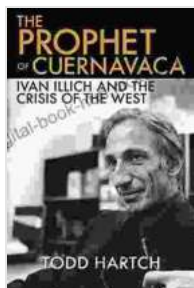


# Ivan Illich: A Prophet for Our Crisis



## The Prophet of Cuernavaca: Ivan Illich and the Crisis of the West by Todd Hartch

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language	: English
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Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
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In a time of great crisis and uncertainty, it is more important than ever to listen to the voices of those who have come before us and who have offered us wisdom and guidance. One such voice is that of Ivan Illich, a prolific writer, philosopher, and critic of technological society.

Illich was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1926. He was the son of a Croatian diplomat and a German mother. Illich grew up in a wealthy and cosmopolitan environment, and he received a privileged education at the Theresianum, a prestigious Jesuit boarding school.

After graduating from the Theresianum, Illich entered the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) and was ordained a priest in 1951. He spent the next 10 years working as a missionary in Puerto Rico and Mexico. During this time, Illich became increasingly disillusioned with the Catholic Church and with the West's development model.

In 1961, Illich left the Jesuits and moved to Cuernavaca, Mexico, where he founded the Center for Intercultural Documentation (CIDOC). CIDOC was a research center that brought together scholars from around the world to study the impact of Western culture on indigenous peoples.

Illich's work at CIDOC focused on the following key areas:

- The crisis of education
- The crisis of medicine
- The crisis of transportation
- The crisis of energy

Illich argued that these crises were all interconnected and that they were all rooted in the West's addiction to technology. He believed that technology had become a tool for domination and control, and that it was destroying our ability to live in harmony with each other and with the natural world.

### **The Crisis of Education**

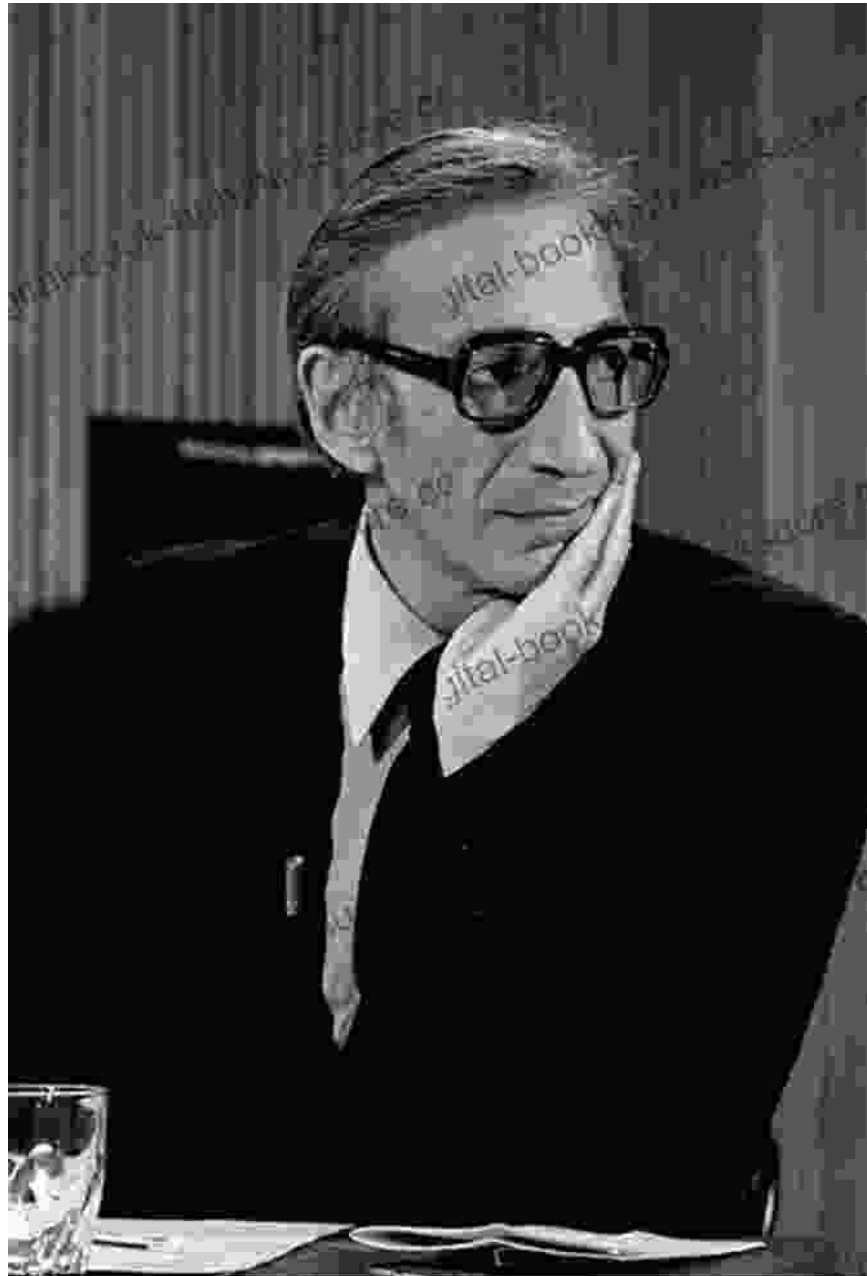
Illich believed that the modern education system was a failure. He argued that schools were not teaching students how to think for themselves or how to live a meaningful life. Instead, schools were simply churning out compliant workers who were unable to question authority or to make their own decisions.



