

"INTRODUCTION"

to Ira Rohter, *Green Hawaii*. Honolulu: Na Kane O Ka Malo Press, 1992

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Almost twenty years ago, a remarkable book was published by the University of Hawaii Press. It was titled, *HAWAII 2000, CONTINUING EXPERIMENT IN ANTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY*, and was edited by George Chaplin, then the editor of *The Honolulu Advertiser*, and Glenn Paige, a professor in the Political Science Department of the University of Hawaii. The book was a record of an extraordinary event--more accurately, an extraordinary and lengthy series of events which began in August 1967 and culminated with the publication of *HAWAII 2000* in 1973. The key event in this series was the convening of the Governor's Conference on the Year 2000 in August 1970, attended by seven hundred Hawaii citizens and eight invited international observers.

Actually, thousands of people on each of Hawaii's four counties had been involved in the process which led up to the August conference, no activity being more significant than the Hawaii Youth Congress which was held in June 1970. In addition, there had been an impressive public advertising campaign conducted by the Junior Advertising Club of Honolulu under the theme "*Hawaii 2000: Somebody Better Care About Tomorrow*." Bumper stickers, bus cards, posters, brochures and advertisements in newspapers, magazines, radio, and television were produced. The Pacific Asian Affairs Council conducted an extra-curricular program involving more than 4000 intermediate and high school students throughout the state under the theme, "*Hawaii 2000--Make It Your World*." There was a well-attended public lecture series which extended over many months featuring local experts. Ten task-forces composed of thirty to fifty Hawaii citizens each worked on specific topics before and during the August Conference. Their reports, as well as those of each of the Neighbor Island 2000 groups (from Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui) formed the bulk of the *HAWAII 2000* report.

The names of all the people who participated actively in various aspects of the process (except, unfortunately, the members of the Youth Congress), are listed in a fifteen-page appendix. It reads like a who's who of many of Hawaii's shakers and movers then and now, though, with the passage of time the number of those who were movers then is steadily increasing.

Even though I arrived as a permanent resident in Hawaii only in August 1969 (however, I first saw Hawaii on my way to Japan in August 1960 and came to realize on subsequent visits that this was my home even though I had been mistakenly born and reared elsewhere), I was extraordinarily privileged to have been able to play a role in most of the activities leading up to the August Conference and beyond as a consequence of my academic involvement in the emerging field of futures studies (or "futuristics" as we called it then).

There is no doubt that my experiences during Hawaii 2000 were among the most important in my life. And I am convinced from what many other participants have subsequently told me that it was a significant experience in the lives of many, perhaps most, of the people active in it.

As a virtual professional conference goer and organizer, I definitely believe it to be the best conference ever, bar none.

As I understand it, the Hawaii 2000 came at a time when the "vision" of the "Democratic Revolution" which re-created the politics and culture of post-war Hawaii had been achieved. Times were good--and, some people thought "a-changin'"--and so the leaders of Hawaii wanted to look ahead to see what new attainable glories--or surmountable problems--lay before them just over the horizon.

A section of the report of the task force on The Economy 2000 contained extrapolations to the year 2000 of certain trends well underway and monitored at the time. They were submitted by Robert Schmitt, the State Statistician. As the editors said, they "are cited below to illustrate their limited utility" (p. 239). In other words, they won't--they can't--happen. They are too absurd to be taken seriously.

	1968/9	1999(est 0
Civilian population	737,000	1,379,000
Agricultural jobs	14,450	3800
Consumer price index increase		171%
Median monthly rent	\$147	\$1,070
Assessed value of real property	\$6.6 bil.	\$127 bil.
Motor vehicles	374,000	2,126,000

Schmitt also provided some "more reasonable" projections which the Economy 2000 task force accepted. One was that by the year 2000 "there would be almost 200,000 visitors in the State at any given time. These totals imply a parallel growth in business and industry, housing supply, hotel accommodations, school enrollment, and beach usage. Airport and highway facilities will be strained far beyond their present capabilities, resulting in traffic jams of truly incredible proportions, both on the streets and aloft." (p. 240f).

A quick review of all of the task force reports contained in *HAWAII 2000* reveals an impressive unity of views: clear awareness of the problems of rapid population growth, economic development, environmental pollution, strained housing and transportation, and the continued deterioration--extinction?--of traditional Hawaiian culture.

An editorial in the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* of August 10, republished in *HAWAII 2000* (p.448) said in part:

"There was a general recognition that the rate of change is accelerating--and some feeling that the sum total of changes in the next 30 years may more closely equal those of the last 3000 than the last 30.

"There were dreams of new and better politics with more participation... or 'interest communities' growing up around the State where people with similar concerns might live together...of comfortable and pleasant transit systems instead of crowded highways...of wealth more evenly distributed...of leisure used profitably and lovingly.

"The villains included notably the auto, the hordes of people who aren't in Hawaii now but may want to come, the single family home that contributes to urban sprawl, comfortable traditionalists who can't abide others 'doing their thing,' and, of course, the establishment now in charge and thereby accountable for all things evil.

"Youths proposed that government might well subsidize and study more experiments in new life styles like Banana Patch, that government officials be held

personally and financially responsible for development errors, that wealth be limited, and that population be controlled.

