

PART THREE: **What Kind of Fair?**

"A new civilization is emerging in our lives, and blind men everywhere are trying to suppress it. This new civilization brings with it new family styles; changed ways of working, loving, and living; a new economy; new political conflicts; and beyond all this an altered consciousness as well. Pieces of this new civilization exist today. Millions are already attuning their lives to the rhythms of tomorrow. Others, terrified of the future, are engaged in a desperate, futile flight into the past and are trying to restore the dying world that gave them birth.

The dawn of this new civilization is the single most explosive fact of our lifetimes.

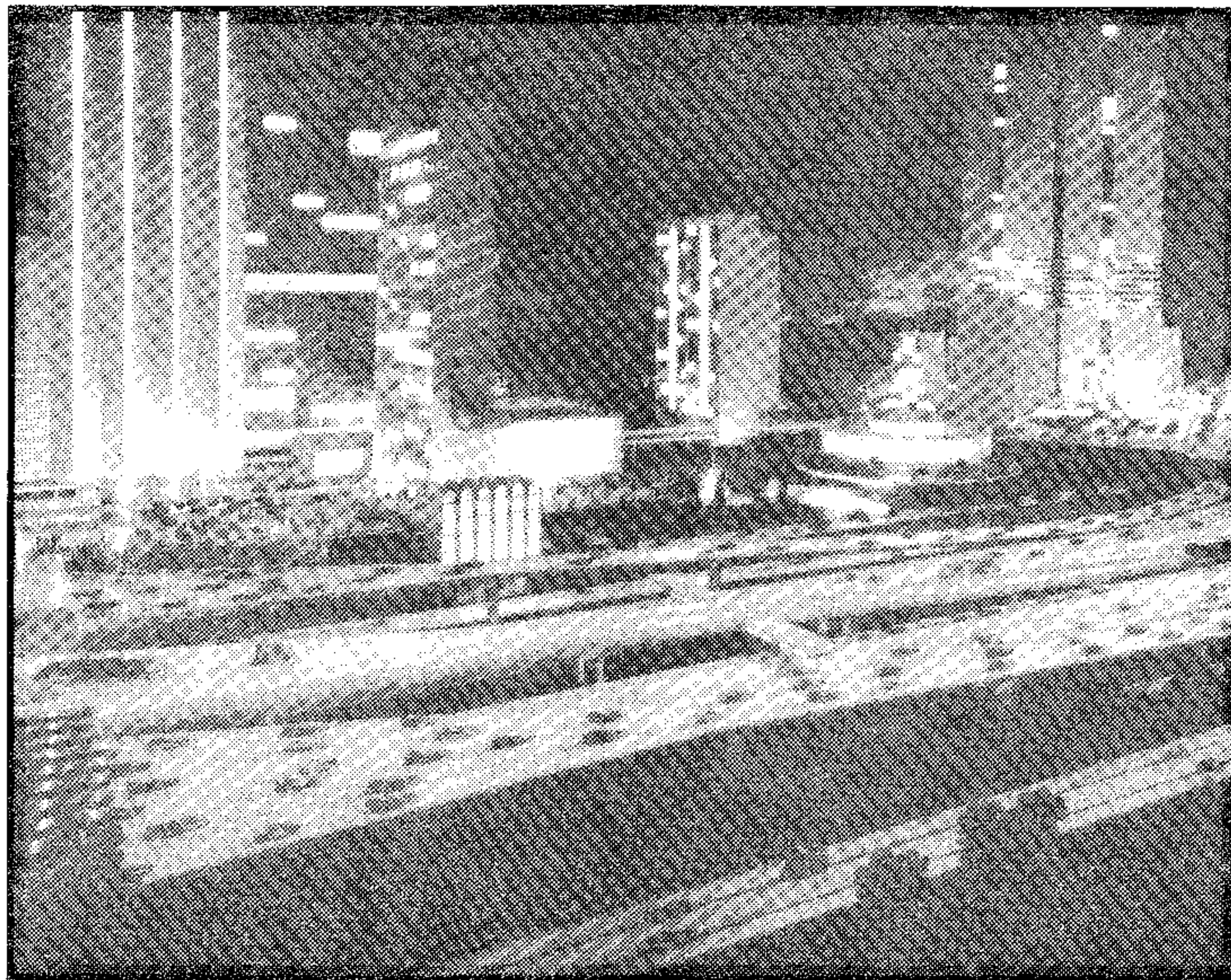
It is the central event—the key to understanding the years immediately ahead. It is an event as profound as that First Wave of change unleashed ten thousand years ago by the invention of agriculture, or the earthshaking Second Wave of change touched off by the industrial revolution. We are the children of the next transformation, the Third Wave."

—Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave*
(William Morrow & Co. Inc., 1980)

Section 3.1 **A Statement of Purpose**

When the second New York World's Fair closed its gates on October 16, 1965, we were poised at the edge of an unprecedented period. Only the most incisive among us could have foreseen the dynamics which were to shape history over the next quarter century. We stood on the brink of division as we reflected upon what the future held for humankind.

There were those among us who believed passionately in technological possibilities: massive "Emerald Cities" where uniform living standards were bolstered by all means of modern convenience; where space travel had become commonplace; where giant farms and factories could easily feed and clothe a hungry world; where the newly crowned King Science would obliterate poverty and disease; where no one would suffer want because the age of technological enlightenment had lifted the whole of humankind to a more fulfilling plateau.



City of Tomorrow, GM Futurama II, 1964-65 World's Fair



Civil Rights protest, opening day 1964 World's Fair



Demolition of 1964-65 World's Fair



Hiroshima, August 1945

Others in our midst were equally convinced that the future would expose all manner of evil heretofore only imagined in the most bizarre fantasies of film makers and fictionists. This gloomy scenario projected mass conformity and Orwellian mind control; technological overload leading to social bankruptcy; environmental decay and extreme scarcity of natural resources, all of which would push human misery over the edge. The resulting apocalypse: the unthinkable, but inevitable nightmare of nuclear annihilation.

It can be argued that some elements of both visions have indeed come to pass. Yet, events of the past two decades dictate a moderating of such extreme attitudes as concerned persons of our day seek to understand the unfolding world of tomorrow.



Deposit of Time Capsule II for 5,000 years at the close of the 1964-65 World's Fair (October 16, 1965)

Yes, the world has experienced diminishing resources. Yes, with our increasing global relatedness, some of the delightful differences in culture have been crowded out by the mass appeal of designer jeans and fast food restaurants. Yes, mistrust when coupled with advance weapons systems leave us perilously close to self-destruction. Yes, inequitable distribution causes painful scarcities of food and energy among segments of our population.

