

vee, his ideal: "Mr. Boyce at the end of his long table, dispensing compliments and offering little toasts, might have been the man with the long whip surrounded by seemingly docile tigers perched on stools. The whip was the law, and without the law he and I well knew to what a shambles life was reduced. Yes, my tragedy, or at least my bathos, is that I have been simply a lawyer. My guide and mentor was, in his own fashion, a man." Eric Temple, the heretical New Dealer, fares well even when under investigation by Senator McCarthy. Clifflie Dean, who leads a revolution against Lloyd Degener, gets what he wants and regrets it. ("Save a bees' nest from a burning bush, and you can count on them to sting you.")

In "The Money Juggler" Roger Jordan says: "Glancing from John to Townie to Hilary, I was suddenly struck by the size of their common denominator. It was in their eyes, in the opaque glitter of their distrustful eyes. They were all prosperous, all expensively and similarly clad. I would have defied John O'Hara himself to have told in that assemblage of colored shirts, which was the descendant of a colonial governor, which the popular columnist and which the Wall Street lawyer. Over their apparel, which was as beautiful as a *New Yorker* advertisement, glowed the snakes' eyes that saw the world at a snake's level: one inch above the ground." The irony is that the narrator's eyes can't be more than an inch higher. Auchincloss has a larger vision than that, but not so large as I could wish.

—GRANVILLE HICKS.

#### FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT No. 1235

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 1235 will be found in the next issue.

AM JPC DEMJCTJ XCJRCCM CYTC

YMW NAXCKJZ, JPC VAKTJ PYJP

BCMCKYNNZ LKCIYANCW.

—PYNAVYH

#### Answer to Literary Crypt No. 1234

Democracy substitutes election by the incompetent many for appointment by the corrupt few.

—SHAW.

## LETTERS TO THE Book Review Editor



### Concentration Camps on Hand

IT COULD HAPPEN AGAIN, says Roger Baldwin in his introduction to *Concentration Camps, U.S.A.*, by Charles R. Allen, Jr. [SR, Mar. 18]. Those who have the courage to read this little book will learn that not only in Hitler Germany did the natives claim not to have known of these camps which were situated within ten miles or less from their homes, but that natives of Allentown, Pa.; El Reno, Okla.; Florence, Ariz.; Wickenburg, Ariz.; and Tule Lake, Calif., are also not aware of our projected use of these sites for concentration camps, based on Title II of the McCarran Internal Security Act.

Since 1952 these camps have been kept in "readiness" despite our then-President Truman's veto message of that portion of the McCarran Act.

MOLLIE G. AUGUST.

Philadelphia, Pa.

### Vilified for Profit?

THE REVIEW BY MARGUERITE CLARK of *The Healers* [SR, Mar. 11] is alarming and disturbing on many counts. . . .

The medical profession is certainly no worse than the clergy and the lawyers. We are all human beings and there will always be a scoundrel in our midst. However, I know that the great majority of physicians are dedicated to healing the sick with little thought for themselves. . . . Certainly a physician wishes to receive due recompense commensurate with the years of study and preparation that go into his long and essentially unsubsidized training period. Eight to ten years after college is perhaps the longest post-graduate training in our society, and a physician has a right to a reasonable return on this investment and for the long hours and constant strain that are his way of life. It is only the insecure and ineffective, however, who would spin a tall tale to justify a big bill, and if this is done, I suspect the purpose is really to bolster the ego rather than to fill the pocketbook. . . .

I object to the implication that medical school-hospital services are the only places where honest medicine is likely to be practiced or that medical schools take over more and more hospitals in order to make them honest. . . . The profession actively polices itself and does not need the medical schools to do the job for it. The suggestions made in this book, if taken seriously, could undermine years of effort expended in bringing the medical school teachers and the community physicians together in the job of continuing education for all physicians for the betterment of patient care. Physicians have been working very hard at this business of keeping up to date and are beginning to examine themselves to see how successful their efforts are. How many other professions do this?

It seems to me that the medical profes-

sion as a whole has been vilified—for profit—by Anonymous, M.D. and by Putnam, the publisher. An apology is due.

