

THE DREADFUL ABSTRACTIONS

ABSTRACTION is a weapon of politics that is endlessly corrupting to communications. A sense of the devastation worked upon the mind by political abstractions is beginning to inform modern literature, accounting for the renewed attention to form and technique in some quarters, and the exploration of subjective regions by a number of contemporary novelists. The "sacred abstractions" must never be disturbed—indeed, they exact a certain tribute from the writer who would discuss or celebrate matters with public or "social" implications. To be "fearless," in this instance, does not greatly assist the writer, for good communications are not possible without some fearlessness on the part of the reader, as well.

What, really, arms the abstractions, giving them their immeasurable importance? The October-November number of *Contemporary Issues*, a British magazine of radical political commentary, has an article on twentieth-century poetry which throws a bright light on the general situation. Discussing both the difficulties and the hazards of communication by modern poets, the writer, John Ball, says:

Take, for example, the case of Michael Gold. Why is his novel, *Jews Without Money*, in many ways a masterpiece, while his *Rosenberg Cantata* is so vulgar that it is an insult to the memory of the Rosenbergs, who were after all human beings? Because in the earlier work he wrote about people, but in his poem he wrote about "The People" ("People" is actually always capitalized in the text!). "The People" remains a perpetual abstraction quite independently of what real people do or want, so that a Michael Gold can support it at the same time that he supports Russia in the murder and deportation of Hungarians merely for asking that the army of occupation be withdrawn from their land so that they could live their own lives.

Naturally, these stereotypes result in the creation of an artificial world which sometimes seems almost

ludicrously removed from reality. When Auden's *Spain 1937* appeared (the finest poem about the Spanish Civil War), at least some of the Stalinists greeted it with cries of "Fascist!" It seems the poem contained these lines:

Today the expending of powers
On the flat ephemeral pamphlet and the boring
meeting.

"Fascist!" cried the Stalinists; you must not
insult the people's pamphlets and meetings! Or, the
Stalinists apparently felt that the lines:

You get a little drunk,
And you lands in jail,

from "Old Man River" were offensive to the Negro
race. So, Paul Robeson dutifully replaced them by the
"militant":

You shows a little spunk,
And you lands in jail.

Another example was the attempt to present the
Rosenbergs as victims of American anti-Semitism.
For this purpose it was convenient that the
Rosenbergs be transformed into devout Jews. Hence,
in the poem, *Never to be Forgotten*, we have:

Killed, O modest Julius, sweet Ethel,
Leaving behind a locket of hair, a golden ring, a
book of prayer . . .

In Russia immediately after the Revolution and
during the relatively liberal NEP, some of the world's
most outstanding modern literature flourished. Then,
Pasternak, Ilf, and Petrov were silenced. Isaak Babel,
one of the best short story writers who ever lived, was
jailed and probably murdered after announcing that
he would become the master of a new genre, "the
genre of silence." Mayakowsky and Essenin killed
themselves. Ignazio Silone has reminded us (*Dissent*,
Winter, 1955) that literary suicide is a problem of
consequence today:

"Whenever I happen to consider the sense of
bewilderment, tedium, and disgust characteristic of
our age, my mind turns . . . to the suicides of Essenin,
Mayakowsky, Ernest Toller, Kurt Tucholsky, Stefan
Zweig, Klaus Mann, Drieu La Rochelle, F. O.
Mathiessen, Cesare Pavese, and other lesser-known
figures. . . . the last writings of these men before

death or their last confidences to their friends, are invariably a confession of anguish or despair at the effort and the futility of living."

Modern art and totalitarianism, whether fascist or Stalinist, do not get on well together. Even the "subjectivists" are too free for comfort and tell at least part of the truth. Even the dream world of a Joyce is much closer to reality than a Zhdanovist poem. Joyce reflects reality as a dream does, but Ilya Ehrenburg reflects reality like a picture postcard. In this connection, it was only a few months ago that John Foster Dulles called on American newspapermen to be loyal supporters of their government's policies, and it was several months before that when *Life* magazine called for American writers to be lusty in their praise of the American way of life and less carping.

For what reasons are the sacred abstractions sacred? Why must some things never be discussed impartially? Why must a free-wheeling report on American life and times be suppressed for European readers?

The answer is not complicated. The abstractions must be preserved because, if they are not, the faith of the people will be shaken and it will not be possible to marshal their energies for a given political objective. The people who distort for the sake of a general idea, a stereotype, are always the people who think that the future depends upon obtaining some political objective. They want to control human behavior. They have an end which cannot be realized except by swaying masses of people to look at things in a specified way. They want uniformity in opinion and feeling. They want this uniformity, this control, because they believe that "security" depends upon it. This is the basic reason for all the "curtains," whether of iron, bamboo, dollars, or some other symbolic material.

It seems obvious that there can be no really free communication over mass media until men are emancipated from the fear which makes them willing to regard the preservation of stereotypes as more valuable than simple statements of the truth. The entire conception of security will have to be reformed around some more reliable foundation than the capacity to manipulate the

minds, and therefore the feelings and behavior, of millions of people.

