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Abstract: Charles Fourier has been disdained or ignored by political scientists, even by theorists. Some of his ideas were “mad,” but so many others were brilliant. Now we can see that even some “mad” ideas were simply premature, e.g., global warming. His works are a “whole earth catalog” of solutions to today's most intractable problems, such as agricultural labor in a democracy, environmental degradation, consumerism, loneliness, the decline of the family, the gradual disappearance of nutritious meals (and shared mealtimes), eldercare, boredom at work, unemployment, and the fragmentation of communities by “identity” politics.

In 19th century United States, Fourierist and Owenite communitarian models for settling the country was taken very seriously by intellectuals, and more than 100 communities existed. Available data has barely been unearthed by political scientists; the whole movement is rarely mentioned in history books, even “radical” ones. Both capitalism and Marxian socialism eclipsed this fruitful policy option. The disappointing experiences of technological, gigantic socialism and capitalism make the decentralized, “small is beautiful,” scale of organization look very attractive.



Walker Evans

Why This?

In 1909, the U.S. Commission on Country Life found persistent problems, many the same as those which had prompted the 19th century communitarians: the “idiocy of rural life” and the environmental degradation resulting from the usual methods of food production. Yet despite Progressive reform efforts, the agricultural sector today seems to offer few options other than self-exploitation family farms, chemicalized agribusiness, brutalized migrant labor, or those questionable imports.

This paper will consider rural dysfunction, reform movements, and policy options. It will revisit the communitarian road that was taken, but then backtracked. It is now especially appropriate to reconsider Fourier, as a new translation of his *Theory of Four Movements* (material, organic, animal, and social) was published in 1996, after many years without a Fourier English translation in print.

I. Introduction

In the early 20th century, political and revolutionary Marxism had become “hegemonic” over other socialist theories. Perhaps now the others can re-emerge. The strange and brilliant Charles Fourier certainly deserves more exposure. We need not institute every detail of his schemes, and we can note some serious omissions. Nevertheless, he provided practical policy ideas for the world as it is now, for developing as well as developed nations, and for an increasingly feminist world where boundaries of personal and political are shifting. His ideas

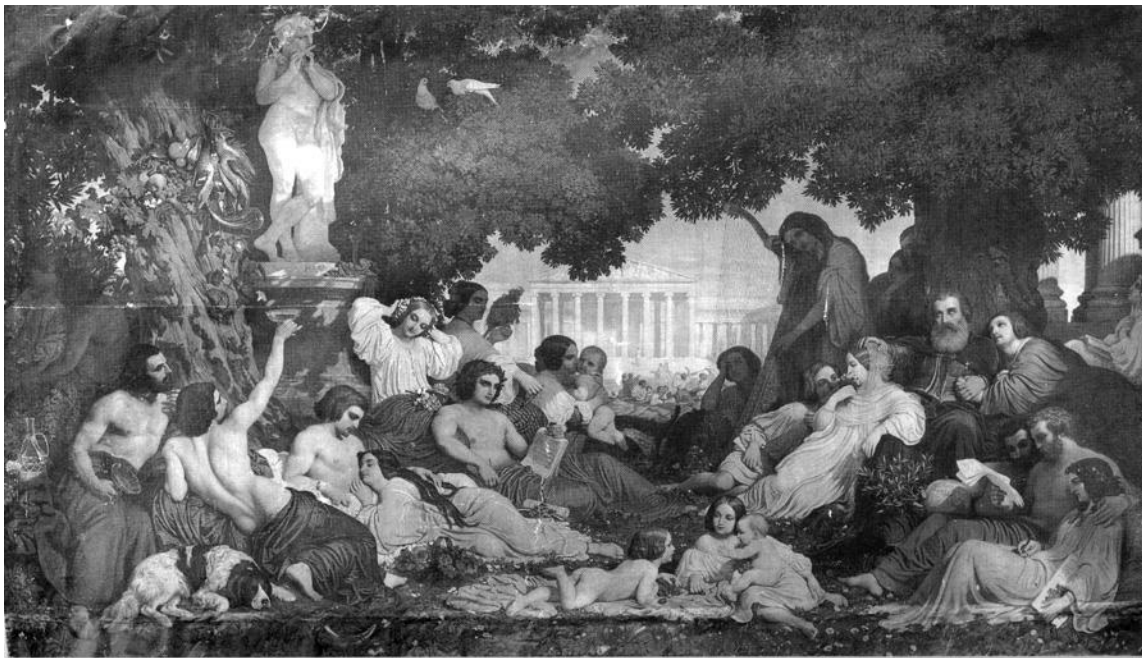


Plate 21. Dominique Papety: *Un Rêve de bonheur*, Salon of 1843. Musée Vivenel, Compiègne.

When It Could be This

are especially relevant to an era in which hard work is disdained and perpetual play desired, when the lust for luxurious consumption defies environmental sustainability at the same time that it leaves people “never content, constantly gnawed by desires despite being surrounded by opulence” (Fourier 1996, 279).

Fourier was an impassioned geographer and an observant demographer. He contemplates the promises and pitfalls of globalization. He has novel suggestions for the gap left by the “normal” family’s erosion, and for the increasing proportion of older people. This paper will focus on an ancient problem with its own modern complications: how can a democratic society produce food (and other agricultural products) without enslavement, exploitation, or destruction of the earth? Fourier was literally concerned about “How can we keep them down on the farm after they’ve seen Paree?” He deemed agricultural laborers, in Europe and elsewhere, a reserve of “indigent . . . wretches” (Fourier 1996, 274). The family farm was no solution, as its individualistic approach was wearisome, wasteful, and inefficient. Besides, Fourier regarded the family as an institution deservedly on the way out. Finally, even in his day, agribusiness was imposing a new feudalism on farmers:

[M]onopolists. . . could reduce all those below them to commercial vassalage, and achieve control over the whole of production by their combined intrigues. The small landowner would then be forced indirectly to dispose of his harvest in a way that met with the monopolists’ agreement; he would in fact have become an agricultural agent of the commercial coalition. The final result of this would be the renaissance of an inverse feudalism, founded on mercantile leagues rather than leagues of nobles. (Fourier 1996, 264)

A related, important matter: how can meals be served up nutritious, delicious, and elegant, without servants or wife-servants? Feeding people is a complicated art and science, and there are few full-time housewives or househusbands with the time, energy, and knowledge to perform this most vital task for humanity. Of course, today, there are even more challenges, because of long-distance, chemicalized, commercial food production. Fourier gives this need its due; one might say that gastronomy has the central place in his utopia.

Let us take a brief look at Fourierism.

II. Fourierism

Charles Fourier (1772-1837), a silk merchant and auto-didact, had no professional affiliation to restrain or tame his ideological meandering. Traumatized by the French Revolution and its aftermath, Fourier (1996) adjudged the ideas of the *Philosophes* as “floods of illusion.”

People. . . were forced to recognise that no good was to be anticipated from any of the knowledge accumulated thus far, and that they would have to look to some new science to provide social well-being, and find new and original paths for political thought; it was obvious that neither the Philosophers nor their opponents were able to alleviate the miseries of society, and that their respective dogmas served only to mask the continuing presence of its worst scourges, including poverty.

It was pondering this that first led me to suspect the existence of a social science of which we were still unaware, and stimulated me to try to discover what it was. (7)

He took as his method absolute doubt, finding that Descartes hardly doubted anything important.

As I had no connection with any scientific school, I decided to apply doubt to all opinions without exception, even regarding with suspicion arrangements which had universal agreement; for although this Civilisation is the idol of all philosophical schools, and the one they believe to be most nearly perfect, what could be more imperfect than Civilisation, and all the scourges it brings with it? What more dubious than its necessity and its future permanence? Is it not far more likely that it is just one more rung on the ladder of human progress? (Fourier 1996, 8)

To Fourier, “civilisation” is a mostly pejorative term, referring to the present society. It had been preceded by the stages of Savagery, Patriarchate, and Barbarism, which still existed throughout the world, and weren’t all bad. “Civilisation” will be surpassed by the utopian era of “Harmony,” which would last for 70,000 years. Then chaos would ensue, and ultimately, the end of the animal and vegetable world.

