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population. One might suppose, then, that he would suggest American withdrawal. In fact, he says very little about this possibility, dismissing it out of hand because it "would have ominous reverberations throughout Asia," because it would be "humiliating," and because of our "moral obligations" to those whom we have supported and encouraged. The argument is hardly convincing. Our moral obligations, such as they may be, can be met by resettling those whom Schlesinger describes as the "Frankenstein's monsters we delight in creating in our client countries," and their cohorts, say, in Arizona. The "humiliation" of withdrawal hardly compares with the national disgrace of a policy of scorched earth and mass murder. It is difficult to imagine anything more "ominous" for backward Asia than a permanent military presence of the sort we are rapidly constructing on the borders of China. Schlesinger's "middle course" is one that, if successful, will leave the United States as dominant as it is in the Philippines, hardly an attractive prospect. If anything will lead this nation to "defile its oldest ideals and disgrace itself in the eyes of the world and its own posterity," it is a willingness to tolerate any barbarism, so long as it can succeed, and to raise our twitters of protest only when total victory seems beyond our grasp.

Noam Chomsky, Professor of Linguistics at M.I.T., is the author of Cartesian Linguistics (Harper & Row)



Reviewed by Peter Collier

FRIENDSHIP AND FRATRICIDE by Meyer Zeligs. New York: Viking. 482 pp. \$7.95.

SURPRISINGLY, neither the traumatic pre-McCarthy years which made Alger Hiss's trial no more than the opening cannonade for the wholesale bloodletting which was to follow, nor the endless stream of apologet-

ics re-agonizing the respective positions in the case, have sent it to oblivion. No longer a cause célèbre, it continues to be evocative, possessing the relentless appeal of an unsolved murder. And one always senses that the clashing forces forces for which Whittaker Chambers and Alger Hiss were in so many ways little more than symbols—are so dichotomized and so obviously re-enacting a genuine American social ritual, even today, that the case has symmetry and a continuing relevance. The myth it embodies is less wholesome but no less crucial to our cultural life than the steelyeyed sheriff drawing last but straightest.

Friendship and Fratricide shifts the focus on the case from politics to psychoanalysis. The author, Dr. Meyer Zeligs, is a practicing San Francisco psychiatrist who spent six years assembling and evaluating the data for his book. One thing is quite clear from the outset: Zeligs is a professional incapable of the amateurishness and monumental pique characterizing the Freud-Bullitt study of Woodrow Wilson, with which his book will inevitably be compared. Whatever its flaws, Friendship and Fratricide will have to be considered as a serious attempt to make psycho-biography yield new insights into one of the most obscure cases in modern American history.

Ultimately Zeligs sides with Hiss in the conflict and accords him something approaching special treatment, but he does so, one senses, because that position happens to be the logical result of an inquiry conducted along those lines usually termed "scientific."

Whittaker Chambers—obese, brilliant, shabby, every inch an underground man living out his own Dostoevskian nightmare—is the prime mover in the openended drama Zeligs attempts to unravel. Known best for his destructiveness, this mysterious man, the most celebrated informer since Quisling, was once characterized by Malcolm Cowley as the potentially great literary genius of this century. Any talent he might have had, however, is hidden by his heavy-handed efforts as a senior editor at Time, by the saccharine pages of the works-Witness and Cold Friday—that followed his recantation, and by the neurotic juvenilia Zeligs exhumes from Chambers' undergraduate days at Columbia.

There is, however, abundant creativity in the way Chambers molded reality, forcing it into a dramatic coherence

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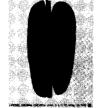








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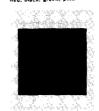
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which exalted him as a tragic hero—a combination of Willy Loman and Young Werther—perennially beset by malignant forces ranging from the entire social order to the Communist Party apparatus he purported to serve. It was primarily in his life acts that Chambers availed himself of the artist's prerogative to revise, alter and embellish, as Zeligs' analysis of his strangely contradictory testimony before HUAC shows.

