VOLUME XXXV, NO. 3
JANUARY 20, 1982

ATTRACTIONS OF IDEOLOGY

THE sins of the ideologists are easily exposed. The passage of time is all that is required. The extent to which respected thinkers are misled by their "will to believe" is illustrated in a recent review in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* (Oct. 18, 1981) by Gilbert Comte, reprinted in translation from *Le Monde* The book which has his attention is *Les Infortunes de la Verite* (The Misfortunes of Truth) by Serge Quadruppani, in which the writer castigates nearly all the distinguished French writers who shaped public opinion during the period from 1925 to 1945. The reviewer summarizes the author's indictment of two "fellow travelers" who should have "known better."

> The way the Communists took the wrong road remains a tremendous mystery. How did courageous men, who had already freed themselves from the social and intellectual conformism of their age, come to connive, whether consciously or unconsciously, at a series of abominable "official" untruths? One fellow traveller was Romain Rolland, who, after rightly feeling disgusted at nationalist propaganda during the First World War, did his very best ten years later to hush up Panait Istrati's revelations about the Stalinist terror. His lying convoluted letter to the Romanian writer must stand as one of the all-time monuments to hypocrisy.
>
> While in Berlin Goebbels was burning books he considered pernicious, at least 50 percent of Parisian anti-fascist intellectuals placed on their private index works by Anton Ciliga, Leon Trotsky, Victor Serge and Boris Souvarine, which they knew to be "blasphemous." Twenty years later, Jean-Paul Sartre still saw the Soviet Union as a bastion of freedom. And when the wool was finally pulled from his eyes, he went on, at the time the Gang of Four were running riot, to hail Mao as the moraliser of Marxism.

The writer of this book, the reviewer notes, has "the enormous benefit of hindsight." Born after the war, he came to maturity "at a time when history had already made up its mind about Hitler and Stalin." Few indeed were the Frenchmen who, in the early 1920s, were aware of "the direction that history was likely to take." Even Leon Blum, respected socialist and later leader of the Popular Front, incautiously declared that he preferred the Nazi "spirit of change, renovation and revolution" to the feudal conservatism of Hitler's rivals for power. "If," he said, "I had to examine the problem purely on terms of historical evolution, I would say that I would be even more disappointed and depressed if Kurt von Schleicher, not Hitler, won." Later, in the United States, Anne Lindbergh made a similar error in her *Wave of the Future* (1940),

What is the fascination of ideology? It lies in the promises made. The longing of human beings for social and political arrangements which will do away with injustice and suffering is universal and the ideologist appeals to that longing with a theory and program which begins with the attainment of control. In the case of Communism, the program starts with violent revolution leading to a seizure of power, followed by the establishment of what Lenin called the "quasi-state" as a temporary institution ruled by the workers and necessary to suppress the bourgeoisie. Engels said that "so long as the proletariat needs the State, it needs it not in the interests of freedom, but in order to suppress its opponents; and when it becomes possible to speak of freedom, the State as such ceases to exist." During the period of transition to a classless society, the victorious revolutionary party, he said, "is necessarily compelled to maintain its rule by means of that fear with which its arms inspire in the reactionaries." To which Lenin added: Thus "the transition from Capitalism to Communism forms a whole historical epoch."

It is now evident that this epoch is unending, and that the fear used by the Communist Party to

maintain its power has been made the chief guardian of order. This is the "hindsight" that makes easy the writing of such books as *The Misfortunes of Truth.*

Ideology is not only a revolutionary doctrine. It serves the champions of various forms of the status quo, often with religious assumptions as justification. But here, again, fear is the instrument of control, which is commonly vindicated by a success which claims that God or the Moral Law or Natural Selection approves and supports its use. The threat of excommunication by the Roman Church together with the deadly penalties of the Holy Inquisition illustrate extreme uses of power in behalf of established authority. But the equally formidable invocation of Reason during the Reign of Terror in France at the end of the eighteenth century shows that the authority justifying the use of brute power may also be anti-clerical.

Today, in South Africa, we witness the struggle to survive of an ideology based on religious beliefs. Both the Boer and the English settlers there were from the beginning determined to keep South Africa a white man's country. In 1885 the South African Republic passed a law depriving the Indians of all political rights and the right to own fixed property. This law also gave the Government the right to designate where the "aboriginal races," including "Coolies" and Arabs and Malays, might live and work—in restricted "streets, wards, and locations." Threatened enforcement of this provision in 1899 made the life of Indian traders in the Transvaal a nightmare. Their businesses were at a standstill by reason of their expectation of having to move to a location where trade would be almost impossible. A delegation of Indians went to the home of Paul Kruger, president of the Transvaal Republic, hoping to gain consideration for their problems. Kruger, who had taken part in the Great Trek during the 1830s, had spent his life hunting and fighting and his literacy was almost entirely Biblical, with a preference for the Old Testament. When the Indian merchants came to his house, he did not admit them, but made them wait in the courtyard. Finally, he told them: "You are the descendants of Ishmael and therefore from your very birth bound to slave for the descendants of Esau. As descendants of Esau we cannot admit you to rights placing you on an equality with ourselves. You must rest content with what rights we grant you."