Fourier’s political speculations began with two related problems: agricultural association and British commercial monopoly. His solution, the germ of his later “phalansteries,” was to bring together

[A]t least eight hundred [people] . . . for the formation of a NATURAL or ATTRACTIVE association. I mean by these terms a society whose members would be driven to work by competition, self-esteem and other stimuli compatible with self-interest; this new order will fill us with enthusiasm for agricultural work, although at present it is regarded as suitable only for the lowest, and is only done out of necessity and the fear of dying of hunger. (Fourier 1996, 11)

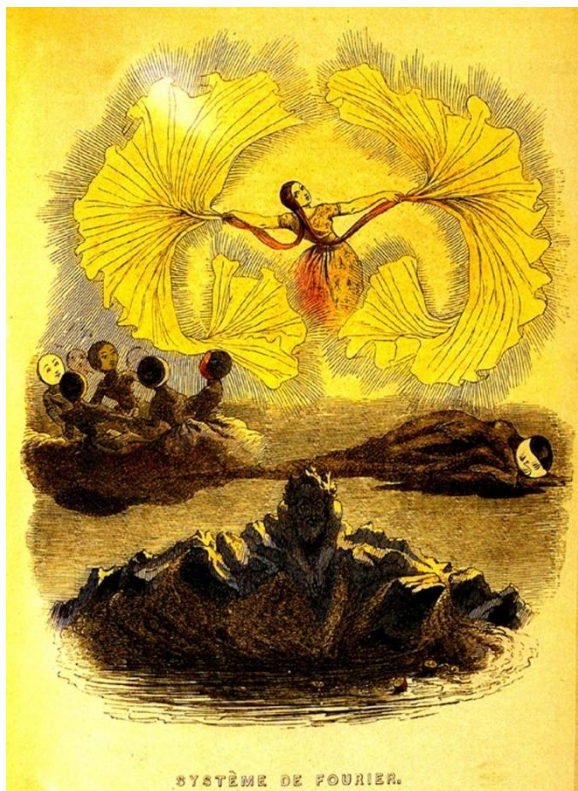
The lure would be luxury and pleasure. With the principle of association, eliminating waste and middlemen, vast savings would result: “[T]hree hundred families of associated villagers need have only one well-ordered granary, instead of three hundred ill-kept ones; only one wine-vat instead of three hundred . . .” (Fourier 1996, 11). The benefits of combined creativity and knowledge would also be considerable even for the rich:

In the current order [it is necessary] for every head of household to know about oenology, knowledge which is not easy to acquire. Three-quarters of rich households lack this knowledge, and consequently are very poorly stocked with wine; they spend a lot of money on drink, but have nothing but adulterated and badly kept wines because they have to rely on wine-merchants who are the most adept swindlers, and on hired cellar-men whose only skill is cheating. (Fourier 1996, 123)

Fourier's plan would vanquish the miseries of "civilisation," which included but were not limited to those created by industrial capitalism. Early socialism, even that of Marx and Engels, charted far more social ills than surplus value extraction.

Fourier designed a society which not only allowed for great abundance and luxury (with minimal resource use), but also permitted the full expression of all human passions. Complete harmony was possible without the need for repressing any human desires or reforming humankind. Indeed, Fourier called his ideal society Harmony.

He believed that people were born with certain personality types, based on their dominant passions. He posited twelve basic passions: the five sensual appetites; four appetites of the soul: friendship, love, family, and ambition; and three distributive passions: the cabalist (love of intrigues), butterfly (love of change and contrast), and composite (desire to combine pleasures of sense and soul) His psychology has found some modern verification (Angier, 1996). The superior individuals were the ones with the greatest complexity, and the largest number of dominant passions. Fourier believed that all passions, manias, and desires were good (otherwise God wouldn't have created them). Crime, all social pathology, and dysfunction he attributed to repression. With the proper organization of society, all tastes would become socially useful or at least innocuous.



J. Grandville

As Fourier developed his scheme, he decided that his "phalansteries" needed 1620 people to include male and female representatives of all the basic personality types for the proper arrangements of work and love. They would be rich and poor, young and old, and of all persuasions. Everyone would be guaranteed a generous minimum of food, lodging, clothing, entertainment, education, medical and dental care, and sex. An affluent standard of living would be possible because of the savings permitted by "uniting into combined households," the avoidance of waste, the labor intensive production of necessities and luxuries, the extremely high productivity of Harmony's ecstatic workers, and the elimination of "12 classes of parasites."

Fourier did not endorse mass-production techniques or consider them necessary for abundance. His objective was to achieve "1) The greatest possible consumption of different kinds of food; 2) the smallest possible consumption of different kinds of clothing and furniture. . . ." Because manufacturing was odious, all manufactured goods would have to be nearly indestructible: "furniture and clothing will last an extremely long time. They will become eternal" (Fourier 1971, 288; Moonan, 1998).

No one would be laboring to support capitalists, middlemen, idlers, priests, economists, bureaucrats, armies and navies, or various other parasites. Wives of the rich as well as all

children would become workers. Fourier's discovery of the "theory of passionate attraction," a breakthrough which he compared to Newton's discoveries, meant that people would voluntarily enrol in all those (and only those) types of work which satisfied their particular combination of passions. In addition, work would be spiced up with competition, intrigues, sex, and pageantry.

No occupation should be pursued for more than two hours at a time. Necessary dangerous work, as in chemical plants and glass works, would be rotated so that one person might spend only two or three hours a week in those places. But no matter how enticing, all work would be done in short sessions. This would have the additional advantage of promoting equality and solidarity, as those who were leaders in one field would be novices in another.

The major productive work in Harmony would be horticulture, which, along with small domestic animal raising, gamekeeping, and fishfarming, would supply a large part of the diet. Legumes, rather than bread, would be the staple food, with high consumption of fruits and vegetables.

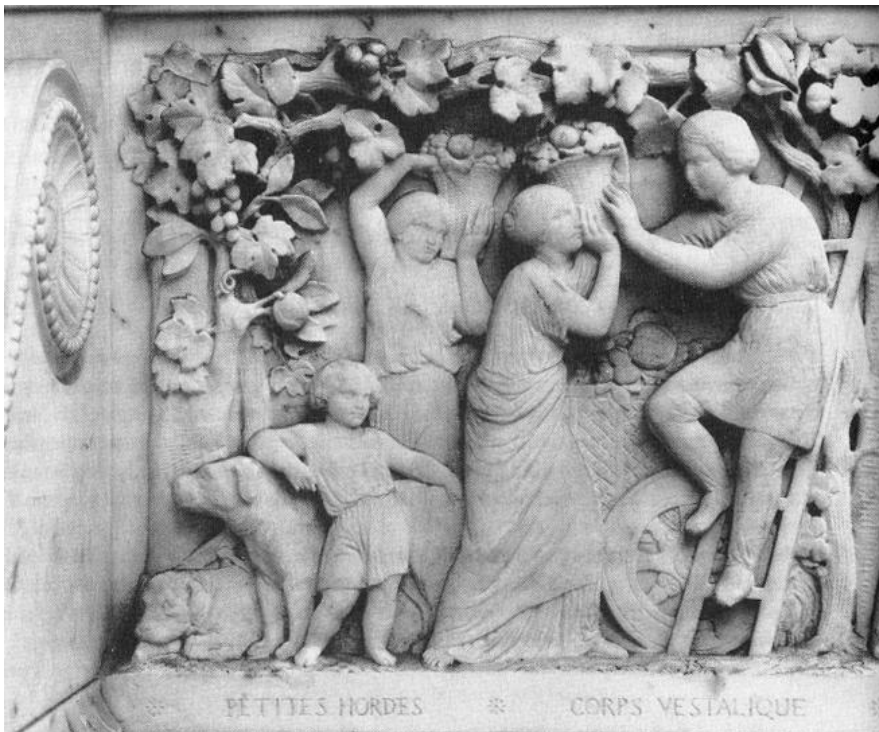
A wide variety of occupations would exist in Harmony; Fourier imagined that they would be developed to the highest standards. Thus:

The doctors of the phalange will be specialists in preventive medicine: their interest is to see that no one falls ill. In Harmony, doctors (and dentists) will always work as a team in a group. They will be collectively remunerated in proportion to the general health of the phalange, and not according to the number of ailments or number of patients treated. (Zeldin 1969, 72)

Dirty work would be joyfully pursued by the "Little Hordes," teams of children who (according to Fourier) have a penchant for filth, noise, and disgusting tasks such as removing

reptiles from the roads. In contrast, the "Little Bands," those children with a taste for elegance, would have the responsibility of maintaining the decorative side of the phalanstery and correcting the grammar of their elders.

There would be trade, partying, and joint enterprises with the outside world, which would also be organized in phalansteries. Most notable were the "industrial armies," mustered for environmental projects such as reclamation of deserts, reforestation, and building canals.



A Ottin

The expenditure, he points out with the logic of a commercial traveller, would be much smaller for a productive army; and besides the saving in slaughtered men, burnt cities, devastated fields, we should have the saving of the cost of equipment, and the benefit of the work accomplished. (Zeldin 1969, 109)

Further peace-promoting activities would be world conclaves of those who shared each sexual or food fetish.