Illich proposed a radical alternative to the modern education system: deschooling. Deschooling would involve the abolition of compulsory schooling and the creation of a new, more decentralized and learner-centered education system.

### **The Crisis of Medicine**

Illich also believed that the modern medical system was a failure. He argued that hospitals were not healing people but were instead making them more dependent on technology. Illich believed that the best way to achieve health was through a healthy lifestyle and preventive care.



Illich proposed a radical alternative to the modern medical system: auto-medication. Auto-medication would involve people taking more

responsibility for their own health and making their own decisions about how to treat their illnesses.

## **The Crisis of Transportation**

Illich believed that the modern transportation system was a failure. He argued that cars were not making people more mobile but were instead making them more dependent on technology. Illich believed that the best way to get around was through walking, biking, and public transportation.



Illich proposed a radical alternative to the modern transportation system: convivial transportation. Convivial transportation would involve people using modes of transportation that were human-powered and that did not rely on fossil fuels.

## **The Crisis of Energy**

Illich believed that the modern energy system was a failure. He argued that fossil fuels were not a sustainable source of energy and that they were causing environmental degradation. Illich believed that the best way to meet our energy needs was through renewable energy sources.



Illich proposed a radical alternative to the modern energy system: convivial energy. Convivial energy would involve people using energy sources that were decentralized and that did not rely on fossil fuels.

### **Tools for Conviviality**

Illich believed that the key to overcoming the crisis of the West was to create tools for conviviality. Conviviality is a state of human well-being that is based on mutual respect, cooperation, and sharing.

Illich identified four key tools for conviviality:

- The bicycle
- The library
- The shared workshop
- The community garden

Illich believed that these tools could help people to live a more sustainable, just, and fulfilling life.

## **Legacy**

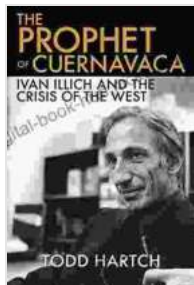
Ivan Illich died in Bremen, Germany, in 2002. He was 76 years old. Illich's work continues to be influential today, and he is considered to be one of the most important thinkers of the 20th century.

Illich's work has been praised for its originality, incisiveness, and prophetic vision. He was a brilliant critic of the modern world, and he offered us a radical alternative to the status quo.

Illich's work is not for the faint of heart. He is a challenging thinker who will force you to question your assumptions about the world. But if you are willing to open your mind, Illich's work can be a source of great insight and inspiration.



In a time of great crisis and uncertainty, we need more voices like Ivan Illich. He was a prophet for our time, and his work can help us to find a better way forward.



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