Not only the "leaders" will have to take part in this reform. They led fear the unprejudiced statement, the unstereotyped utterance, as much as the leaders avoid such expressions. The idea of "standing alone," of having no "crowd" in which to get lost, is as unsettling to those habituated to the easy acceptance of abstractions as the threat of independent minds is to those who plan the conformities to which the population is supposed to respond.

At the root of this psychological condition is fear. There are some very simple things to be said about fear. First, it is not overcome by possession of the power to harm other people. The stronger men become for destruction, the more they fear the loss of their strength. The strongest in destruction are really the most anxious, the most frantic. Deep within them they *know* that their power is really weakness, and this realization completes the compact with ever-present anxiety.

If there is such a thing as a compact with the powers of Darkness, it is the compact made by fear with instruments of destruction. It is not only or merely that the destruction is a bad thing. The more profound evil lies in the disintegrating effect upon the people who make the compact. Inevitably, they lose their balance, their sense of reality. All other values, eventually, are sacrificed in order to maintain the "commanding position." See, for example, the sort of thing that gets to seem reasonable to those who are engaged in securing a commanding position. The following is from the London *Observer* for July 6 of this year:

Mr. Dulles was expected to offer General de Gaulle a nuclear power plant for a submarine. . . and to suggest that France should test a nuclear weapon as soon as possible to satisfy the demands of prestige before joining in an agreement to suspend tests. American Intelligence sources believe that France could set off one small atomic bomb in the near future, but that she has decided instead to wait until she has enough fissionable material for a more impressive test series. Mr. Dulles, according to

Washington reports, was most anxious to find out if possible whether the suggested prestige demonstration would satisfy General de Gaulle or whether France was seriously insisting on building her own arsenal, a procedure which would require more tests. . . . (Quoted in *Contemporary Issues*.)

Where national affairs are decided upon according to motives of this sort, and in this scheme of international relationships, it is an utter waste of time to write about political matters. It would take a man a lifetime to unravel the inner meaning of the abstractions which are here made to do duty as "principles," and to chart the progress of a cultural delusion or full-dress psychosis as complex as politics itself has become.

Such actions can by no stretch of the imagination have any real effect upon the springs of human action—no effect, that is, beyond the spread of confusion. If men are to be made free, if they are to learn how to feel secure, it will be by means so far removed from political means that the political vocabulary becomes completely senseless for this purpose—if it has not already been made senseless for any purpose.

Virtually every political group is bound, in the nature of things, to push a certain set of abstractions, on the acceptance of which its particular theory of progress depends. And since the end of a political organization is a political act, and not the growth in understanding of people at large (although this may be regarded as a desirable side-effect, or even a partial prerequisite), a partisanship in ideas tends to dominate the intellectual atmosphere of the political group. For if the abstractions are forever being questioned, how is the movement ever to get off the ground?

But truth cannot survive in a partisan atmosphere. The will to know succumbs to the will to do. And the will to do gives way to the will to triumph.

This sequence was not such a serious matter in the days before the atom bomb. That is, was not *objectively* so serious. Its effect on the individuals was probably very much the same,

except that, now, with the instruments of power raised to the nth degree, the madness of partisanship comes more rapidly and obliterates the last traces of sanity more completely.

We are driven, therefore, to search for a new conception of the Good—a good which does not depend upon collectivist compulsions to security.

The source of the terror in our time is the dark, secret conviction that a man cannot have a good life unless he makes other people collaborate with him to secure the conditions of the good life. It is this belief which sanctioned the horror of the death camps in Germany and the slave camps in Russia, and the sabotage of freedom of opinion and expression in the United States. The angry men are the men who fear the world will close in upon and destroy them if they do not get agreement or conformity from *everybody*. Men grow angry only because they are desperate. There is no liberation from the angry men short of a new view of man's life and his relationships with the world about him. It was Gandhi's genius to have seen this truth and given it expression. Each year of history since he died confirms his bold declaration.

It is time to give serious ear to the prophets of freedom without (excessive) political organization—to men like Tolstoy—and to search for roots of intellectual and moral conviction to nourish a freedom of this sort. Obviously, we cannot get from organizations the moral strength and vision to live without the securities which organizational structure provides. If organizations are to be of use, they must be of the sort which supply an impartial light, telling us what other men have thought about these matters, but never deciding for us what *we* shall think.

REVIEW

DOSSIER ON THE FBI

A SPECIAL 56-page issue of the *Nation* (Oct. 18) is entirely devoted to a study of the organization, nature and present influence of J. Edgar Hoover's Federal Bureau of Investigation. As a result—judging by concrete evidence of the past fifteen years—both the *Nation's* editor, Carey McWilliams, and Fred J. Cook, author of "The F.B.I.," may be in for some nonsensical trouble. Industrialist Cyrus Eaton's public attack on some FBI practices earned him a summons to appear before the House Un-American Activities Committee, and the *Nation* has now presumably allied itself with what Hoover has called a "hard core of propagandists" dedicated to subvert the interests of America and further those of Communism!