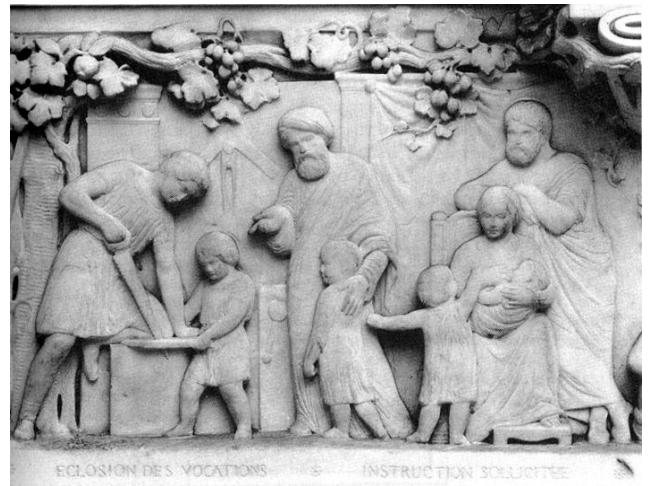
Terlingua International Chili Championship

**Chili Appreciation Society
International**

<http://www.chili.org/terlingua.html>

To end the scourge of war yet allow expression of competitive passions, Fourier proposed a “world war of small pastries” (petits pâtés), in which massive armies (men and women) would compete to produce the best array of these pastries (Fourier 1967; Bloksberg 1998)

Children would be educated in Harmony by following their instincts, imitating older children, finding mentors, and participating in the work of the community. Miniature workshops with tiny tools would be irresistible. Opera was a prime educational tool as well as a phalanstery-integrating activity. Its pedagogical value derived from the great variety of skills required, including managing complex operations (Kozinn 1994). (For Fourier there was nothing more enticing than the orchestration of the universe’s vast diversity.) Adults, children, and members of all classes would participate; a prince might well be in the chorus line and a pauper, the diva. Although some people would prefer set painting to



A. Otton

performing, Fourier expected that all children would be trained in singing and playing instruments from an early age. All the working groups of the phalanstery would have distinctive anthems sung at the beginning and end of each session.

Fourier proposed a radical re-creation of the “amorous world.” He opposed monogamy and the family because they were uneconomic, but even more, because they did not fulfill their supposed purposes. Like other aspects of “civilization,” marriage encouraged corruption and harbored misery for almost all: wives, husbands, and children, as well as the unmarried. Fourier doubted that monogamy could satisfy sexual needs. On the contrary, the widespread debauchery which Fourier observed indicated that marriage was an unnatural institution.

Fourier also indicted the family because of its oppressiveness towards women. Neither their sexual nor intellectual needs could be properly fulfilled in it. Fourier, an early feminist, believed in the inherent superiority of women in matters intellectual and political. “In the combined order, education shall have restored woman to the use of her faculties, [now] smothered by a social system which engrosses her in the complicated functions of our isolated households” (Poster 1971, 210). Women's personalities were warped because for years they were trained in duplicity for snaring a husband. This energy was in any case wasted, for once snared, the merry-go-round began. Fourier did not devalue “traditional women's work.” On the contrary, the marital arts, especially cooking, gardening, childrearing and lovemaking, were to become the most important activities in the future.



Bertall

The family was not a guarantee of security. Even the “normal” family was constantly threatened by death or departure of spouse, children, or parents. Falling out of love, boredom, or “internal migration” were constant risks even where technical fidelity prevailed. Sterility was another possible disaster:

“Children come in torrents to people who are unable to feed them, but rich families seem particularly subject to sterility” (Fourier 1971, 182).

Furthermore, the institution created especial hardship for those who were excluded--the single, for whatever reason, including unattractiveness. A particular concern of Fourier's was the elderly, whom he saw isolated socially, vocationally, and sexually.

Was all the sacrifice worth it because the family was a wonderful nest for childrearing? Fourier (1971) thought not: “In the family system children spend all their time crying, quarreling, breaking things and refusing to work” (99). Children were oppressed by child rearing which concentrated on breaking their wills and fitting them to society. He believed that a better method encouraged children's instincts for imitation and play. Society must respect



Photo Bill Gnade

Meat Pie Contest at the Elm City Brewery, Keene

nature, and provide for the harmless release of all desires and passions; otherwise the repressed would result in a “countermarch” of evil and violence.

Finally, Fourier saw the family as the enemy of community. The “wondrous inventions” of science and industry needed to be matched by a “social order which will assure our happiness,” which required a communal combination of skills and passions. Fourier sketched in elaborate detail his “new amorous order” in which marriage would be abolished, housework and child care collectivized, and a sexual minimum the right of all (Roelofs 1985; 1996).

III. Marxism and Fourier

Fourier’s indictment of capitalism was appreciated (some would say appropriated) by Marx and Engels, but there were significant differences between the two socialist doctrines. Fourier disapproved of all violence and revolution, did not see class struggle as the pivot to socialist transformation, and desired the happy collaboration

of all classes, ages, talents, and personality types. Furthermore, rather than the commodification of housework advocated by Marx and Engels, Fourier proposed the domestication of industrial work, local communal self-sufficiency, and small scale “appropriate” technology. One writer has said that Fourier wanted to “feminize” the world (Coole 1988). The abolition of the family--and substitute institutions for its every function--was necessary for the liberation of women and central to his doctrine.

Fourier, like Marx and Engels, saw “globalization” (especially the British commercial monopoly) hastening the federation of the world (desirable), but unlike them, he deplored such effects as the destruction of the Indian local textile industry (Fourier 1996, 274).

How does Fourier’s fantastic plan relate to U.S. agriculture? First let us look at the perennial situation of farming.

IV. Problems of U.S. Agriculture

In 1909 the Commission on Country Life submitted its report to President Roosevelt; it was subsequently published as a U.S. Senate document. Although the evidence was taken in a rare “prosperous” time for farmers, the picture it paints is dreary, and the Commission fears for the survival of rural life. Among its concerns are the power imbalance between individual farmers and the corporations squeezing them on both the supply and marketing sides; depletion of the soil, the poverty of social and cultural life (even successful farmers often had no books in their houses), and the “burdens and narrow life of farm women” (15). The Report embodied the

collectivist, nationalist, and ameliorative spirit of Progressivism. It set in motion valiant attempts to save the family farm and farming communities--most notably the full blooming of the Extension Service and the encouragement of cooperation. However, these policies probably accelerated the elimination of individual farmers and the domination of agribusiness.

REPORT OF COMMISSION ON COUNTRY LIFE

Washington, January 23, 1909.

To the President:

The Commission on Country Life herewith presents its report, covering the following topics:

Introductory review or summary:

I. General statement--

The purpose of the Commission.
Methods pursued by the Commission.
(Circulars, hearings, school-house meetings.)

II. The main special deficiencies in country life--

1. Disregard of the inherent rights of land workers.
 - (a) Speculative holding of lands.
 - (b) Monopolistic control of streams.
 - (c) Wastage and control of forests.
 - (d) Restraint of trade.
 - (e) Remedies for the disregard of the inherent rights of the farmer.
2. Highways.
3. Soil depletion and its effects.
4. Agricultural labor.
 - (a) Statement of the general problem.
 - (b) The question of intemperance.
 - (c) Development of local attachments of the farm laborer.
5. Health in the open country.
6. Woman's work on the farm.

III. The general corrective forces that should be set in motion--

7. Need of agricultural or country life surveys.
8. Need of a redirected education.
9. Necessity of working together.
10. The country church.
11. Personal ideals and local leadership.

Introductory Review or Summary.

The Commission finds that agriculture in the United States, taken altogether, is prosperous commercially, when measured by the conditions that have obtained in previous years, although there are some regions in which this is only partially true. The country people are producing vast quantities of supplies for food, shelter, clothing, and for use in the arts. The country homes are improving in comfort, attractiveness, and healthfulness. Not only in the material wealth that they produce, but in the supply of independent and strong citi-

REPORT OF THE COUNTRY LIFE COMMISSION. 13

zenship, the agricultural people constitute the very foundation of our national efficiency. As agriculture is the immediate basis of country life, so it follows that the general affairs of the open country, speaking broadly, are in a condition of improvement.

Many institutions, organizations, and movements are actively contributing to the increasing welfare of the open country. The most important of these are the United States Department of Agriculture, the colleges of agriculture and the experiment stations in the States, and the national farmers' organizations. These institutions and organizations are now properly assuming leadership in country-life affairs, and consequently in many of the public questions of national bearing. With these agencies must be mentioned state departments of agriculture, agricultural societies, and organizations of very many kinds, teachers in schools, workers in church and other religious associations, traveling libraries, and many other groups, all working with commendable zeal to further the welfare of the people of the open country.