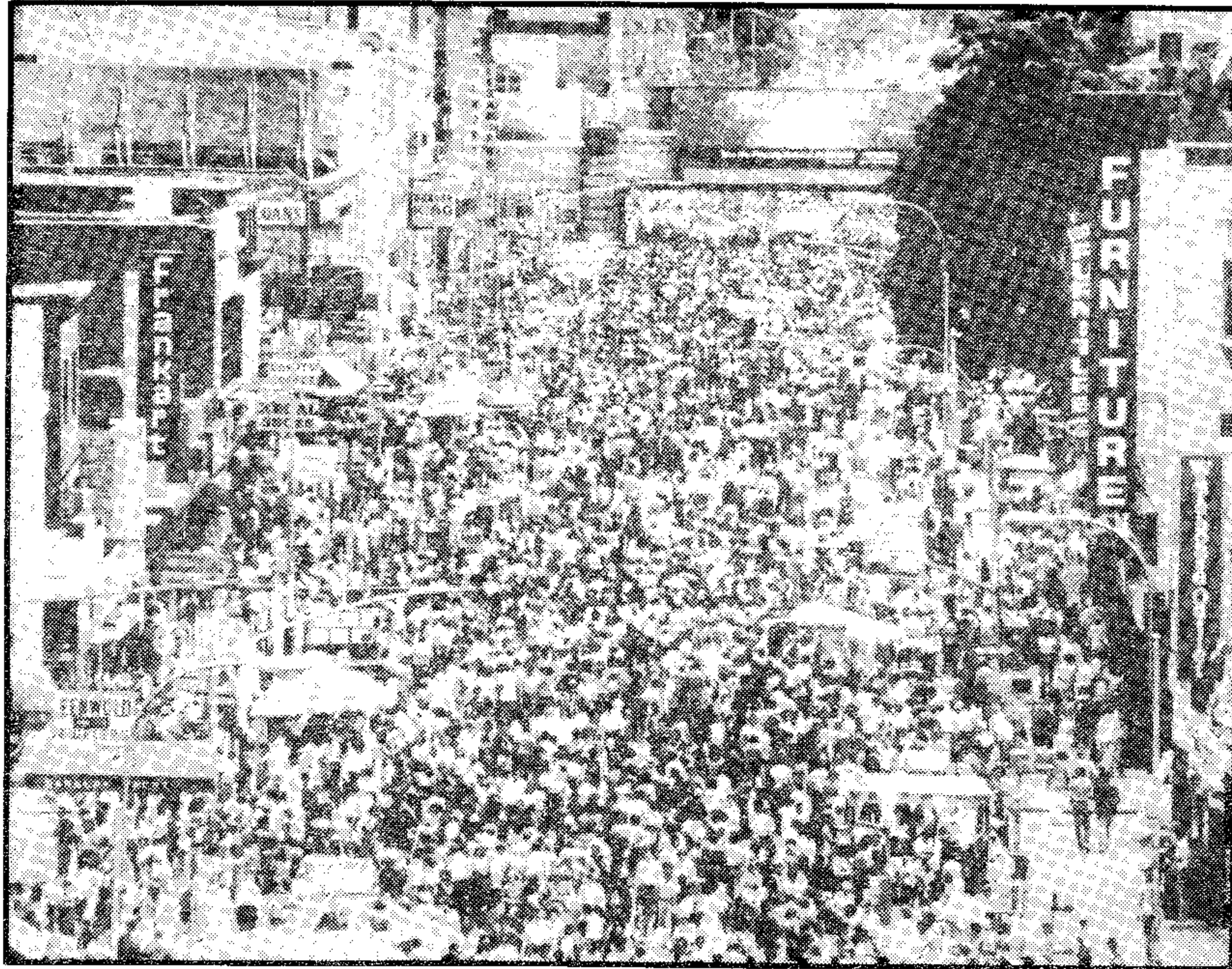
But so too is there an emerging global awareness of our interdependence. So too is there a magnificent reclaiming of ethnic pride and cultural heritage marvelously displayed through tribal art, dance, theatre and cuisine. So too is the fact that, despite the continuing threat, somehow the world community has managed to avoid global conflagration. So too is there the indomitable compassion among individuals and organizations throughout the world responding to the struggle against poverty, disease, and oppression.

No, technology has not been our savior. No, model cities in which everyone lives well and safely have not sprouted across our landscape. No, giant farms and factories have not solved our production problems, but have instead brought on a different, more elusive set of social ills. No, we are not free from want--neither intellectual, physical, economic, emotional, nor spiritual.

Yet, we are different than we were a generation ago. And, in part technology has changed us. Rather than the large, dramatic, intergalactic extravaganzas which we envisioned, technological advances have focused on "small" accomplishments--emphasizing efficiency of time, space, energy and cost. As a result, day-to-day living has been greatly affected by the information revolution. Computerized operations are taking their place beside the television set as an integral part of the life-styles of our people. Centralized information banks utilizing telephones and video components are quickly bringing substantive change to the way we work, worship, plan and play. There is an increasing emphasis upon "humanizing" the computer, so that technology might be more responsive to our needs.

