

## CONFIRMING VOICES

LAST June a reader noticed our remarks about a subscriber who couldn't find a store which stocked the book a MANAS reviewer thought well of. The reader reported that he had no trouble getting the book. He didn't try a book store but sent his order to a "book broker" in New York. He received the book in two or three weeks, and at a substantial discount. Good enough. He got the book.

How do the book brokers manage? Our reader sent a memo which explains: "Book brokers can give big discounts because they cut overhead to the bone (their entire staff may be just 2 or 3 people) . . . and carry little if any inventory (thus they have virtually no capital tied up and no unsold books)." And they wait until your order comes in with the money before they order the book from the publisher.

Well, the idea is to get the book, and that may be the best (sometimes the only) way to get it, these days. But this sort of distribution means an end to the old fashioned friendly book store in the neighborhood, or somewhere within reach. Maybe such stores are mostly gone anyway. The ones that used to line sixth street in Los Angeles are certainly gone. The big, successful stores seem able to stock only best-sellers and expensive coffee table volumes that rich people buy. Now and then you can find a great paperback store (like Kepler's in Menlo Park, Calif.) that carries practically everything, or tries to, but generally speaking there are just too many books for any bookseller to stock them all. He *has* to take orders, especially for books that aren't expected to sell well, since he must pay rent, month after month, for the books in his store that don't sell. He can't afford much of this.

There are parallels. Dozens of essays have been written about the decline and disappearance

of the family farm. You see the figures almost every week, if you read the organic and land reform press. Then there's the small corner grocery store, not there any more in most cities and towns. So you go to one of those enormous markets with ninety competitive products for every gastronomic need, and if you are not a frequent food buyer you close your eyes and reach, feeling like a victim from the moment you enter the place.

There is the matter of "ethics" in all such issues and problems. We recall a parallel in the jewelry business—our example goes back forty or fifty years but it's still good. Once upon a time there was a little neighborhood jeweler in a friendly town—or even a big town—who sold watches and repaired them, and who could tell the value of diamonds and understood about other precious stones. His customers came to his store because they knew him, liked him, and trusted him. He would tell them which company, in his opinion, made a good or the best watch, and they would buy as he counseled.

But manufacturers of fine watches have problems, too. The sales managers have to meet quotas. The accountants explain that the plant needs to be bigger to make more watches faster to keep the price competitive. And the sales department will have to sell more watches to keep everything going. Sales must go up every year or *the whole thing will fall apart!* And it's true, the way they tell it.

What does the sales manager do? He goes downtown to see R. H. Macy or Bernard Gimbel and says, "How would you like to have a lot of fine watches at a really reduced price? We want to move our product." And the jewelry buyer says: "How *much* reduction?" So, a few weeks later the papers have a half-page ad—fine watches

galore, at big discount prices. And they sell and sell.

The little jeweler sees the ad. Sitting in his empty store, he thinks about how his customers are being lost to the department store methods, or mail-order houses (like book brokers), and one day he just closes up and buys a little chicken farm, which, he often finds, is no way to make a living either.

So now there aren't any little jewelers—no more little book stores, little farms, little printers, little *anythings*, and prices have gone much higher than any of them used to charge. There aren't even any little towns any more—just Sloburbia, as Joseph Wood Krutch once described the stretch of highway reaching from Los Angeles to San Francisco.

So what should people do? Tell Congress to go home and try a little honest farming? They certainly can't legislate justice! No one can. Which is to say that the anarchists have fifty-one per cent of the truth, and all that spoils the anarchist dream is the other forty-nine.

There are a few rules that have to be self-adopted which might make things work more decently. Gandhi once said that the thing to do is buy what you need from local people. Even if it costs more, *pay it!* He gave the example of a barber. Suppose he doesn't know how to cut hair very well. In that case, Gandhi said, take up a collection and send him to barber school—make your home town good enough for you, since, one way or another, this has to be done. That is, if you want to have a town. Or if the small town fashions don't suit, make your own clothes. If you don't know how, learn. Worse things than wearing odd-looking apparel can happen to people. And what, after all, could be less attractive to the eye than the results of the blue denim rebellion? Does anyone really think that levis are pleasant to look at everywhere you turn? It's a protest fashion, they say. We are a nation of independent thinkers.

