



The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages, Revised and Expanded Edition

By Norman Cohn

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The Middle Ages inherited from antiquity a tradition of prophecy and gave it new life. This tradition foretold a millennium in which humanity would enjoy a new paradise on earth, free from suffering and sin. This is the story of those millenarian fanaticisms, and points to their persistence in the modern era.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

At the end of the first millennium A.D., itinerant preachers crisscrossed Europe warning that the end of the world was nigh. Hundreds of thousands of people took heed, joining religious cults and anti-governmental militias in preparation for the coming war between good and evil. (If this sounds familiar, it is proof only that history is cyclical.) During this heady time, Europe exploded in religious war, peasant revolts and sectarian strife, marked by the first large-scale massacres of Jews and gypsies, the first inklings of inquisitions and holy crusades. Norman Cohn, a masterful writer and interpreter, carefully explores this extraordinary period in European history in a book that bears rereading as our own millennium approaches its end.

Review

"Cohn uncovers interesting historical connections between millennial ideas and their use in furthering revolutionary movements started by the engine of social unrest."--The Catholic World

"Cohn's book is even more relevant today. He has added a conclusion relating [these movements in medieval Europe] to the contemporary scene....The mirage of a secularized millennium now appeals, he considers, both to the 'disoriented and desperate' in underdeveloped countries, and to an equally disoriented minority on the fringes of the social democratic state."--Times Literary Supplement

"A work of the first water...of great originality and power."--Sir Isaiah Berlin, Twentieth Century

"As valuable as it is interesting...full of historical facts which are passed over in silence in most histories."--Bertrand Russell

"Now we can understand the origins of twentieth century ideologies."--Dr. Wayne Allen, Delta State University

From the Back Cover

This fascinating book explores the millenarianism that flourished in Western Europe between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries.

Users Review

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Marco Roy:

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