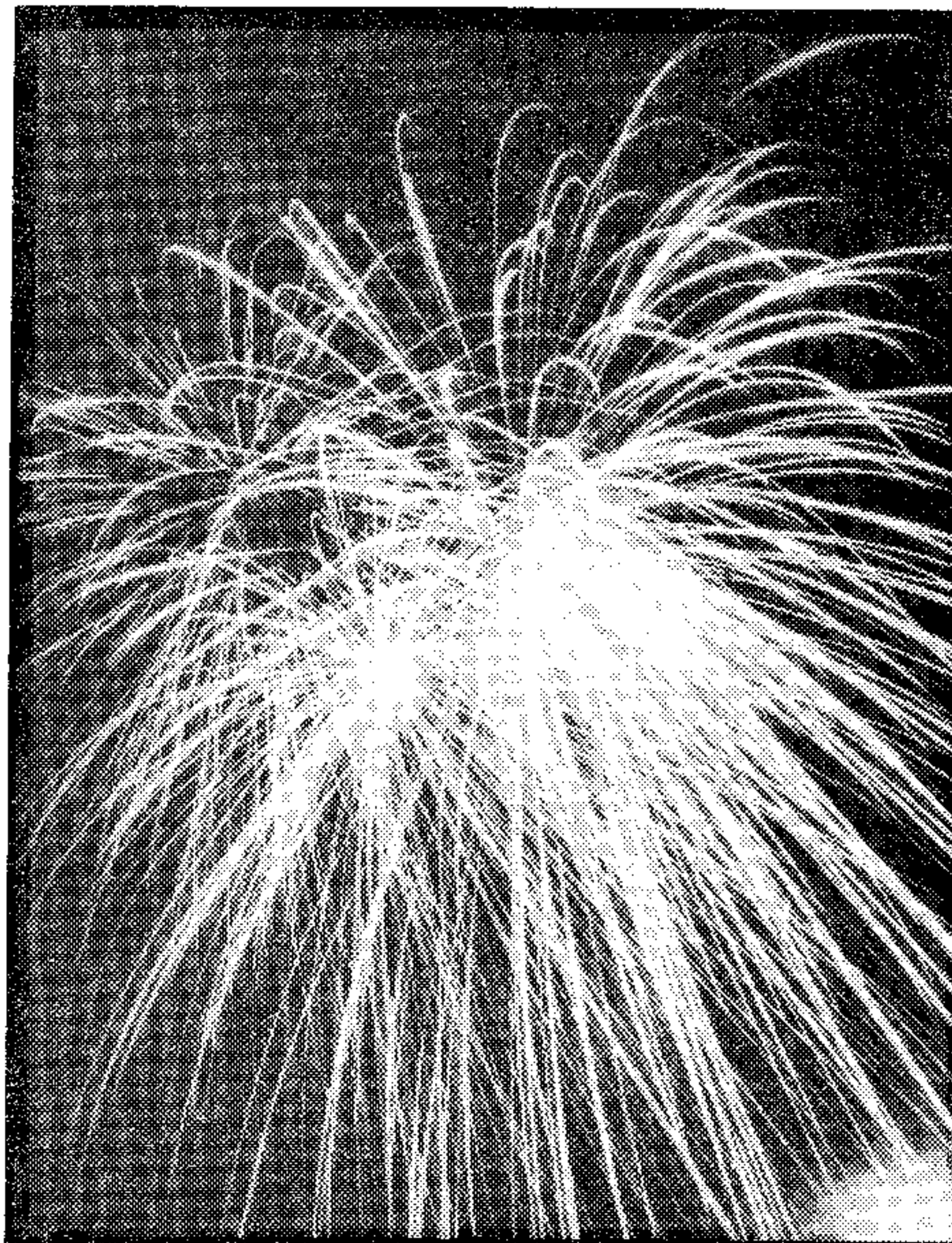
It is a mixed bag that confronts us as we stand face to face with the new millennium. There are rays of hope and encouraging signs, yet lingering doubt and persistent fear that we are not quite in control of our own destinies. Out of these contradictory vectors, a question emerges: can the people of the world still gather together in affirmation of past accomplishments and future possibilities?