RICHARD W. VILTER, M.D.

GORDON TAYLOR,

Professor of Medicine

HELEN HUGHES TAYLOR,

Director, Department of Medicine,  
University of Cincinnati.

Cincinnati, O.

### McCarthyism Over

MAY I CONGRATULATE *Saturday Review* for printing Granville Hicks's candid review of *Think Back on Us* in the March 11 issue. The McCarthy era is over when a writer can state in a national magazine that he was once a member of the Communist Party.

MRS. KENNETH F. KISTER.

Belmont, Mass.

### Too Revealing

MR. GRANVILLE HICKS in his review of Elia Kazan's novel *The Arrangement* [SR, Mar. 4] states that the question asked by Mr. Kazan's work is "what do and what should men live by?" In the course of his review, Mr. Hicks reveals the hero's solution to his search. Is a reviewer justified in disclosing a plot development that answers in advance a question the reader would be asking himself as the character study of the hero progresses?

Don't both author and prospective reader have just cause for complaint?

TERESA C. CAMPBELL.

Tucson, Ariz.

### Borrowed Culture

YOUR REVIEW OF PIERRE GASCAR'S *The Best Years* [SR, Feb. 11] mentions as one of the pleasures of childhood in Aquitaine "Hallowe'en with its pumpkins and ghosts." My wife, who was brought up in Belgium, does not remember Hallowe'en as a European tradition, and her botany books definitely make pumpkins a strictly American plant. Had the sons of Aquitaine been doing a little cultural borrowing, or what?

GORDAN B. CHAMBERLAIN.

Tokyo, Japan

### Frodo's Native Tongue

YOU ARE CORRECT IN WRITING in reference to Frodo [SR, Mar. 18]: "He speaks Elvish." However, it should be noted that Elvish was a second language for Mr. Baggins. Tolkien notes that "Frodo is said to have shown great skill with foreign sounds." His native language was Westron, or the Common Speech. The ancestral language of the Hobbits had died out (except for place names) by the Third Age of Middle earth.

CJ STEVENS.

Bronx, N.Y.

# Road Sign for the Negro

*The Temper of Our Time*, by Eric Hoffer (Harper & Row, 111 pp. \$3.95), a collection of provocative, sometimes disturbing essays, evaluates, among other topics, this "age of the intellectuals" and the Negro revolution, which the author excoriates. Milton R. Konvitz, Cornell University professor, wrote the recently published "Expanding Liberties: Freedom's Gains in Post-War America."

By MILTON R. KONVITZ

AT ONCE deep and shallow, satisfying and frustrating, profoundly wise and merely clever, this fourth book by Eric Hoffer is nevertheless unqualifiedly stimulating, and even exciting. What Hoffer—a man who spends three days a week as a longshoreman and one day a week as "research professor" at the University of California at Berkeley — says of the Florio translation of the essays of Montaigne may be said of his own writing: "The sentences have hooks in them which stick in the mind. . . ." But often Hoffer is guilty of hit-and-run tactics: he throws out a thought in an epigrammatic form that has the capacity to provoke or even shock the reader, but Hoffer leaves it when he puts the period at the end of the sentence. I often felt like shouting, "Hey you! Get back here! See what you have written! Doesn't it

provoke you? Aren't you going to examine its implications, spend your next day at the great library at Berkeley testing it to see if it is as true and as significant as you now seem to think it is?"

It is not that Hoffer is interested merely in wise-cracking; he is unrelentingly serious and concerned. Perhaps his thoughts come too fast; they push their way to instant expression, and there they are for all to see and to make of them what one can. The result is a book not so much of essays as of fragments. As a philosopher his style of thought is pre-Socratic: he constantly discovers broad generalizations, universal laws, but leaves them as stark, challenging insights—which others, but not he, may be provoked to examine at a pedestrian pace. Let Plato convert the penetrating intuitions of Empedocles into hypotheses. The philosopher of love/hate and the four elements has no mind for scientific investigation and logical disputation.