Ironically, *Elements* for June had an article called "Indigo Frenzy" which tells about the indigo dye used in "true denim," which everybody has to wear, these days, or look like a conformist. While the synthetic indigo developed for food coloring is said to be "safe" in the small quantities required, the fabric dye—now produced and used at the rate of 40 million pounds a year—contains "a known bladder carcinogen," according to a toxicologist of the Occupational & Health Administration. This researcher is quoted in *Elements*:

"And the principal hazard of indigo would be in the workplace," adds the toxicologist, "although the fact that it bleeds when laundered could also involve some environmental effects. But we really don't know what the hazards are, because those types of tests have not been adequately done. In fact, there are a number of such chemicals used in the workplace that haven't been properly checked out."

While the textile union seems satisfied that the fabric dye is not harmful, no one, the *Elements* writer says, "is willing to speculate on the relationship between the known toxicity of large doses of the indigo food dye and the possible toxicity of heavy occupational exposure to the indigo textile dye." Hmmm. This might be a good time to revive the linsey-woolsey garb worn by the American colonials and first self-sufficient citizens of the United States. If we have to have proletarian fashions, why not go back to wearing undyed homespun instead of factory-bleached denim? Hand-loomed clothing would put a lot of people back to work. If we had fewer cars, more bicycles, more home industry, smaller towns, and a lot of family gardens, we could probably afford one good suit of hand-loomed fabric.

The bleached blue denim rebellion is really ridiculous. The next step will be to get Ford and General Motors to pre-dent the fenders of cars so that we can all look rural and old-timey out on the road. They'll do it, of course. They'll do anything the "market" requires, so long as they can find a way to make things look "primitive" with mass production methods. The method is the thing.

Want solar heating? We'll need the entire Southwestern desert to set up big enough installations to make it really practical. Nothing small-scale or independent will do.

What really needs to happen has absolutely nothing to do with bigness and large-scale programs. It is easy to state in principle. Good advice crops up everywhere. Here, for example, is a passage (quoted in a *Nation* review) from Garry Wills' introduction to Lillian Hellman's *Scoundrel Time*, about the intimidation of an entire nation by Senator Joseph McCarthy. The reviewer points out that Miss Hellman's friend, Dashiell Hammett, was professionally ruined by anti-Communist investigators in Washington, then gives this passage from Wills:

Cold War liberals were ideologues, and ideologues meet each other on the same ground, if only to do battle there. Radicals of the Hellman and Hammett sort cannot even find that meeting place. The popular image of the radical is the wild and irresponsible "bomb thrower." But most radicals I have met were extraordinarily civil. They oppose the general degradation, not with a programmatic solution, but with a personal code that makes pride possible in a shameful social order. They do not wish to be implicated in responsibility for society's crimes, which means that they must take a special kind of responsibility for their own acts.

Ideology is, by contrast, an *escape* from personal responsibility. Someone like Whittaker Chambers wanted to be told what to do, he wanted to be History's slave. Ideologues want to be certified by others as respectable—if not by the Committee or the Party, then by the ADA. They want their hates to be dictated by the national program. The radical thinks of virtuous people, while the ideologue thinks of orthodoxy. The radical hates vicious and harmful people while the ideologue hates heretical ideas, no matter how "nice" the possessors of those ideas may be. The radical tries to uphold a private kind of honor in a rotten world. . . .

The various levels at which such solutions are found and worked on are too numerous to catalog in any detail. For example, in an article in the *Summer CoEvolution Quarterly* Wendell Berry compares the problems of conventional waste

disposal (soil depletion and pollution) with what he does on his farm in Port Royal, Kentucky:

By contrast, we have here on our farm an outdoor toilet with a concrete-block chamber underneath, in which, by the addition of sawdust and some effort and care, we compost the excrement of our household and make it fit to return to the soil. We do not do this, the Lord knows, because we want to be wealthy, powerful, and comfortable, but because we want to be healthy, and we know that we cannot be healthy if our soil is unhealthy. It is an ecological or organic solution. It was not prescribed to us by technology or society, but by a need more comprehensive than both. It is less dependent upon a device than upon an understanding and a discipline. And it does not cause a ramifying series of problems and solutions madly leapfrogging over the top of each other. It is a solution that causes a ramifying series of solutions. It withholds contaminants from the water, it enriches the ground, it calls for forethought, moral responsibility, physical exertion—and from those solutions other solutions follow. It begins a process of healing, and healing does not cause a problem; it only incidentally causes a "cure." Healing can properly end only when we are whole, when health joins us to the universe. The whole is a great concordance of solutions.