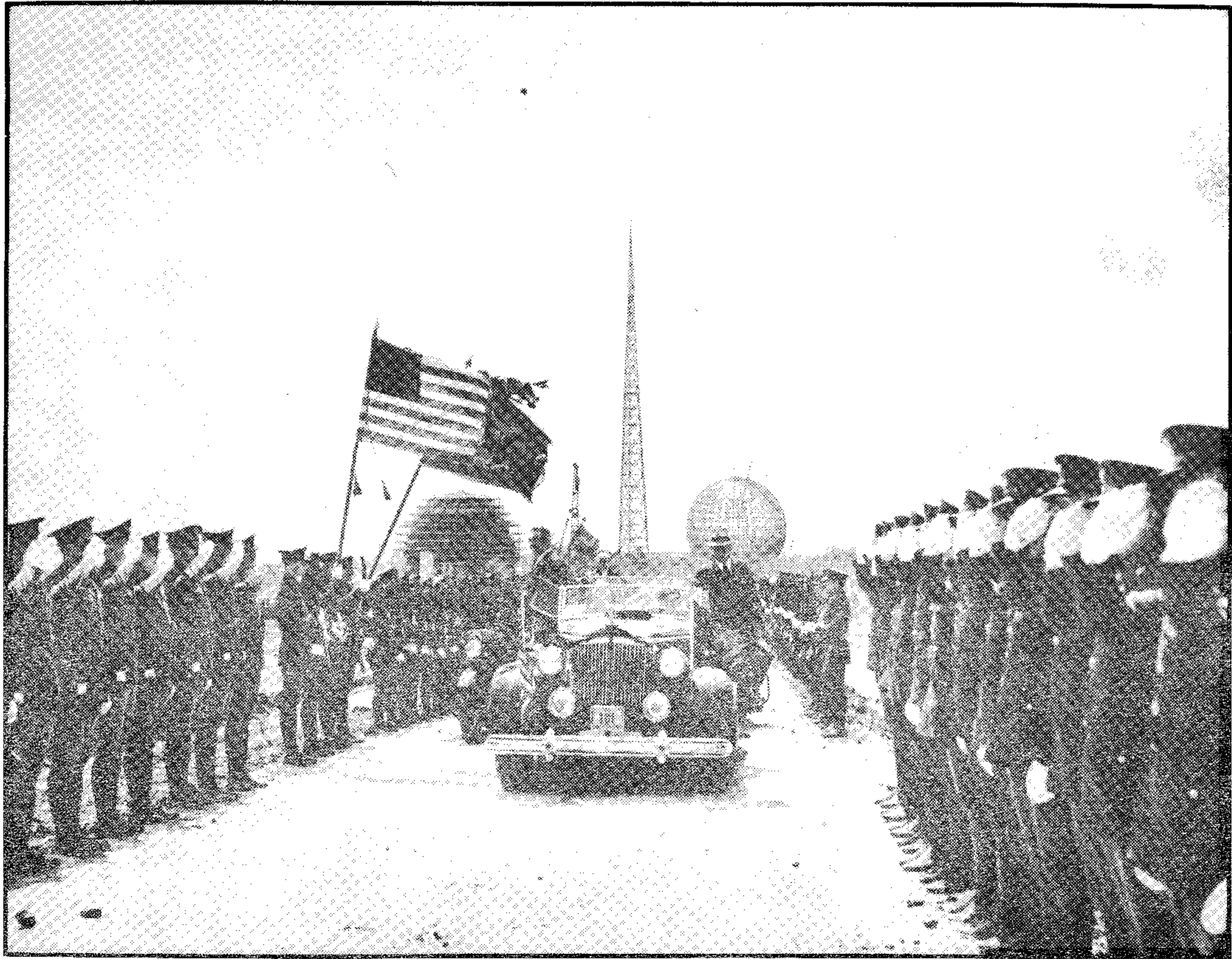
The answer, we would profess, is a resounding: **Yes**



New York City street festival — Flushing, 1978

Lying deep and sometimes dormant in the human psyche, there is a basic need for celebration and socialization. We are born into families and nations. Tribal festivals are periodically necessary as they evoke a cleansing of the corporate and individual spirit. In times of despair, whether within persons or among whole communities, such celebrations serve as points of refuge and refreshment without which continued survival would not be possible. Such experiences rekindle the flame of triumph over life's apparent absurdity and sorrow. On our ever shrinking planet, we have become more aware of our whole human family. The need is great for a festive event which would involve us all.