The Most Prominent Deficiencies.

Yet it is true, notwithstanding all this progress as measured by historical standards, that agriculture is not commercially as profitable as it is entitled to be for the labor and energy that the farmer expends and the risks that he assumes, and that the social conditions in the open country are far short of their possibilities. We must measure our agricultural efficiency by its possibilities rather than by comparison with previous conditions. The farmer is almost necessarily handicapped in the development of his business, because his capital is small and the volume of his transactions limited; and he usually stands practically alone against organized interests. In the general readjustment of modern life due to the great changes in manufactures and commerce inequalities and discriminations have arisen, and naturally the separate man suffers most. The unattached man has problems that government should understand.

The reasons for the lack of a highly organized rural society are very many, as the full report explains. The leading specific causes are:

A lack of knowledge on the part of farmers of the exact agricultural conditions and possibilities of their regions;

Lack of good training for country life in the schools;

The disadvantage or handicap of the farmer as against the established business systems and interests, preventing him from securing adequate returns for his products, depriving him of the benefits that would result from unmonopolized rivers and the conservation of forests, and depriving the community, in many cases, of the good that would come from the use of great tracts of agricultural land that are now held for speculative purposes;

Lack of good highway facilities;

Every period in our history tells a dismal story of individual agriculture, although we should apply Fourier's rule of seven-eighths:

For instance, if I say as a general thesis, civilized man is very miserable, this means that seven-eighths, or eight-ninths of them are reduced to a state of misery and privation, and that only one-eighth escapes the general misfortune and enjoys a lot that can be envied. (34)

In colonial days, feudal relations, tenancy, indentured servants, or slavery prevailed over vast areas in agriculture North and South (Stock 1996). Small independent farmers in the South "lived in filth" (Danbom 1995). New England farmers were the one-eighth remnant; they were healthy, and prosperous by Puritan standards. However, they still followed the communal shared labor and decision-making practices of the English village; their crops were diverse and provided for self-sufficiency (with hemp, flax, and wool for clothing); and everyone engaged in agriculture, including artisans and ministers.

Instead of wheat monoculture, they used techniques learned from the Indians, who grew corn and beans in hills, using hoes only (Danbom 1995). This had economic, environmental, and nutritional advantages over later agricultural practices. Still, everyone worked hard,

including wives and children, to maintain a Puritan standard of living. The owners of the colonies wanted to make a profit on their investments and to this end hastened the settlement of inland areas for cash crops, especially lumber. As land scarcities increased after the Revolution, so did class divisions. Self-sufficiency declined, off-farm work increased, most sons had to find non-farm careers or migrate, and dowryless daughters became spinsters. Finally, the poor soils of New England could barely compete with the commercial farms of the West.

By 1850, the market dictated what was produced on most farms. The southern slave plantations (and small proprietors) produced export crops (e.g., tobacco and cotton). In the West, cattle raising was most profitable (and required least labor, which was scarce) so that's what was done. No matter the negative consequences of a beef diet to the land, the water, or nutrition, for starters. The life of the cowboy was often miserable. Grazing and cattle droves used public lands, so "free enterprise" was also a myth. Finally, the long droves ended in market or railroad towns which featured saloons and brothels for recuperation. Indigenous

people and native animal species were exterminated to make way for this on-coming "civilization." Farmers exploited themselves, their spouses, and their children, yet most farmers failed. The best bet was land speculation--buy a farm and quickly sell it to the next hopeful coming from the East. Then, either repeat the process or move into any non-farm occupation (Keener 1961). As is true today, some held onto their farms despite net loss



National Archive

by off-farm work, or by using natural resources (e.g., trapping, lumbering, fishing) as a cash crop.

An apt description was provided in 1859 by Horace Greeley (1963), editor of the New York Tribune and a Fourierist:

There are too many idle, shiftless people in Kansas. I speak not here of lawyers, gentleman speculators, and other non-producers, who are in excess here as elsewhere; I allude directly to those who call themselves settlers, and who would be farmers if they were anything. To see a man squatted on a quarter-section in a cabin which would make a fair hogpen, but is unfit for human habitation, and there living from hand to mouth by a little of this and a little of that, with hardly an acre of prairie broken (sometime without a fence up), with no garden, no fruit trees, "no nothing"--waiting for someone to come

along and buy out his “claim” and let him move on to repeat the operation somewhere else . . . how a man located in a little squalid cabin on one of these rich “claims” can sleep moonlit nights under the average circumstances of his class, passes my comprehension. (52-53)

There were a few women farmers, but most were farmers’ wives, and they worked and bred until they died; farmers would go through several wives. Those women who converted to Mormonism were opting for a soft life compared to the average pioneer wife (Foster 1981).

Farming in the far Western part of the country had all the usual problems, such as the lack of willing, competent farm labor. In addition, it was made possible only by vast government financed irrigation projects (Hughes 1987, 288). Transformation of the landscape and diversion of water remain today the source of environmental and social problems, and belie the “free enterprise” claim of our agriculture.

From the start, government subsidies and promotion of “scientific farming” hastened the domination of agribusiness—even the Homestead Act resulted in fraudulent parcellation by big business. As farmers specialized and produced for market they lost self-sufficiency, and both their consumption and production expenditures rose. This was a major cause of the farm crisis and Populist Revolt of the 1870s-1890s (Mayhew 1972).



Nebraska State Historical Society

One response to the farmers’ plight was the Granger movement (Patrons of Husbandry). The first club was organized in 1868 by Oliver Kelley, a federal civil servant in Washington, D.C. The Grange had social, educational, and political aspects; it was the first farm organization in which women participated as full members. Coincidentally, this was precisely the kind of organization that Fourier had viewed as a transition to “associationism” He thought that Freemasonry had the potential to become a new religion, based on pleasure, with, of course, the addition of women (Fourier 1996, 196). In fact, Kelley was a Mason, and incorporated its aspects of ritual and solidarity into the Grange. There are still traces of festivity and pickled-beet contests in the Grange, but its activism became channeled into a doomed Farmers’ Party (doomed by the shrinking farm population). The relative prosperity of 1900-1920 brought farmers into conservative “interest group” politics with the creation of the American Farm Bureau (Danbom 1995, 182).



After 1920 there was a long decline in farmers' fortunes from many causes. These included a drop in postwar exports, because of European recovery and competition from Canada, Australia, and other places. Dietary and style changes were an influence, prohibition nipped sales of various agricultural products, and food processors took an increasing lump of the food dollar. Farmers were now strapped to pay for automobiles, tractors, and fuel, while sales of horses and oats plummeted (Danbom 1995, 192).

Furthermore, they were enticed by a huge array of stuff in Sears Roebuck catalogs, which included labor saving devices especially helpful for women, along with status symbols for the parlor and intriguing undergarments.

The Depression revealed the persistent poverty and insecurity of farm life, and the Dust Storms illustrated what the agricultural "system" had done to the land. The New Deal began a period of intense government intervention in agricultural markets. Acreage limitations, price supports, commodity loans, crop insurance, and similar income support programs were directed at the larger commercial farmers. The poorer farmers, including black sharecroppers displaced from the land, migrated. Many ended up on relief, and some were eventually absorbed by the war industry.

Some urban people decided to form rural communes in order to eat, following the advice of Ralph Borsodi and others of the back-to-the-land movement. The federal government's Resettlement Administration created a few collective farms for displaced farmers and laborers (Conkin 1959). At these, an array of handicrafts was taught, cultural activities promoted, and medical care provided by salaried doctors. Their creators were socialists, Progressives, and pragmatists. However, like other radical programs of the New Deal (e.g., National Resources Planning Board), these communities did not survive the war. War industries enabled the communards to hit the road in Fords, and they did. In the postwar period a major farm depression was averted by continuing government income support programs (mostly for larger commercial farmers) and using agricultural products for foreign policy objectives. Nevertheless, the decline of family farms continued. In 1959, a coalition of rural organizations urged Congress to create another Country Life Commission; by 1990 it seemed that the small farm, as a profit making operation, was headed toward extinction (U.S. Congress 1959).

Ben Shahn, National Archives



Both agribusiness and family farms employ migrant workers, and often their children. Conditions have hardly improved since Edward Murrow's broadcast "Harvest of Shame." As Fourier noted, a semi-slave class contradicts the basic democratic ideals.

