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Is Hoover Still the Champion?

How Many Decades Hath a Demigod?

Former Attorney General Ramsey Clark's new book, "Crime in America," has stirred a storm of comment. Two of The Inquirer's regular columnists waded into the controversy here—with opposing views.

NEW YORK.

I WORRY about J. Edgar Hoover. How much longer can he remain in the ruddy prime of senility? How many decades hath a demigod?

However much one admires Hoover's energy and pugnacity, there are times when one must ask: Is wisdom always with the ancient? Does age necessarily mellow?

After 45 years, Hoover continues to move through the corridors of power with the swagger of infallibility. More than most men, he has had his godlike hours. To plain folks across the land, Hoover is a saintly man with a heavy clout. Omniscient, brave, reverent, he knows which man hath sinned and where the grapes of wrath are stored.

One must acknowledge the special gifts of any mortal who can achieve that sort of status — and maintain it — without supernatural aid. To this odd — one might say un-American — mystique, I'll drop a curtsy.

You've a splendid club chair in the American pantheon, Mr. Hoover. But as an ordinary citizen, I'm fed up with the lightning of your terrible swift sword. I've even begun to suspect that you are what Hazlitt called "a man of monkish spleen."

And because you insist on remaining in office, Mr. Hoover, I fancy it's the spleen that's showing at the very moment when you fancy it's the flash of your sword.

SURELY, there was more spleen than justice in Hoover's attack last week on former Attorney General Ramsey Clark. "The worst attorney general ever encountered" was the way our 75-year-old hero put it.

Manifestly, the Hoover



Harriet Van Horne



J. EDGAR HOOVER



RAMSEY CLARK



ROBERT F. KENNEDY

His virtues, of course, stood out with uncommon radiance when his successor, John Mitchell, took over the Department of Justice. Interestingly, the very authorities cited above have lately been saying that Mitchell may take his place in history as one of our very worst attorneys general.

There's a cynical maxim — originally French, I think — that men charged with dispensing injustice always seem to have a natural gift for it. I believe it.

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THE Nixon-Mitchell years may be remembered as the time when justice slumbered while politicians grew fat. Consider the ugly twist given one of Clark's high-minded schemes, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. It was conceived as a grant-in-aid project to assist local police to smarten up their departments. Education in criminology, sensitivity training, courses in community relations, training of young recruits from minority groups — these were the goals Clark had in mind.

Today, according to a terrifying article in the current issue of *The Nation*, "The LEAA has become a pork barrel whose chief beneficiaries are the uniformed police." Huge sums of money have been appropriated — more than \$1 billion — and are being spent on armored tanks (for riot control, of course), on sporty squad cars and a truly menacing array of surveillance equipment, including computerized "intelligence systems" intended to predict "unrest."

With these devices — precisely the sort of police state evil Ramsey Clark opposed — the police can keep ordinary, law-abiding citizens under surveillance while they work, shop, walk down the street

and visit both public and private buildings.

Using LEAA funds, many police forces will shortly be buying infrared cameras, zoom lenses and instant replay video tape. You will be spied on — and photographed — at protest meetings, rock festivals or sitting in your car

with a friend. All this in the name of "safe streets."

This is the hard line on crime endorsed by both J. Edgar Hoover and John Mitchell. And it's the line that is giving our police agencies a repressive capacity unmatched in world history.

tirade was prompted by Clark's new book (which I've not read) setting forth his philosophy that crime cannot be curbed unless society's ills are cured.

Hoover's outburst could also be owing to his displeasure over Clark's growing eminence among people who share his passion for justice. Legal scholars, civil libertarians, historians and professionals concerned with correction and reform have repeatedly stated that Clark may well be the very best attorney general in American history.

THIS IS INCREDIBLE RIGHT-WING SHIT!

Clark Should Fight In His Own Class

CHICAGO.

A NEW book by a former attorney general seeks to discredit FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover.

Well, people have been sticking pins in Hoover for as long as I can remember, and none has yet drawn blood.

Why do they try?

When Ramsey Clark was attorney general for a couple of years, technically he was Hoover's superior." He could not shove Hoover around; nobody could. So now Clark has written a book accusing the director of "self-centered concern for his own reputation," as if that were bad.

The book purports to "reveal" that there was conflict between Hoover and former Attorney General Robert Kennedy.

Lightweight Ramsey Clark should fight in his own class. I guess he knows that now.

Instead of temporizing or denying the book's allegations of "conflict," Director Hoover affirms that there most certainly was "conflict" between himself and those others.

SPARING the deceased a recapitulation of some of Kennedy's conduct while in that office, the director relates only professional differences. For example, Kennedy wanted to lower FBI employment standards in order to bring in more Negro agents. Hoover refused.

"I told him, 'Bobby, I have no prejudices. The FBI has Negro agents, Indian agents, Chinese agents — all kinds of agents. Anyone who can meet the qualifications can have a job. But I will not lower those qualifications.'" And he didn't.

As for Clark, Hoover says,



Paul Harvey

FBI is his religion, his wife, his life.

When Hoover took over as director 45 years ago, the FBI was a crummy conglomeration of political rejects. Within three years, he cleaned out the misfits and established the standards which have become tradition.

In all those years, no taint of scandal has touched the FBI. No FBI agent ever used threats or violence to get a confession.

NONE ever misbehaved on duty and the few whose conduct off duty was unbecoming were summarily dismissed.

Clark's accusation is not new. Three generations of liberals have accused Hoover of being a "dictator."

If by that they mean he runs the FBI with an uncompromising hand — he sure does. Be glad he does.

Despite the sensitive nature of his files — which include something about almost everybody, which could be used for diabolical blackmail or nefarious political purpose — Director Hoover has preserved the sanctity of those files against generations of the worst bad people the world has been able to produce.

There were times when Hoover stood, almost alone, between them and us.

J. Edgar Hoover will continue to be feared by the Panthers on the left and the Klan on the right and the overall underworld — and by lightweights who will always be outclassed as long as he is around.

"He was the worst of all the attorney generals I have seen ... a jellyfish ... a softy ... likely to slip-flop on any issue."

If Clark is, as some say, seeking a national following which may propel him to national prominence in 1972, he should never have gone lion hunting with a peashooter.

About his charge that Director Hoover is concerned "for his own reputation": You bet he is!

Forsaking all others, the