Protecting the environment is something everyone can favor, we or they. But "they" seem to feel themselves about to drown helplessly in a rising pool of industrial offal unless someone can be compelled to shut down the machinery. We find it easier to recognize a job of managing newly complex ecological cycles—a job clarified by new techniques for detecting subtle pollutions and facilitated by the technology-based way of thinking we refer to as systems analysis. In our picture, new chemical threats to the environment are paralleled by a new chemical and social technology of population control.

Which all sounds more self-congratulatory on behalf of the technological community than I should be or mean to be. I am merely reporting that the thoughtful men in that community, as I encounter them, look a good deal more cheerful than most other thoughtful men. Gayer, you might say. And not out of blindness.

It would be a disrespect to the poem and a disservice to the reader to present only the truncated version of "Lapis Lazuli" which appears on the cover. So, though it is less relevant to my argument, here is the rest of it:

Two Chinamen, behind them a third,
Are carved in lapis lazuli,
Over them flies a long-legged bird,
A symbol of longevity;
The third, doubtless a serving-man,
Carries a musical instrument.

Every discoloration of the stone,
Every accidental crack or dent,
Seems a water-course or an avalanche,
Or lofty slope where it still snows
Though doubleless plum or cherry-branch
Sweetens the little half-way house
Those Chinamen climb towards, and I
Delight to imagine them seated there;
There, on the mountain and the sky,
On all the tragic scene they stare.
One asks for mournful melodies;
Accomplished fingers begin to play.
Their eyes mid many wrinkles, their eyes,
Their ancient, glittering eyes, are gay.
How to Survive in a Revolution

There'll be even more rebellion in the 70s predicts Warren Bennis. More black power, more Scarceale Maoists, more women's liberation. What can you do? The first thing is to make your organization more sensitive to what's going on outside.

In the early 60s, many of us who made a business out of predicting the future were guilty of a common error. We assumed that certain basic trends of the 50s—toward bigness, toward interdependence of institutions—toward concentration—would continue unchallenged.

We hoped that the problems caused by technology would be cured by a higher order of technology. That the problems caused by big science would be cured by the breakthroughs of bigger science.

My own book, The Temporary Society, joined in this cult of inevitability; but it tried to suggest ways to infuse these large-scale systems with a more humanistic and democratic bent. I suggested some directions to make the people enmeshed in our vast modern hierarchies more aware of each other's human needs.

I thought that all the trends of a massive, post-industrial society would continue but there were ways to make it bet-
ter, a bit more human. My optimism was based on the expectation of a slow process of incremental reform.

What the book missed—what most futurists were incapable of predicting—was that the challenge of the 80s would not turn out to be liberal and reformist. It would be revolutionary—and from several directions at once.

The vehemence of the black rebellion should have been more predictable, but the social movement which took all by surprise was the revolt of white, affluent, educated youth. The revolution in Scarsdale. This is the revolution which has torn our universities apart and which is beginning to have a profound effect on the business and governmental community. It has forced us to revise most of our ideas about the future.

There are now seven and a half million young people in college. They form a truly vast, new intelligentsia. This intelligentsia hasn’t changed that much in quality from the old. After all, the intelligentsia has traditionally remained a bit outside society and lobbed social criticism at the establishment. But it was always a tiny fraction of the population. Suddenly in America, the intelligentsia has become a major segment of the population. They are now spreading from the campus into the government, business, and the professions—but are continuing to define themselves as critics, as devil’s advocates, and radical reformers.

When this critical intelligentsia formed a tiny percentage of the population, it was perfectly proper to think that those who went to work for TRW and GE would be absorbed into the organization. But today there are simply too many. They are aware of themselves as a community. They are able to support each other’s rebellion in ways which were never possible before.

