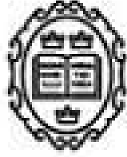

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World in Our Time by Carroll Quigley

Review by: L. S. Stavrianos

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and similarity. Greater incisiveness might have been achieved had the separate historical chapters preceded the theoretical ones.

Fragment is another name for cultural distinctiveness—the historical result of an exodus by a segment from its cultural matrix. The founding of new societies is a process in which parts, ripped from wholes, alter parent societies and their offspring alike. All this is familiar enough, but the present effort encompasses more. It seeks to examine the process within a cultural unity—Europe—and to define the elements of permanence and change. The concept of fragmentation becomes an instrument of historical analysis. Separation molds the stages of fragmentation as these stages and others are modulated by the developing European tradition and the flux of place, time, and social condition.

Infoldings and outfoldings of history abound. Feudal fragmentation, for example, in North America, Latin America, and Canada "has the longest reach . . . of all detachments from Europe." Without "real Whiggery" and "no Jacobinism," socialism of the European variety is uncongenial to those parts of the New World which predate the European Enlightenment. Fragments lose "the stimulus toward change that the whole provides," and yet they supply opportunity for the development of freedom; "by extricating the European ideologies from the European battle, by cutting short the process of renewal which keeps that battle going, they permit precisely that unfolding of potentialities which the Old World denies." But "there is a stifling of the future as well as an escape from the past," for the price of freedom to develop is a traditional nationalism; the outcome a failure of the parts to understand the European whole.

While the several essays offer fertile comparisons and the theoretical sections often enlighten, impertinent queries constantly interrupt the flow of argument. The particularity that governs the historical chapters of Europe's erstwhile colonies contrasts oddly with the absence of unifying hypotheses concerning Europe. A cultural unity, the unity of Europe, is presupposed. The correlative of the entire approach frequently seems to dissipate in assumption. Are the generalizations supporting the so-called European "ideology"—concepts fundamentally social and political—in fact the ruling concepts? Are these in truth the dominating symbols in which the drives of men are fused? We can accept selected elements in the evolution of society as relatively fixed; others are relatively malleable. Which are mutable; which permanent? Persistence without change is as valid a mechanism in social as in genetic evolution. But in society, as in genes, recombination dissolves fixities. Historians will not find persistence astounding, but they will wish to know under what specific conditions immutability endures. Historians will wish particularly to know how fixities persist without genuine isolation and what inhibits fertility in concrete instances.

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TRAGEDY AND HOPE: A HISTORY OF THE WORLD IN OUR TIME. By *Carroll Quigley*. (New York: Macmillan Company. 1966. Pp. xi, 1348. $12.50.)

THIS fascinating, impressive, and important analysis of the contemporary world

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—its historical origins, its present condition, and its prospects—begins with an interpretation of the evolution of civilization based on the author's earlier well-known work on this subject. He then examines in considerable detail the dynamics of world affairs on the eve of World War I. With this background, he develops a full-scale review of events from 1914 to 1964. There are many other studies of this half century, but Professor Quigley's is unique and invaluable because of his informed and consistent analysis of the intimate relationship between contemporary history and contemporary science-technology. A basic weakness of much modern scholarship has been its failure to recognize adequately this relationship. How unfortunate this is becomes apparent in this work with its mass of illuminating information and insights concerning the manifold repercussions of the development of weapons and of the rationalization of society by the application of game theory, information theory, cybernetics, symbolic logic, and electronic computing. These, and related techniques, are transforming not only nations but also the relations between nations. The author shows in convincing detail the decisive role of the wavering balance of nuclear weapons in the alternating thawing and freezing that has marked the cold war. Quigley also bears down heavily on economic development, tracing the evolution from commercial capitalism to industrial capitalism, finance capitalism, monopoly capitalism, and finally to what he calls the current pluralist economy. More important, he emphasizes throughout the political and social repercussions of this economic evolution, including the close relationship between the Great Depression and Hitler's triumph.

The over-all thesis of the book is that the nineteenth century was "a period of materialism, selfishness, false values, hypocrisy, and secret vices"; that the two world wars and the Great Depression were the terrible fruits of that century; and that the hope of the twentieth century "rests on its recognition that war and depression are man-made and needless." It is just as well that these propositions are recapitulated in the final pages, for the reader, likely as not, will have lost the line of reasoning by the time he has reached the end of this massive, rambling hulk of a book. The author obviously is a man of wide-ranging intellectual interests, but organization definitely is not his forte. He cannot resist going off on tangents that attract him, so that the reader continually encounters revealing data and interpretations of topics such as the historic significance of Britain's island position, the nature of the German national character, the implications of Hiroshima, and the problems of child rearing in the United States. The net result is a fascinating but also frequently confusing work that would be substantially shorter and more effective if it were properly reorganized and edited.

A final feature of this book is its refreshing candor. Quigley has definite views and expresses them forthrightly. Considering the vast range of his subjects, it is not surprising that statements that are extravagant or only partly true or even completely untrue can be found in virtually every chapter. But to concentrate on such statements and to ignore the overriding merits of this study would be grossly unfair and unfortunate. For the author does ask the important questions, and he does try to answer them honestly and meaningfully—which is why his book is more significant and challenging than most studies of our times.

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