Today there are not many profitable family farms. Mechanization and chemicalization have become more perilous economically, leaving aside the net damage to natural resources (National Research Council 1989). Perhaps one-eighth have found a "niche" market in which they make a decent living, have a normal workday (by today's urban standards), and do not destroy the land. They may be marketing organic produce, and/or processed specialty items (e.g., the great farm cheeses of Vermont win international competitions), participate in community supported agriculture, or just say yes to illegal crops.

Probably a more common experience of new small farmers is the young couple who converted their ancestors' dairy farm in New Hampshire into a diversified operation, including vegetables, fruit, chickens, emus, pumpkins and Christmas trees (both for short-term ornamentation and discard). They also sell ice cream trucked in from a producer in Massachusetts (protecting our population against ice cream deficiency diseases). Nevertheless,

the wife has an off-farm job and "[T]hey tend the farm from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m., seven days a week" (Anderson 1998). They enjoy it now, but is it sustainable in the long run?

Relevant to the decline of the family farm is the decline of the family. Some farmers can find no wives, and

American Memory, Library of Congress



those who have been found often choose not to engage in traditional wifely unpaid labor. They have preferred careers or must support the farm by working in shopping malls and town offices. They are unlikely to have seven children, and those they do have want to go to the disco, not the silo, or kick around a pigskin, not skin a pig. Meanwhile, in the urban areas, many women, especially black women, face a dwindling pool of suitable husband material, or vanishing husbands because of the many female options available (Guttentag and Secord 1983). Here's where the Fourier solution is especially useful, for phalansteries can work without an exactly equal number of men and women. It is much harder for the family to do so; those outside the family system have to butt out one of the partners in order to get in, live in a clouded status without full benefits, or remain entirely outside.

The aging of the population (farm and other) presents many challenges. Elderly farmers need lots of help, and their children are not itching to take over. Now more people are living to be 100. Who will take care of them? Their 80 year-old children? Thousands more immigrants? Care can be the work of a community, as it was in the 19th century communitarian societies.

Currently, many issues relating to agriculture in addition to the small farmers' plight are on the national agenda. These make us wary of the market solution--agribusiness, more efficient, let it be, and let rural people be absorbed into other occupations or agribusiness. That had in fact been a consequence of the land-grant colleges created in the 19th century. Farmers' sons and daughters studied "scientific agriculture," supposedly to become better farmers. Instead, they were absorbed into John Deere, Jello, and Ortho corporations, to sell inputs and commodities to the remaining farmers.

These titles document the problems: *Silent Spring* (Carson 1962), *Merchants of Grain* (Morgan 1980), *Let Them Eat Ketchup* (Collins 1996), *Hard Tomatoes, Hard Times* (Hightower 1973), "Harvest of Shame" (Murrow 1960), *Ill Fares the Land* (George 1984), *Diet for a Small Planet* (Lappé 1971), *Diet for a Poisoned Planet* (Steinman 1990), *Living Hungry in America* (Brown and Pizer 1987), *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* (Enloe 1989), *Broken Heartland: The Rise of America's Rural Ghetto* (Davidson 1990). Energy economics demonstrates that the

energy inputs in U.S. agriculture exceed the outputs, and indicates the rationality of intensifying human labor--which is plentiful (Martinez-Alier 1987). Even official sources in the United States see further mechanization and chemicalization no longer viable from economic, environmental, and nutritional perspectives (NRC 1989). Massive unemployment in the Third World has resulted from the "technical assistance" programs promoting industrial agriculture and export crops, and from the subsidized US crops sold abroad.

Less publicized is the disdain some Third World countries have for our vermin infested food exports and genetically altered seeds and food. Of course, Fourier was correct that farmers under capitalism would become feudal vassals of corporations. Today they must use inputs designated by food processors, are

forbidden to save seed, and are more like hired hands of agribusiness. However, they provide the capital and must take all the risk.

As profits determine diet, so today junk food is supported by government policies. The U.S. Congress guards us against popcorn-deficiency diseases. Children are being trained by advertising, with their schools' connivance, to eat junk food. My generation worried about pesticides in the children's food; but today's children don't eat meals anymore--apparently, not even at home. They live on M&Ms, colas, fritos, tacos, bagels, pizza. Many people have no choice of diet, as they are fed institutionally, e.g., students, elderly, prisoners, hospitalized, and often, workers.

Agribusiness also holds sway over textile and paper fibers, biofuels, forestry, and medicinal plants. The connection between clothing and social justice, environment, and imperialism is rarely made today, and environmental organizations sell sweatshop garments.

The Popcorn Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act (Act) [7 U.S.C. 7481-7491] [\[PDF\]](#) was signed into law on April 4, 1996. The Act authorizes the Popcorn Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Order (Order) [7 CFR Part 1215] [\[PDF\]](#). After notice and comment rulemaking on a proposal submitted by the Popcorn Institute, USDA conducted a referendum to determine if popcorn processors favored implementation of the program. In the referendum, which was held from April 15 through 30, 1997, 92 percent of the processors voting favored implementing the Order and those processors represented 95 percent of the popcorn processed by voters in the referendum. The Order became effective in September 1997, assessment obligations began in January 1998, and the Popcorn Board held its organizational meeting in April 1998

This is where the industrial revolution began, with slave labor producing cotton, and children in factories and crawling through coal mines, all so we could have an ever normal stock of 40 t-shirts. Today all aspects of agribusiness require hired labor, and their condition remains a shame in this “prosperous” and “free” society.

V. Communitarianism

In the 19th Century, communitarianism was a serious alternative to individual enterprise or family farms. Its theories were widely discussed in the intellectual world from the 1820s to the 1860s, and many experiments undertaken. In 1825 Robert Owen (1970) gave a joint address to both Houses of Congress describing his proposed communities. For several years, Arthur Brisbane had a thrice-weekly column on Fourierism in the *New York Tribune*, which omitted some of the wilder aspects, but explicated the basic ideas. The advocates of associationism, as it was often called, regarded it as a preferred model for the settlement of the West (Bestor 1970). Twenty-nine Fourierist “phalanxes” were created in the U.S.; the best known was Brook Farm in Roxbury, Massachusetts (Guarneri 1991). There were also many religious communities, of which the Shaker settlements in New England, Kentucky, Ohio, and elsewhere were most numerous. Whatever their inspiration, they saw themselves as providing a practical alternative to isolated monoculture farming and living, slave plantations, and industrial capitalism. The Shaker literature proclaimed: “Abolition of all slavery: Chattel, Wage, Habit, Passion, Poverty, Disease,” and, influenced by Marxism, “Each using according to need.” These communities enjoyed a far richer cultural and material lifestyle than the average 19th century farm family, and were creative in the use of technology. The Oneida Community, which practiced group marriage, came closest to the Fourierist dream. It lasted for almost 40 years; the records of this experiment have yet to be mined by political scientists. Shakers flourished even longer, and served the celibate sexual niche, often chosen after married life.

Figure 14 Map 1. Location of Fourierist phalanxes

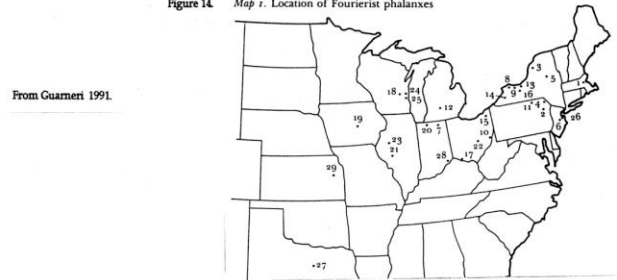
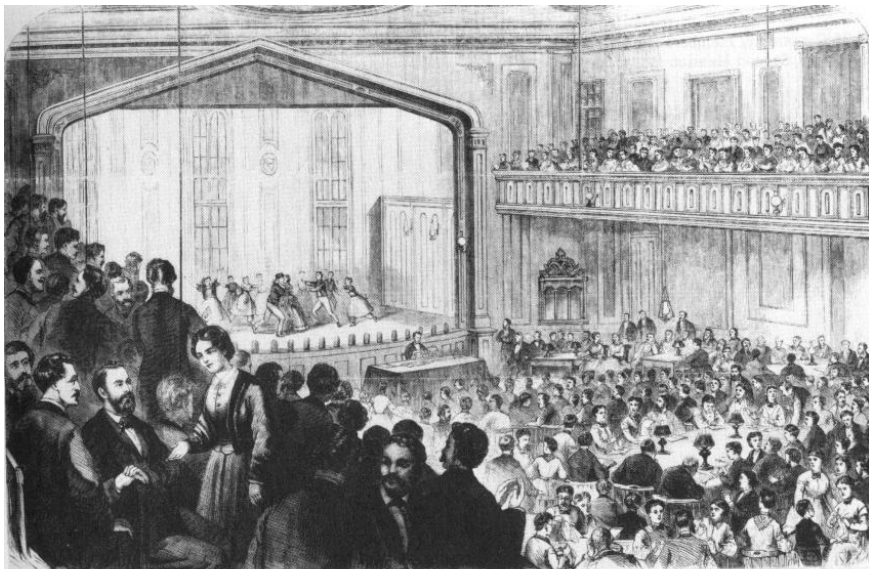