As a man, Paul Kruger was truly heroic, loved by his people, honored by other statesmen. Yet his ideology made him indifferent to the welfare of those not of his race and religion. The heritage of that ideology was reflected in the report last summer (*Los Angeles Times,* Aug. 20) of the visit of some Americans to a squatters' camp near Cape Town. There had been a police raid on the camp. "The police, with their batons, their guns and their dogs, had destroyed a cluster of squatters' tents fashioned from plastic sheets, scrap wood, and poles." One of the visitors said, "I have never seen such human degradation, despair and disillusionment." Another commented that the South African government's "dependence on all-pervasive police power . . . in some ways shocked us more than some of the poverty and economic deprivation which we witnessed."

Yet the history of hardly any modern country is without such ugly accompaniments, either past or present, as part of the price paid for its dominance and prosperity. The genocidal wars of Americans against the native Indians are well known, and the conquest of great areas of the New World by the Spanish was marked by a barbarism equalled only by the righteousness of the invaders. The Spanish claimed that they were bringing the light of religious truth to the heathen of North and South America. After a few hundred years the revised claim was that indigenous peoples would learn the ways of civilization from European conquerors, and at the turn of the century Americans were declaring that the Manifest Destiny of a chosen people sanctified

their forays in both the Caribbean and the Pacific regions.

The union of righteousness with power may be the worst possible combination for both individuals and nations—and ideology, in which the one becomes the justification of the other, the undeviating path to historical infamy, Yet what would humans be without the hope of being and doing right? It is the dogmatic doctrine that is at fault, the assumption that we *know* what is right, which displaces the hungering after the good. It would be something of an art to be able to distinguish between the motivations of a human being and the means he chooses, mistaken or otherwise, to reach fulfillment. A passage in Pyarelal's recent book, *Mahatma Gandhi—The Discovery of Satyagraha,* gives an account of Gandhi's effort to make this distinction in relation to Paul Kruger. Oom Paul, as he was affectionately known to his countrymen (Oom means "Uncle"), died at eighty in exile in Switzerland, in 1904.

Pyarelal says of him:

> The last of the old world Puritans, who had so desperately wanted to believe that the earth was flat, to the end he proclaimed that the troubles of his country were due not to anything wrong in its stand on the issue of racial inequality but to "some departure on the part of his fellow burghers from the stricter tenets of the Dopper sect," the most puritanical branch of the Dutch Reformed Church to which he belonged.
>
> "Doppers," he has explained in his Memoirs derives from the Dutch word *dop,* meaning damper or extinguisher that puts out candles, so that the Doppers "extinguish all new thoughts and are opposed to all progress." True to his fundamentalist faith, he sincerely believed that not only the Transvaal but the whole of South Africa was his people's birthright, their heritage in the days before the Great Trek, and that it was his destiny to lead them to the Promised Land.

When Kruger died, Gandhi wrote in his magazine, *Indian Opinion,* that the harm done to Indians by his legislation should not prevent them from recognizing his good qualities. Among the traits of his character deserving admiration, Gandhi said, were his "unexampled devotion to and intense love for those whom he was proud to call his people," and even his faith in the Old Testament. He acted steadfastly according to his lights, regardless of praise or blame. Then there was his "single-minded, though at times misguided" patriotism.

Gandhi's attitude toward race and cultural prejudice was illustrated by his response to the change wrought in a Johannesburg solicitor, J. L. P. Erasmus, who was a Boer Commandant taken prisoner by the British in the Boer War. Along with other prisoners he was transported to a detainment camp in India and later, in Amritsar, he received a copy of the *Bhagavad Gita* from a Brahmin friend. When he returned to South Africa he gave a series of lectures on the *Gita* before the Transvaal Philosophical Society, and Gandhi printed the lectures in *Indian Opinion* in 1904. According to Pyarelal:

> His approach to the subject was sympathetic and critical. Particularly impressive was his assessment of the achievements of India in the field of science, philosophy and literature, not to mention the high place and treatment accorded to women in ancient India, "which is the index to civilization." As a prisoner of war Mr. Erasmus had seen some of the worst aspects of Indian life and very little of its best. The Boers were credited with having a more than the usual measure of colour prejudice, which was rampant in South Africa. His lectures were, therefore, all the more valuable as showing "how a prominent member of that race can become sympathetic by the simple process of learning the truth." Gandhiji saw in it a happy augury for the future. It confirmed him in his view that anti-Indian prejudice in South Africa was based very largely, if not wholly, on misconception and could be remedied by dissemination of the truth about India and Indian life.