Wendell Berry is saying something very specific which we are all able to follow, and he is also suggesting something non-specific but very basic in his almost passing reference to understanding and discipline. He is suggesting that there is a level of awareness, a mode of conceiving relationships, an attitude toward ourselves, others, and the world around us, in which life turns into a process of mutually beneficial collaboration, no longer a series of tough encounters with temporary victories and long-term defeats. He is saying, in another way, what Ivan Illich said a few years ago in his characteristic fashion:

Any social structure must disintegrate beyond some level of energy use. Beyond this critical level, education for bureaucracy must take the place of initiative within law. . . . technocracy must prevail when mechanical power exceeds metabolic energy by a certain ratio.

He is saying what E. F. Schumacher affirmed in his disquisition on the idea of "enough." When people have enough to live simply, decently—call it modest excellence—if they then attempt to get more than they need, eat more than is healthy for them, and indulge the tendency to conspicuous waste to prove their "achievement" or "success," things will begin to go bad for them, and they will go from bad to worse.

What are the underlying principles which can protect people from succumbing to this process? They are in all the high religions, all the great philosophies. Identifying and using them is the problem. In our time, nature is doing her best to make one practical version of them self-evident. We have nature scripture-readers aplenty to tell us what she is saying in her most unambiguous voice.

There are other voices, too. Nature speaks through human beings. In an appendix to *The Root Is Man* (Cunningham Press), Dwight Macdonald included an essay by Andrea Caffi, translated by Nicola Chiaromonte, which has this passage:

As long as today's problems are stated in term of "mass politics" and "mass organization," it is clear that only States and mass parties can deal with them. But, if the solutions that can be offered by existing States and parties are acknowledged to be either futile or wicked, or both, then we must look not only for different "solutions" but especially for a different way of stating the problems themselves.

To begin with, it is evident that it doesn't make any sense to worry about "problems" as long as one has the feeling that one cannot "get to the bottom" of anything, and that it is imperative to go on living, to cultivate one's garden, to ingest the daily meal, and to pay one's debts (as George Eliot put it).

There are men and women. As units in a "mass," they submit to uniform rules of housing, eating, and dressing; go to the factory or the movies; vote for a party or acclaim a Leader. Finally, it is as "masses" that they let themselves be enlisted, drilled, and led to the slaughter for the Fatherland, for democracy, or for civilization. Yet, each one of them has been a child. Each one has made, *by himself and for himself*, the discovery of the world and of his own consciousness. Each one, as an adolescent, has

experienced "unique" moments of love, friendship, admiration, joy of living or unmotivated sadness. Even in the greyest existences there are traces of aspiration to a life less debased, to a real communion with one's neighbors. One can hardly imagine a human life without some moments of carefree enjoyment and enthusiasm, or without dreams.

The "mass," however, wouldn't be so ghastly a phenomenon if it didn't also cause the ruthless recourse to egoism; total vulgarity, ferocious and self-satisfied, the "extreme situations" of physical and moral degradation from which there is no way out; the violent escape from the stifling anonymity of mass life into the frenzied attempts to emerge from the crowd, to dominate, to inflict suffering on others, and on oneself.

All this knocks down any faith in a pre-established "human progress," but also shows that the apparent compactness and smooth working, of "mass existence" hides a frightful precariousness of human situations, that to build on the masses is tantamount to building on quicksand. . . .

This was written more than twenty-five years ago, and there have been only confirming events since. What did Caffi advocate?

Rather than solidarity, we should promote friendship among the individuals who struggle to emerge from the "mass." Those friendships should then be strengthened through some constructive enterprise carried out in common. The aim remains the rebirth of true "popular" communities. . . . The only escape open to us is a bold and uncompromising recourse to reason (which, among other things, would mercilessly ridicule any form of authoritarianism, theocracy, "ideocracy," or what Sartre calls *l'espiit de serieux*) and to a sociability so refined, so vigilant, and so tolerant, as to give the individual, together with a sense of common purpose and solidarity, a feeling of full personal independence.

Only through the reawakening and cultivation of such qualities can we slowly build a "civilization of the people" in opposition to the "civilization" of the masses, where everything tends to be measured in terms of sheer utilitarianism, stability is again and again sought at the lowest possible level, and a coarse pragmatism is supposed to be the measure of all truth and all justice.

We have space for one more confirming voice, in this case Jonathan Kozol, who writes in

*Fellowship* for June/July. A quotation from Dorothy Day is his text: "The problem is too large on the one hand so that wherever I speak, people say the Government, the State, has to step in. . . . On the other hand, the solution is too simple, too small, so people end with a sense of futility: What is the use?" Illustrating this text, Kozol says:

A letter published in *The New York Times*, written by a high official of Queens County Medical Association, offers an example of this process: "Much has been said concerning lack of access to medical care by people living in . . . (the) ghettos. . . ." This is, the doctor writes, quite incorrect: "Medical services are available to all." Having thus denied the initial charge, he then reruns the subject for a second time, though with an argument that seems to contradict the first:

"The problem," he says, is not to be solved by "forcing physicians" to go into black and Spanish neighborhoods. The solution, instead, "is the elimination of (the) slums." In the face of the recorded figures for the deaths of children in the poorest hospitals in New York, he makes this charge: as far as preventable deaths of infants are concerned the majority of cases are not the result of the malfunction of the medical profession. They are, he says, the consequences of "behavior habits and the recklessness of individuals."