Thus in the essay "A Time of Juveniles" he states that, instead of revolutions being the engines of change, "change prepares the ground for revolution. . . . Change comes first." Since the adolescent lives through a period of "drastic change," his actions tend to become those of a "juvenile delinquent." Other types of drastic change evoke actions that are also characteristically juvenile because juvenility is an endemic disease of men in a state of change. "Thus a time of drastic change [like ours] is likely to become a time of wild dreams, extravagant fairy tales, gigantic masquerades, preposterous pretensions, marching multitudes with banners waving and drums beating, messiahs bringing glad tidings, and mass migrations to promised lands."

Now here is an extremely interesting philosophy of history thrown out in a nugget of fourteen pages, with not a footnote in sight. It is left for a Vico, a Spengler, or a Toynbee to test and prove it as a hypothesis in three or more big, difficult, and fully documented volumes.

Less than fifty pages later, Hoffer, in the chapter "A Name for Our Age," finds that ours is "the age of the intellectuals." There are some fifteen pages devoted to this theme, pages in which the reader will discover interesting, perceptive ideas. But at the end one asks if these ideas add up to persuasive proof that ours is the age of the intellectuals; and then, recalling "A Time of Juveniles,"

one wonders whether intellectuals are juveniles or juveniles are intellectuals.

To this reviewer, the most disturbing essay in the book is the one on "The Negro Revolution." Since it is the most consequential piece in the book, I would like to examine it more closely. I see its theme as a crude, heavy, murderous club with which to beat and crack the heads of Negroes.

Let Hoffer himself provide a summary of his position:

Even when it tries to be gentle, the voice of the Negro seems to say: "Lift me up in your arms. I am an abandoned and abused child. Adopt me as your favorite son. Feed me, clothe me, educate me, love and baby me. You must do it right away or I shall set your house on fire or rot at your doorstep and poison the air you breathe."

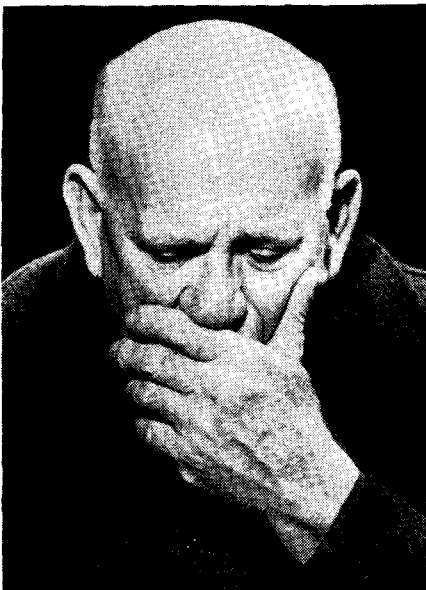
To sum up: The Negro revolution is a fraud. It has no faith in the character and potentialities of the Negro masses. It has no taste for real enemies, real battlegrounds, and desperate situations. It wants cheap victories and the easy way. A genuine mass movement does not shy away from desperate situations. It wants above all to prove the validity and potency of its faith, and this it can do only by acting against overwhelming odds. . . .

Like his fellow Americans, the Negro sets his heart not on "things which are not" but on things he sees in store windows. Hence, when Negro masses act, you have looting orgies and not a mass movement.

Hoffer can be permitted to be a hit-and-run thinker when he writes philosophies of history that one can take or leave as one likes. But when he writes about "the Negro revolution" he is not pushing ideas around but people, men with "hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions," who bleed when pricked, and who can ask: "If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not avenge?"

I would ask Hoffer: Is it just to substitute the riots in Watts, Rochester, and Harlem for the civil rights movement as the essence of "the Negro revolution"? When the thousands of Negro high school and college boys and girls sat peacefully, silently at lunch counters, or marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., singing "We Shall Overcome" on streets and in parks where they had a right to assemble, were they thinking of the things one sees in store windows? Were they engaged in looting orgies or in an unprecedented mass movement which almost the whole world watched with respect, admiration, and sympathy?

When six Negro girls and three Negro boys walked to the door of Central High School in Little Rock as some 500 whites stood and surged and shouted and threatened, and as the mob increased to a thousand persons in a lynching mood,



Eric Hoffer—sentences with hooks.