

Barbara Ward, author of Spaceship Earth talks about human settlements

Materialism has not given us joyousness... in many ways we're bloody bores... if you've got to end up even making sex boring, that's pretty damn clever.



Canada's billion-dollar nuclear reactor program at home and the government's nuclear export policy are both 'folly'. The lethal consequences can't be controlled.

My prayer, my hope, my dreams

British economist, writer and social crusader Barbara Ward Lady Jackson, will be lecturing across Canada for the next three weeks on the topic of human settlements, the theme of the United Nations conference Habitat, which opens in Vancouver on May 31. Miss Ward was interviewed in London last week by Southern News Service correspondent PETER CALAMAI. With vivid imagery, spiced with pungent, lively language, Barbara Ward provides new thoughts on the pressing problems of our age and future. She is due to speak in Vancouver on April 20.

SNS: Your lectures are keyed to the Habitat conference?
Ward: I'm talking rather more broadly about Habitat—the theme of the inner and the outer limits... the inner limit of human dignity and a basic standard of living for all (it's Maurice Strong's idea) and the outer limits of what our poor little planet can actually take in the way of resource exhaustion and ecological strain and then pointing out that the least conserving element in our way of life is how we live in big cities.

This is where most of the waste and the strain and the conflict and the confrontation come. If you're going to have any hope of dealing with these two limits then you've got to begin to think in new ways about your cities.

That's my theme and Habitat is so important because it is the place where some of these questions can come up.

SNS: Is Habitat just about cities?
Ward: No. Habitat is about all the processes that make cities. At the moment, in the Third World in particular, there is this overwhelming drive to the biggest city. It's only in some of the planned economies and in China where there's a real effort being made to get away from the 10,200 million city, and to see if you can't have a better distribution of population. So city-making is one of the critical problems.

SNS: But it is possible to stop people living in cities?
Ward: We've never tried. We've never tried to say there are alternative urban centres to go to. Some of the most successful countries from an urban point of view—because of a federal system of their geography like Switzerland or West Germany—have— I really got a 10 million city. They're smaller and they're having more manageable urban problems.

In the United States, a very interesting thing is happening—a move out from the older centres altogether, the move of population from the north-east and the central area down into the south-west. They're abandoning the old cities—Detroit, Pittsburgh.

SNS: Is the problem different in the developing world?
Ward: The developing world have got a marvelous chance, which is not to repeat our glibly errors, not to lose it out. What they lack, they think, are the resources. But this is the fascinating problem and the one that I hope will come right through Vancouver.

One thing about the 10-million city... it's an energy gobbler, it's a resource gobbler and it's also very difficult to create what I would call genuinely human communities where people of different interests, of different incomes, of different classes meet.

What do you do about the big fellows that you've already got? Well, a number of things. You've got to revive the inner city as a community. You cannot leave it as the place where everyone goes away from at night who's got a good job and everyone who stays in has no job at all. So, recreate the inner city as a mixed community. Don't let your Covent Gardens be pulled down and convention halls put in. Keep a mix.

Also keep continuity, because if you take away all of your neighbor's landmarks, he goes literally dazed, you know. An awful lot of people go mad if you just wipe their neighborhood out and give them a new housing area.

Work hard in your centre city and then try in your sprawl to articulate centres of employment and of community. We've torn things to pieces to put in great big highways. Let's clear things up and put in parks and farms and market gardens. Let's get back to food. We're going to be jolly hungry in 50 years time if we're not careful.

Let's try to do, in a sense, what the Chinese apparently tried to do at Shanghai—revive the inner city, then have an agricultural belt and then further cities.

SNS: The problem with what the Chinese do is they do it through coercion.

Ward: Listen, you're bloody well coerced if you haven't got a job in Britain. Don't let's kid ourselves, the way in which we say in the Western world that there's no coercion when a chap's out of work and hasn't a hope of a job.

I certainly agree that if you do not have enlightened people who care people you will not get any reform in our closed open society. It has always de-

peended upon your Lord Greys, your Lord Shaftesburys, your Disraelis and it's no different now. If you get any absolutely bloody-minded owning class, as you have in Spain, you get communism and why not? Why are you worse off?

SNS: You can't think in the developed world today that there's a bloody-minded middle class who are very attached to property?
Ward: Very mixed. You've got more and more people taking the line that you've got to encourage every range of society to own their houses, to have the feeling that they are people of property. This is the big change everywhere. In Western Europe, there's a good deal of genuine drive developing behind the idea that you don't have municipal tenants, that you don't have municipalization. On the contrary, you encourage people to turn their rents into mortgages.

SNS: Why?
Ward: A practical reason. They take much better care. And that's just a fact. Interestingly enough, in the socialist countries, home ownership is quite high and I think for the same reason.

SNS: I think you'd find in Canada that many people are hostile towards the idea of losing what they consider the privileges, the prerogatives, of owning a piece of land.

Ward: That's exactly how Marie Antoinette felt. I myself think that there is enough of the Humphrey-Johnson Great Society feel for this not to be a dead end. The sheer brutality of the crisis in New York makes people begin to think.

There's another point. So many of the new ideas seem to be encouraged by the potential shortage of energy and by the possible vastly increased costs of keeping our old patterns which depend, essentially, upon the private car.

SNS: Does what's happened to New York mean that we should avoid at all costs creating any more cities of many millions?
Ward: Yes, but I'm more too sure whether we know enough yet about how to do it.