The doctor's letter to the *Times* does not, of course, propose that—prior to the longed-for day of the "elimination" of the slums (a day which has not come yet within the course of 700 years in New York, London, Paris, Bogota, Berlin, or elsewhere)—it would make one immediate difference in the lives of several thousand real and perishable human beings if *he* were to put in just two nights each week working in a well-staffed clinic at a storefront in East Harlem. He does not propose that 10 or 20 of his colleagues, neighbors, friends might totally support a small realistic action of this kind on an intensive basis every night. Instead, he offers the millennial idea: the abolition of the slums.

This is no academic proposal for Jonathan Kozol. He has been doing this kind of thing himself for the past five or more years. Somehow or other, it seems that more and more people are getting things in focus in the right way, these days. We have tried to give a sample or two. Meanwhile, it will continue to be a problem, now

and then, to get a good book when you want and are able to buy it.

## *REVIEW*

### WHERE DOES INTELLIGENCE COME FROM?

THE IQ CONTROVERSY (Pantheon paperback, 1976, \$6.95 ), edited by N. J. Block and Gerald Dworkin, has 450 pages on a subject about which little is known but much is said. The question of whether or not "intelligence" is inherited may be a scientific issue, but whatever answers are attempted have moral consequences, so that there seems little possibility of calm discussion. The tough-minded educational psychologists at whom the book seems mostly aimed say it is the business of science to find out facts, and that the more we know about human beings and the way their "intelligence" is acquired, the better we'll be able to cope with educational issues and problems of social justice. The critics say that the question of what is inherited and how it may be isolated from cultural and environmental factors is so obscure that we can have no worthwhile certainty about the inheritance of intelligence at present, and perhaps never. They also say that publication of dubious and unreliable evidence seeming to indicate the superiority of one racial group over another is a disservice to society and a misapplication of science. Even if the evidence is good, it is irrelevant, they say, to education, and whether true or false it is sure to be exploited by racist partisans.

The chief targets of the criticism in this book are Arthur R. Jensen, professor of educational psychology at the University of California in Berkeley, and Richard J. Herrnstein, professor of psychology at Harvard. At issue are the claims, suggestions, and implications made by Prof. Jensen in his article in the Winter 1968 *Harvard Educational Review*, and the contentions by Prof. Herrnstein in an article in the *Atlantic* for September, 1971. Since these disturbing contributions to the IQ controversy are so well known, and have been so widely discussed, they are not reprinted in the book by Block and Dworkin. Jensen argues that the factor of

heredity in intelligence has been neglected, that it may be high, and he finds that some racial groups may be better endowed intellectually than others. This latter claim involves the separation of intelligence into two levels, the first representing skills acquired through memory or imitation, the second involving use and manipulation of concepts and the power of inventive generalization. If some racial groups do better at the first level than at the second, then, Jensen argues, public education ought to take this reality into account. For people predominantly at one level, training at that level may be more valuable than futile emphasis on the other.

Prof. Herrnstein summarizes his contention:

Concisely stated, it is that, (1) since people inherit their mental capacities (as indexed, for example, in intelligence tests) to some extent, and (2) since success in our society calls for those mental capacities, therefore, (3), it follows that success in our society reflects inherited differences between people.

It goes without saying that the ideas and proposals of these writers are challenged at every point and argued at length. We shall make no attempt to condense the arguments, or even to outline them, but simply report that anyone who takes seriously Professors Jensen and Herrnstein ought to read this book. There are, however, other reasons for reading it. One gets a working perspective on both the limitations and possibilities of the application of science to human beings and their affairs. The editors make this plain in their introduction:

The problems dealt with in these readings are so rich in complexity and interest that it would theoretically be possible to build an education around them. In crudest summary form, the following questions would arise: What is the nature of science? What is measurement? What is an explanation? What are theory, hypothesis, inference? What is an experiment? How do we distinguish causes from correlations? What is the role of mathematics in science? What do we know about human nature? What features of a person can be changed? What are intelligence, ability, learning, motivation? How can we best educate people? How should we take into account differences between people in organizing a

society? How have the findings of the sciences been used in the past to affect policy? What is the relationship of expertise to politics? What are the ethics of research, of publishing, of journalism? The great diversity in these issues is reflected in the disciplines of our contributors—psychology, journalism, genetics, astronomy, linguistics, economics, history, education, sociology, and philosophy.