The Boer ideology began with the Old Testament story of the heroic search by the Hebrew people for the Promised Land, and one may find much to admire in the resulting pioneer spirit of the *Voortrekkers.* Laurens van der Post

writes of his Boer ancestors in *The Dark Eye in Africa:*

> They came out of Europe like the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt to search for their promised land. Unless you have lived the pattern with them as I have, you cannot know how deeply the Old Testament example was burnt into them and how unfailingly the experience thrust on them by Africa seemed to confirm their own affinity with the Biblical story. Even the first book written in Africaans argued that the Garden of Eden was in the heart of Africa. . . . This particular myth of my countrymen presupposed just such a journey as the Great Trek through a great unknown wilderness to a land of promise. It was a necessary and inevitable phase in the development of their myth. But if today this Old Testament myth seems to be perilously receding, it is because it is still confined in its Old Testament context and has never been transcended into New Testament teaching and example. . . . No living myth can be pinned down to one particular phase of its inherent development or to one consciously selected and favoured aspect of itself.
>
> . . . one time-honoured myth is that in which man is chosen and called upon to perform "a perilous journey." It is this myth, of course, which is so utterly transcended and accomplished in the New Testament. This is also the myth which rules in the hearts of my countrymen. Only since it has not yet been transcended, because the European in Africa will not carry it forward, and since by the laws of its own dynamic being it cannot stand still, inevitably it has begun to recede and an earlier pattern, a less conscious phase of it, begun to replace a more conscious one. . . .
>
> They are now called upon to free themselves from the Egypt of their worldly senses, from captivity in the Babylon of their outer histories, and to carry the myth forward into a realm where race and physical being have no automatic privileged meaning, but where kinship is determined by the deeper and abiding considerations of life for all those who whatever their colour or race, have answered the ancient challenge and have committed themselves to the "journey of becoming."

In concluding this part of his discussion van der Post says that "when you consider all that has happened in the human spirit since the angry days of Old Testament patriarchical unawareness, then you will realize how dangerously the 'being' of my countrymen has receded in Africa, how wide is the gap between them and the time that contains their lives, and how obscure and unimagined are the ways in which real help can be given from the outside."

It is easy, as we said at the beginning, to lay bare the prejudices, the mistakes, the deceptions, and the injustices of those suffering from historical and personal conceits. We have writers aplenty who do this very well. But few indeed are the writers who even raise the question, as van der Post has done here, of how "real help can be given from the outside." A first step, naturally, would be to trace back a prejudice or a misconception to the place where it began, in association with some past idea of virtue or doing good. Where, then, did the application of the idea go wrong? How should it have developed? Is there any possibility of pointing this out?

"Materialism" is much condemned today, and doubtless deserves it. Yet how did materialism arise, and what were the motives of the first aggressive materialists of the modern world? One need only turn to the works of La Mettrie and Baron d'Holbach, in the eighteenth century. In those days the materialists were the lovers of freedom of mind, which after all is a *spiritual* value! Materialism, in our time, no longer serves freedom but confinement—mainly, perhaps, because it is not a thought-out but a merely inherited assumption for most of its believers. The conviction of the modern materialist is acquired by hear-say, not earned through hard thinking. Modern materialism has now little more to support its claims than the old, wornout religion had which materialism has so largely replaced among the educated.

Yet the attackers of materialism, if they are to keep their own balance, need to take into account the disciplines that were practiced by most of those who gave their materialism the dignity of serious profession. They embraced materialism in the first place, as Bertrand Russell long ago pointed out, because they wanted a weapon against too easy and irrational belief. They were

men who embraced the materialistic dogma, he said, not because they loved dogma but because they "felt that nothing less definite would enable them to fight the dogmas they disliked."

