is embodied in its symbols.

Toynbee sees the goal of the philosophy of history in the development of a "synoptic", which gives a general picture of the view of history, combining knowledge about individual civilizations (discovered by archaeologists, archivists, orientalists), in correlating them with each other. The historian saw the practical significance of his research in the fact that in the conditions of the world community, the global nature of the main human problems, it can help people of different civilizations to overcome mutual misunderstanding, fears and hostility and see in local and partial stories the common achievement and common heritage of the entire human race.

Toynbee wrote: "If history has no other purpose than collecting facts on their own, it only turns into an intellectual transfer of time, like collecting stamps. Laws cannot be eliminated from history ... Science has become historical in spirit, while history becomes ... the science of social development".

The English historian Toynbee clearly formulated the essence of his differences with the neo-Kantian historians (Charles A. Beard, L. Thorndike, Windelband, Rickert, and others).

The famous American historian Charles A. Beard, who was one of the first to review the "Study of History", accused Toynbee of introducing natural science methodology into historical research: "Introducing analogies from biology and physics into historical knowledge rapes historical reality and leads rather to confusion, than to knowledge. Even the natural sciences begin with some basic assumptions about their subject. To a much greater degree, this relates to any judgment regarding history. Empirical operations in history are always limited by the intellectual predispositions of the researcher. This rule cannot be avoided".

Compatriot Toynbee R.J. Collingwood in his book «The Idea of History» characterizes Toynbee's methodology as a "reformulation of the positivistic point of view", "a new expression of historical positivism". The author's "Study of History" constructs for Collingwood is a vivid example of naturalism, which is manifested in the fact that Toynbee, firstly, underestimates the continuity of history, artificially dissecting it into separate parts ("civilization"), and secondly, sharply contrasts historian cognizable by him of the historical process, likening, thus, the naturalist. "... These two lines," Collingwood concludes, "agree on the same thing: history turns into nature, and the past, instead of living in the present, as is the case in history, is thought of as a dead past, as it is in nature. The ideas of Collingwood belong to the "understanding" tradition in the western methodology of history. According to Collingwood, what is known in the past is the spiritual life of people, the spiritual motivations of their activities.

The implementation of the Collingwood's methodological setting means the maximum blurring of the line between the subject and the object of historical research. The Toynbee methodology does not imply an absolute distance between the historian and the knowable past, but includes the element of "understanding."

Belief Toynbee in the objective essence of the historical process and in the possibility of objective knowledge forces him in the debate with Collingwood to insist on the possibility and necessity of using "historical models". Any cogitative operation, according to Toynbee, distorts reality, dismembering it, is essentially indivisible by its essence.

Toynbee tried to carry out the idea of combining discrete elements with elements of continuity in the historical process. "They, I suppose," Toynbee writes to his critics, "are on guard in the name of protecting the uniqueness of historical events and human personalities. It is in their eyes the treasure of the highest value; my work is for them a red rag and therefore they regard it as a symbol of an attack on the principle of respect for the element of uniqueness in history, which they value so highly. By the way, I appreciate it too; but at the same time, I am aware that in addition to the elements of uniqueness in human affairs there is also an element of repeatability".

In his memoirs, Toynbee compares his own historical method with the method of Lewis Bernstein Namier, a recognized master of empirical research. Noting a significant external difference in their methodological views: one is to consider the tree of history as a whole, the other - in a scrupulous study of individual leaves of this tree, Toynbee at the same time insists that some deep community unites his method and Namier's method. According to Toynbee, each strive in their own way to find some way of depicting historical events in terms of not myth, but reality.

The contribution of Lewis Bernstein Namier to the theoretical re-justification of the history of British parliamentarism is well known. In British historiography, the ideas of the meaning of history, historical progress in the late 1920s — early 1930s subjected to fierce attacks from representatives of "neo-conservative" historicism, among whom belonged L. Namier. The refusal of the position of "teachers of life", the preaching of idiographism in the methodology - all this did not mean that the "neo-conservatives" managed to implement their methodological principles in concrete historiographic practice, i.e. "clear" it from theory in humanitarian research. Toynbee's position on the issue of determinism and foresight in history is highly indicative. He wrote:

“Studying human history for today reveals a certain number of repetitive patterns. It would be superfluous to repeat that I am not a determinist.

