What Is a Futurist?

A futurist is a person who is seriously interested in the future. He likes to know what the possibilities are — both the problems that may come up and the opportunities that may arise — so that he can prepare for them.

The futurist now has his own special magazine: THE FUTURIST: A Journal of Forecasts, Trends, and Ideas About the Future. An exciting window on tomorrow, THE FUTURIST is vital to anyone who wants to know what leading experts believe may happen in the next 5 to 50 years.

A reader of THE FUTURIST knows a lot that most people don’t know. For instance:

1. How large U.S. megalopolises may be by the year 2000.
2. What the institution of marriage may be like in the future.
3. What theologian Harvey Cox believes will be the future of Christianity.
4. Why today’s children may live to be 200 years old.
5. Why President Nixon put futurists on the White House staff and what they told him.
6. When drugs may raise the level of human intelligence.
7. How many jobs there may be in oceanology by 1980.

THE FUTURIST is published by the World Future Society, a nonprofit association of individuals and organizations interested in the future. (As a subscriber to THE FUTURIST, you will learn about the Society’s activities and will have an opportunity to join, if you wish.)

Since the Society has no official position on what the future will or should be like, THE FUTURIST presents a wide variety of provocative views. Here you will find authors as different as Glenn T. Seaborg, chairman of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, and Earl Hubbard, an artist and space philosopher. You may also encounter Arthur I. Waskow, a New Left activist, and Lt. Col. Joseph Martino, who forecasts technological developments for the U.S. Air Force. However different they may be, authors in THE FUTURIST always have something important to say about the future.

WORLD FUTURE SOCIETY,
P.O. Box 19285
20th St. Station, Washington, D.C. 20036

Please enter my subscription to THE FUTURIST for one year (six issues).

□ Enclosed is $7.50  □ Please bill me.

Name ____________________________

Address ____________________________

City State ____________

Zipcode ____________ Occupation ______

If not completely satisfied with THE FUTURIST when your first copy arrives, you may cancel within 30 days and receive a complete refund.

How to Cope with Now

FUTURE SHOCK by Alvin Toffler.
1970, 505 pages, $7.95

New York: Random House,

Reviewed by Amitai Etzioni

Toffler’s book is widely misread. It is not about the future, with its mind-blowing rapid succession of technological breakthroughs and the “shock” they will cause as they threaten our capacity to absorb and react; it is not about the present society, which is already overwhelmed. Rather, Toffler’s subject is societal management. He explores the conditions under which man is in charge as opposed to those that lock him in and subject him to forces beyond his control. He neither understands nor controls.

The projected needs of societies in the foreseeable future do not differ basically from the requirements for effective and participatory management of our present society. Consequently, a study of the capacity to manage “the future” has essentially the same agenda as a study of ways to deal with forces affecting our life today.

Toffler, who is as much an essayist as he is a social science popularizer,
writes for effect. He says we will experience a state of shock about the future similar to the culture shock pre-literate tribes suffered upon abrupt exposure to Western civilization. He believes, in fact, that we have already been thrown into a shock.

But even if one does not share Toffler's alarm about the rapidity of change around us and is somewhat more confident about our capacity to cope, many of Toffler's suggestions on "how to manage" (he would add "the future") are still of interest.

Personal coping. Toffler prescribes a deliberate slowing of pace in order to reduce our overstimulation. Frantic cocktail parties, jet hopping, frequent changes of home and job—these are all part of what makes life unduly transient for most people. Why not take a new look at each one of these enticements and demands on one's energy? Maybe one can say no to some of them. Toffler further suggests that one not try to handle the strain of being modern all by himself—one should join up with groups of fellow travelers who share the transient situation; we should help one another and not hesitate to draw on professional counselling. Better yet, we should find halfway houses between where we are and where we are going, to soften the transition. When it comes time to retire, one should first cut his working time in half. In general, we should try not to leap, but to step into new worlds.

Societal coping. But, says Toffler, quite correctly, personal adaptations must be accompanied by societal ones. Our educational system must be re-done because "what passes for education today, even in our 'best' schools and colleges, is a hopeless anachronism." We need to transform the organization of our schools from one that parallels the factory (and so prepares the student for it) to one more like a lab—full of opportunities for autonomy and self-growth. We should also "revolutionize the curriculum" and encourage a more futuristic orientation. If you read Paul Goodman and Marshall McLuhan, you can fill in the details yourself.

Toffler favors "taming technology" to slow down and humanize the industrial processes. This is to be accomplished by the use of a broad political grouping rationally committed to further scientific and technological advance—but on a selective basis only." (I cannot help but agree, having advanced an identical idea in a Science article published on 13 September 1968.)

Finally, Toffler proposes a new strategy, which he labels "social futurology." It consists of planning that is concerned more with human values than with efficiency, rationality and economic utilities and is thus more far-sighted and more participatory than are current schemes. Goals are no longer to be set by elites or their commissions and staffs, but by the people. The public is to be better informed and would share in goal setting via "social-future assemblies," which would be not unlike updated New England town meetings.

