

## 8. SOME THOUGHTS ON THE FUTURE OF POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

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20 years ago, I published a paper in the United States entitled "Teaching the Future". Ever since I have tried to stress the importance of an enlightened interest in the future of man's society and culture. What I then dared call the "futuorological" approach is the attempt to discuss man and his world in the heretofore forbidden future tense. Marshalling the ever growing resources of science and scholarship we can now do more than methodically employ retrospective analysis and hypothetical predictions; we can also try to establish the degree of their credibility and probability. In contrast to an ideological fixation on the past and to an utopian glorification of the future, a futuorological approach would include the future as a specific dimension of the present. As John Dewey expressed it back in 1922: "We do not use the present to control the future. We use the foresight of the future to refine and expand present activity. In this use of desire, deliberation and choice, freedom is actualized."

Our age of crisis does not permit us, to treat "futuorology" as 'l'art pour l'art'. Our survival depends on the solution of a few core problems that have been vexing us since 1914. They were summarized in concise language by the late President Roosevelt who called for a world founded upon four essential freedoms: freedom from fear, freedom from want, freedom of worship and freedom of speech and expression. Millions in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are recurrently threatened with outright starvation. The cloud of economic depression seems to vanish only as countries rearm or engage in war. Anticipating the present-day problem of the "welfare and warfare state" as early as twenty years ago, the late historian Carl L. Becker explained: "We seem to live in a world in which the easiest and quickest way to abolish one wrong thing - unemployment and want - is to practice on a grand scale another wrong thing - war!" And it was Harold J. Laski who warned us that ... "the technological implication of modern warfare may make possible a new type of militarism unrecognisable to those who look for its historic characteristics." Today the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany are particularly exposed to the pressure of the East-West conflict - the former as the hegemonial power of the West, the latter as the most advanced bridgehead in the European theater of conflict. Hence in those countries, the collaboration of the managers of the armament industries with the ever growing armed forces constitutes a special danger for democracy, and it was only natural that President Eisenhower warned us of the 'military and industrial (and we may add: scientific!) complex'.