

not the lack of exploitation, but rather a series of other mechanisms dealing with the peculiar relationship between the state, the land-holders and the peasantry that might help to explain why Ottoman peasants did not rebel. For example, it was shown that for 17th century western Anatolia it was the peculiar structure of provincial relations and the effects of state actions on this structure that determined peasant collective action. Gerber's attention to the village community fits in directly with this concern. However, the key to an adequate understanding of the peculiar development of the Middle East seems to require further work directed toward the structure of Ottoman agrarian society with emphasis on how state decisions and state actions filtered through the agrarian structure, creating diverse interests, conflicts, and being worked and reworked through the networks of provincial society.

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BEECHER, JONATHAN. Charles Fourier. The Visionary and His World. University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1987. xvii, 601 pp. Ill. \$ 49.50.

The only other study of the life and work of the utopian socialist Charles Fourier (1772-1837) comparable in scope to this comprehensive monograph by Jonathan Beecher is that by the Soviet historian I. I. Zilberfarb, *Sotsial'naya Filosofiya Sharlia Furiye* (Moscow, 1964). The merit of this study is doubtless that it will make Fourier better known in the English-speaking world.

For his sources the author drew not only on Fourier's complete works (*Œuvres complètes*, 12 volumes, 1966-68) and the standard biography by Charles Pellarin, published in 1843; he also consulted a large number of hitherto neglected newspaper articles and above all manuscripts by Fourier and his followers stored in the French national archives in Paris. The study was partly financed with various grants from American and French institutes and was twenty years in the making (it is described, somewhat embarrassingly, as "my climb up 'Mount Fourier'" by the author). But, it must be said, one wonders whether the result matches the effort. Beecher describes his methodology as "kaleidoscopic" (p. 11), that is, his concern is to depict Fourier in relation to "his world", the "context" of his life and thought, and the various "milieus" that influenced him (pp. xv, 6). But it would be wrong to expect from this a socially and historically oriented approach: Beecher neglects this aspect, his analysis follows his biographical interest. Accordingly, the first part of the book deals with the life of the "provincial autodidact" and unappreciated author of the *Théorie des quatre mouvements* until the completion of the great *Traité de l'association domestique-agricole* in 1822; and the third part deals with the period of the "Parisian prophet" (considered by Beecher one of theoretical decline), which saw the publication of the *Nouveau monde industriel et sociétaire* and rise of fourierism as a movement. These two biographical chapters are meticulously researched and offer new information on Fourier's life and work, although some of the cited details do not seem particularly relevant.

The second part of the book contains a review of Fourier's theoretical work, which should be measured against other available research. Unlike other critics, Beecher at least retains the "internal logic" (p. 4) and the unity of Fourier's theory, including its more fantastical elements, such as the cosmological speculations and the utopia of sexual liberation, which were systematically played down in the fourierism of the 1830s and 40s to make it palatable to as bourgeois-reformist audience and which usually did not figure in the Engels-inspired marxist interpretations of Fourier either. But in my view Beecher's interpretation still constrains and dilutes Fourier's thought. Because of the biographical approach and the neglect of the social and historical context, he does not even address the question how Fourier, a commercial clerk who never lost his petty-bourgeois roots, was able to propound his utopian proposals to the ruling classes and at the same time develop a theory of eminently broad social scope.

Beecher rightly stresses that Fourier's critique of civilization emanates from the reality of poverty (p. 195ff.). But he ignores those passages in which Fourier locates the causes of mass poverty in the modern system of wage labour and the vicious circle of industrial progress, in the internal contradictions of a means of production in which "poverty arises out of wealth itself" (*Œuvres*, vol. 6, p. 35). Beecher also rightly stresses that the starting point of Fourier's theory of "attractive labour" is a critique of working conditions in early-industrial society (p. 274ff.). But again he ignores Fourier's underlying ingenious analysis of wage labour as "repugnant labour", a concept reflecting, as Fourier put it, the recognition that the workers would rise up against work were it not for the fact that they were held in check by hunger and bayonets.

In short, the radical underside, realistic basis and anti-capitalist substance of Fourier's utopia occur only in coded form in this study. Thus, while Beecher refers to Fourier's rejection of the French Revolution on several occasions, he fails to note that the main thrust of his criticism was that neither the systems of philosophers nor their realization in the bourgeois upheaval had succeeded even in securing a right of existence for the poor masses. And when Beecher adduces the workers' uprisings in Lyon in 1831 and 1834 to illustrate the virulence of the "social question" during the July Monarchy, he makes no mention of the passage by Fourier which is the testament of a whole epoch of class struggles:

Après 45 ans de régénérations multipliées, de progrès en rationalisme, positivisme, industrialisme, et de marche rapide vers une perfectibilité croissante, les peuples vingt fois régénérés et restaurés, arrivent à un tel degré de misère, qu'ils se soulèvent par insuffisance de salaire, et inscrivent sur leur drapeau: 'Vivre en travaillant ou mourir en combattant'. (*Œuvres*, vol. 8, p. 56)

In his account of Fourier's concept of labour (pp. 277ff., 294f.), particularly in contrast to that of Marx, Beecher touches on a central problem of utopian thought, namely its ambivalence (indicated, albeit inadequately in Ernst Bloch's distinction between "utopias of freedom" and "utopias of order"). For Fourier, making labour "attractive" – given the abolition of wage labour and the introduction of a guaranteed minimum income – means above all giving human interests and passions a productive orientation. Rather than positing the technological development of productive forces and the concomitant creation of "disposable time" (Marx) as the

condition of communism, Fourier projects a “utopia of labour” in which the rise in labour productivity depends on tying workers’ drives to a fifteen-hour working day and (viewed historically) thereby aims to break their resistance to work.

