Back to Synopsis

ISR 15/1 *Excellent Interdisciplinary Issue (I)* Title 370

Looking through the 21 volumes of ISR which I edited between 1976 and 1996, and inspecting each of the 84 issues of about 100 pages, I was naturally struck that some issues were infinitely more interdisciplinary than others. Not only was each Comment or article more in accord with the philosophy of the Journal, but each Issue as a whole combined contributions from many different disciplines, on a micro- and a macro-scale, thus creating a picture of interdisciplinarity par excellence. Such an outstanding Issue was ISR Volume 15, Number 1.

How did this happen? I have always worked with one year's capital of 15 to 20 articles and comments in hand, so that on press-day I could select and produce the best possible issue for the next publication. This fortuitous selection occurred during the summer of 1989 but this chance event cannot be explained. It did lead however to the excellent ISR 15/1 in March 1990.

My own Editorial "When Peace breaks out" attacked once again the astronomical expenditure on armaments and suggested as an alternative to spend an equal amount on space exploration, of greater benefit to mankind. The statue of the *Caller for Peace* outside Berlin's Brandenburg Gate inspired me to write this ever relevant essay. The following Comment "Bridges" was written by Lisa Heinz, a member of the Washington Office of Technology Assessment, and she outlined the interdisciplinary advantages of the Internet, just then coming into more general use.

"Interdisciplinary Research Centers" by Emeritus Professor David Tabor of the Cavendish Laboratory in Cambridge stressed the advantages of the 17 Interdisciplinary Research Centers set up by the U K Science and Engineering Research Council, and described the one in Cambridge where he had worked.

An entirely different aspect of interdisciplinary work was illustrated by Professor Ed Creutz, a Member of the ISR Editorial Board and formerly Director of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum in Honolulu, Hawaii. They had received ancient *tapa,* a bark cloth, and Creutz explained in his article "Interdisciplinary Research is needed" how the identification of the tree by a botanist, the colour of the dye by a chemist, the mineral pigment by a geologist and the cultural context by an anthropologist, all combined for the display.

Professor Carlo Rubbia, the Director General of CERN in Geneva, wrote about "The Universality of Science and International Co-operation" holding up WHO and CERN as examples of modern co-operation, whereas in the past science progressed mostly at universities, where kindred spirits could easily meet.

Back to Synopsis

To .. ISR Volume 15 and Volume 16. ISR 15/1 *Excellent Interdisciplinary Issue (II)*. Title 371.