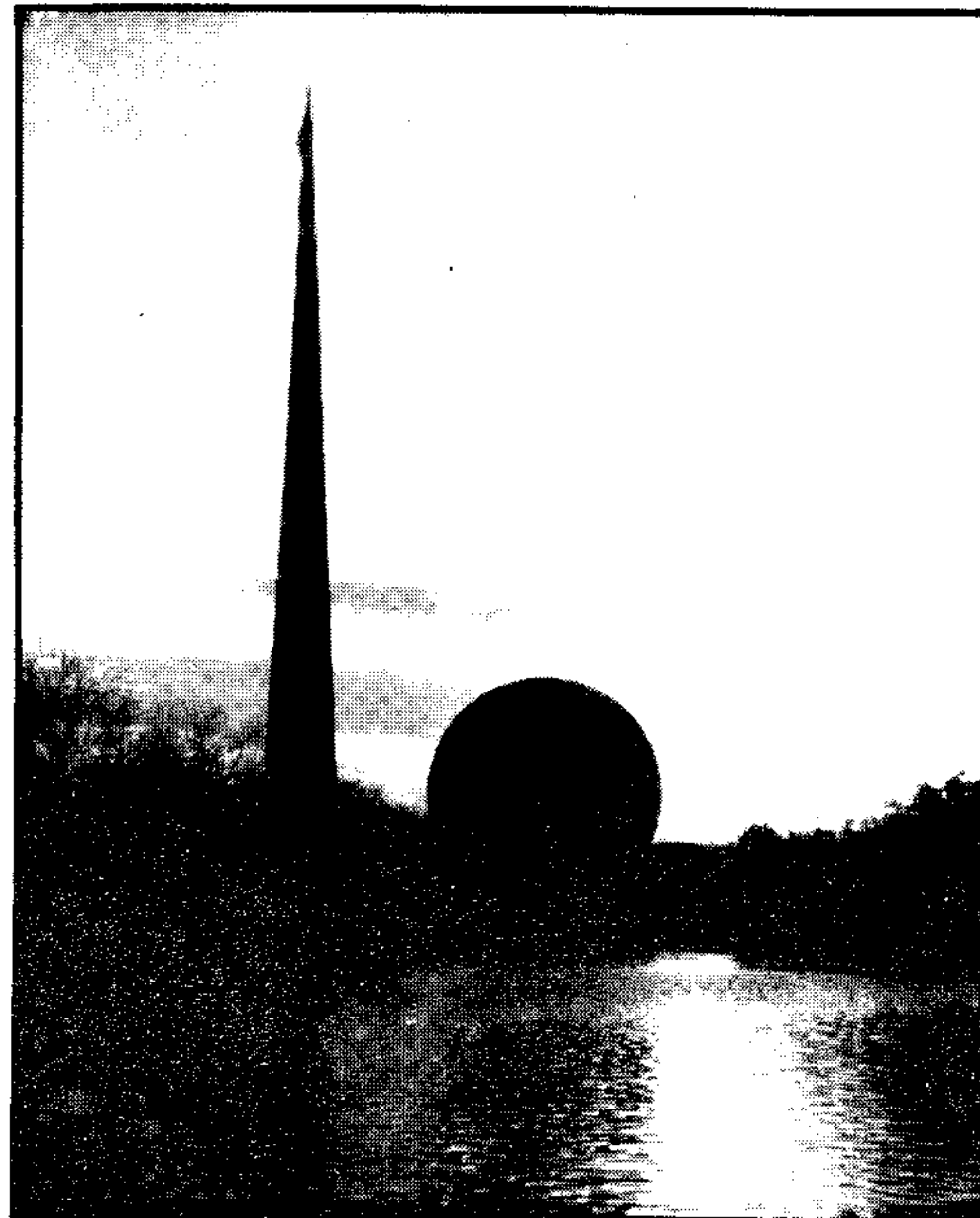




FDR inspects removal of depression-era ash dumps as the World of Tomorrow rises in the background (June 1938).

A World's Fair in 1989 could fill this void. Yet, such a proposed Exposition must give new meaning to the principle first expressed by the originators of the 1939 New York World's Fair in that, "we propose to do a Fair along new lines, or none at all." The complexity of our times demand nothing less. A 1989 World's Fair in New York must break entirely new ground or be rendered obsolete before it begins. It must capture the imagination of a populace which has come to expect innovation. It must challenge architects, presidents, industrialists and playwrights; artists, athletes, children and chemists.