So I believe they will have a profound impact on the world of business—an impact none of us futurists were able to predict but which we must begin to measure now. What will that impact be? What are the demands of their revolution? Unlike the 30s, the demands have very little to do with wages and only touch peripherally on the conditions of work. These are the children of the middle class, and they have reached a higher level on the hierarchy of needs. The typical college rebels are the children of technocrats, lawyers, and doctors. They are interested in creating work situations which bring joy, spontaneity, self-expression and self-actualization. They already take full employment for granted and are interested, now, in full lives.

Their new morality is person-centered. It values technology, only if the technology serves personal growth and social goals. To the extent that institutions fail in fulfilling these goals, they will fail to attract the brightest young people to work in them.

These values, these concerns are producing a second society within the first. This second culture is, in many ways, far clumsier than the massive post-industrial society which provided a model for the futurists. It is a society which is far less concerned with profit or production. It is—by its own ideology—awkward and participative. The new culture is willing to tolerate inefficiency for the sake of personal development. A group of kids may take eight months to put up a geodesic dome when they could have a contractor put it up in two days—but they’ll do it the slow way. Similarly, they will trade off part of the GNP for a smaller political and economic involvement overseas.
The new culture treasures smallness, human scale, and cultural pluralism. In the past few years, it has produced a host of little communities with those goals.

These include all the counter-institutions of the Left: the free-schools, the underground newspapers, the communes. It is an odd parallel to the process by which tiny companies on Route 128 are spun off from the big corporations and universities. And I think the two derive from many of the same needs—individuation, for creativity, for more continual human contact with co-workers. For a closer look at why men leave big companies to set up little companies, you might read "The Splintering of the Solid State Electronics Industry" (Innovation, Issue 8); or "Beginnings of the Holography Industry" (Innovation, Issue 7).

I think that these mini-societies will become increasingly dominant on the American scene. In fact, they will comprise a whole counter-trend which we failed to foresee in the early 60s, a drive towards smallness, towards personal diversity, and cultural pluralism.

The next ten years or so will see a very dynamic sometimes abrasive interaction between these two cultures. Sometimes, the issues will center on social responsibility; sometimes they will deal with the suitable ways to combine bigness and smallness, productive efficiency and human scale. I personally think that there are ways to combine these two trends to gain the advantages of both. Of bigness and smallness, of centralized power and cultural diversity.

So far, the "alternative institutions" of the Left—the communes and underground culture—have been the only
ways to satisfy the needs of the young. The big firms have had difficulty attracting talented graduates from the campus; but I still think that business remains one of the most creative places for designing the jobs which will finally satisfy the young.

To a large degree, these young people are stuck with us. Despite the fact that their parents are affluent, they're going to have to make a living. So they don't have that many options. They can't all make movies or drive cabs or write for underground newspapers; and there are only so many slots in the Peace Corps and VISTA. The Peace Corps turned down 1500 applicants last year alone, and the government is simply not going to support a massive volunteer program. There's been some talk about a National Youth Corps, but if every disaffected kid in our colleges joined up, it would cost $16 billion a year.

Many of them stay on in school for lack of anything more appealing. A lot of the students today are saying they wouldn't be in the university if there was no war. They say that they're only there to avoid the draft; but I think that's probably not true. For one thing, girls are there. They don't have to be—they could do other things.

They seem to be marking time until more attractive institutions can be designed. They're all dressed up with no place to go. At present, none of our institutions offers them much they really like.

Many of our disaffected youth hope that their counter-culture will completely supplant the old corporations and governmental institutions. This seems to me unlikely—but provided their present disaffection from the private sector can be softened a bit, it seems to me that business has much to offer. Before it can, however, both sides will have to learn a great deal. One of the things business will have to learn is that social change is here. The revolutions are actually happening. The kids can't be conned.

One of the major problems in working toward this synthesis is that the big firms remain largely unaware of how important, how dynamic these revolutionary forces really are.

The corporation is a closed world; and it becomes increasingly difficult, the longer you are inside, to be aware of what is happening just outside the door. It's very difficult for a corporation to remain sensitive to social change, but it is vital. You never escape a revolution completely. The longer you wait, the more expensive it is when you find out.

