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Forecasts

Every prognosis is necessarily qualified by a certain degree of vagueness, since it seeks to form an idea of the future by way of intuition and extrapolation. Outside the field of observation of any forecast are unprecedented catastrophes or utterly novel developments based on incalculable inventions. In spite of all these factors that militate against clarity in the picture, factors which are substantial in character, forward-looking planning can get nowhere without such forecasts. The reason for this is that decisions taken at a given point in time bear on subsequent developments, which for this reason have to be seen at least in outline, if we are to have a basis for any new decision.

What in former times made its appearance only in utopian fiction has now become the concern of a new branch of science, futurology. As in so many other fields, the USA is here too far ahead of us: there exist a number of large private and governmental institutions whose sole task is to make predictions about the future. Their prognoses constitute an important part of the technological, military, political and business planning done in the USA.

The BDA (Federation of German Architects) has concerned itself with this set of questions and has devoted its 42nd Reunion to the theme "How shall we continue to live?" While at that meeting the sketching of possible conditions played a leading role, the topics taken up in this Issue are

looked at from another side. What is to be sketched is not so much the possible conditions obtaining in a future world (let us say, the year 2000, just to name a given date) as, rather, the necessary steps that have to be taken in order to arrive at humane environmental conditions within the scope of the developments presupposed by the futurologists. The focus should, then, not be on the description of possible conditions but on the presentation of the process.

With this very precisely defined theme in mind the Editors turned to a number of leading, internationally recognized scientific men (Christopher Alexander, Reyner Banham, Max Bense, Pierre Bertaux, Wernher Braun, Yves Cousteau, Jean Fourastié, Helmar Frank, Jürgen Habermas, Robert Jungk, Alexander Mitscherlich, Adolf Portmann, Jean Rostand, Karl Schiller, Karl Steinbuch, Johannes Schlums), as on single architects (Yona Friedman, Buckminster Fuller, Walter Jonas, Cedric Price) and requested them to send in articles on the subject.

Two further questions have come up. One has to do with the comportment of people in an entirely industrialized environment; the other bears on the subject of the training of planning specialists and architects who are capable of coming to terms with the problems of future environmental planning and organization.

As for the question relating to the comportment of people in an entirely industrialized environment, reference has been made to the rapidly multiplying utopian planning projects of architects in recent times (cf. *Building+Home*, No. 5, 1967). These pro-

jects stress throughout the technological aspect of the problem. The question as to how the human being must be constituted in order to be able to live in these superstructures is hardly posed at all. However, if architecture is understood as the creation of an environment that is compatible with human needs, the question would have to be raised as to the minimum requirements that have to be met by builders. The technological utopia would have to be checked against a sociological utopia to see whether it stands up. So much for the topics dealt with in this Issue.

Not all those who were approached could spare the time to contribute an article; some felt that they had nothing to say on the architecturally oriented questions or that the subject was too difficult for them. This Issue contains some of the contributions that came in; others are going to be published in later Issues. Views are expressed here by spokesmen of the fields of medicine, sociology, politics, traffic studies, cybernetics and futurology. Regardless of whether a position was taken or not on the questions raised or whether new questions were posed, these articles embody a number of demands and findings which are of some significance for architects. Perhaps they will give rise to a debate, seeing that some of the ideas presented are not to be swallowed uncritically, for which the pages of this journal are available to everyone. In this connection, however, not only are the views put forward in this particular Issue to be considered but also those utopian proposals published in No. 5, 1967.

Inhaltsverzeichnis

	Jürgen Joedicke, Stuttgart	Prognosen	77
	Alexander Mitscherlich, Frankfurt am Main	Was soll aus unseren Städten werden?	79-82
	Pierre und Daniel Bertaux, Paris	Plädoyer für eine menschliche Kontakte fördernde Stadt	83-87
	Johannes Schlums, Klaus Bender, Stuttgart	Das Großhaus in der Stadt - eine Betrachtung zum Verkehr	89-94
	Karl Schiller, Bonn	Infrastrukturinvestitionen als wirtschafts- und gesellschaftspolitische Aufgabe	95
	Robert Jungk, Wien	Notwendigkeit und Problematik einer »Look-out Institution« für Umweltgestaltung	97-98
	Karl Steinbuch, Ettlingen	Zukunftsplanung als politische Aufgabe	99-103
	Eero Saarinen, Kevin Roche, John Dinkeloo & Associates, Hamden/USA	Laboratorium der Bell Telephone Holmdel	104-116
Chronik	Walter Jonas, Zürich	Vorschlag für eine Stadt	
	Yona Friedman, Paris	Filmprojekt »Das Jahr 2000«	
Wettbewerb		1000-Betten-Krankenhaus Göppingen	