Mr. Cook's contribution to the *Nation* will probably interest all readers of MANAS, not as information encouraging "attacks" against Hoover, but because certain issues and principles are here revealed in illustrative instances. Moreover, the director of the FBI, while agreeing that the chief judiciary body should maintain independence from other branches of the government, has nevertheless insisted that "the courts themselves must eventually come to grips in a realistic manner with facts and join all forces for good in protecting society." Speaking before the American Legion in its thirty-ninth Annual Convention in 1957, Hoover was wildly applauded for his criticism of recent Supreme Court decisions, especially the one rendered in the *Jencks* case—which required that, when the government puts a witness on the stand, it must make available to the defense the details of earlier questioning as a test of his veracity, even if these "details" are held in the secret files of the FBI. As Justice William Brennan wrote in giving the Court's decision: "Every experienced trial judge and trial lawyer knows the value for impeachment purposes of statements of the witness regarding events before time dulls treacherous memory. It is

unconscionable to allow it [the government] to undertake prosecution and then invoke its governmental privileges to deprive the accused of anything which might be material to the defense."

Mr. Hoover and his supporters feel charged with the defense of America against the infiltration of perverse political ideas and, assuming a crusading role, they evidently believe that any methods which facilitate the collection of files on "radicals" are "necessary measures." By this means, Mr. Hoover, in philosophy a self-confessed McCarthy of the Federal police, has managed to transform completely the conception of this agency held by those who formed the Bureau in the first place. Justice Stone, once charged with reforming the Bureau, wrote in 1924:

There is always the possibility that a secret police may become a menace to free government and free institutions because it carries with it the possibility of abuses of power which are not always apprehended or understood. The Bureau of Investigation is not concerned with political or other opinions of individuals. It is concerned only with such conduct as is forbidden by the laws of the United States. When a police system passes beyond these limits, it is dangerous to the proper administration of justice and to human liberty, which it should be our first concern to cherish. Within them it should rightly be a terror to the wrong-doer.

How far Hoover has departed from this intention is illustrated by numerous inflammatory and opinionated speeches, clearly representing his claim to the right of "judging Un-American opinion" *a priori*. The following paragraphs, written in 1941, made it possible for him to consider the opinions of school teachers as also within his rightful province. He then wrote:

. . . The rabble-rousing Communists, the goose-stepping bundsmen, their stooges and seemingly innocent "fronts," and last but not least, the pseudo-liberals . . . By whom have these persons been set upon us? By persons whom we have trusted most—by certain teachers in our public schools and institutions of higher learning, by certain writers fattening upon royalties fostering class hatred and discontent, by some prattleminded politicians

grabbing votes with one hand while waving the flag of pseudo-liberalism with the other, and worst of all by some ministers of the gospel . . . The word "liberalism" is something we should weigh carefully during these dark days that confront our nation . . .

The Federal Bureau of Investigation began as a subdivision of the Secret Service, and was called into existence as one of several emergency measures taken to protect the government against the terrorist bomb plots of 1919. Mr. Hoover was its first Director. As Max Lowenthal points out in his critical studies of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, a decision was then made to make the most of miscellaneous information, whatever its source. Lowenthal writes:

The Bureau of Investigation faced and solved one problem in the first ten days of the existence of Mr. Hoover's division, the problem of the kind of data detectives should send to headquarters. They were going to receive material from undercover informers, from neighbors, from personal enemies of the persons under investigation. The detectives were going to hear gossip about what people were said to have said or were suspected of having done—information derived in some instances, from some unknown person who told the bureau's agents or informers or the latter's informants. Some of the information might relate to people's personal habits and life. The bureau's decision was that everything received by the special agents and informers should be reported to headquarters; the agents were specifically directed to send whatever reached them, "of every nature."

The period of the bombings passed, but Mr. Hoover's approach remained, and new "crises," while never in any respect justifying similar measures in a democracy, were continually being discovered. What had happened, in effect, was that a man whose political opinions were always and still are those of Joseph McCarthy, and who is admittedly devoted to the techniques of Dick Tracy when it comes to investigative work, became empowered to decide what distinguishes social criticism from terrorist action. As Mr. Cook puts it:

Mr. Cook puts it:

It should be understood that the language of Hoover's GID in 1919-20, the language of Hoover in

1940-41, and the expressions of Hoover today, all fit into one coherent pattern—a pattern that fails to distinguish between revolutionaries and liberals and tars with the brush of subversion all liberalism.

In 1919, for example, as chief of GID and the man in charge of deportations on the Buford, Hoover drew considerable criticism for a refusal to permit wives to accompany their deported husbands. Subsequently, GID in its report to Palmer attacked its critics in language that seems strangely familiar. It said: "There would have been no vicious and hurtful criticism of the administration, but rather free praise from all reasonable sides for its promptness and good effect, had it not been for the press agents of the Reds and their hallucinated friends among the parlor bolsheviks, and even a certain class of Liberal writers from whom bitter discrimination might have been expected . . ."