And now, because of the materialistic dogma, we are saddled with habits of mind which remain long after the claim that matter is "everything" has been rejected. The negations of materialism are everywhere, while its positive aspects have been made into impossible rules for investigating spiritual things! Actually, the present-day critic of materialism tends to be either a flag-waver of "the spirit" or he finds himself obliged, as Lawrence Hyde remarked (in *The Learned Knife*), to point to considerations "which are of such a nature that in the ordinary course of events they should never have to be referred to at all in such a direct way." Hyde continues:

> By this I mean that he is driven back on appeal to principles which should properly be expressed only by the creation of works of art or in the conduct of a life. . . . The normal and most effective method of opposing error in this field is that of simply affirming the truth without entering into argument with its detractors; the attitude adopted by the spiritual Spinoza, who announced that "it was contrary to his habits to seek out the errors into which others had fallen."

The ideologists of materialism, in short, are endlessly verbal because they argue from an array of sense perceptions—at best scientific description—to extravagant promises about the future. The persuasions of materialism include the ideology of technology, which relies on power, just as the ideological social systems rely on external control.

The advocate of spiritual reality has no evidence in the form of sense perceptions to offer—the spirit does not manifest to sense—while the inferences on which his philosophy is based develop from unspoken assumptions he finds in his heart. Argument about such assumptions, as Hyde says, "entails an insistence on all sorts of points which should never have to be underscored in this harsh uncompromising manner." Spirit has its presence in attitude and act, and it is here that Gandhi sought and found his strength.

Gandhi listed no enemies to be destroyed and he was gentle in his criticism of even the partisan outlook which had brought so much pain to his people. And yet, his work was vastly corrective of the mistakes of every sort of ideology and every social system, whether already in power or proposed with revolutionary zeal. It was his practice to enter into the minds of his opponents, to understand them first of all, and then to appeal to what was right and good in what they believed.

On one point only was Gandhi adamant: He would not bow to violence nor would he use it in any form. The rules of life he practiced reduce the evil results of the mistakes and pretensions of ideology first, because of the rejection of power for oneself, and second, by the firm independence that will not submit to power. Gandhi's rules cannot put an end to illusions, for we all have them and will continue to have them, but for those armed by the psycho-moral weapons he proposed, the influence of illusions can only go so far. The range of mistakes is reduced, giving the good in humans far wider expression.

REVIEW
ENERGY POLICY IN CANADA

THE energy problems of Canada are fundamentally the same as those of the United States, although there are doubtless "local" variations. These problems, like most others requiring continuous public attention, are problems of habit and ways of thinking. A book we have received for review from the University of Toronto Press, *Energy and the Quality of Life* ($8.50), by four university professors—C. A. Hooker, R. MacDonald, R. Van Hulst, and Peter Victor—makes this clear. The issues in the energy shortage begin by being practical, then they are recognized as social, and ultimately profound ethical questions are raised.

The practical problems are briefly set:

> The last hundred years has seen several major shifts among energy forms. Starting from its initial and long-time dependence upon renewable forms of energy—wood and waterpower—Canada has steadily developed a much greater dependence upon non-renewable energy forms primarily oil, natural gas, and coal. In 1979 these fossil fuels provided 90 per cent of all energy needs. The most important physical factor in the Canadian energy predicament is the decline in oil and gas supplies and the difficulties associated with substituting either coal or electricity for them.

Canadians, moreover, are inefficient (like ourselves) in the use of non-renewable forms of energy. Only the U.S. uses more energy per capita than the Canadians, while the Swedes consume "less than two thirds the energy per capita to achieve essentially the same gross national product as Canada, though both countries have similar economies, climates, and styles of living."

Finally, the Canadians, according to these scholars, have only a "business-as-usual" approach to their energy policy, which is bound to leave Canada with "an even stronger dependence upon traditional non-renewable energy resources with no allowance for the longer term future." It "leans even more heavily toward the established dependence on foreign capital and towards ever more massive technical projects; reinforces the past trend towards less and less public participation in decision-making and towards a decreased sense of initiative and responsibility for social conditions; and leads towards maintenance of the present institutional arrangements with regard to energy policy and supply."

The book provides detailed analysis of the energy dilemma in Canada, describes the inadequacy of the policy response, and does the same in particular for Ontario. In a summing up for both Canada and Ontario, the authors predict:

> —There will be a growing dependence upon fossil fuels at a time of decreasing fossil fuel availability.
>
> —There will be a rapidly growing dependence upon another non-renewable energy resource, uranium.
>
> —The growth of highly centralized, capital-intensive technology in the hands of those with an existing economic interest in energy exploitation will be reinforced.
>
> —Energy policy will continue to be focused on increasing the supply of energy, largely through investment in nuclear energy, even though the returns on the investment constitute, at best, only a partial response to the province's energy dilemma.
>
> There will be a relatively small commitment to addressing the demand side of the energy equation through an effective energy conservation program.
>
> —The social implications of energy policy will remain relatively neglected. We anticipate reinforcement of the trend towards a uniform industrialized lifestyle with decreased citizen responsibility, initiative, and participation. In short, the province's policy is one of energy insecurity.