Table 1. Fourierist phalanxes in the United States

Name and location	Acreage	Members*	Dates
1. Brook Farm, West Roxbury, Mass.	208	90	1841-47
2. Social Reform Unity, Pike Co., Pa.	2,000	20-30	1842-43
3. Jefferson County Industrial Association, Gold Creek, Jefferson Co., N.Y.	600	400	1843-44
4. Sylvania Association, Darlingtonville (now Greeley), Pike Co., Pa.	2,394	145	1843-44
5. Morehouse Union, Piseco, Hamilton Co., N.Y.	300	?	1843-44
6. North American Phalanx, Monmouth Co., N.J.	673	120	1843-55
7. LaGrange Phalanx, LaGrange Co., Ind.	1,045	130	1843-47
8. Clarkson Association (orig. Western New York Industrial Association; reorg. Port Richmond Phalanx), Clarkson Township, Monroe Co., N.Y.	1,480	420	1843-45
9. Bloomfield Union Association, North Bloomfield, N.Y.	730	148	1844-46
10. Ohio Phalanx, Belmont Co., Ohio	2,200	100	1844-45
11. Leraysville Phalanx, Le Raysville, Bradford Co., Pa.	600	40	1844-45
12. Alphadelphia Association, Kalamazoo Co., Mich.	2,814	225	1844-47
13. Sodus Bay Phalanx, Wayne Co., N.Y.	1,400	260	1844-45
14. Mixville Association, Mixville, Allegany County, N.Y.	?	?	1844-45
15. Trumbull Phalanx, Trumbull Co., Ohio	1,237	250	1844-48, 1849-52
16. Ontario (or Manchester) Union, Ontario Co., N.Y.	284	130	1844-45
17. Clermont Phalanx, Clermont Co., Ohio	1,140	120	1844-46
18. Wisconsin Phalanx, Ceresco, Fond du Lac Co., Wis.	1,793	180	1844-50
19. Iowa Pioneer Phalanx, Mahaska Co., Iowa	320	50	1844-45
20. Philadelphia Industrial Association, St. Joseph Co., Ind.	?	70	1845-47
21. Integral Phalanx, Sangamon Co., Ill. (merged with Sangamon Association)	555	95	1845-47
22. Columbian Phalanx, Muskingum Co., Ohio	2,700	150	1845-45
23. Canton Phalanx, Canton Township, Fulton Co., Ill.	c.400	75	1845-45
24. Spring Farm Phalanx, Sheboygan Co., Wis.	c.100	30	1846-49
25. Pigeon River Fourier Colony, Sheboygan Co., Wis.	?	20	1846-47
26. Raritan Bay Union, Middlesex Co., N.J.	268	90	1853-57
27. La Reunion, Dallas Co., Tex.	2,240	350	1855-59
28. Fourier Phalanx, Dearborn Co., Ind.	220	13	1858-58
29. Kansas Co-operative Farm (also called Silville or Prairie Home Colony), Frank-	3,200	50	1869-92

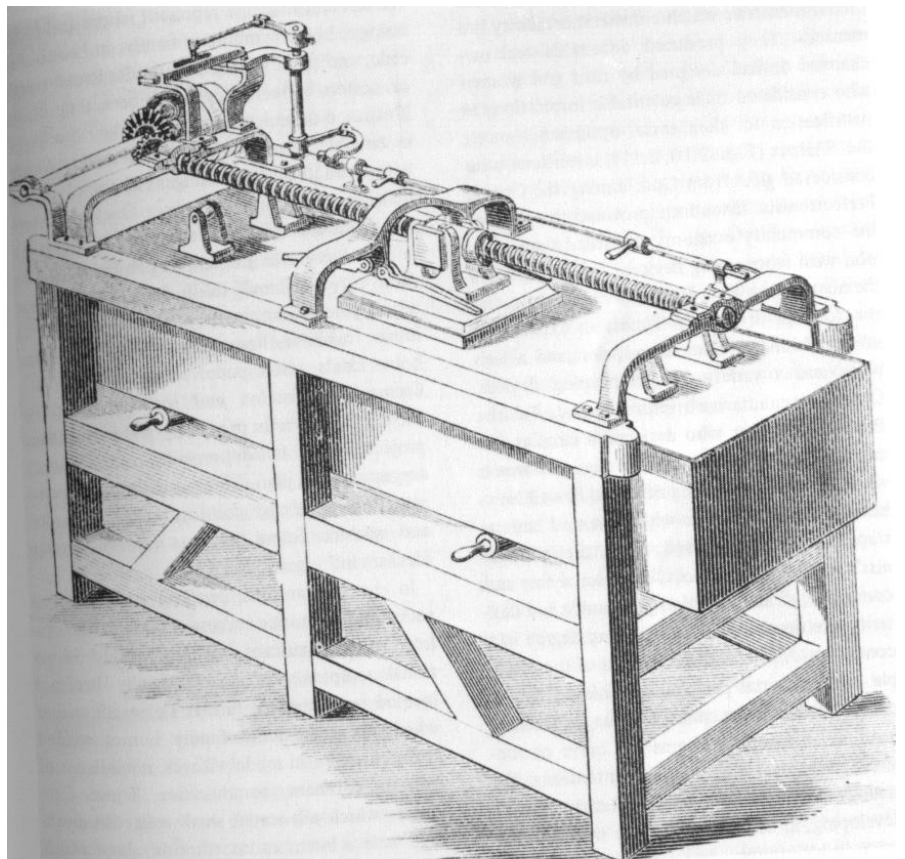


Theatrical Performance at Oneida Mansion House

Hayden 1976

fundamentalists outside were often subjected to mind control *without* the communal benefits. Communities either prohibited or used alcohol in moderation, whereas ordinary farmers and workers tended to drink all day. Communitarianism, (even Shakers by the 19th century), were not cultish (i.e., Christians awaiting the end of the world while living in poverty), but rather a movement that attempted to solve the major political, social, and economic problems of the time, including race, sex, and class inequality. Some gestures towards women's liberation were undertaken in seven-eighths of the communities. The Mormons, not without pro-natalist motives, found a way to include the surplus spinsters of the East in family life. However, only the Shakers and the short-lived Nashoba experiment of Frances Wright had black members.

As a productive institution, communitarianism had many advantages. Farming, agricultural processing, and other manufacturing could be supported by the combined capital, labor, intelligence, and skills of the entire community. Skilled and educated people chose this way of life. (So did some odd ducks, but they also abided in isolated farms, where violence and abuse were hidden.) Both productive machinery and luxurious consumption goods (e.g., theaters, pool tables, saunas, tennis courts) became affordable to people of



Shaker Washing Machine

Hayden 1976

average means.