I do not believe that anything of the repetition in the past was inevitable, just as I do not believe that any of this or another repetition should be repeated in the future”. Toynbee denied the possibility of historical foresight: «I personally believe that foresight is impossible in the realm of human affairs. I believe that the outcome of human choice of goals and plans is, by its nature, incapable of foresight, however we could be informed about relevant past facts up to the present.

And I also believe that these inner, unpredictable plans, goals, and choices play a large enough role in every human situation in order to devalue foresight, based on other elements of human affairs that could possibly have been foreseen if they ever were isolated».

Following Bergson, Spengler and others, Toynbee sought to break free from the captivity of traditional rationalism, coming from the Enlightenment and likening philosophical and historical knowledge to natural science thinking, which was attributed to the ability to fully understand social reality, culture, and man. Toynbee sought to take into account the role of artistic and aesthetic knowledge and intuition in many ways different from the natural-scientific specifics of humanitarian knowledge.

At the same time, Toynbee realized that the failure of some models of scientific thinking and philosophizing that came from the educational rationalism of the 18th century, clearly manifested in his era, did not justify the refusal of such methodological value of general scientific knowledge developed by rationalism as a principle of causality.

III. DISCUSSION

Toynbee’s socio-political philosophy is assessed in literature in a very different way. The fact is that his first publications belong to the 10th years of the XXth century, and the last ones were written in the 1970s. Over the 60-year period, characterized by particularly rapid rates of scientific, technical and social development, and at the same time an increase in crisis phenomena in the development of capitalism, Toynbee’s views have undergone a significant evolution. This evolution, according to Yu.N. Semenov, was due primarily to the impact of such globally significant phenomena as the First and Second World Wars, the collapse of the colonial system, the scientific and technological revolution, the change of the period of “cold war” in the relations between socialist and capitalist countries, the policy of peaceful coexistence, etc.

In the evolution of Toynbee’s views, the emergence and introduction of a huge mass of new historical facts, including the discovery of previously unknown civilizations, as well as new socio-historical generalizations, played a significant role. Finally, the most diverse and often very thorough and numerous criticism of Toynbee (with his characteristic propensity for self-reflection), together with objective factors, contributed to a serious change and updating of many of his fundamental views.

Belief in progress, hope for the unlimited possibilities of the spiritual perfection of humanity are characteristic of Toynbee’s views. He seeks to link the mass of empirical material, taken on a global scale, into a single picture of the history of humanity, to reveal the connection of historical data with the eternal needs of man and society.

According to the Professor G. Morgentau, «Mr. Toynbee regained the courage that the scientific dogma put to sleep, to ask history questions that are significant for him and through him as a person for other people as well, and make history answer them. Compare the richness and dynamism of its historical imagination and the trouble-free poverty of scientific historiography».

Jose Ortega y Gasset, the largest Spanish philosopher of the XXth century, wrote “The Interpretation of the Universal History of Toynbee”, where he criticizes Toynbee’s initial position about local civilizations as the main intelligible units of history. He joins the opinion of historians who hold traditional positions that recognize the “nation” as the main unit for the division of history.

The Spanish philosopher considers the consideration of them from the outside, not from the inside to be an essential minus of the concept of local civilizations, which does not allow Toynbee to penetrate into their inner essence.

Jose Ortega y Gasset, without disagreeing with most of Toynbee's critics, indicates that behind his empirical method lies a priori, the desire to arbitrarily adjust the facts to a made-up scheme.

Jose Ortega y Gasset, distinguishing between the "physical world" and the "historical world", believes that the historian's method is "narration" - a unique and unique form of "proof" for the historian, completely different from the proof of "mathematical" or "physical" and, however, equivalent to them.

A critical analysis of the philosophical and historical views of A. Toynbee was carried out in the works of Soviet philosophers and historians, who revealed the ideological and historical origins of his views, elevated to absolute historical repeatability and discontinuity, revealed numerous inaccuracies. At the same time, Toynbee is described in these works as the most prominent theoretical theorist, in whose works a great deal of factual material is concentrated and in his own way many fundamental and most urgent questions of history and modernity are raised.

IV. RESULTS

In monograph «Arnold J. Toynbee — a historian for crisis time» Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Roland N. Stromberg tried to identify the relationship between the ideological, political and historical and theoretical views of Toynbee.

Roland N. Stromberg is one of the few who pays great attention to the political experience of Toynbee as the English thinker: "He is a man of great political experience. Spengler was a poor school teacher, an outsider compared to Toynbee. The requirement of the ancients for a historian to have a certain practical and political experience is fulfilled by Toynbee much more than by most of his academic critics who accused him of being naive... And how many of them spoke with dictators and marched with armies?"