Hoover, unlike McCarthy, is a dedicated man who takes his own work very seriously. Despite the numerous and effective jobs of lampooning directed against Hoover—Milton Mayer tackled the Chief as long ago as 1935 in the *Forum*, and Dwight Macdonald printed a critical survey in 1938, holding the FBI responsible for the framing techniques used against Sacco and Vanzetti—most of the FBI agents take tremendous pride in their work and are able men. Mr. Hoover is himself a hard worker and doubtless, in his own terms, an incorruptible man. But, in the long view, one can be excused for preferring a McCarthy whose incredible bumbles are perpetual. Sincerity tacked to an opinionated mind can easily lead to "necessary" infringements on recognized legal procedure, due to the conviction that a Savior must take strong steps. Authority must be unquestioned, and irregularities of procedure are allowed on the basis that "crises" take us beyond ordinary law. The following paragraphs from Mr. Cook's article in the *Nation* are significant:

Hoover always responds with righteous wrath to the faintest suggestion that the courts or any critically-minded Congressional committee be given a peep at the contents of the F.B.I.'s secret files. Yet there have been some repeated and pretty solid indications that this secrecy is often less than perfect. The late Senator Pat McCarran, an investigator of the

McCarthy stripe, declared explicitly on the floor of the Senate on March 25, 1953: "I have had dozens of them (FBI secret files) in my possession and have taken them home and used them for Sunday reading." Even the sacredness of secrecy, it appears, is two-faced.

It is in the confusion created by such collisions of words and action that one must try to assess Hoover's role in the post war era that he has influenced so subtly and profoundly. While keeping himself in the background of hysteria, he has certainly helped, probably more powerfully than any other figure, to foment hysteria. He began it in 1945 with his complete acceptance of the revelations of Elizabeth Bentley, he gave the witch-hunt the full support of his prestige through his close relationship with McCarthy and through his testimony before the Senate in 1953; he capped the performance this year in his *Masters of Deceit*, which pictures a still-active and menacing internal threat in the very hour of American communism's virtual demise.

The interesting chapter on the FBI's influence on the Federal Courts is now being written. In 1948, Clifton Bennett wrote in an article for Dwight Macdonald's *Politics*:

The American Civil Liberties Union, like the liberal weeklies, has gone soft on the F.B.I. of late years, seems to think the G-men have become more scrupulous in their methods. Actually, what is happening is not so much a change of heart on their part as the tendency of the courts to make legal what formerly was illegal. Both the growth and the "legalization" of the F.B.I. in recent years are symptomatic of the steady increase in State power which began under Roosevelt's New Deal.

The relation between the F.B.I. and the Federal courts cannot be considered a complete parallel with the Gestapo-German State system until the anonymous denunciation which is a major item in F.B.I. political cases becomes generally acceptable as evidence in the courts.

Although anonymous denunciation is not yet accepted as evidence, the dossiers of the F.B.I. may influence courts and Federal agencies through the introduction of irrelevant and prejudicial material.

But the Supreme Court has picked up its courage and discovered its principles. Recent opinions affirm the right to a reasonable defense of the individual who is questioned by the Un-

American Activities Committee on the basis of FBI files. The Court will not back down, and the Un-American Activities Committee will have to.

What will happen to the hundreds of thousands of dossiers and the thousands of staff-written "biographies" now in the FBI's possession? So long as they exist, and so long as there is any loophole allowing their use in prosecution for "dangerous opinions," they will serve as a reminder of how far ahead stretches the road to a true American democracy. As was once observed in these pages:

A *system*, designed to destroy danger, invariably becomes that which it seeks to destroy; for as its agencies generate emotional momentum, the dangerous characteristic of the new system emerges—the firm belief, on the part of its proponents, that the structure, now finally erected, must be preserved.

COMMENTARY

"COMMUNITIES" AND OTHER MATTERS

GREAT things have been accomplished in the world by means of communities. The earliest Christians banded themselves together in communities. The brotherly associations brought to light by the Dead Sea Scrolls were communities. The Reformation found powerful allies in the communities known as the Brothers and Sisters of the Common Lot. Thomas A Kempis obtained his education from one of these groups. And now we learn (see *Frontiers*) that the discipline and some of the inspiration of the movement for peace and freedom founded by Gandhi came from a community association in South Africa.

Men of visionary minds and generous hearts are forever trying to start communities and trying to make them work. Most of them do not succeed, yet the impulse to associate on this basis of personal self-sacrifice survives, which is a notable kind of success. So far as we can see, the best communities are those in which men join in order to do something which goes beyond the objectives of the community, per se. In this case, the role of the community is to supply the conditions of close cooperation for working toward the larger end. Thus the frictions and personal differences which inevitably arise are lost in the labors for something recognized as more important than community "harmony" and mere "getting along."