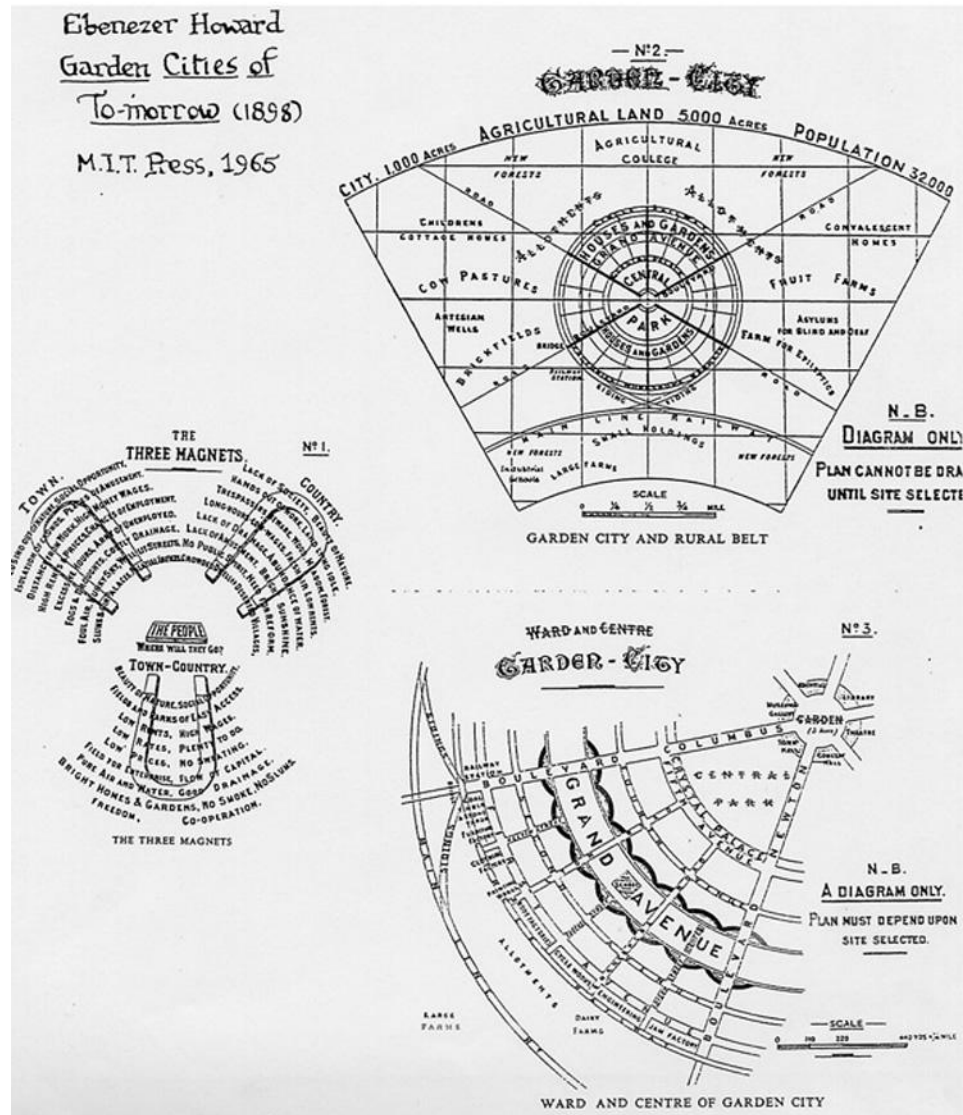
Appropriate technology (e.g., washing machines) was applied to housework, which, although mostly performed by women, was much easier as a collective undertaking. Self-sufficiency was the rule, unlike the increasingly monocultural individual farms. Surpluses were sold locally along with value added products that helped to insure economic viability. Their inventions were widely admired; for example, washing machines were bought by hotels and other institutions. Shakers sold seed packets and herbal concoctions by mail order; Oneida travelling salespeople distributed the community's manufactures. Here was a model for human-scale economic development, in contrast to our slave labor, agribusiness, massive public works, highways, assembly line, military Keynesianism, and citizen-subsidized weapons exports.

Communitarianism was a promising answer to Fourier's concern about agriculture in a democracy, which precluded peasants or slaves. He also desired nutritious, delicious, convivial meals, yet believed that liberated women wouldn't want to spend their days preparing them. Labor in communities was confined to regular hours with unpleasant shifts rotated, holidays and time-off scheduled despite cows, boring work pleasant because of companionship and flirtation, and variety in work available according to taste. Indeed, among Oneida's enterprises was the supremely Fourierist one: performing operas for paying audiences. Health and diet were superior to that of individual farmers, who were highly susceptible to alcoholism and violence. Education was provided for children and adults; both the Owenite New Harmony and Fourierist Brook Farm had notable, profitable, "progressive" schools for their own children as well as outsiders. The Shaker school in Canterbury NH was considered better than the public offering, and locals sent their children to it. Incentives for sustainability were built in. Unlike the normal pattern of speculative land use, communities developed a place where they intended to stay, and were thus likely to promote long-range soil fertility and avoid toxic wastes. Equipment was shared by many farmers, and the communal situation encouraged repair and adaptation.

VI. Implementation Today, communalism would have many advantages for both rural and urban life. Ebenezer Howard's 1898 Garden City idea is still valid; rural isolation and urban congestion must give way to an intermediate form, highly self-sufficient, green, and cultured. We need to restore productivity to idle lands and unemployed people. Voluntary immigrants could find a friendly and comfortable home and decent work. The energy costs, pollution, and labor oppression of agribusiness could be gradually reversed. Chemicalized imports, including flowers, produced by plantation labor, could cease. Communal self-sufficient agriculture could be resumed throughout the world, where hunger and unemployment

have followed the introduction of capital-intensive cash crop farming. The impracticality of the family farm would be recognized, and the self-exploitation (and guilt) of those trying to maintain it ended.

How could such a fantastic scheme be implemented? How "anti-american" such ideas! On the contrary, there have been many successful cooperative agricultural or agro-industrial communities in the United States (albeit ignored in history books and Hollywood films). Throughout our history, cooperative economic activities have made individual farming tolerable: communalism in early New England; barn raisings; and insurance, supply, and marketing



cooperatives.

As for its "anticapitalist" nature, so has been our agriculture from the start: slavery; indentured workers; government subsidies for canals, research, and development; rural electrification; price supports; "food for peace," etc. In addition, monopolies have belied the "free enterprise" theory. Furthermore, for all our aversion to an imposed culture, the Extension Service, along with private organizations such as the National Recreation Association, has



Hungarian collective farm

Nigel Swain www.liv.ac.uk

invigorated rural life with 4-H Clubs, folk dancing, local history pageantry, and peach-canning contests.

Some may argue that cooperatives are not in accordance with “human nature,” and that people won’t be able to “get along.” This ignores the eons of human tribal history; surely as genetically significant as the aggressive drives. Furthermore, there is evidence that people don’t get along very well in individual families, and that pioneer farmers’ domains were rife with domestic violence. Communal living skills can be learned--after all, there have been successful experiments.

Those older sustainable communities

that had a probationary period didn’t admit troublemakers and those unsuited to the lifestyle. Today, the great popularity of co-housing developments indicates that there are many people who desire cooperative living; they may be the pioneers demonstrating its benefits to the more conservative citizens (McCamant and Durrett 1994).

The collective farm experience in Communist countries--in comparison to their individual farms--can indicate some benefits of the system. In Poland, where a mere 20% of farmland was collectivized, the few collective ones were among the most productive. More significant:



The development of the agro-industrial complex with small-scale industrial production concentrated in the non-harvest months has been another important factor increasing the welfare of farm families. These small-scale industrial operations are frequently employing farm women in rural areas who take advantage of the child care facilities provided by the collective farm. This process has given farm women more options in life and it is possible for women to rise in the collective farm meritocracy thereby reducing the power of their formerly [sic] domineering husbands. (Turgeon 1991, 3)

Hungarian collective farms were especially successful. The Cuban collectives brought regular hours, indoor plumbing, and cultural amenities to former peasants, and enabled women to assume leadership roles. Bulgarian collectivization was often seen as a desirable alternative to traditional dependence on parents and in-laws among younger farmers (Creed 1998). Consumers appreciated the better enforcement of pesticide levels in the collective and state

farms than was the case with the individual profit-seeking farmers. Reports of astounding productivity in USSR private plots usually ignored (1) the nature of the produce (e.g., chickens, bok choy, tomatoes, raspberries, etc., rather than wheat, potatoes, rutabagas, etc.); (2) the intense, unregulated self-exploitation and that of family members on the private plots; and (3) the vast collective farm inputs (e.g., seed, machinery, fertilizer) employed (often illegally) in private cultivation. Labor time was slacked from communal responsibilities. A fair judgment of these systems must include not only productivity, but also quality of life for men, women, children, and elders; purity of food; and protection of the environment. In general, agricultural chemicals were used atrociously in Communist systems, but this was not inherent in collective farming.

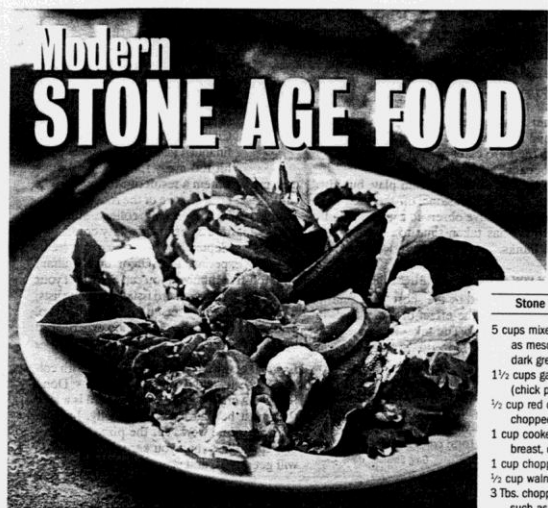
A detailed communal plan for the United States requires considerable collective thought. Here are a few suggestions. A new communitarianism would be voluntary, and might recruit among farmers and would-be farmers, immigrants, homeless, single people, retirees, and 18-22 year olds (college courses both practical and impractical could be part of the community). A revived Citizen's Extension Service could facilitate experimentation and electronic exchange of information.

