

## **Utopias and Utopians: An Historical Dictionary**

Richard C. Trahair



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The concept of utopia is generally attributed to Thomas More, whose fictional work, *Utopia* (1516), presents a place that is at once ideal and imaginary. The term means both a good place and no place, and More's work has inspired numerous political philosophers, religious leaders, and literary figures for nearly five centuries. Utopian ventures are worth close attention to help understand why some fail and others succeed, and they offer hope for an improved life on earth. This reference book is a comprehensive guide to utopian communities and their founders. While other volumes look at literary utopias or examine utopias in only one country, this work examines utopias from antiquity to the present and surveys utopian efforts around the world. Multidisciplinary in nature, the book draws on anthropology, religion, philosophy, political science, history, sociology, and literature.

Included are more than 600 alphabetically arranged entries. Roughly half are short descriptions of utopian ventures and the rest are brief biographical sketches of individuals who were involved. Each entry is followed by a list of sources, and the volume concludes with a selected, general bibliography. The entries draw on a wide range of activities and institutions: from abodes of love to conservation groups; from hippie communes and fantastic entertainments to caravans and residential settlements; from garden cities to children's schools; from business schemes to spiritual encampments; from religious communities to unrealizable schemes. Entries were chosen for their illustrative value and origin and include several dystopias, literary and real, which provide an additional context for the utopian communities.

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