Who will change? Toffler's conceptions of the cybernetic elements of societal guidance are quite valid; he correctly sees a significant role to be played by a more systematic input of knowledge into decision-making bodies and wider use of computers and of modern means of communication in guiding societal processes. But his conception of political processes is innocent, to say the least. Is society naively stumbling into the future like a tribe in a jungle because no Toffler has yet told us that a shocking future is behind the next tree? And now that we have been warned, what do we need in order to revolutionize education, humanize the planners and turn over the power to the people? What makes establishments myopic, and how will they become farsighted? By reading futurology?

As I see it, the society is composed not of elites and masses but of a plurality of groups who command unequal political power, ranging from forceful groups of manufacturers to weak groups of people on relief. The power of each group is determined by numerous factors, including resources, size of membership, level of education, political consciousness, organization and mobilization for political action. The course society steers—within the constraints set by its environment—is largely shaped by the interplay among these various groups. As the various "background" factors that affect the groups' relative power change—as, for instance, education and political skills.

Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City
Second Edition
Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan

Beyond the Melting Pot was one of the most influential books published during the 1960's. This second edition includes a new 90-page introduction, "New York City in 1970," in which the authors, with all their previous depth and verve, examine the turn of events since 1963, the date of the first edition. Their concerns are directed to such developments as the rise of militant black demands and the response to these of the city's peoples and political structures; the decline of Catholic power in Lindsay's New York and the rise in power of Jews and WASP's; the growth of a black middle class and the economic and political difficulties of the Puerto Ricans.

$10.00 cloth $1.95 paperback

Violence and the Police: A Sociological Study of Law, Custom, and Morality
by William A. Westley

Who are the police? What jobs do they perform? Why do they behave as they do? Twenty years ago William Westley answered these questions by making a study of the municipal police force in a midwestern city, which has proved to be one of the pioneering works in the field.

The original study is updated by a Preface in which Professor Westley notes the significance of his findings for present-day problems.

$8.95

Build Me a Mountain: Youth, Poverty, and the Creation of New Settings
by I. Ira Goldenberg

In the 1960's, the War on Poverty dramatized the plight of "the other America." Simultaneously, helping professions in general and clinical psychology in particular grappled with redefined responsibilities to society's disenfranchised citizenry. Dr. Goldenberg advocates an alliance between social activist and clinician in the arena of community action.

In this seminal case study of New Haven's Residential Youth Center (RYC), he examines the evolution of a new setting for human renewal and draws inferences for the creation of other non-self-defeating programs.

$10.00

The MIT Press
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1970
spread throughout the lower classes and minorities—the relative power profile of the member groupings changes, and so does the course of society. Most "background" factors tend to change slowly, and the mobilization of one group tends to trigger the countermobilization of some others, thus reducing the net change in the power distribution of the total system. Therefore, the redirection of society tends to be gradual. Recognition of this fact does not make for good copy, but it may make for a more accurate social-political analysis.

The same must be said about the observation that most societal changes are not caused by technological breakthroughs but by new political mobilizations and coalitions—they provide the needed energy to fuel major societal reorganization. Our present "crisis" is not so much due to transistors, computers and CATV as it is to the rise and expansion of demands of groups previously kept passive or semi-passive. Minorities, lower classes, women and youngsters have increasingly taken to political action and are now asking for the quality of air, water, health care and education reserved until recently for the upper and upper-middle classes. If the rising groups coalesce, they may make the future ever more responsive to all member groupings of society because the very mobilization of the weak leads to a decrease in the inequality of political power. If these groups who are now making themselves heard will follow their respective sectarian courses, some seeking to out-Vietcong one another, and others to have more pork chops for themselves without much consideration for other groups, the future will belong to neither. It will be largely the property of the contemporary elites, give or take a few thousand planners, cybernetic engineers and Tofflers needed for societal guidance.

Even if one subscribes to a political theory different from the one I just outlined—and agrees with Daniel Bell, John Kenneth Galbraith and Robert Heilbroner, who are more optimistic than I about the prospect of an elite of scientists and other intellect workers (to use Paul Baran's term)—one still must note that without some political conception Toffler's "shock absorbers" are either establishment bumpers, or have to await the revolution before they can be installed. Toffler seems to be unaware that his list of recommendations includes some items, such as the sharing of goal setting, which entail a radical transformation of the polity. Others, such as his advice to reduce one's pace to counter the strain of the system, help to preserve the establishment. While this makes Toffler's book of value both to those who seek to "absorb" the future and to those who seek to form it, both will need to find a way to link his cybernetics to a political conception. Otherwise, it is like a missile without a propellant, and that won't work—even in the future.


The First Southern Strategy

FORGING A MAJORITY: THE FORMATION OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY IN PITTSBURGH, 1848–1860 by MICHAEL FITZGIBBON HOLT

New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969, 408 pages, $10.00

Reviewed by Charles O. Jones

No one could recall when the Republicans had last nominated such an attractive and able candidate for mayor of Pittsburgh. The Republicans dared to think they had a chance to win in 1969 with John K. Tabor despite a 3 to 1 Democratic registration advantage. "Tabor the doer" was bright, sincere, energetic, on the move. Even his ads had him running right at you. The traditionally strong Democratic machine could stand a little joust after