Just two years ago I was called in as a consultant to a Chicago department store which paid a very high price to learn what was going on all around them.

Their store was partially burned down—a $20-million fire. They had to conclude that it was arson—and almost certainly someone black, possibly employed by them. They had one of the most liberal policies with respect to hiring minority groups, but only a tiny fraction of the blacks they'd hired had risen above the clerk or sealer staff.

Right after the fire, the executives brought in some of the most militant members of the black action groups in Chicago to ask them what had gone wrong. I was there, and it was a stormy session. The meeting was a real shocker for the executives, because they hadn't realized how tough the black revolt had become.

And the executives of that store weren't naive men. They weren't conservatives either.

I'm not sure the management learned anything new, but what they already knew took on sudden force. It became persuasive after the fire, whereas it hadn't been before. The executives told the militants how proud they were to have blacks working in the store, but the blacks pointed out that there wasn't one black buyer. There weren't any blacks in management. The executives certainly knew that, but inside a closed world like a corporation, you come to exercise a kind of selective ignorance.

During those bitter days after the fire, they realized an important point. The entire marketing pattern in the city of Chicago had changed without their really being aware of it—a dreadful blow to the pride of any marketing organization. They had an entirely new
clienteles—black people. Black people with very different desires, needs, and financial problems. The store hadn't really come to terms with this shifting market.

In addition to being the right and moral thing to do, it made economic sense to have blacks in management. And that's the first step they took—but it took only a $20-million fire before they did it.

By now, most corporations are aware that there is a black revolution going on, though not many have quite figured out what to do about it. But how many firms are really sensitive to the multiple revolutions occurring in our society?

Take women's rights. Very few managers realize that when women's liberation takes hold—and it's moving extremely fast now—it will make the black revolt seem like a spring zephyr. It's always more painful to have a civil war when you're already integrated.

Few businessmen pay women equally, respect their judgments, and promote them equally with men. Very few institutions have done anything at all about setting up day-care centers, so that women can really pursue their careers; yet this will be one of the biggest issues of the next few years.

For my own part, I welcome it—though nervously of course. I think women will make excellent managers. Because of their cultural training, I think they're far more capable of absorbing and dealing with conflict than men. Women are also less subject to distortions of power than men. Men are educated to a style of personal ambition which makes their heads swim in situations of power and status.

David Riesman, the Harvard sociologist, suggested to me that one way to insure the social orientation of science and technology would be to get more women into the field. There is nothing, he said, which would humanize science as much as more women engineers and physicists.

It's very difficult for a corporation to remain sensitive to social change, but it has become increasingly vital.

There are definitely ways for a corporation to learn about social change without a $20-million fire—but they require genuine effort.

In every organization, there are people who are out at the cuticle. In the regular course of work, they make contact with people on the outside and are often the first to sense change.

They are salesmen, personnel recruiters, sometimes lawyers. Properly encouraged, they can act as a scanner for the company, letting the household executives know what is happening on the outside.

Unhappily, they are most often in the impotent departments of the company. They're always muttering about how to change the organization, but they somehow don't affect the fabric of the system.

I think it's terribly important for institutions to recognize and reward these individuals who are at the boundary of the company. They are interstitial men—they connect several worlds, and can provide excellent information about the social climate.

One example of an interstitial man I know is Rowan Wakefield. He's an assistant to Chancellor Gould, head of the sprawling State University of New York. He has an office in Washington, and his job is to hook people between the two worlds. He helps our professors find their way through the Washington research-labyrinth. He's virtually autonomous down there and is very good at spotting opportunities. He's very much attuned to changes in the Washington scene.

In essence, he serves the function of bringing together two very different social systems.

Every company has people who function that way in a less formal capacity.

Thomas Allen writes (Innovation, Issue 8.4) about how scientific information really gets into a company. He says it rarely comes through journals or consultants. Usually there are one or two people working in the company who keep up a wide range of contacts in the scientific community or make a point of keeping up with the journals. Allen calls these men "gatekeepers" and says that most of the scientific information which finds its way in comes through them.