Beecher further clarifies the limit of Fourier’s utopia in the discussion of the “new world of love” (p. 297ff., 311ff.). This chapter, based on a Fourier manuscript first published by Simone Debout in 1967, is in my view the book’s most informative. Here too the utopia of sexual liberation is transformed into a concept for the public organization and supervision of sexual behaviour, with the goal of repressing the unproductive and unsocial character of private sexuality. Beecher in this context refers to “Fourier’s insistence on openness and clarity in sexual relations” (p. 315). (A clear parallel emerges here with Fourier’s architectural utopia, which also stresses transparency and visibility.)

The notion of the emancipation of sexuality from its civilized-bourgeois inhibitions is based on Fourier’s philosophy of history, without doubt his greatest project. Beecher underlines its importance more strongly than other researchers have done, not least because he does not consider the analysis of labour to be the crux of Fourier’s theory and critique of civilization. According to Beecher, Fourier endeavoured to explain historical progress in terms of the prevailing modus of sexual relations – in other words, to outline a philosophy of history from the viewpoint of the social status of women. “But the attempt to work out a theory of social change centering on the changing status of women was not consistently pursued by Fourier” (pp. 322, 326). In the history of ideas this undeveloped argument constitutes not just a footnote on “women and socialism”; it requires a change of paradigm and a comprehensive revision of the materialist interpretation of history. Although Beecher does not draw this conclusion specifically, it does follow from his interest in a rehabilitation of utopian socialism in relation to marxism.

The study concludes with a detailed account of the reformulation of Fourier’s theory (“in a watered-down version”, p. 429) by his followers and the spread of fourierism in the first years of the July Monarchy. But because of the absence of a social and historical perspective, as already mentioned, Beecher interprets fourierism merely in terms of the internal tensions existing with a sect. He does not provide an examination of its social basis or an explanation how utopian socialism could have developed into a ‘social movement’ (p. 422). It is not sufficient to refer the fact that violent class conflicts were rife in France, and that therefore certain sections of the bourgeoisie took an interest in the “social question” (pp. 452, 485). Moreover, this chapter contains next to nothing on the spread of fourierism within the working class (see p. 453).

The bibliography is extensive, and the author quotes from a wide range of sources. The total absence of German works may be excusable in view of the sorry state of research in the Federal Republic (the only relevant contribution to the study of Fourier in recent years has come from Elisabeth Lenk in her preface to the German edition of *Théorie des quatre mouvements*, published in 1966); but it is not excusable with regard to the available literature in the German Democratic Republic – for instance, Beecher considers neither Zahns’ studies of Fourier’s

economic and philosophical works, nor the general account by Höppner and Seidel-Höppner.

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CLAEYS, GREGORY. *Machinery, Money and the Millennium. From Moral Economy to Socialism, 1815-60*. Polity Press, Oxford 1987. xxx, 245 pp. £ 25.00.

This volume begins with an exceptionally ambitious review of the history of property theories before 1815. In particular there is an account of how the moral economy regarded the just price and fair exchange, the duty to be charitable and the notion of the community of goods. We are reminded of how Aristotle thought currency was only legitimate as a medium of exchange and of how Augustine took the wish to buy cheap and sell dear to be a vice. Indeed, the latter held that if the poor were faced with starvation they might “take what is necessary from another goods, either openly or by stealth” without, strictly speaking, being guilty of fraud or robbery. This was also argued by Thomas Rutherford in his *Institutes of Natural Law* (1754). This bold introduction must be imperfect at many points, but is indispensable since it is the author’s purpose to disclose the link between the just price tradition and early socialism.

Turning to Owen, Claeys allows that it is tempting to conclude that he reverted to a non-market, pre-economic, household-orientated model of production and consumption. Yet “the uniqueness of Owenism lay in its attempt to combine the goals of universal culture, material affluence with reduced hours of labour and no harmful division of labour, and community of property”. Owen is seen here as the most neglected of the early British Socialist critics of political economy; his own writings having been neglected in favour of Thompson, Gray and company. This requires a rather detailed account of Owen’s economic beliefs up till his arrival at a mature position around 1830. It is insisted that the crucial component in Owen’s thinking is his notion of the past, present and future of machinery. It is convincingly demonstrated that Owen was more of a political economist than a moral economist.

Having rehabilitated Owen in this respect, the author turns to a re-examination of the work of some of his contemporaries and followers. He is particularly good on George Mudie and the quest for economic socialism. This is one of the most original chapters in the book. Claeys has discovered writings by Mudie in neglected journals some of which are not listed in *The Warwick Guide to British Labour Periodicals, 1790-1970*. Mudie’s ideas have been largely ignored because most of the periodicals to which he contributed have been lost until very recently. Rejecting the notion of a self-equilibrating tendency inherent within the market, Mudie insisted upon the need for “the operations of a great nation (to proceed upon some well-devised plan [ . . . ]”. It is evident that Mudie also broke much more clearly than Owen did from the concept of *les industriels*. Anticipating Gray at this point as well as at others he