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Author's Note

THE HARD WORK in this history of 1975–2025 was done by a computer expert and a scientist, whose professional forecasts I then edited to fit with my economic prejudices.

The computer expert was my son, Christopher Macrae, who lives in Paris and already telecommutes from there. The scientist he recruited proved by far the best writer of the three of us, and also wrote the most sparkling of the biographies. He did not want to be named because, as he explained at a book conference we sensibly held in the cheaper grandstand at Ascot: “As an atheistic moral relativist, I’ve been publishing stuff about another future, so I don’t want to seem to be forecasting your Christian libertarian one at the same time.” I suspect that, in his future, mad Christian libertarian economists like me blow the world up.

Author's Note

Nevertheless, each of the three professionals—the scientist, the computerman and the economist—thinks the things here forecast in his field are technically likely to become feasible within the next forty years. Our disagreement is whether men will devise the best incentive systems to put them efficiently into operation. As we scabbled over each other's copy, we began to cross out each other's best jokes because we eventually felt that we were writing a deeply serious book. This is the lovely future everybody under the age of fifty could have if only all democrats made the right decisions.

It was particularly nice for me that the book was accepted even in its then inchoate state by Sidgwick and Jackson in Britain; and now Macmillan is to publish it in America. When General Sir John Hackett wrote his brilliant work on *The Third World War*, there was an excellent arrangement whereby he did all the work and six of us who had written memos collected half the money. I said then that my difficulty was I didn't believe there would be a war, and that I had in the past decade written many articles in *The Economist* and delivered lectures in nearly thirty countries across the world saying the future should be much more rosy. Some of those who have read those articles and heard those lectures—mainly on the future organization of business and the coming decline of governments—will find similarities of expression here; if one wants to say the same thing at about the same length it is affectation to strive for second-best sentences. Any complaints about this or about the book's implausibility will be answered after 20 June 2025, when one of the two of us signing below is actuarially likely to be still alive. California's Institute for Contemporary Studies financed the work done up front by the computerman and the scientist, but it has no responsibility for our guesses on what is about to happen.

NORMAN MACRAE
(*Author*)

CHRISTOPHER MACRAE
(*Telecommuting author on computers*)

TC Key

THIS TRANSMISSION IS PROGRAMMED so that the reader may switch as required to subsidiary databases (open 15 June 2025) for extensive background information on all sources and statistics used by the authors. This includes (a) explanations of all words with no meaning in 2025 (like OPEC, EEC, mugging, nuclear disarmament, sexism, ministries of the interior); (b) full references for all quotations used; and (c) further material from the Biographical Institute of the University of the Caucasus at Borovskygrad, from whose unrivalled collection of twentieth and twenty-first century lives we have drawn during this transmission. We thereby avoid, in this concise history, what pre-TC historians called footnotes.

Prologue

WE HAVE BEEN COMMISSIONED to transmit on your telecomputing systems this examination of how and why the tumultuous history of the past half-century has come about. In 1975 few people believed mankind could quickly achieve today's comfort, ease, abolition of crime and freedom of living styles. Moreover, mankind very nearly didn't. This is an examination of why what happened did, and why what could have happened was mercifully avoided.

The first chapter is a brief summary of the thirty years before 1975. It may help explain why, during the youth of 2025's middle-aged and senior citizens, one of the fastest growing human diseases was something called a nervous breakdown.

*20 June 2025
Tahiti*