

Aquarians meet

Mark Burdman reports on the Toronto futurist conference

On July 20-24, the World Futures Society and the Canadian Association for Futures Studies sponsored the largest futurist assembly to date. The Toronto conference drew 6000 participants from 45 countries, and featured hundreds of discussion seminars, films, and special events. EIR correspondent Mark Burdman covered the conference from its introductory keynote to its final plenary. Further installments of this report will describe conference discussions on the "post-industrial information society" forecast for the United States and on the space program.

"We must have respect for primitive cultures."

"We must find the ways of transformation to deal with the phenomenon of systems breakdown going on around us." "Respect life: animals, vegetables, and fishes, especially whales."

Another guru's tract? A new California cult manifesto? A scene from the movie *Hair*?

None of the above. All these statements were made at the recent Toronto First Global Conference on the Future, funded and sponsored by some of Canada's most prestigious corporations and government agencies. The five-day Toronto conference was an object lesson in how some of the leading elites of the Western world have degenerated morally, philosophically, and politically.

For five days, I witnessed top energy policy planners, corporate strategists, and social theorists evangelize for the set of values usually associated with the "Aquarian Age" elements of the counterculture. The first salvo in the Toronto conference's "Aquarian Age" barrage was fired by Stanford Research Institute futurist Willis Harman. Harman is the man whose social-psychological "Changing Images of Man" experiments in the early 1970s initiated what has today come to be known as the "Aquarian Conspiracy."

On July 20, Harman delivered the conference keynote, in a speech entitled, "To Think Globally and Act Locally, Perceive Newly" (the official conference title theme was "Through the '80s: Thinking Globally, Acting Locally"). During the speech, Harman declared: "... It is the materialist view of industrial society that is out of step, with its concept of humankind controlling and exploiting an insentient world.

"Thus, there would seem to be two possible perceptions of reality around which a global order might eventually be constructed. One is the materialist world view implicit in the institutions of modern industrial nations (capitalist, socialist and communist). The other is closer to the perception of the North American Indian and may be emergent as an ecological perspective in some of the contemporary social movements around themes like consumer society, development alternatives, appropriate technology, holistic health, alternative lifestyles, and so on. The second seems rather impractical and visionary to most of what we call "decision makers" in modern society. It does seem to have the virtue of being the more compatible with a vast diversity of cultures in the Third World. . . .

"The choices of self-seeking individuals in a world of increasingly resource-consuming, environmentally damaging, and powerful technology are not guaranteed to sum to desirable social choices. Is there no alternative to increasingly heavyhanded centralized regulation? . . . The only other way would seem to be through *conscious identification* of the individual with the whole. Perhaps we see the beginning of this development in the grassroots emergence of an ecological ethic. . . ."

Harman then praised the views of drug cultist Aldous Huxley as providing a "set of premises" for "a global order . . . in which the great juggernaut of the world

The conference sponsors

Toronto Futures Conference sponsors included prestigious individuals and corporate interests. According to the official Conference Final Program, the Board of Directors of the World Future Society, the main sponsoring group of the conference, includes Orville Freeman, head of the New York-based Business International; Sol M. Linowitz, a director of Xerox and a senior partner of the Coudert Brothers law firm; and Michael Michaelis, a director of the Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Arthur D. Little Corporation.

Among the corporate and government sponsors: Alcan Canada Products, Ltd.; Bell Canada; Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce; Control Data Corporation; IBM Canada, Ltd.; Imperial Oil, Ltd.; Petro Canada; Royal Bank of Canada; Shell Canada, Ltd.; Sun Oil Company of Canada, Ltd.; Trizec Corporation, Ltd.; Air Canada; Ontario Ministry of Industry and Tourism; Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada; Xerox of Canada, Ltd.; Rothman's of Pall Mall Canada, Ltd.; Molson Companies, Ltd.

Maurice Strong's 'basic truths'

One of the most interesting case studies in the degeneracy of the Canadian elites is that of Maurice Strong.