Channel all house and land sales through judicial boards to wipe out unearned profit

It's conceivable that taking a look at fuel and taking a look at the systems we've developed, we shall come at our cities, perhaps through the outer limits, rather than through the inner limits. Not because people are burning them down but because they're too expensive to keep up.

What will be interesting in the 21st century is whether if you're not producing food at all output per acre, whether people will come and say: 'I think we'll have it.'

SNS: Even if Canada gets to, say, three per cent of its GNP for foreign aid, is it still going to be possible by the year 2025 to have only 50 million people in a country that will support 300 million?

Ward: It very much depends on what happens elsewhere. It's certainly entirely in the interests of the developed world to hasten in every possible way the development of the other continents. No one who has been

do it. That's how we arrange choice. But here you come against another principle which is: There are some things we don't let anyone buy.

SNS: Is one of them going to be land?
Ward: They can own it but they can't sell it. You can have secure private ownership as long as the sale is done through a land commission. Everyone has the right to buy, which is "free," but the community has the right to control, which is "hold."

I would have a land commission entirely staffed by retired Supreme Court judges. I'd like Judge Sirica looking after my land. That would mean an absolute right to ownland but when you sell it, you sell it through a community land board. That seems to be just. I don't see why any unearned increment should go to an individual.

As long as you've got unlimited resources, unlimited petrol, very few people—six per cent of the world's population—40 per cent of the world's income—you can afford yourself quite a few millionaires. But it gets more difficult as the pressures get tighter.

There is nothing that I can see in our planetary prospects that suggests that things aren't going to get more tight. I'll tell you something else. Why do you need more than \$40,000 a year to be happy? For God's sake if you can't be happy on that... go stew your head.

SNS: Why does the socialist prime minister of Britain have three houses of his own plus two government homes?
Ward: Yes, yes, I know. Why does Mr. Brezhnev have 10 cars?

SNS: Then, isn't a matter of ideology?
Ward: No, no, it's profound social morality. We do need a new communal ethic, because the resources are going to be scarce.

The resources that are absolutely unlimited are mind and heart and spirit and intelligence and knowledge and sharing of ideas. Ideas are the only things that grow by being exchanged.

What I would like to put across, most of all, is that this isn't very fearome. We're not a very happy people. Materialism has not given us joyousness. No one would say we're anything in many ways but bloody bores. I mean, honest, if you've got to end up even making sex boring, that's pretty damn clever.

Uuugh. There is something quite au courant about our society and I'm not surprised that poor old Solzhenitsyn got a hell of a shock. He probably found that in many ways the concentration camps were more moral.

Behind the idea of being thrifty, being more conserving, caring for your things, mending things, there's the possibility of an ethic we only lost about 100 years ago. Don't you think it's possible that this violent consumerism might just be an aberration?

SNS: So will the new morality be brought on because the old morality gets priced out of existence?
Ward: Probably. The slosh-on society belongs to slosh on resources and slosh-on energy. It's possible. Mind you, because they didn't notice it had gone. It's interesting that all the French new towns have all got very sophisticated public transport. I think tating cars in the centre cities will come or else compelling people to double up. They're doing that in San Francisco already. If you come across the bridge from Oakland with four in a car you pay no toll and the toll goes steadily up, according to the lack of numbers.

Ward: Yes, South Korea, it will be like it but it's a basic reality that it's folly. You can't control the consequences and they're lethal. As far as I'm concerned, all fission reactors are out, especially fast breeders. There are alternatives when you think that more than half the energy generated in North America is wasted now.

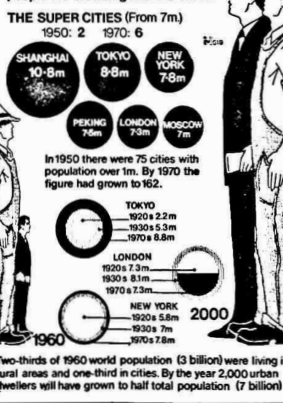
SNS: I'm not sure I completely understand. For this you must have the rule of law, you must have decentralized power, you must have a well-distributed property system.

Ward: I think true liberty is liberty of the spirit and liberty of the heart and mind. For this you must have the rule of law, you must have decentralized power, you must have a well-distributed property system.

But I do not think that I need a car that falls to pieces every year. I do not think I need a refrigerator that cannot be repaired. I do not think I need super-expensive food. I do not think I need to be free. On the contrary, consumerism is the enemy of freedom because it binds you to things. And thinginess is not liberty—it's the exact opposite.

THE BURSTING CITIES

World population (3.89 bil) is expected to double by 2000AD. More and more people are crowding into the cities.



Two-thirds of 1960 world population (3 billion) were living in rural areas and one-third in cities. By the year 2000 urban dwellers will have grown to half total population (7 billion)

Detroit Pittsburgh



The old cities are being abandoned

Ward: And it would cost less, if you take the single-mass commuter, they reckon in New York City he gets about six per cent of his energy in useful movement. Well the moment energy becomes something you've got to watch because it's costly, he begins to make a different calculation. He then hires a minibus with seven of his friends and his cost-effectiveness goes up by something like three or four hundred per cent. SNS: But what price do you put on individual choice, if I want to live in the middle of Montreal and drive a car and am willing to pay the real cost of running it? Ward: Then only the very rich could