

Organization since its foundation and until his death in 1958), chose as his title "Population and Food Supply". After paying tribute to the role which McDougall played in the establishment of FAO, Dr. Toynbee noted that the establishment of the Organization was not the only historic event that made the year 1945 a turning-point in history. The same year saw the harnessing of atomic energy as a weapon of warfare. Using a standard of humaneness as measurement, Dr. Toynbee viewed these two historic events of the year 1945 as opposite poles of the gamut of human achievement. Yet he noted an historical connexion between them, and a close one. "Both events", he said, "were consequences of an increase in Man's power that had been in progress since the dawn of history and had recently been accelerating. By 1945 Man was within sight of acquiring the power either to provide a humane standard of living — spiritual as well as material — for the whole human race or alternatively to commit 'genocide' — a new word that we have had to coin to describe an atrocity that was previously beyond our reach . . . To be human means to be free to choose between good and evil. Good and evil are always what they are. But the stakes of life and death are raised higher with each successive rise in mankind's power".

Noting that for the first time since the Paleolithic age, when man definitively got the upper hand over non-human nature, the human race is again in danger of extinction, Dr. Toynbee declared that we are now at the crossroads. Used constructively, atomic energy could bring in a new era of progress for mankind as distinctive as the past new eras inaugurated by the "invention" of agriculture and of metallurgy and by the Industrial Revolution. On the other hand, we could adopt the opposite philosophy — the philosophy of resignation. But as he pointed out:

"This defeatist philosophy has always been untrue to the facts. Man has always had some freedom of choice ever since he became human; but, when his power was in its infancy, his freedom was not so obvious as it is today. In those days he felt himself helpless in the face of forces that, today, we know that we can control if we choose. Man once felt impotent, for example, in face of the three classic scourges of human life: war, pestilence, and famine. An invasion by human aggressors was, for our forefathers, on a par with an invasion by locusts. Their onset was inexorable; so there is nothing that you can do with them but fight them, and, if you failed to destroy them, they will devour your crops and thus destroy you. It had not yet occurred to people that their human enemies, being human, could be reasoned with, and that perhaps both parties, when they talked it over, might find that they had a common interest in keeping the peace, and basing it on agreed mutual concessions. Instead, tribe felt tribe to be unamenable to anything but force as Man has found locusts to be. As for pestilence and famine, these too, like war, were accepted as being acts of God. How could Man ban disease or influence the weather by taking thought? When God gave David a choice between famine, pestilence, and war as his punishment for an offence, David felt that God was doing him a great favour. Instead of