Strong is one of the top energy entrepreneurs in Canada, having founded the multinational Petrocan company. He is a former United Nations undersecretary, and was a motivator of the first U.N. Conference on the Environment in Stockholm and of the U.N. Habitat Conference in Vancouver in the early 1960s.

At the Toronto Conference, Strong gave the closing keynote, a rambling summation of the five days' events that included several striking observations. Two of the most noteworthy were:

"Indigenous cultures like the hunter-gatherer are being threatened. One of the great heritages we have is being wiped out. I don't just embrace primitive cultures, but they represent basic truths that we have to inculcate in our futures planning."

"What is happening in Canada is not unique: decentralization *and* regionalization and globalism all combined, with an inevitable decline in the central role of the nation-state in the system of governance. The nation-state will unsuccessfully resist this trend."

Strong is involved in sponsoring a number of kook activities. He is a director of the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, and, according to an informed source, is seeking to transform the area in Colorado where Aspen is located into a "network of mystical retreats that will serve as a model for the rest of the world."

Strong is also on the board of directors of the Lindisfarne Association, a feudal institution that supports the development of a new "planetary culture" based on the construction of handicraft villages interlinked through worldwide communications grids.

Other Lindisfarne directors include Mary Catherine Bateson, daughter of recently deceased drug cultist Gregory Bateson, and Richard Falk. Both were active in bringing Ayatollah Khomeini to power in Iran. William Irwin Thompson, Lindisfarne's founder, has written a book extolling the "dance of death of industrial civilization"; and Amory Lovins, head of the British branch of Friends of the Earth, who has recently issued a comprehensive report against nuclear power which received substantial excerpted coverage in the most recent edition of the New York Council on Foreign Relations' quarterly *Foreign Affairs*.

industrial economy will not ride roughshod over the less materially focused cultures."

On the last day of the conference, Canadian Association for Futures Studies President Frank Feather announced that Harman, along with Indian futurist Rashmi Mayur of the Bombay Environmental Planning Institute and "alternative futures" spokesman Hazel Henderson, had most "personified" the conference as a whole. This was quite true.

Mayur had told the Toronto *Sunday Sun* as the conference began that "Nicaragua and El Salvador are only ripples of the storm to come." If solutions cannot be found, the Third World will rise up and enter the citadels of western affluence." To the final plenary session of the conference, Mayur proclaimed, "We are building our house on sand if we base our future on technology. . . . The American Indians are the ones who are the basic inspiration for the future."

In her presentations, conference heroine Hazel Henderson elaborated on this theme. "Our job is not to steer spaceship earth, as the crisis managers do," she declared during the morning July 21 plenary. "Let us respond to the emerging awareness of ourselves as a conscious part of the earth, to the mysterious self-organizing Earth Mother."

'Father of Futurism'

While Harman, Henderson, and Mayur personified the five-day Toronto event, it was French futurist Bertrand de Jouvenel who was its godfather.

On the first night of the conference, de Jouvenel was the co-recipient, along with Canada's media fetishist Marshall McLuhan, of an official award for his services to the field of "futurism." De Jouvenel served as a personal disciple of H.G. Wells, the British theorist whose entire work was devoted to the proposition that science should remain the preserve of a special priesthood ruling over a bestialized and ignorant mass. The seminal work in modern futurism, de Jouvenel's *Art of Conjecture*, was consciously modeled after Wells's theory that control over the human mind largely depended on controlling each individual's sense of what the future could hold in store. Wells also developed the notion of an "open conspiracy" or "world brain" composed of elites around the world. In 1960, de Jouvenel, with Ford Foundation money, founded the first modern "futurist" institution, the Futuribles. This group was the motivating force, along with the Sussex, England-based Tavistock Institute, in launching a simultaneous series of Year 2000 projects in the mid-1960s. Out of these Year 2000 projects, a whole range of futurist groups was spun off, including the World Futures Society and the Canadian Association of Futures Studies.