After review of the unattractive aspects of nuclear power—including notice that in the United States there is a virtual moratorium on the construction of nuclear plants—the authors ask why the Canadian decisionmakers are so determined to go further in this direction. The answers given are well put. First, the decision-makers are not yet convinced of the objections

and continue to believe that nuclear power is a panacea for future energy supply, since it is "clean, cheap, and inexhaustible." While anyone with more than third-grade mentality has reason to know that it has none of these qualities, nuclear power is still appealing to those who want an energy technology that lends itself to centralized control and to extension of existing planning and control procedures. A further reason is that this centralized control is valued by private capital looking for investment. Not one of these "advantages" is in the interest of the public at large.

The authors propose "an alternative energy strategy" which includes these major components:

> —a major commitment to increased efficiency in the use of energy, achieved through adopting a variety of conservation and innovative technological measures, with the objective of reducing the growth in demand and in the long term reducing the total consumption of energy in Canada;
>
> —the harnessing of renewable energy resources at a rate and on a scale sufficient to meet a significant proportion of the energy requirements over the next twenty-five years, and the majority of these requirements after some fifty years;
>
> —the implementation of "intermediate term" policies for remaining fossil-fuel reserves and existing nuclear generating capacity to the transition from a predominantly fossil-fueled economy to one largely based upon renewable energy resources.

The most valuable part of this book (for the general reader) is the chapter on "Institutional Structure and Energy Policy." Here we recognize the reason for the helplessness of the common citizen in the face of technical and social problems over which he has neither control nor access to control. The suppliers of energy, whether private or public, think of themselves as vendors of a commodity. As in conventional free-enterprise theory, these vendors are controlled by the market, which is claimed to be sufficient protection of their customers. An example given in this chapter is Ontario Hydro, "which has wide authority in relation to the generation, transmission, and distribution of electric power and indeed all forms of municipally managed energy throughout the province of Ontario." Its business is conceived as simply to generate and supply electrical power as demanded by the people. Such a company, the authors point out, like other industrial enterprises, will be interested solely in effective management for carrying out its task. It is a market institution, "centralized, technically oriented, and efficient in the production of its commodity but structurally unable to relate to the wider social ramifications of its activity."

The writers comment:

> Efficiency, growth, and control—the dominant goals of market-oriented institutions—lead to centralized, high-technology institutions with dominant experts and passive clients. Hydro is no exception, for the thrust and development is towards ever larger, ever more technically sophisticated, centralized production plants. Hydro has been actively phasing out small generation plants; there is no planned role for local generating plants based on biological energy or any involvement in solar technology—in contrast to US utilities which are active in making energy conservation advantages and solar technology available to their customers. Hydro expansion plans call instead for large nuclear power plants with all of their attendant consequences. And it is characteristic of Hydro that, in a publication on long-range power planning, solar energy is mentioned only in passing and then only to refer to electric solar cells. Instead, Hydro publication discusses the consumer virtues of electric heating, omitting consideration of wider social costs. In partial anticipation of arguments that other alternatives are socially preferable, Hydro claims the moral immunity of the market by invoking the sovereignty of consumers as "public demand" and "industrial need." What this amounts to in reality, however, is the acceptance of consumer preferences that Hydro itself has helped to create.

Again and again, public participation in decision which will have far-reaching effect on the general welfare is either nominal or non-existent. What emerges from the review of the decision-making functions in Ontario is "a picture of a welter of institutions, public and private, transitory and permanent, each in some interaction with

some of the others, a web without coherent policy-making focus. "

The authors conclude with their proposal of decentralized institutions for decision-making about energy in order to permit recognition of and response to the differing needs of, say, rural people and city dwellers. Some will have good reason to want solar and wind technologies, and they should have a voice. Decentralized institutions, the proposal points out, make possible face-to-face dialogue about needs, helping to generate informed public opinion. The writers add:

> Local, small-scale institutions can show more flexibility and immediacy in the resolution of conflict than massive centralized bureaucracies. There is more opportunity for informal compromises, goal adjustments, and individually tailored responses than in large, formal institutions having complex, formal, and usually adversarial decision procedures. . . . Decentralization allows simultaneous small-scale experimentation and learning without immediately facing large-scale consequences, thereby providing more continuity and long-term choice than centralization.

This seems a book which combines accurate technical analysis with impartial social review, using sober common sense.

