

hasty demise New Harmony had witnessed some of the classic ills accompanying efforts to make over men.

The Oneida Community, founded and watched over for many years by John Humphrey Noyes, carried communal sharing to what most would probably consider its logical extreme. To be specific, in this community they practiced what was called complex marriage. That is, each adult who was a full-fledged member of the community might be considered married to every other such adult of the opposite sex. Noyes was a religious leader, and the strange beliefs of the community were a part of the religion he taught. He believed in the possibility of perfection here and now, and those who had arrived at perfection no longer lived under the old dispensation. In anticipation of the Kingdom of Heaven—which was the name bestowed upon the first establishment begun by Noyes—he wrote:

When the will of God is done . . . there will be no marriage. The marriage supper of the lamb is a feast at which every dish is free to every guest. Exclusiveness, jealousy, quarreling, have no place there, for the same reason as that which forbids the guests at a thanksgiving dinner to claim each his separate dish, and quarrel with the rest for his rights. In a holy community, there is no

more reason why sexual intercourse should be restrained by law, than why eating and drinking should be. . . .¹¹

Though the community lasted for a longer period than most such undertakings, it did eventually break up. One writer points out that young people went away to college and came more and more “to desire the marriage customs of the world where people were allowed to fall in love and not required to cultivate a specious enjoyment at seeing their loved ones bandied through a wide circle of holy hands.”¹²

Utopian Socialism

A second, and related, development in utopian thought in the first half of the nineteenth century was the setting forth of what has been called utopian socialism. The theory of modern socialism was developed in this period by those whom Marx scornfully dubbed utopians. They were mostly French, and included Morelly, Babeuf, Saint-Simon, Fourier, Cabet, and Blanc.

Fourier and Cabet developed theories, and attempted to apply them in communities. Fourier's dream may serve as an example of these, though they differed considerably one from another. “In

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 375-76.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 405.

brief, Fourier proposed to eliminate wasteful competition, and oppressive government, by organizing self-sufficient and mainly agricultural units of production.”¹³ These units he called Phalanstères. They would, he thought, solve the problems of production, and each person would be guaranteed a basic standard of living. “Along with this expanding production, will go an educational revolution. . . . It will raise mankind to perfection in body and mind. . . . Our present teachers—slaves to abstractions—know how to produce Neros; we know how to turn potential Neros into men like Gods.”¹⁴

Mankind was made for perfection and harmony, according to Fourier, not discord and competition. His system would achieve the true end of man. “This economic and educational revolution, by housing the population in self-supporting, autonomous and self-conducted luxury hotels, in which all the occupants would work and play in industrious harmony, would solve the problems of poverty, war, and wickedness.”¹⁵ All that he needed to get this plan underway, he believed, was to find

¹³ John Bowle, *Politics and Opinion in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, A Galaxy Book, 1964), p. 142.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

a wealthy patron who would finance it, and he waited expectantly through his later years for such a benefactor.

Several important changes in utopian literature occurred in the latter part of the nineteenth century. For one thing, there was apparently a great increase in the number of such works produced. One book lists the better known ones, mainly in English or English translation, for the period 1850-1950. This indicates a great concentration of production of such literature from about 1883 to 1912. Only six works are listed from 1850 to 1883; whereas, there are seventy-four works from 1883 to 1912, seven for 1894 alone.”¹⁶

The Shift from Local Groups to a World-wide Organization

Another development was the shift from the conception of utopian communities to dreams of world-wide organization. As one account has it, “it was to become rapidly and increasingly apparent that the utopian community was so unrealistic that it could provide no more than a setting for fantasy or satire. Modern utopia must be a state, and indeed it was already beginning to be evident that modern utopia must be the world.” By some kind of metamorphosis, “the

¹⁶ See Negley and Patrick, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-22.