

the other hand the high-tech way of life has turned into a flat lifeway, shorn of family values, shot through with violence at every level, lived second-hand through the media, a lifeway vulnerable to every kind of abuse.

In a way the futures movement of recent decades has had its roots in nineteenth century optimism. The twentieth century started well, with the Hague Peace Conference, the decision to replace force by diplomacy in disputes among nations, the successive developments of the League of Nations and the United Nations, and major breakthroughs in our understanding of human development and creative problemsolving, to say nothing of breakthroughs in physical technologies that could improve human health and welfare. It became possible to see World War II as a tragic interruption of a basically positive process of societal evolution. say this with deep feeling because that is the way saw it too

After a decade of holding workshops to assist people in imaging a world without weapons, and encouraging that intimate and highly personal process that unfolds during the workshops, of participants beginning to feel empowered by their own imagery, have had to reflect on what that empowerment meant. On the all-too-infrequent occasions when there were non-westerners in the workshops, they came out rather differently from the workshops with all-western participants, with more diversity. How valid, then, was the empowerment of Europeans and North Americans?

The workshops am referring to, known as "Imaging a World Without Weapons Workshops" may be unfamiliar to many readers. Briefly explained, these workshops were designed to enable people who took disarmament seriously to see whata world in which their goals had been accomplished might look like. Participation involves accepting Polak's concept of a "breach in time", the possibility of abrupt discontinuities in history. Participants step, in fantasy, into a future 30 years hence (time enough for major

Perspectives edited by Samir Amin from the United Nations University in Tokyo. In a period when nationalism, religious fundamentalism and anti-westernism war with a hunger for technology in many parts of the world, it becomes all the more important to gain some knowledge of what scholars from these regions with a broad training in both western and non-western traditions see as possible futures.

The Redevelopment of Imaging Workshops

In the past, we have taken anyone who wanted to participate, into futures imaging workshops. Given the complexity and seriousness of the present situation, and the danger of shallow fantasies about future peace, it seems as if the time has come to require some study of the world beyond Europe and North America of those who would enter upon the work of imaging futures. It is high time to ground would-be journeyers into the the twenty-first century in the history of the twin human capacities for folly and utopia-building, as well as grounding them in a sensitivity to the aspirations that come out of other cultural lifeways.

My own lifetime of 70 years, and my reading of history, has shown me over and over again that no matter how bad things are, the human race has been there before. Been there, and found a way past destruction. It is finding the way past destruction that makes the imaging so important. Clarity about those ever-present twin capacities, and recognition of an undreamed-of human diversity, can save us from shallow optimism. We don't have to abandon the methods developed to image that better world, only broaden and deepen them.

Preparing for a New Generation of Imagery About the future

Now that the Gulf War is inducing something of the same kind of paralysis that people felt at the close of World War II, Warren Ziegler and our many colleagues are preparing to do a new round of workshops, imaging the