COMMENTARY
SCIENCE FOR TOMORROW

HERE we would like to call particular attention to the strong rational appeal of Devendra Kumar's writing in *Science for Villages* (see page 6). His listing of the objectives of work in behalf of three quarters of India's population is precise and comprehensively complete. This is science for the benefit of the reader, and it is persuasive.

The scientifically-minded reader is likely to be impressed, not only by the care with which *Science for Villages* is edited, but also by Gandhi's foresight and sound understanding of the practical problems of the people of India. This is writing which generates the respect of the intelligent reader who, if he happens to be a Westerner, will be likely to renew his perception that India is not just a far-off and puzzling country with lots of problems, but a part of *our* world—what we call the "civilized" world—inhabited by people who, as Devendra Kumar says, have opportunity to demonstrate the value and promise of "an economy where harmony between Nature and Man is restored." To be still agrarian to the extent that India is agrarian eliminates a great many obstacles. This sort of balance has been largely lost in the United States, as Wendell Berry suggests (see "Children"). This week's Review shows the obstacles that confront intelligent Canadians. Both there and here so many wrong ways of doing things are securely established.

People like Kumar in India and John Jeavons, the Todds, and the Jacksons in the United States are introducing another kind of science, illustrating the *meaning* of scientific practice under the control of human reason and human values. Their work, as it becomes better known, will have increasing impact among people of intelligence who have for years felt cut off from the alien world of technological and economic enterprise. As Erich Kahler said in one of his books, preoccupation with "the daily flow of new discoveries and inventions that perpetually change aspects of thought and practice" has "shifted the center of gravity of our world from existential to functional, instrumental, and mechanical ways of life." The new sort of science shifts that center back, enabling human communication to be once more "a discourse between the centers of inner life, between people as human beings."

This is what Berry means when he says that agriculture is the matrix of culture. It is what Schumacher was talking about in all his papers and books, after he realized what had happened to the lives of people all over the world.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
SOME READING

IT is a matter of embarrassment—and a commentary on the times—that the review function of a paper like MANAS often involves telling people how to spend their money. While transactions requiring the cash nexus ought to be the least important things we write about, the best we can do is bury them in a parenthesis. Even if the good things in life are in principle free, readers need directions on how to use a few dollars to find out more about what they are. With this apology, then, that is how we began here.

Blair & Ketchum's *Country Journal*, a magazine we've been exchanging with for about a year, combines obvious commercial success with essential decency. The contents are sprightly as well as intelligently useful and the MANAS editors, on the lookout for good ideas, reach for this monthly when it comes in. Last October's issue (single copies, $1.50, subscriptions $15—Country Journal, P.O. Box 24059 Boulder, Colo. 80322 has two especially notable articles, one by Wendell Berry, the other on "The Homesteader's Basic Library" by several contributors. There is also a story about the ups and downs of the wood stove in America (quoted to show the kind of writing encountered in *Country Journal*):

> This is a country built upon certain ideas, among them the dogmas of indoor plumbing and central heating. The woodstove, sitting in America's parlors and constantly reminding us of our humble origins, soon clashed with the country's up-and-coming notions of sophistication. I've heard an older neighbor of mine say that we fought the Second World War for sophistication.
>
> The woodstove manufacturers—there were only two or three—were obviously no-nonsense people. I'd say they were fellows who wore sensible shoes, drove black sedans and read the hometown papers each night in front of their own stoves. Where they went wrong was in failing to build a stove with chrome strips and flared fenders. Madison Avenue, meanwhile, wooed and won us with her coquetry, and we were no longer a simple people. The woodstove ended up in the garage beside the Delco system, and the country was inside, warming itself in front of the evening news.
>
> Now after thirty years or so, we find history sneaking up on us again. We find ourselves, blinking like a man suddenly set down amid a foreign population, out in the garage taking the rust off the parlor stove. That is how cycles work, of course. We know what happens. We're just never quite prepared. Mythology tells us humankind acquired fire when Prometheus stole it, later being punished by the gods. Now fire is delivered to us by the fuel-oil man and we are punished at the end of the month by the bill. That is another example of how cycles work.

The writer of this is John Baskin, an editor of *Ohio* magazine. He goes on to say that his own wood stove was the one Ben Franklin invented, and that it saw him through six frigid winters in two drafty Ohio farmhouses. The rest of his story tells how the Franklin stove works and elaborates on its not entirely obsolete virtues.

Our perennial curiosity as to what Franklin's stove actually looked like was at last satisfied by a picture (engraving) taken from a book by Franklin, *Observations on Electricity*, published in London in 1751. The stove has magnificent flare, but no fenders.