But he was talking only about the information most directly relevant to the process of scientific innovation. Almost all information of any kind enters a company that way. There are many kinds of gatekeepers in a company and they have access to various kinds of worlds. Part of the manager's job is to decide which of these gatekeepers he wants to encourage.

If he believes it is important to be aware of social changes outside the company, he can find ways to encourage access to that information through the black gatekeepers or the radicals on his staff. If he wants to bring in literature or friends to lecture, that is fairly standard practice in most think tanks, which make it their business to keep in very close touch with the social environment. It may be that keeping up has become an important function in all companies.

The manager might simply ask his social gatekeepers, "Perhaps you can act as our access point to people on the outside. Go ahead. Take some time, bring in people who will challenge us fundamentally in various ways and do it right here in the company. That way we can find the least painful ways to learn about changes which will certainly affect us in any event."

Many times these gatekeepers may or may not seem like the best company men. They have external constituencies, they have outside interests, they may even have a low commitment to the primary tasks of the organization; but somehow we must develop a reward structure that will encourage people in just that gatekeeping role, because it is absolutely vital to the evolution of organizational goals.

They're the people I look for when I'm consulting. I call them "gatekeepers." They sense discrepancies between what the organization ought to be doing and what it actually is doing. As a result, they're under continual tension. They make good problem identi-
iers. This makes them, in fact, very useful company men, although they may often seem abrasive to others in the company.

If you’re concerned about generating an awareness of the outside environment, then your first job as manager is to recognize these gatekeepers for what they are. To judge whether their “second worlds” are relevant to your organization—and to find ways to help them bring that world into the company where people can learn from it.

Once we’ve achieved a degree of openness between the rebels and the private sector, once managers have shown they can be genuinely sensitive to social change, I believe a real process of social experimentation can begin.

Much of the experimentation will deal with ways to combine centralized services with cultural diversity.

Here at the university, for example, we’re beginning an experiment of that sort. This place has about 23,000 students, and it will go up to 40,000 in another five or six years. We’re also starting up a big new campus at Amherst, three miles away, which should have close to 40,000 students! We’re building, in effect, a small city. But instead of designing it as one massive multiversity, we’ll put up 30 new mini-collages, each with its own style, its own architecture, its own social environment. There will be a great deal of student participation in designing the environment and curriculum of these little colleges. They’ll be like highly diversified boutiques within a big department store. The store will have a central management, accounting department, fund raisers—but a lot of different choices.

You have all the advantages of centralized buying and funding and staffing, but at the same time each student has the chance to choose environments which are human in scale and capable of responding to his ideas and needs.

All our institutions will begin responding to the revolution we’re going through now. They’ll have to. It’s a revolution in consciousness—for the first time in ages we’re taking seriously the subjective experiences of people.

The changes will be as vast as after unlocking the secrets of the atom. I believe the T-group movement and the hippie movement are manifestations of a new consciousness which is giving credibility and validation to a man’s subjective experience, the way he sees the world, his desires.

I think this concern with the subjective will make a first priority out of how an individual can maintain his integrity in a shifting, turbulent society. Much more attention in colleges and universities will have to be paid to the art and science of becoming fully human. As a total business, what the kids want to do is understand their identities. Free their personalities. Become human. Learn about what directly concerns them—which at present is politics, rock music, movies, drugs, and religion. Some smart industrialist is going to come along and begin setting up degree-granting Woodstock festivals. Not for year-long bashes—but on a drop-in, drop-out basis.

The universities will probably put a great deal of emphasis on how to create human environments—both in physical and spiritual terms. I can imagine new varieties of Route 128 spinning off these institutions of learning. Little companies would specialize in marketing various social environments. To educate children better, to coordinate health facilities, to sensitize executives. Here is a wealth of exciting careers for the rebels of today.

