



Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought for an Anti-Utopian Age

Russell Jacoby

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Many observers judge utopians and their sympathizers as foolhardy dreamers at best and murderous totalitarians at worst. However, as noted social critic and historian Russell Jacoby argues, not only has utopianism been unfairly characterized, a return to an iconoclastic utopian spirit is vital for today's society. Jacoby reexamines the anti-utopian mindset and identifies how utopian thought came to be regarded with such suspicion. He challenges standard readings of such anti-utopian classics as *1984* and *Brave New World* and offers stinging critiques of the influential liberal and anti-utopian theorists Hannah Arendt, Isaiah Berlin, and Karl Popper. As Jacoby demonstrates, iconoclastic utopianism, shaped by the works of Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch, Gustav Landauer, and other predominantly Jewish thinkers, revives society's dormant political imagination and suggests new and more imaginative ideas of the future.

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