Wendell Berry is—fortunately—writing a lot, these days, and there is no sign in his prose of writer's fatigue. His *Country Journal* contribution is titled "Small Is Bountiful," in which he explains why we need more and smaller farms. We now have, he says, "a farmer-killing and a land-killing economy."

He asks:

> Is there, in reality, such a possibility as "economy of scale" or "growth economy"? That question now presses heavily upon every enterprise of our livelihood. But upon agriculture, so near to the interests of culture and life itself it presses with the greatest weight. And it is from agriculture that we receive the most immediate answer: Only if we are willing to sacrifice *everything* but money value, and count it no loss.
>
> In agriculture, the economy of scale or growth directly destroys land, people, neighborhoods, and

communities. (Of industrial and urban "development" the same is true—though because the commotion is greater, the consequences may be less obvious.) And so good agriculture is virtually synonymous with small-scale agriculture—that is, with what is conventionally called the small farm. The meaning of "small" will vary, of course, from place to place and from farmer to farmer. What I mean by it has much to do with *propriety* of size and scale. Smallness tends to be a prerequisite of diversity, and diversity, in turn, a prerequisite of thrift and care in the use of the world. In general, I believe, small farms tend to be diverse in economy, which is to say complex in structure; whereas the larger the farm, the more likely it is to specialize in one or two crops, to have no animals, and to depend on chemicals, purchased supplies, and credit. In agriculture, as in nature and culture, the more complex the system or structure (within the obvious biological and human limits), the more sound and durable it is likely to be. The present industrial system of agriculture is failing because it is in itself too simple to provide even rudimentary methods of soil conservation, or to be capable of the restraints necessary to the survival of rural neighborhoods, and because it fosters a mentality too simple to notice these deficiencies. . .

Berry says at the end of this article:

As a possibility, the small farm cannot be "developed" like a product or a program. Like a household, it is a human organism and has its origin in both nature and culture. Its justification is not only agricultural, but is a part of an ancient pattern of values, ideas, aspirations, attitudes, faiths, knowledges, and skills that propose and support the sound establishment of a people on the land. To defend the small farm is to defend a large part, and the best part, of our cultural inheritance.

Defenders of the small farm (to use only the most immediate example) must take care never to use the word "economy" to mean only "money economy." We must use it to mean also—as the origin of the word instructs—the order of households. And we must therefore judge economic health by the health of households.

With some care in the definition, a "homesteader" could be identified as Berry's small farmer, and the "Homesteader's Basic Library" described in *Country Journal* would help to arm him with what he needs to know. This list of books was developed by asking six "authorities" to name the ten best books on farming. The books suggested (often the same ones) cover animal husbandry as well as farming practice. The first of the six experts consulted is Eliot Coleman, a New Englander who began his organic gardening on a piece of land he bought from Scott Nearing in Harborside, Maine, where before long he demonstrated his capacities not only as farmer but as educator as well. For several years he took groups of American farmers on tour of the "biological" farms of Europe, proving that we still have much to learn from European practice. Eliot Coleman is now "director of the Natural Foods Associates' 586-acre experimental farm in northeast Texas," where he "hopes to demonstrate that organic farming can be successful in a warm moist climate that many believe requires the use of pesticides." The other five "experts" (or teams) are Jerome Belanger, who publishes a magazine called *Countryside* and farms 150 acres; Cary Fowler, a co-author of *Food First*, and program director for the National Sharecroppers Fund, who farms ninety acres in North Carolina; Norm Lee who has an eleven-acre homestead in New York State and edits *Homesteader's News;* the Poissons (Leandre and Gretchen), who call themselves "solar peasants" and have designed solar homes and devices for cold-climate gardens (they live in New Hampshire); and the Potterfields (David and Nan), who garden, keep bees, and raise rabbits in Western Pennsylvania, and operate a lending library on health, nutrition, and alternative sources of energy. The suggestions of these experienced people are probably the best to be had.

FRONTIERS

"To the Doors of Mud Huts"

THERE is growing recognition in India that Gandhi's criticisms of industrialism, first recorded in *Hind Swaraj* (Indian Home Rule) in 1909, have a positive foundation in common with the present-day movement for appropriate technology. In *Science for Villages* for last October, the editor, Devendra Kumar, says his monthly journal propagates Gandhi's "basic ideas on Science and Technology in the present context and idiom." For a long time Asian countries tried to copy the West, with notable success in Japan. Now, however, observers who have seen the social results of this program are declaring that "Gandhi's insistence on villages had a deep meaning." Devendra Kumar writes:

> Now, 33 years after his demise, the world conditions have changed and we are in a position to see things in better perspective. A new generation finds that, to quote an authority, increasing industrial output is no longer the dominant objective; there is an array of objectives, including employment and wider diffusion of incomes, choice of labour-intensive and indigenous techniques, regional equality, self-reliance, inter-sectoral harmony, guarding against the concentration of economic power in a few hands, exercising restraint on foreign capital, influencing the product mix so as to be relevant to satisfying the basic needs of the people, promotion of exports of manufactured goods, checking inflation, protecting the environment, minimizing dependence on imported energy, and so on. They have thus found that industrialization, which was, at the outset, assumed to be synonymous with development, has failed to live up to the expectation of eradicating mass poverty.