You can already see the process beginning, just by walking along the streets in Cambridge. There is an alphabet soup of new organizations starting—ESI, OISTI, ADC. They are all involved with arranging educational technology, with managing change and with coordinating social and technical systems.

At present we can see needs, but the markets are still undefined.

For example, in New York City there is a tremendous need for computer-aided instruction. But developing and purchasing the technology for that instruction is so expensive that New York can’t afford to buy it from the present manufacturers. There’s a need and a supplier, but no market.

The real challenge for the young in technology and private enterprise is to see how these needs can be converted into markets. Again, this involves very creative thinking about how to combine the advantages of bigness and smallness.

The revolution in consciousness, however, does not mean that every subjective urge should be accepted. It just means that there must be an increasing sensitivity to the real desires of people.

I was talking the other day, to the director of an R&D lab which works on social applications for technology.

He emphasized how difficult it is to work with young people these days. They really want to do their own thing, yet his job is somehow to bring a concerted effort out of all these individuals.

Some of the young men told him that they had their own projects they wanted to develop in the lab—they weren’t really interested in his. Some of the projects fitted very well with the overall purposes of the laboratory. Others just didn’t.

I told him he’d have to sit down with them and work towards some kind of synthesis of goals. But he should remember that he was representing an institution, and clear expectations are a very important part of an institution’s climate.

There have to be very clearly stated goals and standards. He had to make it clear that not all projects were compatible with the lab’s goals. They might have to go somewhere else to do their work.

How the large corporations will accommodate themselves to shift in consciousness I’m honestly not sure.

Perhaps there are forms of organic populism which can take place within the big corporations like GE or IBM. I think that it will be virtually necessary, if the companies want to attract the brightest and most creative of our youth. There may be ways for the companies to provide cultural pluralism within their present framework. To set up mini-companies and economic boutiques which will have their own unique environments and goals within the framework of the parent company. To do that, the big corporations will have to take big chances, short of destroying their markets and profit picture.

We live in a time when, even in privately owned firms, there will be an increasing priority set for broadly social goals.

A futurist should never let himself be tempted into premature optimism. Nevertheless, I like to think we may yet develop the zeal and conscience among managers and even among stockholders that will produce the needed pressure for building a better environment for all of us.
Comments the Editor (CH):

I think this article by Warren Bennis is rather special.

It's not very often you catch a professional futurist in the process of changing his mind about what the future holds in store. The result is somewhat fragmentary, properly tentative, and—I believe—extremely provocative.

In 1968, Bennis published The Temporary Society—a handbook in effect for humanizing a massive, postindustrial world. He'd written it over a period of years. Now he believes the book failed to foresee a major reaction to this world. It missed the most revolutionary forces at work in our society today. Now, Bennis tries to characterize those forces and show where they may be taking us.

Bennis has already authored a number of books on change and the future. He is coauthor (with Philip Slater) of The Temporary Society (Harper & Row, 1968, $4.95). His most recent volumes are The Planning of Change (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968, $9.25) with Robert Chin and Kenneth Benne; Changing Organizations (McGraw-Hill, 1966, $8.50), and Personal and Organizational Change (Wiley, 1965, $8.95) with Edgar Schein. He has already appeared in the pages of Innovation ("I Say Hello, You Say Goodbye," Issue 1) with an article about the emotional and psychological stresses of social change inside technological organizations.

Bennis's academic career includes teaching at Harvard, Boston University, and MIT (where he received his PhD in 1955 and became a full professor in 1963), and two years as visiting professor in Switzerland and India. From 1964 till 1967, he was chairman of the Organization Studies Group in the Sloan School of Management at MIT. He is also a member of the Board of Trustees at Antioch College.

Two years ago, Bennis became a key administrator at the University of New York at Buffalo, and he has been active in the Institute for Applied Behavioral Sciences in Washington, D.C.

Warren Bennis has been closely associated with The Innovation Group from its inception. He is on our Advisory Board and will be cochairing our fall conference/tour to Japan where his books have already—we discover—earned him a prodigious reputation.