

## FOREWORD

At the time when these lines are being written, the new discipline of Futurology - a name given it by Ossip K. Flechtheim - is as yet in an early stage of development. Much like sociology in its beginnings, it is still awaiting official academic recognition.

An investigation into the future earns the right to call itself scientific when it begins to question itself, to realize its own limitations, and to limit itself to hypotheses about future developments.

No new science - and Futurology makes no exception - comes into existence out of sheer nothingness. It rather attempts to integrate those endeavours already under way but as yet dissipated, thus systematizing and invigorating them. In fact for years, if not for decades, a struggle for a rational grasp of the approaching epoch has been noticeable in various specialized fields. This holds particularly true for economics and military affairs - testing grounds especially fertile for yielding insights into the future.

An autonomous science of the future will make it its first and foremost task to substitute the onesidedness inherent in projections, extrapolations, prognoses, and planning projects of the individual disciplines by a set of more comprehensive views and surveys. In this way contradictory future developments can be discovered and publicized at a time that allows for prevention of conflict and destructive collision of antagonistic forces. This "perspective of perspectives" need not only be used as a warning signal for the prevention of dangerous situations; it can point out desirable developments and thus strengthen them.

In the present volume a futurological conception of the human venture is contrasted with traditional linear theories of history. It is intimated that Futurology will put an end to the era of outdated "progress" characterized by unrelated and ruthless linear thrusts; it will study horizontal effects instead. This method of the social sciences can be compared to the field theory in physics and to the "Gestalt theory" in psychology.

The net, not the arrow will be the symbol of an age in which Futurology will play a central part.

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