In monograph «Arnold Toynbee. The Ocumenical Vision» (1975) Professor C. Wainthroth gives the Toynbee's socio-political views: "Toynbee is a Westerner, an Englishman, not fascinated by the West. His approach is ecumenical. Therefore, there are people in whose view he is not with the West and even against the West ... However, a truly Western person is no longer an apologist for the West; he must look to the West from a broader point of view. And this is exactly what Toynbee does, and does possibly better than anyone else".

A. Toynbee wrote: «In the current situation, when the whole world actually became one, it should be considered as a whole. It is necessary to overcome all forms of ethnocentrism, in particular — Eurocentrism. This latter still dominates the worldview of Western civilization, in the historical concepts of the Western man, still inclined to view the history of his own civilization as a unique and exceptional phenomenon, apart from its connection with the histories of other societies, or simply as the apogee of world history».

The critical comments made to the "Cambridge Modern History" in an article with the remarkable name "The Modern World or the Modern West" are of interest for our research.

"This is not the history of Mankind over the past 450 years. This is the history of Western European peoples, their overseas colonists, subjects and victims ... ". Further, Toynbee notes the deep anachronism of the fundamental methodological framework underlying the "Cambridge Modern History." According to this attitude, "... the history of the last 450 years is the history of the progressive development of the whole world, initially only by regional Western society; and this process was to become the central theme of the "Cambridge Modern History"... Moreover, it was assumed that the non-Western majority of humanity must either follow the path of the West... or die. When Lord Acton made his plan in 1896 ... there were certain circumstances that justified this erroneous concept. However, the dramatic events of the 20th century...threw a new light on the whole past, beginning with the first effects of the Modern West on other societies.

The non-Western Man was not "aligned", was not "assimilated." The call of the West to his independence and his very existence served as a stimulus for him, awakening him to action...". From the above considerations, Toynbee shows that in his program of "spiritual revolution" an important, if not key, role was assigned to a fundamental change in the historical views of humanity, and the West above all.

Toynbee insists that the current state of the world creates an urgent need for a new history, or rather, for a new synthetic science of man. This new history should be free from a narrow, meaningless specialization, from ethnocentrism, which presupposes the separation of a fundamentally unified history into stories, for example, "Western" and "Eastern".

According to Toynbee, "today there is a great intellectual opportunity for historians. For the first time in history, we have a chance to see two things. We can now see the history of civilizations ... as a whole, instead of being limited, like our predecessors, to a partial contemplation of its fragments and fragments. In addition, now we can also see all aspects of human existence precisely as aspects of a single human nature instead of, like our predecessors, exploring a person in parts, artificially breaking his study into a number of independent "disciplines". Since the role of the main factor testifying to the unity of the historical process in the Toynbee concept is fulfilled by religious evolution, it is quite logical that Toynbee thinks of a religious history as the foundation of this new, synthetic science about man. Thus, the views of the English thinker on the role of historical knowledge in the life of society with its religious doctrine were closed.

The persistent assertion of the social role of historical knowledge is characteristic of the works of Toynbee in the 1940s and 1950s. Proceeding from the postulate of "openness" of history for spiritual influence, Toynbee writes about the opportunity for a historian to influence the course of social development, the opportunity that has increased enormously in modern conditions. "I believe that the historians of our day have a great opportunity, and that this great possibility is also a great responsibility," he concludes with one of his works with this statement.

V. CONCLUSION

Toynbee's works are characterized by a huge amount of factual material, including statistical and other sociological data, a comparison of specific historical facts and situations, as if repeated in conditions of different civilizations, etc. But all these facts and figures turn out to be not the primary material for scientific generalizations, but only "proof" of the a priori existing scheme of the historical process. This pseudo-empiricism was subjected to the harshest criticism from Western historians.

The involvement in world politics at the highest level has largely determined the nature and extent of A. Toynbee's historical thinking, which has become one of the prominent representatives of the civilizational approach to world history.

As the analysis of A. Toynbee's historical development model shows, this English researcher combines the achievements of a civilizational approach with the idea of the continuous progressive development of mankind, which is the fundamental principle of a linear understanding of the historical process. In our opinion, such ideas of the theory of Arnold Toynbee can become elements of a new methodology for understanding the historical process.

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