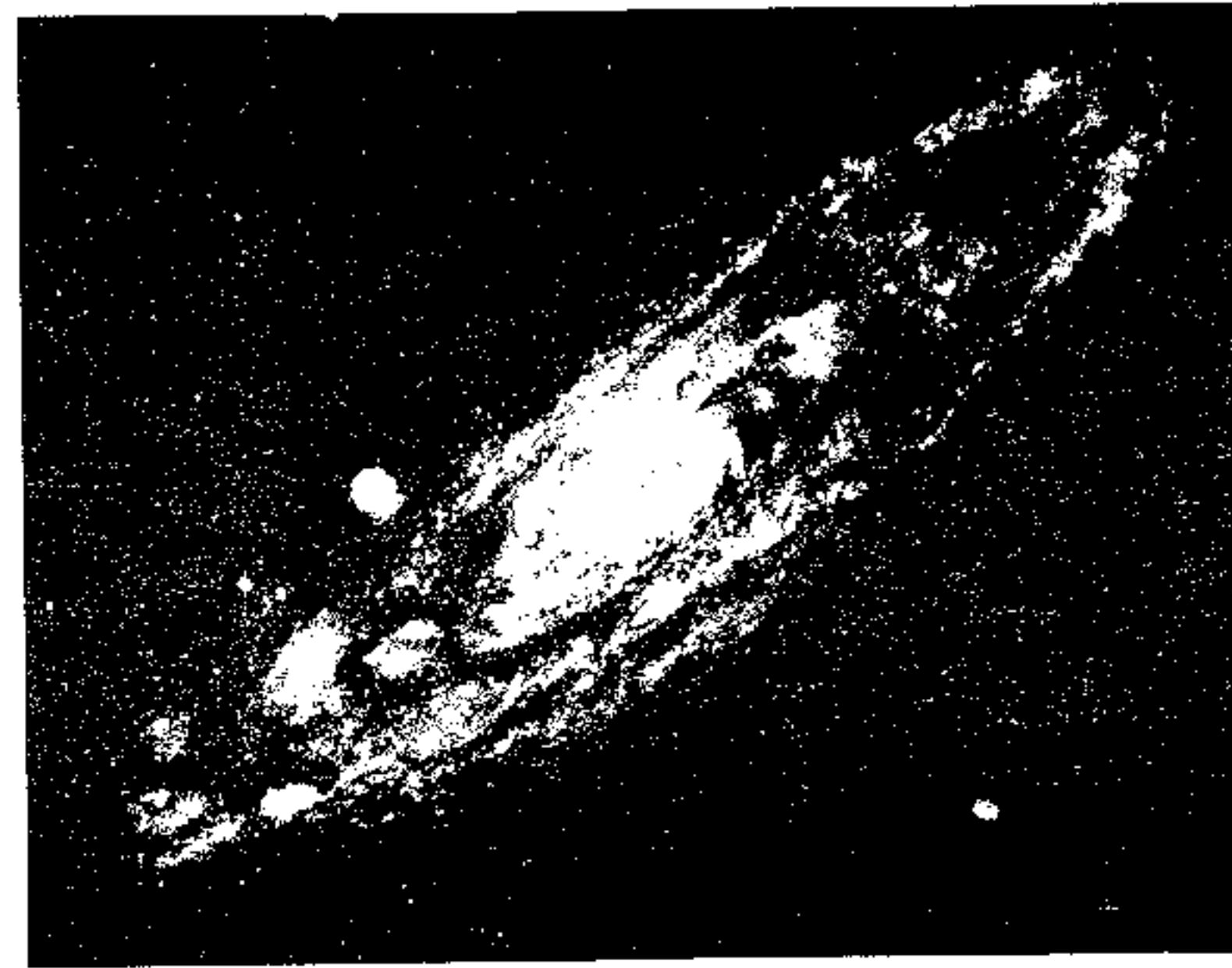
Such a Fair must address the tough issues of our day, especially engaging the dynamic force and potential of emerging Third World communities. It cannot forsake the plight of our urban areas, and particularly its host city. Yet it must carry communications to rural folk, exploring the frontiers of forestry, agriculture and oceanography. It must be upbeat and vibrant, informative yet intriguing; capturing both the mastery and the mystery within the hearts and minds of individuals and reflecting the full range of human emotions.



Trylon & Perisphere/1939 World's Fair



Statue of 'The Astronomer' stood next to Perisphere/1939 World's Fair.