Hazel Henderson declares holy war

EIR interviewed Hazel Henderson, "alternative futures" theorist who delivered two keynote addresses during the five-day Toronto First Global Conference on the Future conference.

Q: Two comments of yours over the past few days have interested me. First, I heard you made some comments pertinent to the so-called reindustrialization debate in the United States. Second, in your first speech at the conference, you declared that the 1980s would require that we undergo a "trial by entropy." Can you explain your views on these two points?

A: Well, on the first, I was saying that "reindustrialization" is really an empty phrase. . . . What *kind* of industry do we need. . . . By "trial by entropy" I am saying that at the moment, our existing plant and equipment are all capital-intensive and material-intensive. To . . . change things around, we simply must go back and retrofit all this stuff. What we can't retrofit, we have to write off. . . . Our productive processes cannot be energy-efficient under the new conditions we are facing, when the only game in town is conservation.

It's never a matter of no-growth vs. growth, simply put. No one suggests that *only* small-scale technology will be used. But what I *am* saying is that we need a new type of energy fitted to the local community. We can't have a national energy plan. . . . It can't fit the needs of various regions. In Florida, for example, solar should go all the way. In Massachusetts, we should retrofit small dams with hydroelectric turbines, wind power, insulating power, renewable resources, and so on. . . . Mass transit has to be maintained. We'll still be producing steel, and we'll need telephones. It's a question of sorting out what has to be written off. . . .

Q: I read an article of yours; you began with a citation from a book called "The Promise of the Coming Dark Ages," by the Greek author Stavrianos. You seemed to regard what he was saying favorably.

A: That was the chapter citation of the last chapter in my book, "Creating Alternative Futures." . . . There is some hope that while all the world is crashing down about their ears, people don't necessarily have to panic, even

though the statisticians haven't yet bothered to conceptualize the existence of a growing local economy: the restoration of downtown houses, the network of food co-ops, and so on. This is what I call a "counter-economy." . . . that is already in existence. And this counter-economy makes us reflect on what happened when the Roman Empire collapsed.

Metaphorically speaking, you see, the last Dark Age wasn't a Dark Age at all. Today, the electric utilities presidents run around saying it's a Dark Age, but it's only a Dark Age for *them*. Similarly, the last Dark Age was only a Dark Age for the Roman elites. These types are like the captain on the Titanic.

. . . It depends on where you are whether we're moving into the Dark Age or the Solar Age. The Solar Age which I foresee right around the corner will be a total configuration: sun powering the whole planet, with biomass, wind power, conversion of wastes, gasohol, and so on.

Q: What if you were to be convinced that fusion power could achieve commercial feasibility, and that it would indeed provide unlimited energy for us all? What position would you then take?

A: There's too much blind faith in far-out technological fixed. We need to bridge the energy trough, not to wait for energy to be ready for commercial use at some time in the future.

I lived in Princeton for seven years, and I've been in holy wars with the fusion people. I know the tokamak fusion rathole, with its lack of payoff. They have this whole thing about the Lawson criterion: that a certain temperature has to be achieved. Mr. Gottlieb would proudly tell me he got a magnetic bottle up to get fusion for 30 seconds. To get 30 seconds of a reaction, he used enough electricity for the whole city of Trenton for 24 hours. Then . . . Lawson came back and said, oops, I made a mistake by an order of magnitude. And then each fusion technique involves a holy war, with the clumsy tokamak of Gottlieb squeezing out others.

I am just much more conservative. I hope someday we'll repeal the laws of thermodynamics, but in the meantime I want to make sure the American population gets through the energy-trough. Fusion is whistling in the dark.

Q: I notice you're really being featured at this conference. What do you make of that?

A: Compared with the big futures conference in 1975, which was simplistic and technocratic, tinker-toy, this one has a lot of riches. . . . I must tell you, I'm amazed and gratified. I came here all prepared for a battle, and it never occurred to me in my wildest dreams that the thing has so much swung around.