Obviously, the question of the inheritability of intelligence, as people conceive and argue it, is both a factual and a moral issue. This book shows that the factual and the moral are inextricably mixed in practice, and that there is practically no possibility of separating them in the foreseeable future. But some people believe that more clarity would be achieved by trying to separate them. The idea is that if we could mark for identification what are the true *facts* of life—what is indeed inheritable, and what is a matter of environmental modification or, say, *teaching*—then we could combine the moral or normative side of human decision wisely with the way things immutably are. This is a plausible contention, but it might be misleading. Even the facts of life may have some sort of moral lining of which we are unaware. There are no facts which are not idea-facts, as Whitehead pointed out years ago. Perceptions are turned into "facts" only by becoming elements in human constructs.

To avoid any easy branding of Prof. Jensen as a social scientist who is willing to arm prejudiced people with supposed "facts" concerning the intellectual inferiority of a racial group, we quote his reply to a question during a seminar at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions:

Q: As you no doubt know, white racists have for years tried to justify their racism on the ground that they are inherently superior to blacks. What effect will your study have on their racist claims?

JENSEN Racists usually don't even recognize the overlap between racial groups. If there were no overlap, then one could judge persons by their group membership. But when fifteen per cent of the Negroes are superior on I.Q. tests to fifty per cent of the whites, then you simply have to treat people on the basis of their individual merit. It is just because

they are racists, persons who would deny political and economic rights to certain groups, that I think we must have the strongest possible laws to stop them. We need laws that will enforce to the maximum the treatment of individuals as individuals—in jobs, in housing, in education. Everyone cannot go to the same kind of college or graduate school. There have to be selection procedures. But every effort must be made to make sure that the selection is based only on relevant criteria, not on such things as race, skin color, social class, or national origin. I am in favor of the strongest kind of enforcement of laws to ensure fair employment and all other institutionalized forms of opportunity in our society. As long as we take that stand, we are on fairly safe ground. (*Center Magazine*, June, 1969.)

What do the critics say about Prof. Jensen's thesis? They say that the evidence for the inheritance of intelligence is vague, often contradictory, and in any event too unreliable to become the basis of educational plans; that, furthermore, there are good reasons for maintaining that even if there were measurable hereditary factors in intelligence they would have little or no bearing on conscientious teaching. They cast doubt on the idea of the IQ as a measure of actual intelligence, pointing out that tests measure only what they test for, not some substantial but probably indefinable reality which we call intelligence. They say, finally, that despite Prof. Jensen's insistence on treating individuals as individuals, regardless of racial or cultural origins, what he says is bound to be misused by racists.

What else might be said? Two things occur. One is the question of fact, as presented by Prof. Jensen. We did not notice anywhere in *The IQ Controversy* attention to what seemed his key evidence for claiming that intelligence is indeed transmitted from parents to offspring. In his paper, which we briefly reviewed in *MANAS* for July 2, 1969, he cites the finding of psychologists that the brightest, keenest rats who escape most easily from mazes have bright, keen rats for their children. This seems a great distance from human beings to go for evidence that human intelligence is biologically transmitted—a pathetically slender

sort of fact on which to base such unpopular claims.

Another conclusion we reached after reading Prof. Jensen's more than 100 pages in the *Harvard Educational Review* is that the anomalous results of most of the serious attempts to separate nature from nurture—heredity from environment—in the formation of intellectual capacities suggest that there may be a missing factor not taken into consideration at all. A distinguished historian, Philip Ainsworth Means, reached this conclusion. He named the missing element the *x*-factor, remarking—

If *x* be not the most conspicuous factor in the matter, it is certainly the most important, the most fate-laden. When, through a tardily completed understanding of the significance of life, we achieve mastery over *x*, then, and not until then, shall we cease to be a race of biped ants and, consummating our age-old desire, join the immortal gods.

Historians, we suppose, are free to exercise common sense, although a *psychologist* who said anything like that would be chased out of town. Meanwhile, the need for some such admission is obvious from the pages of *IQ Controversy*. The focus of every writer in the book, no matter how skilled or excellent, is on what teachers, social environment, affluence, poverty, whatever, do *to* or *for* the young; they say nothing about what the young may do for themselves. No mention of the *x* factor. They don't discuss how people overcome circumstances, whether of heredity or environment. The mystery of egoity—in short, of high resolve, or self-generated determination—is not considered at all. It is, perhaps, regarded as irrelevant, or might be claimed to cancel out, like any other factor no one knows anything about. But Prof. Means had the grace to mention it, calling it *x*. The point is that not mentioning it in a book regarded as important for educators to read is quite possibly a crucial omission.