There are many good books about communities. Among the books which are excellent on this subject, but not so well known, are the following: *Communitistic Societies of the United States* by Charles Nordhoff, published by John Murray in London in 1875; *A Southwestern Utopia* by Thomas A. Robertson (Ward Ritchie Press, Los Angeles, 1947); *All Things Common* by Claire Hutchet Bishop (Harper, 1950). For insight into the problems of communities, we strongly recommend Watson Thomson's study of

Henri Lasserre, *Pioneer in Community*, published in 1949 by the Ryerson Press, Toronto, Canada, at \$2.00.

The trouble with most communities seems to be that they are conceived as ends in themselves. This is too much for a material association to carry. The rule we incline to is this: If you can't do far better or more efficiently in a community what you are now doing without one, don't form one. Communities for their own sake tend to grow sectarian, sentimental, or sour. With a little imagination, you can have full intellectual and moral community with other people without living on the same piece of land with them. Community is a means, not an end.

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Religions are like communities—the less institutionalism, the better. In a recent letter a MANAS correspondent makes this comment about one of the more liberal churches:

... there is the all-too-human tendency, it seems to me, to try to build up the church as an organization, and end in itself, rather than to keep it simply an aid to the individual's striving for the good life. Many people, I know, find satisfaction in helping to build up an institution; and the unselfish, cooperative nature of such personal effort is commendable. But the build-up, the fund-raising campaigns, as of a commercial organization putting on a sales drive, seems to me much in the spirit of the competitive enterprise system that already looms too large in our lives.

Lasserre, for one, saw this point very clearly in relation to religious communities, and urged that, in the religious quest, "the greatest possible freedom should be afforded by the community to the individual."

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

THE BAD JUVENILES: II

OUR brief notes last week on the perplexities surrounding juvenile delinquency might be regarded as a preface to the finest writing on this subject that we have ever seen. Readers of this page are already aware of the fact that playwright Arthur Miller wants to direct a motion picture focussing on the youth gangs of New York City. With this in mind, he spent two months living with or in close proximity to street gangs.

So far, however, the project has failed to receive backing, but Miller's "Bridge to a Savage World" in *Esquire* for October will quite possibly move someone to make the film. In a closing paragraph Miller states his point of view:

We read about gangs, we see pictures of them, and the image is one of fierceness. They are certainly fierce in battle—but that is only one part of what they are. A gang fight rarely if ever lasts more than three or four minutes. That fact is a key to many others with which I intend to infuse this film. The truth is that they are scared kids underneath it all, so scared that, as I have said, a gang war can be quickly mediated—if one is adept and knowing. What they must have in exchange for peace, however, is a shred of dignity. These are children who have never known life excepting as a worthless thing; they have been told from birth that they are nothing, that their parents are nothing, that their hopes are nothing. The group in this picture will end, by and large, with a discovery of their innate worth.

Among other things, Mr. Miller wishes to inform the public regarding the heroic activities of the New York City Youth Board's "street workers":

The New York City Youth Board, a direct arm of the Mayor's Office, is now about eleven years old. It began as an experimental project, one of the first of its kind. Its novelty consists of its methods and philosophy which go counter to much previous social-work procedure. The main feature of its method is that instead of sitting in an office, its men go out into the streets, the pool rooms, the dance halls, the homes and hangouts of the very worst gangs, prepared to

spend years with them, giving them every kind of leadership and aid in order to relate their members to the values of civilized society. Youth Board workers, one of whom is the hero of this film, have suffered every kind of psychological indignity. But in a few neighborhoods a handful of men has sometimes held back slaughter and in many individual cases raised up seemingly incorrigible young men to decency.

This picture will end in a victory, a victory whose magnitude I can barely suggest in these summary pages. I do not mean to suggest that the Youth Board has solved the problem of delinquency. What it has done, however, is to develop a spirit and a technique which do work. In this picture we shall meet boys who, before they are reached, could fit comfortably into the behavior patterns of the early hordes that roamed the virgin forests. There are elements in the gang codes today which are more primitive than those that governed the earliest clan societies. When a Youth Board worker descends into the streets he is going back into human history a distance of thousands of years. Thus, it is fruitless merely to say that the delinquent must be given love and care—or the birch rod. What is involved here is a profound conflict of man's most subtle values. The deeper into their lives the Youth Board worker goes, the more apparent it becomes that they are essentially boys who have never made contact with civilized values, boys without a concept of the father, as the father is normally conceived, boys without an inkling of the idea of social obligation, personal duty or even rudimentary honor. To save one of these is obviously a great piece of work.

Mr. Miller's long and absorbing article is thoroughly realistic, yet makes you feel that this writer is the only one who could write or produce a play of this nature without making its happy ending seem contrived. Miller describes another of the psychological keynotes of his proposed production, illustrating how completely cut off these youths have been from traditional settings for adventure:

Throughout the picture their boredom will be like an insistent counterpoint to every moment, every act. They simply have nothing to do. The great city is building and rebuilding, the traffic is endlessly flowing, the phones by the millions are ringing, the lights are blinking on a thousand marquees, but they are afraid to leave their corner, especially alone, and they live without an inkling that people are supposed

to occupy themselves, that their lives are supposed to be meaningful. Thus, the idea of a camping trip is outlandish at first. What's to be gained? Girls? Free whiskey? What? No, Jerry says you just have fun together. The simple fact is these boys never learned how to play.