In the September 1980 issue of *Poverty and Basic Needs*, Robert McNamara of the World Bank spoke of the plight of the "absolute poor" in the developing countries, noting that their only hope is in learning to become "more productive." Commenting, Kumar says:

> This is why Gandhi insisted on decentralization of production techniques so as to make them available to as many hands as possible, enabling the mode of productivity itself to reach the poor and have distributive justice woven into it. This model overcomes intrinsically the concentration, in a few hands, of wealth (as in free economy countries) and/or that of power (as in planned economy countries). Decentralized production . . . is an autonomous, indigenous, democratically controlled and directed process of self-reliant and environmentally sound development, in which reduction of disparities of all kinds and gradually increasing living standards and voluntary participation by all concerned take place.

Science for Villages reports on work done by groups which pursue this objective.

In 1934 Gandhi wrote to a number of India's leading scientists, inviting them to become consultants to the newly formed All-India Village Industries Association, pointing out the need for specialized knowledge in areas such as "chemical analysis, food values, sanitation, distribution of village manufactures, improved methods of developing village industries, cooperation, disposal of village waste as manure, methods of village transport, education (adult and other), care of infants, and many other things. . . ."

Experimental work initiated in this way by no means came up to Gandhi's hopes, yet, as the Italian physicist, Bruno Vitale, said in *Science for Villages* (last May):

> . . . as we look to the results of rural development work done by voluntary agencies under Gandhi's inspiration for the past 50 years, we find that there is great impact, leading to the formation of 1,500-2,000 dedicated people in small groups working independently and covering a large number of villages. The field of their activity is varied, e.g. Khadi and Village Industries, welfare of tribals, removal of untouchability, basic education, agriculture, welfare of women and children, etc. This is no mean achievement in a country where the gulf dividing urban elite and the village people is probably the widest, the communication between the elite class and the masses is weak; and the understanding of the realities of the villages by the decision-makers is poor. Through these institutions, the application of science and technology has to be done to meet requirements of the poorest and to pursue the unfulfilled dream of Gandhi.

While the obstacles named are serious, Devendra Kumar suggests that the opportunities for India are great:

> India is a country of villages (76% of its population is rural), and yet it has a well-developed city civilization of industry, commerce, science and technology. This is India's uniqueness which no other country has in such measure, since industrialized nations have a very small percentage of people working on the land, and the agricultural countries have not industrial-technological acumen developed. Being third in the world in numerical strength of scientific personnel gives us *the power*, and our being a mainly agrarian society gives us *the space* to manoeuvre a course to bring about the new economic order of the world—an economy where harmony between Nature and Man is restored, conflict between the individual and collective interests of people and nations resolved, and peace in the outer and inner life of Man attained. (September 1981 *Science f or Villages.*)

The women of the villages are especially over-worked, and one article points out that even small changes in their everyday life would help to alleviate the depression suffered by so many. A writer in the July-August issue says:

> Hence it is essential that we find out means of introducing such techniques in the life of women which will remove the drudgery in their household chores. . . . The replacing of the smoky *Chalha* [stove?] by a smokeless one, ball-bearings fitted to the pulley at the well for drawing water, a wheelbarrow to reduce the load usually taken on heads are examples. . .

A contributor to *Science for Villages* for last June notes the need for considering the impact of innovation on women's lives. In some African countries, he says, a third of the farm households are headed by women.

> Another often-ignored fact is that when technological change comes to a rural area, women often lose partly or completely their occupation, status, and income-earning opportunities. Following the introduction of rice mills in Indonesia, women lost 12 million work hours with a corresponding loss of $50 million in earnings. . . .
>
> The need is for basic research and pilot projects, since rural women are involved in the subsistence economy which seldom figures in statistics or development planning.

Science for Villages is concerned with a wide variety of down-to-earth possibilities for the improvement of village life. Subscription is $10.00 a year, payable to Center of Science for Villages, Magan Sangrahalaya, Wardha 449001 (M.S.), India. This Center "is committed to taking the benefits of Science from the thresholds of labs to the doors of mud huts."