## COMMENTARY

### THE MYTH OF EMPIRICISM

VERY few critics give attention to the neglect by modern writers of the *x* factor referred to in this week's Review. There are many elaborate discussions of the "nature of man," these days, but they usually omit precisely the elements which might supply some actual illumination on the problems of character and the formation of human intelligence. As Lévi-Strauss remarked in *The Savage Mind*, the "scientific *praxis*, among ourselves, has emptied notions of birth and death of everything not corresponding to mere physiological processes and rendered them unsuitable to convey other meanings."

This habit can be traced back to Aristotle and his focus on sense experience. Even those who declare the intention of freeing the modern mind from Aristotelian confinements seem to support his claim that all our knowledge must come to us through the senses. The intuitions which arrive from other sources, however ennobling, are dealt with as having mere "poetic" value, by comparison with the deliveries of the empirical sciences.

It has remained for a handful of perceptive scholars to point out that the empirical approach has been a "metaphysical" system in disguise from the very first, and has operated to shut out from consideration large areas of human experience. Years ago, Frederick Lange observed in his *History of Materialism* that Aristotle's insistence on "facts," and on "inductive mounting from facts to principles, has remained a mere theory, scarcely anywhere put into practice by Aristotle himself." What he did was rather to "adduce a few isolated facts, and immediately spring from these to the most universal principles, to which he thenceforward dogmatically adheres in purely deductive treatment."

Almost a century later, in an essay, "Problems of Empiricism" (in *Beyond the Edge of Certainty*, Colodny, Prentice-Hall, 1905), Paul Feyerabend showed that the metaphysical system of

empiricism, once established, eliminates attention to alternatives which do not fit in with empirical doctrine. And this "refusal to consider them," he says, "*will result in the elimination of potentially refuting facts.*" When this happens, he goes on to say, the empirical theory becomes "almost indistinguishable from a myth. . . . It penetrates the most common idiom, infects all modes of thinking and many decisions that mean a great deal in human life."

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves STUDENT PUBLISHING

IF the application of some (educational) principle brings a discovery of irresistible importance, and you make that principle into a searchlight for looking around, you begin to see a great many things that need either encouragement or interruption. Then, if you have a little money, enough determination, and a little skill, you may start publishing a magazine. This is quite obviously what happened to the young men and women who organized the Institute for Local Self-Reliance in Washington, D.C. The members of this group are showing their friends and the people next-door in a run-down urban neighborhood how to establish roof-top vegetable gardens and basement sprouts plantations, how to compost the organic refuse that local produce stores are glad to give away, how to start fish farms, and various other ways of becoming a little more independent than they were before. Their magazine, naturally, is called *Self-Reliance*. It comes out every two months and costs \$6.00 a year. (Address: 1717 18th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.) Mostly it tells about the kinds of self-reliance now emerging or traditionally practiced around the country. (It is visually attractive, well edited, and professionally produced.) In the first issue there were these "news items":

The city council and city manager of a small city in Texas whose citizens are tired of their dependence upon an outside utility company for electricity, decide to carefully examine the alternative of a solar-powered electric system, owned and operated by the community.

The citizens of the company mining town of David, Kentucky, decided to buy their independence and now collectively own their land, their buildings, the whole town.

The workers in an asbestos mine in Vermont, stunned by the announced intention of the employer to close down the plant rather than to install equipment to clean up the air in the mine, join

together to buy the company. They install the necessary environmental equipment and realize record profits managing the mine themselves.

In fifty towns and cities around the country, neighborhoods are dealing with the problem of waste by establishing community-based recycling systems that are consistently more efficient than the massive, unwieldy city-wide systems with which they compete. [For a wonderful example of such local resourcefulness see Orville Schell's *The Town that Fought To Save Itself*, Pantheon paperback, 1976.]

In a philosophy class at one Pennsylvania college, students study Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay, "Self-Reliance." They proceed to buy, rehabilitate and sell a house, learning the principles of self-reliance while, at the same time, adding to the wealth of the community.

In one urban neighborhood, a community organization establishes a housing trust to own property cooperatively with the residents. In another city, several communities work together to identify their residents' skills and needs and to establish a productive enterprise which would utilize those skills to meet specific needs.