Doubtfully they prepare. The first thing is to steal camping supplies. Jerry makes them return them because he won't go with stolen goods. (This motif flows through everything; he does not lecture them, but simply will not commit an immoral act. Thus, as they grow to identify themselves with him, they cease to suggest immoral acts to him, ultimately police one another. The time comes when individuals in the gang call down others for "disappointing Jerry." They are tougher with their defaults than Jerry is.)

It would be easy for representatives of the "get tough with delinquents" school to object to Mr. Miller's optimism, since his personal experience with the street gangs was for only two months. Yet everything he says is reinforced by the experiences of "Sam Kolman" (as reported here last week), who lived and breathed the problems of New York street gangs for years. What Miller adds is the heroic dimension to youth reclamation work—both as the image of the hero affects the youth, and as it emerges, less spectacularly but just as truly, in the street worker's personality.

Meanwhile, according to information accompanying a dramatic spread in *This Week* for Oct. 26, the delinquent problem will shortly be solved. J. Edgar Hoover, whom Dwight Macdonald once dubbed "Gee Whiz Man Number One," presents the first of a three-part series headed, "A program for a Better America!" He has a more revealing subtitle: "Counterattack on Juvenile Delinquency." Mr. Hoover is famous for crusades, and doubtless spectacular publicity will accompany this one, most of it working against the sort of education attempted by the New York City Youth Board. For a sample of Hoover's attitude we quote the following paragraphs, in which the FBI Director has packed the "militance" typical of his accounts of "Red Sympathizers":

America is facing an emergency, a crisis which threatens the very future of our nation.

It is the emergency of juvenile delinquency. The tide of youthful lawlessness is rising at a terrifying pace. By 1962 one million of our teen-agers will be arrested each year—at the present rate.

My considered opinion is that we must act—and promptly. *The time has come for a counterattack against juvenile delinquency.* Unless this counterattack is successful no street or park in the nation will be safe. Worst of all, every child in the nation will be exposed to the vicious acts of the delinquent minority.

I have been called an advocate of the "get tough" policy. To an extent, perhaps I am. I have seen too many instances in which repeated leniency has encouraged misbehavior, and I have also seen occasions when the policies of a realistic judge proved to be very effective deterrents to crime.

The "I can get away with anything—I'm a juvenile!" attitude on the part of scores of young hoodlums is a clear-cut indication of how sentiment can supplant sense. Too frequently, misguided sentimentality, along with a policy of blanketing all youthful offenders under a protective covering of anonymity, actually encourages juvenile misbehavior. The knowledge that one can get by, not once but time after time, breeds bitter contempt for law and makes a mockery of our system of justice.

The Shook-up Generation, by Harrison Salisbury (Harper), reviewed in the *Saturday Review* for Oct. 18, is a study of juvenile delinquency by a Pulitzer Prize-winning author. The reviewer, Wenzell Brown, is also a student of juvenile crime and the author of several works of fiction focussed on this social no-man's-land. Both Mr. Salisbury and Mr. Brown deplore the "treat 'em rough" school of thought, and Salisbury selects New York's Police Commissioner Kennedy as a prime example of the "rough" point of view. Kennedy's attitude is that such attempts as the New York City Youth Board amount to a lot of unnecessary dawdling. We place our bets, however, with the "Sam Kolmans" and the Arthur Millers. Mr. Salisbury offers considerable evidence to suggest that "rough" police measures are a strong spur in the direction of further delinquency. To quote Mr. Brown:

What does the shook-up youth want? Mr. Salisbury put this question to a member of a teen-age fighting gang. The answer: "To stay alive." This response is far more revealing than it appears at first glance. This boy lived in constant fear of rival gangs, the police, adults, strangers, and every symbol of authority. He was afraid to move more than three or four blocks from home, even to go to the moving pictures because he would have to pass through the "turf" of another gang. Paradoxically, the basic cause of most youthful violence is the misdirected quest for security and conformity. Unable, through his own limitations, to find acceptance in approved channels the adolescent moves into a social substratum where his revolt against the mores of society wins him recognition and a sense of belonging.

FRONTIERS

Some MANAS Exchanges

AMONG the magazines received regularly by MANAS is an Indian weekly, *Thought*, which is a literary and political review. The Aug. 10 issue has an article by B. Natesan on the influence of John Ruskin on Gandhi—an intensely interesting fragment of biography concerning the development of Gandhi's ideas. Natesan's point is that Gandhi took Ruskin's insight, expressed in words "woven with the skill and artistry of workmen in gold or ivory," and put it to work. The book which carried compelling impact for Gandhi was Ruskin's *Unto This Last*—a volume containing social criticism so in advance of Ruskin's time that the *Cornhill Magazine*, which first published these essays, was threatened with cancelled subscriptions by Britain's learned dons.