"On balance, it was an extremely worthwhile exchange."

Let's take a closer look at what the "youths" of that time specifically proposed, according to *HAWAII 2000* (p. 17f). Among the proposals passed by the Youth Congress were these:

Seek voluntary restriction of families to two children.

Recognize health care as a right, not a privilege.

Facilitate the secession of Hawaii from the United States.

Abolish the two-party system.

Return estate lands to people of Hawaiian ancestry.

Abolish money and establish a democratic-socialist system based on need rather than greed.

Create nonmilitary-related jobs.

"Youth Congress 1970 urges that the Governor's Conference [on] the Year 2000 recognize that the design and planning of Hawaii's future include as many visions from as many individuals and groups who want to participate. We believe that there should be no elite groups who decide how Hawaii in the year 2000 will be designed. A pluralistic vision, including the ideas of every individual, not just a majority, should be included in the final master design. Therefore, we urge the Governor's Conference to work toward the design of a society of alternative futures in which many different life-styles will not only be tolerated but encouraged as well."

In the final chapter of the volume, the editors outlined several "Alternative Hawaiis". One vision is of;

"Hawaii as a battlefield for protracted struggle. The poor, the racially-oppressed, the psychologically-scarred, the pure-minded youth, and the cast-aside aged conduct constant warfare against formidably entrenched businessmen, landlords, politicians, bureaucrats, media controllers, police, militarists, teachers, and other assorted authority figures"

"Another vision is of a futurist Hawaiian restoration, the establishment of a true kingdom of aloha. One path to such a community would be through a combination of granting preferential treatment to persons of Hawaiian or part-Hawaiian ancestry in all areas of social life...and an 'aloha-ness test.' ...The aloha kingdom would attempt to achieve greater harmony among men and between man and nature. It need not revert only to fishing and subsistence agriculture but might progress to the highest levels of future scientific, technological, biological, informational and humanistic arts. It might produce concepts of ownership far beyond polemical nineteenth and twentieth century rhetoric" (p. 467).

"Another Hawaii...might be called an 'ecological commonwealth.' This would require a truly radical departure from conventional concerns (capitalist, socialist, or communist) with power and property to focus upon man's relationship with the natural environment as the highest form of good. In effect this would mean profound community acceptance of the necessity for restraint in human power. ...Hawaii could decide to make their islands the world center for experimental man-environment symbiosis" (pp. 466-680).

And so on! Many alternative visions of a Hawaii in the year 2000 which was not simply the result of the continuation of the trends of the immediate past and present were outlined in clarity and beauty.

Now, put this book down and look around you. In which Hawaii do we presently live?

Are we approaching "a true kingdom of *aloha*" or "an ecological commonwealth?" Get real! We live in a Hawaii which is a blend of Schmitt's "impossible projections" and an emerging "battlefield for protracted struggle" between the few superwealthy and the many and growing superpoor.

What went wrong?

Almost everything.

Who's to blame?

Almost everyone.

What can we do?

Read this book--the one you are presently holding in your hands which promises a Green Hawaii; not the yellowed pages of *HAWAII 2000* which promised too much and achieved too little.

But clearly, reading and hoping and planning and dreaming are not enough. We read and talked and hoped and dreamed, and then ran head on first into the 1970s (primarily the economic restructuring of the two "oil crises") and then into the 1980s when many residents of Hawaii, along with almost all Americans and the citizens of many other "developed" nations, went "back to basics" and simply gave up on the dream of a better future. Indeed, we raped and robbed (or acquiesced in the rape and robbery) of the future in a disgusting orgy of militarism, greed, and the pursuit of empty wealth and power.

Leaving us here, where we are today: far, far down the road to what was clearly seen in 1970 as Destruction.

In the volume you are holding, Ira Rohter offers you an appealing vision, and plan of action for achieving, another Hawaii; a Greener and more balanced Hawaii; a non-patriarchal, non-racist Hawaii.

Lots of luck!

I mistakenly thought we in Hawaii had the will and power to take control of our future in 1970. It turned out that we had neither. It was all shibai. Oh, I suppose we can take some comfort by saying that things could be worse than they are now; that *Hawaii 2000* might have slowed things down a bit thereby preserving some semblance of paradise for the remainder of the lives of most of the people who took part in *Hawaii 2000* (and who cares beyond that?); that if so many people hadn't been forced to look at what lay ahead of continued growth, Hawaii would be a fully concrete-covered, wholly-foreign owned Disneyland by now. Who knows?

And I do see some evidence of a resurgence of will--especially within certain segments of the native Hawaiian communities--but I don't see much in the way of power through which to exercise that will positively and peacefully. Each and every one of us spent most of the last two decades pissing away what little power and control we had over the politics, economics, culture, and ecology of these blessed isles. I am profoundly pessimistic about the ability of anyone to regain local control unless they are prepared, as I am not but some might be, to turn Hawaii into the Yugoslavia of the Pacific, hastening the destruction of everything worth saving by

"saving" it through bloody violence.

But what do I know about the future? Demonstrably, nothing! If anything might turn Hawaii around peacefully, quickly, and effectively, what Ira Rohter proposes here just might do the trick.

Go ahead. Make my day:

Create a Green and Humane Hawaii.