We wouldn't know anything about these delighting and encouraging developments if a few people hadn't made themselves a focus of interest which attracts and then spreads such information.

How are such people themselves "developed"? Mostly, they just "happen," but another basic (educational) principle is that these developments can be helped along by teachers with imagination and a propensity for a little (or a lot of) risk-taking. This, at any rate, is what Eliot Wigginton did a few years ago when he and the members of a high-school class started the magazine, *Foxfire*, in Rabun Gap, Georgia. We've told this story before, but it's worth repeating in the brief version of a *Wall Street Journal* writer:

*Foxfire* was founded when Mr. Wigginton, fresh out of Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., was teaching English at the high school here [in Rabun Gap]—or trying to. It became clear that he wasn't getting through to his students when one of them, having been moved to the front of the class for misbehaving, tried to set fire to Mr. Wigginton's lectern. So he gave up trying to drum grammar and

literature into the class and asked if they would rather put out a magazine about the mountains.

Well, it worked. It worked so well that one of the problems, now, is how to cope with devastating success. From the reports we see now and then, they are coping pretty well. Sales of the best-seller anthologies (Doubleday) of material published in the issues of *Foxfire* during the past few years sometimes bring a semi-annual royalty check for as much as \$140,000, and Wigginton is using the money to construct "an oldtime village on a mountain-side."

The youngsters are scouring the mountains for old log structures that Foxfire is buying and reassembling on the rugged site. So far, the village has 21 buildings, ranging from a grist mill to a church schoolhouse. The goal is to build a functioning town, with the community facilities available to nearby residents but not to tourists.

It should be said that *Foxfire* already has dozens of (more or less successful) imitators in schools around the country. Wigginton and his students are willing to go almost anywhere to help teachers who are seriously interested in doing locally what he did in Georgia. Meanwhile, the oldtimers in Rabun Gap are both puzzled and impressed by what a Yankee teacher has accomplished with their youngsters. (He isn't really a Yankee; he was born in West Virginia and grew up in Athens, Gal, but since he went to college in New York state that makes him a Yankee by conversion or infection, for some Rabun Gappers.) The *Wall Street Journal* story continues:

Although some residents have criticized Foxfire for not investing in something like a community center, Mr. Wigginton says the restoration project will have meeting areas for the public. In fact, he adds, if Foxfire ever folds, the whole restored village will be given to the county.

Mr. Wigginton suggests that Foxfire already is benefiting the area by being one of its larger employers. Foxfire's payroll this summer [1975] is \$32,000 for 23 workers, including several high school youngsters making \$100 a week on Foxfire staff, at the restoration site, or working on booklets on such

topics as the roles of mountain women or mountain preachers.

Foxfire also hopes to help organize woodworking training in the public school and then start a business at the village making reproductions of furniture built with old lumber and wood pegs.

The project is also creating jobs for former students, and experience in journalism is opening up areas of motivation for youngsters who never thought of going on to higher education, but are now determined to get training for work they think is important to do.

This information and much more about Foxfire is in the Summer 1975 issue of *Exchange*, a bulletin issued by IDEAS, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. *Exchange* describes Wigginton's new book, *Moments* (\$3.95), in which he tells how the Foxfire Learning Concept works. Also in *Exchange* are listed examples of similar magazines started by students in other states, with help and counsel from Wigginton and his friends. We counted 28 covers of student-edited folk-craft magazines pictured in *Exchange*, with notes on their contents.

There is this quotation from Wigginton's *Moments*:

At the very heart of Foxfire is the conviction that a student can learn about his community and about humanity only outside the classroom. In the classroom he can, with the help of his teachers and peers, examine, analyze, even celebrate what he's discovered, . . . but he must have the world outside the classroom as the heart and soul of what he learns.

Wigginton seems to have found a way to put self-reliance on a production basis.

## *FRONTIERS*

### A Few Encouraging Signs

FOR some years past, eminent nutritionists have been declaring that the refining and processing of foods consumed by the American people is a serious threat to their health. This warning is now spelled out in detail in a handy paperback (Ballantine, \$1.95), *The Save Your Life Diet*, by David Reuben. Inspection of this book is likely to justify its apparently sensational title for most readers, and the dietary suggestions will be welcomed by cooks and menu-planners. Dr. Reuben provides persuasive evidence for his contentions. For example, first he points out that the coronary heart disease responsible for a third of all deaths in the United States "is virtually *unknown* in rural Africa," then he contrasts the American diet with what rural Africans eat.