Gandhi first encountered *Unto This Last* in South Africa in 1907. The effect was immediate and Ruskin became Gandhi's favorite study, along with the Bible. "Evidently," Natesan writes, "it was Ruskin's ideas that held him captive and the logic of his reasoning." A paragraph relates what happened in the next few years:

He [Gandhi] quickly realized how closely his own ideas tallied with Ruskin's: (1) that there could be no civilization without practical religion, (2) no property apart from labour on the soil, and (3) no happiness without honesty and truth. Gandhi's instincts veered round three fundamentals: "the good of the individual is merged in the larger good of Society; the barrister and the barber alike in their avocation and their status; the best wages is that of manual labour." Immediately on return from Natal he called his friends in council, charted out a scheme of cooperative enterprise to give practical shape to those ideas and set to work on a plan of equal sharing of the fruits of common labour in housing, farming and industry. As land is the basis of wealth, first twenty acres and then eighty were purchased a few miles off Durban. Soon the Colony was bustling with activity—a chosen and devoted band of workers inspired by the same ideas, sharing the work and the fruits thereof in common. Thus was inaugurated the famous Phoenix Colony and the office of *Indian Opinion* shifted thereto. The colony included men

and women of diverse communities but all animated by the same common purpose—Polak the British Jew, Kallenbeck the German, Mr. West of *Indian Opinion*, and a collection of Hindus and Muslims and Christians of different grades of culture and status, all working as one family under a pater-familias who claimed no special privileges for himself as chief but considered himself the first among servants of the colony. The whole team was working cheerfully and with discipline. A remarkable feature of the institution was that "Members of the staff were paid alike irrespective of the work they turned out"; each of the inmates shared a bit of land and did his manual labour. Conventions were laid aside; a common kitchen was maintained; men, women and children had each a share of domestic service. "There was but one large family without caste, colour or creed—a new pattern of life was set up with far-reaching effects." Nor were service and good work confined to the circle of the Colony. Members were trained in Social Service and sent out for ameliorative work in the adjacent areas. Ruskin's ideas were rendered dynamic at the hands of Gandhi and his associates.

On this foundation was built Gandhi's movement for liberation, first in South Africa, later in India:

. . . it was this colony that provided the captains and guides for the mass upheaval and passive resistance struggle which later made such an impressive demonstration of human dignity and discipline in the fight against the South African Government's policy of *apartheid*—a fight which extorted the admiration of Tolstoy and paved the way for the Smuts-Gandhi agreement, however limited its scope of achievement.

Nor can we forget it was the nucleus of the famous Ashrams at Sabarmati and Wardha which later had to shoulder more responsible and dangerous political work in India and played such a decisive part in the various campaigns of civil disobedience for the historic freedom struggle waged under the immediate direction of Gandhi and his lieutenants.

Ruskin was but one of the three Westerners who exercised a decisive influence on Gandhi. The other two were Leo Tolstoy and Henry David Thoreau.

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For those in Southern California who look forward to becoming listeners to the non-

commercial FM radio station sponsored by the Pacifica Foundation, when it gets on the air, an extract from the *KPFA Folio* (the program guide published semi-monthly by the Berkeley Pacifica station) may be of interest. In this issue of the folio (Oct. 26-Nov. 8), KPFA announces an attempt to explain its "philosophy of programming." The Music Director, Alan Rich, begins with an account of how music for broadcasting is selected:

In the scheduling of recorded concerts of serious music, the aim is not to steer clear of the obvious and popular in favor of the esoteric. It is, rather, to strike some sort of balance, and, more importantly, to try to present an orderly view of the entire musical repertory. Therefore, there is no conscious attempt to avoid the scheduling of a Tchaikovsky Symphony, but rather to include his music in proportion to the importance he deserves in music history.

Now, this consideration is conditioned to a certain degree by personal taste, and the accusation can easily be levelled against any music director that he schedules only the music he particularly enjoys. This is a danger that must be met head on, and the only answer seems to be that the greater the freedom at a station to schedule without regard for offending an occasional sponsor or an occasional conservative taste, the less the pressure on the music director to establish himself as a censor to weed the "bad" music from the "good." For myself, I like to think that my tastes in music are rather broad, but since I have an unusual amount of opportunity to verbalize about my tastes on programs of criticism, it should be fairly obvious that I don't personally like a great deal of music in the Folio.

Planning an individual concert is, for me, a somewhat instinctive matter, and I offer no formula. . . beyond the general one of trying, over any two-week period, to offer at least something from almost every possible musical style. Even so, I find occasionally to my horror that a Folio will emerge with a preponderance of medieval music, or composers beginning with "J," or Webern. The only thing to do then is to make a conscious effort to restore balance in the next issue.