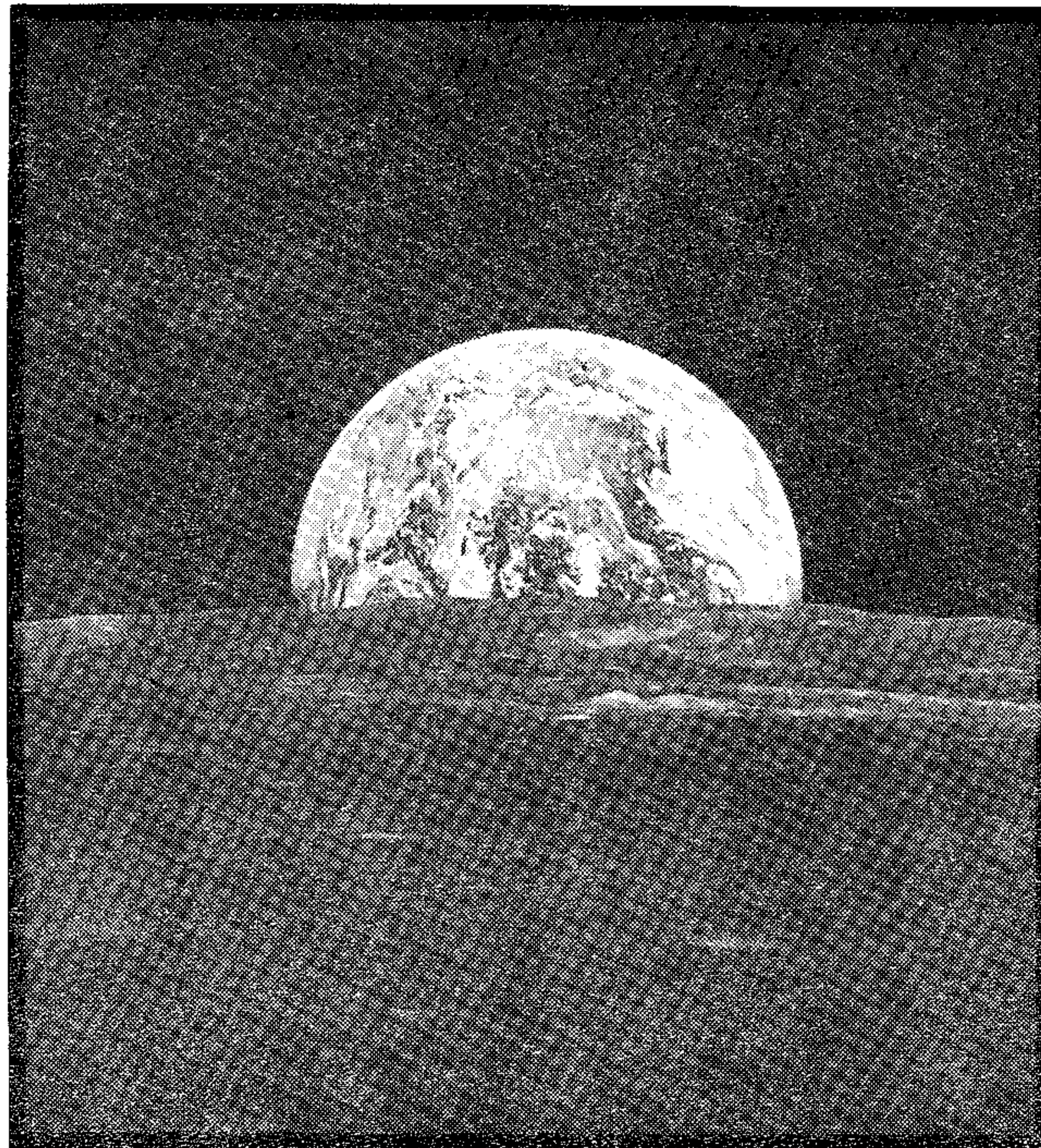
As we confront the exploding age of information, we must remain in touch with ourselves and one another, with our past and our future, with the earth and the stars. The theme of the 1989 New York World's Fair, **Communications--The New Revolution**, focuses this understanding and provides a forum enabling its participants to dream, to experiment with both hard and soft communications, so that suspicions among people might be diminished and our commonality be affirmed.

Wallace K. Harrison, The architect who designed the Trylon and Perisphere for the 1939 World's Fair, predicted shortly before his death in 1981 that a third New York Exposition would be a "Fair of the Air." In truth, through the creative use of media technology, both the planning and operation of the Fair could transcend traditional limitations of time and space and could involve persons in the project who live far removed from the Fair site itself. The entire evolution of this event could involve neighborhoods throughout the city and communities around the globe.

The possibilities are limitless. An ongoing center for communications, experimentation could begin its operation during the planning of the Fair. New techniques in architecture and sculpture--employing air, light, earth, and plastics--could introduce more efficient and cost effective means of aesthetic urban construction. Improvements in city services--transportation, communication, port, park and land use--could provide a valuable legacy to the people of New York. The potential is restricted only by our imaginations.

In certain moments, historical events converge upon a particular time and place to lift the human spirit to new heights. The moment is here to be seized. The vision is here to be nurtured. The opportunity is here to be experienced.

It seems to us that New York in 1989 stands at the center of an almost mystical historical intersection. If men and women who dare to dream can cast off the dry skins of past preconceptions and work together in supple harmony, then an event can be born, a symbol boldly proclaiming to a disheartened world a promise of profound hope for the millennium yet to be.



Earthrise as seen from the moon, July 1969.