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F. Polak and K. Mannheim's reconceptualization of the role of the utopist as a radical/revolutionary who acts to shatter present reality and reconstruct it according to a vision of the future is evaluated in the light of K. Popper's critique of utopian engineering; also, Popper's proposal of piecemeal engineering is critiqued and found deficient. Polak's thesis of a vital image of the future is tested on the basis of J. B. Bury's idea of progress and found to be modern-born. The historic roots of the dominant utopian image of the future (within the idea of progress) are clarified as the technological/consumer society within industrial civilization. However, as this modern thesis become dystopic, an antithesis, in the form of utopian socialism, emerged to contend with the dominant utopian image of the future throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The dialectical struggle between contending utopic images of the future within the idea of progress brought about the progressivesocialist synthesis, which in turn, opposed by reactionary neoliberalism (a "counter-utopia), has realized a new, postmodern thesis - as global sustainable development - a reconstructed, 21st century utopian image of the future.

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