These program notes, while not concerned with mighty affairs, bear something of the leisurely freedom of noncommercial radio, and of the undiluted, un-ulterior interest in their work of

program directors engaged in listener-sponsored radio.

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Maha Bodhi is an international Buddhist monthly founded in 1892 by Anagarika Dharmapala, a religious reformer of more than half a century ago. Dharmapala was a native of Ceylon. During a trip abroad, to Europe and America, as a missionary of Buddhism, he wrote in his diary:

My birthplace Ceylon has no equal in the world. I have seen a great part of the world, but no place to equal the beautiful island. For 2300 years we were the sole possessors. We are now ill-treated and taxed to support a foreign nation.

This is taken from Dharmapala's diary for Oct. 2, 1897. A few days later, on board a German steamer, he wrote:

My mind is full of ideas about elevating my people. With a history to fall [back] upon, with a civilization going back to three centuries before Christ, with a literature the richest in the world, with a monastic order oldest in religious history, my beloved country and people should not remain as they are now. I will teach the European people to be kind and compassionate; I will preach the Damma [the Path] to the world and I will make the people to send the blessed influence of the Great Doctrine all over the European world.

A day later he wrote:

Christian Ecclesiastical Service on board. Some old rotten meat of theology. Ecclesiastical fortifications are being dismantled by the gathering guns of science. Sentimental emotionalism has no place in a matter-of-fact world. I wish to have an organization formed in Ceylon to be called the "International Democratic League" for the dissemination of the Doctrine of Universal Brotherhood.

Dharmapala's labors have been continued by other men. The Maha Bodhi Society of India, which he founded, has contributed largely to the rediscovery of Buddhism by the people of India. The *Maha Bodhi* journal is published at 4A, Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta 12, India. In the July issue is an article, "Soto Zen in Japan,"

which traces the history of Zen Buddhism. It begins:

Zen, like Buddhism itself, is a product of India. However, its antiquity is far greater than that of Buddhism. Its origin is connected with the custom of Indian philosophers who sought an escape from the heat by dwelling in forests. Here they spent their time in meditation and observance of religious ceremonies. . . . Zen is the Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese word *Chan*. Which in turn is a phonetic transcription of Prakrit *jhana*, suffering the loss of its final vowel. The Sanskrit equivalent of *Jhana* is *dhyana*, which means "to think." The first occurrence of the word *dhyana* is in the Chandogya Upanishad. . . .

Zen Sects do not resort to Buddhist scriptures as the ultimate authority. Why? The words of the scriptures are regarded merely as something like the finger pointing to the moon or the net for catching fish. . . . In the Sung Dynasty in China, the Zen Sects adopted such catch-phrases as: "Non-dependence upon words and letters", "Special transmission outside the classified teachings"; "Directly pointing to the human mind"; "Attaining of Buddhahood through seeing one's own Nature."

These explanations are given:

"Directly pointing to the human mind" means pointing out directly that human mind is intrinsically endowed with Buddha-nature and emphasizing the practical experience-attainment of it. "Attaining Buddhahood through seeing one's own Nature" means that the practical embodiment of the Buddha-nature is in itself attainment of Buddhahood, or that it is Buddha himself in action. In such a way, the true Law of the Buddha should be properly transmitted through mind to mind. . . . It is the meaning of the popular catch-phrase, "transmission through mind to mind."

An editorial in this issue of the *Maha Bodhi* journal offers a categorical definition of Buddhism, differing somewhat from Western views of the matter:

The historical fact of the Buddha's Enlightenment beneath the Bodhi-tree at Buddagaya is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, of the entire system of Buddhism. It is the beginning, inasmuch as the Dharma taught by the Buddha is not the product of mere unilluminated mental activity, a philosophical system in the mundane sense of the

term to be accepted or rejected at will, but a transcription into conceptual symbols of His own truly ineffable experience of Reality. . . . The Buddha was not an agnostic, a social reformer, a humanitarian nor anything else to be adequately described by attaching to it any such fashionable label, but simply a man Who by his own efforts became Buddha, the Enlightened One. Those who are for any reason unable to accept Him as such had better leave Him and His religion strictly alone, since however "learned" they may be, they will never be able to understand more than the superficialities of either. A Sinhalese peasant or a Tibetan muleteer has a better chance of comprehension than they. . . .

Enlightenment persists as a permanent possibility at the heart of every human being, however long the actualization of it may be delayed; just as the disc of the moon continues to be reflected in the waters of the ocean, however broken and distorted by the agitation of the waves its image may be. . . .

What Gautama would himself say, today, in the contemporary idiom, about the conviction which filled his life and crowned his efforts, might be different from the foregoing. After all, the credo of millions can hardly contain the essence of the insight of a single great man and pioneer. Yet the *Maha Bodhi* journal's formulation of Buddhism as a "religion" or world faith probably comes very close to being an authentic echo of the Buddha's teachings. It is likely, at any rate, that few religions with so many followers have retained the simplicity and purity of Buddhism as stated in this form.