Another useful discussion of food is Robert Rodale's article, "Rice—the Underrated Health Food," in *Prevention* for June. Remarking that in some ways Asians are healthier than Americans, although in other ways not, Mr. Rodale points out that—

For over two billion people, the main course of every meal every day is the same—rice. Most Oriental people eat about a pound of rice a day, which cooks up into three quite large bowls. With that rice they eat some cooked vegetables, pickled cabbage or other vegetables, perhaps a few small pieces of meat or some bean curd, and quite often fish. But those other foods are secondary to the rice, which is actually the main course of every meal.

Mr. Rodale is convinced that rice is a fine weight-reducing diet—a low-calorie food that satisfies hunger. While there are some warnings to be observed, he believes that rice is kind to the stomach, easy to digest, and that when using rice as a reducing food the only problem is learning how to eat *enough* of it! Besides being tasty, satisfying, and inexpensive, rice, the *Prevention* editor says, "is also 'ecological,' because it is a grain that we eat directly, instead of feeding it to

animals." Only a small portion of the food value of grain fed to animals is returned to us in meat.

The bean curd referred to above is known as tofu, the Japanese name for a milky white curd made from soybeans. Last year the Autumn Press issued *The Book of Tofu*, a large paperback containing an astonishing amount of information on how to make tofu and endless ways to use it in preparing food, along with impressive figures on its high protein content and nutritional value. This soybean encyclopedia also gives a large number of recipes for cooking soybeans, a choice selection of which appears in *Mother Earth News* for May.

Dietary reform for Americans has been on the way for at least a generation, and today countless housewives are applying for the benefit of their families the rapidly spreading knowledge of nutrition. The influence of these ideas is even reaching upward through the bureaucracy to affect the lives of politicians, since, according to a press report last spring, the Health Director of California has assigned a nutritionist to modify the diet of Governor Brown. The Governor and his aides, the Health Director said, "were killing themselves by the way they were eating." So are a lot of other Americans, but little by little the word is getting around, and the new education in food values may radically alter the eating habits of most Americans before the end of the century. Even if common sense fails, the shortage of fossil fuel may bring massive reforms in agriculture, with more people having to raise their own food. A collaboration between intelligence and necessity may work wonders for the future health of the country.

Two members of the Urban Environmental Institute in Allendale, Michigan, wrote to *Science* for June 25 to defend the American people against charges of indifference to conservation. An Institute survey of a large metropolitan population showed that persons who already believe that supplies of oil and natural gas will probably be exhausted during the next fifty years "respond with a variety of conservation adjustments,

including plans to buy a smaller car, drive less, turn down heat, use less electricity." The problem is rather that many are not convinced that there will be a supply problem. The writers, Phyllis Thompson and John McTavish, say:

When asked whom they trusted for energy information, 21 per cent said no one, and 20 per cent said they did not know whom to trust. Only 9 per cent believe the information put forth by the federal government. If we consider the contradictory statements to which they have been exposed, the public is responding in a realistic manner.

Given the internal consistency of behavior, changing the public's perception of the reality of the problem should have immediate effects on conservation behavior. The fault lies with the decision-makers, not with public unwillingness to make unnecessary changes. Current references to the public's unwillingness appear to be not unlike the "blaming the victim" syndrome in the literature on poverty.

The most reliable and comprehensible source of available facts on fossil fuel supply, and on alternative sources of energy, is likely to be Barry Commoner's *The Poverty of Power* (Knopf, \$10.00).

Last February three General Electric engineers quit their jobs designing nuclear reactors because, they said, the risks of nuclear power are too great. In an interview in *Not Man Apart* for May, the former associate editor of *Nuclear Industry* explained that he resigned because he found himself moving from being merely skeptical about nuclear power to "out and out opposition." He also said that the publishers of the magazine seemed unable to face the realities behind the scientific criticism of nuclear power and were ignoring the growing public concern. Some "whistle-blowing" of another sort came to the fore in the charge (*Science*, March 19) that the Environmental Protection Agency is lax in controlling the use of dangerous pesticides. *Science* reports:

The accusation has come from three young lawyers who have just resigned from the pesticides and toxic substances division of the EPA Office of

General Counsel. "It is clear from recent actions," the three said in testifying before a congressional committee, "that the agency intends to refrain from vigorous enforcement of available toxic substances controls and to retrench from the few legal precedents which it has set for evaluating cancer hazards posed by chemicals. . . ." Their criticism was broadly directed, touching on the implementation of the Clean Water Act of 1972 and the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 as well as the laws for the regulation of pesticides—but it is primarily with the latter that the attorneys have themselves been professionally involved.

The items here selected for report seem at least mildly encouraging.