Financing could be provided initially by redirection of agricultural subsidies to sustainable cooperative farming. Educational demonstration farms are now being subsidized by the private sector through donations and foundation grants (Views 1998). Another source of capital could be communards on social wages, social security, private pensions, or inherited wealth. All-age communities, with opportunities for both recreation and part-time convivial work (e.g., canning peaches, teaching children carpentry, composing opera scores, troubleshooting email service) could restore the dignity and economic usefulness of elders, while usefully employing their vast economic resources.

Of course, huge sums could be liberated (and taxes become minuscule) by reducing military expenditures, now used as an economic stimulant and protection for vital supplies of bananas and oil. Healthy lifestyles and preventive health care would reverse a monumental drain on resources. Overconsumption that is pushed by advertising or pulled by loneliness would be eliminated, along with billions spent on most children's toys, lawn care, wild bird feeding, and much other profitable stuff that contributes little to happiness. Many wastes could become productive, such as ghost towns, ghost farms, and ghost machinery; they could be adapted and repaired in a labor-intensive, decentralized economy.

Appropriate technology will reduce drudgery, yet reasonable expenditure of human labor is entirely rational, and currently an underutilized resource. Obesity is now endemic worldwide. As in Fourier's Harmony, the ideal diet would be based on horticulture and intensive farming, and include fruits and vegetables, legumes as a major protein source, and either vegan, vegetarian, or carnivorous eating small animals, perhaps snails up to sheep. This more healthful regime changes radically the land, energy, labor, and chemical basis of agriculture. Likewise, textiles, building materials, fuel, paper, medicines, etc., could also be produced locally from cultivated, wild, or recycled resources. These projects would provide challenges to entice scientists and engineers to become communards, although all members would participate in both intellectual and manual work.

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Modern STONE AGE FOOD

a good Stone Age meat equivalent, low in fat and a good source of protein, says Eaton. Fish, notably fatty salmon, sardines, mackerel and herring, are critical in mimicking a Stone Age diet. Fish contain high levels of omega-3 fatty acids, tragically lacking in modern diets.

■ **Legumes and nuts.** Nuts have a bad rap because of their fat, but they are an "original" food, with fats attuned to our genes. Nuts and legumes supply high-grade vegetable protein, plentiful in Stone Age diets. A modern drawback: Canned dried beans and salted nuts are high in sodium, incompatible with Stone Age genes. Cook your own beans without salt, thoroughly rinse canned beans, and buy unsalted nuts.

Stone Age Salad

- 5 cups mixed greens, such as mesclun, spinach, dark green lettuce
- 1 1/2 cups garbanzo beans (chick peas)
- 1/2 cup red onion, chopped or in rings
- 1 cup cooked chicken breast, cubed
- 1 cup chopped cauliflower
- 1/2 cup walnut pieces
- 3 Tbs. chopped fresh herbs, such as parsley, basil or cilantro

DRESSING:
6 Tbs. orange juice
2 tsps. balsamic vinegar
2 Tbs. canola oil or extra virgin olive oil
2 crushed garlic cloves
Salt and pepper, to taste

In a large bowl, combine salad ingredients. In a small bowl, whisk dressing. Toss together. Serves 4.

Per serving: 331 calories, 19.5g protein, 22g carbohydrates, 19.3g fat (1.8g saturated), 6g fiber, 182mg sodium, 748mg potassium.

EAT LESS "NEW" FOOD

■ **Grains, cereals, pasta, bread.** These arrived only 10,000 years ago. Grains may not be harmful in themselves, says Eaton, but they fill us up so we don't seek out far-more-nourishing Stone Age foods. Some research has linked grains, notably wheat, to arthritis, gastrointestinal problems, headaches and depression, perhaps indicating subtle allergic food reactions.

■ **Dairy products.** Cavemen didn't drink milk because animals were not yet domesticated. Milk products may hurt body functioning by adding high burdens of saturated fats and discordant proteins.

■ **Refined sugar.** Rather than honey and fruits, today's main sweet is 120 pounds of refined sugar a year per person. Evidence shows sugar drives up blood levels of insulin, glucose and triglycerides, known factors in diabetes and heart disease.

■ **Processed oils.** A dramatic change is our high consumption of processed vegetable oil and shortening. An overload of polyunsaturated fats, including hydrogenated and trans fats, promotes cancer, inflammation, high cholesterol and heart disease. ❑

STONE AGE DIET:

65% fruits, vegetable nuts, legumes, honey
35% lean game, egg, wild fowl, fish, shellfish

AMERICAN DIET:

55% "new" foods: cereals, grains, milk, milk products, sugar, sweeteners, processed fats, alcohol
28% fatty meat, poultry, eggs, fish, shellfish
17% fruits, vegetable legumes, nuts

Note: True, the average American lives longer than the average caveman. Early humans died young from infections, injuries, complications of childbirth, modern medicine handles, says evolution nutrition expert S. Boyd Eaton. "Nowadays, food are killing us."

NUTRITION TIPS:

✓ **Take a supplement.** As insurance, Eaton takes a multivitamin-mineral supplement and one or two fish oil capsules a day.

✓ **Pile on potassium.** Our Stone Age ancestor got 7,000mg potassium and 600mg sodium daily, compared with our 2,500mg potassium and 4,000mg sodium.

We are the only free-living mammals that eat more sodium than potassium. Studies link high-sodium, low-potassium diets to blood pressure, strokes and heart disease.

Jean Carper, author of the best seller Miraculous Cures, writes each week on the medical effects of food.

Your body craves nutrients cavemen ate.

WHAT'S the best diet? The one our early ancestors ate, as shown by studying Stone Age (paleolithic) humans who lived 40,000 years ago, says S. Boyd Eaton, M.D., an Emory University "evolutionary nutrition" expert.

We could more efficiently get rid of heart disease, cancer, arthritis, diabetes, obesity and other chronic diseases by changing our diet to fit our genes than by using sophisticated gene therapy, says James V. Neel, a prominent geneticist at the University of Michigan.

We have departed so far from Stone Age eating that 55 percent of the American diet is "new food" not eaten by our ancestors.

EAT MORE "ORIGINAL" FOOD

■ **Fruits and vegetables.** Stone Age humans ate three times more of a wide variety of fruits and vegetables than we do. Fruits and vegetables (along with

legumes and nuts) provided a startling 65 percent of daily calories and 100 grams of fiber a day — five times today's level. Vitamins, minerals and antioxidants were supplied in amounts people now get only through supplements, Eaton says. Modern research clearly shows that heavy consumers of fruits and vegetables have less cancer, heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and other chronic ills.

■ **Lean meat.** Stone Age ancestors ate 35 percent of their calories in protein — two to three times what's recommended today. The difference: Their protein came from lean wild game and fish, as well as from plants. But modern meat, especially red meat, is rich in hazardous saturated fats. White meat poultry, without skin, is

dence shows sugar drives up blood levels of insulin, glucose and triglycerides, known factors in diabetes and heart disease.

Total self-sufficiency is not likely. Most communities would not be able to produce all their machinery, or automobiles, TVs, computers, etc. Small communal industries could be developed for cash needs: food for the local non-farm population, exotic crops for the region, manufacturing, consulting, health care, education, entertainment, etc. This is not so different from what already exists, for "farms," especially in the East, earn income as horseback riding and cross country ski facilities, petting zoos, children's workshop venues, sustainable agriculture demonstration centers, sheltered workshops for developmentally disabled, summer stock theater barns, old book dealers, craft schools, meditation parlors,

"Woodstock," etc. A communal scheme is more viable as the purchased (or bartered) goods, like Fourier's wine vats, would be shared among many people.

It would be reasonable, as Fourier did, to see the world as it is demographically: the shriveling of the family, and the elderly category poised for explosive growth. It makes sense to use resources that are plentiful: land (including abandoned farms), human labor (including that of retirees and fitness bicyclists), and ingenuity. Such changes would support human and environmental health, e.g., local organic food, use of renewable resources for most needs, convivial and supportive communities, mental and physical work--in reasonable doses--for all, and short supply lines.

What makes communitarianism a stronger option today is that the family farm experiment has been run, with negative results (in seven-eighths of the cases) despite incredible natural resources, hard work, and government subsidies. All indications are that agricultural problems are getting worse, and rural communities are dying. There is currently world overproduction of food (and textiles, and most stuff) while hunger persists. These very dysfunctions were what set Fourier on his utopian quest, which began when he saw wheat

dumped in the sea to raise prices, and the urban price of apples 100 times the farm price. What he would think of the world-engulfing junk food diet cannot be imagined.

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