If we relied on Chambers' articulated reasoning for his acts—his participation in the communist underground as well as his final compulsion to recant—he would remain forever opaque. For Zeligs shows him to be a more likely inhabitant of fiction than fact, a man whose acts successfully evaded the discernible cause and effect thought to circumscribe human behavior. He disturbs us for much the same reason that Coleridge was puzzled by Iago: his articulated motivation is inadequate as an explanation for his malignant acts.

Zeligs' premise is based on the fact that Chambers' peculiar acts in his adult life were dictated by a birth-trauma which became translated into an obsessive need to undergo symbolic deaths and re-births, a syndrome which often fed off other people, particularly those reminiscent of his brother, Richard. Zeligs carefully traces Chambers' furtive adolescent escapes from home and shows how they always resulted in the establishment of a new identity, as did the long, imaginative series of aliases he created for himself during his life as ostensible communist courier for stolen state secrets. Zeligs also underscores the insubstantialities of Chambers' descriptions of his communist activities and the weakness in his later rationalizations that anything which seemed bizarre in his behavior was actually dictated by his profession as spy.

Coincidental with the birth-trauma in Chambers' unconscious was a fratricidal impulse directed originally at his brother. Handsome, athletic, definitely heterosexual, Richard Chambers was in every way Whittaker's antithesis. By implication, Chambers coveted Richard's personality as exactly that which isolated him from the parental favor he imagined his brother enjoying. But Richard was no less victimized than his brother by a chaotic and irregular family life, and had far fewer imaginative resources to combat anomie; he eventually killed himself.



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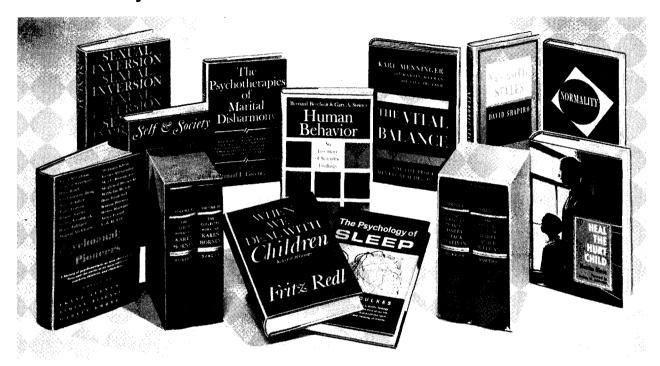
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This fate, according to Zeligs, is exactly what Chambers unconsciously wished for his brother and sought to promote in small ways. Richard fulfilled his fratricidal tendencies for him, allowing Chambers to shuffle off the coil of his own burdensome mortality and be reborn as the idealized brother. A pattern, with Richard's role open to any number of surrogates, was set up, becoming the predicate on which Chambers' adult behavior was based.

Hiss, says Zeligs, was one such surrogate, whose own psychic life made him particularly vulnerable to Chambers. For he was a compulsive good guy, a "caretaker" whose own early family traumata had made him overly proper and too solicitous. He claimed, when first accused by Chambers of being the highest-placed and most unregenerate of communist agents, that he had known his assailant only briefly, some 13 years earlier, as George Crosley. He contended that their relationship had been casual, terminating abruptly when Chambers became too much of a sponge.

But Chambers (who, Zeligs says, compulsively collected "life-preservers" in case his precarious existence should be threatened) had tucked away a wealth of anecdotes about Hiss, his habits and family life. They provided juicy and telling testimony. Denying vehemently that he had ever been even remotely associated with communism, Hiss challenged Chambers to make his accusations outside the sanctuary of HUAC. He did, Hiss sued for libel, astonishing new evidence kept appearing throughout the trial (Zeligs suggests that Chambers was continually "primed" by the FBI), and Hiss was finally convicted of perjury.

Zeligs' portrait of Hiss is of a man good to a flaw, an American Adam, a new world innocent vulnerable to the machinations of any Caliban. He could have stepped out of the pages of Horatio Alger, raising himself by the bootstraps of unlimited promise inherent in the American dream to finally take a prominent place beside Roosevelt at Yalta and at the founding of the U.N. In Horatio Alger, the American dream is limitless and always inviting; in the fall of Alger Hiss, it is revealed as bankrupt, ending finally in disgrace and penury.

Zeligs' book interprets the Hiss affair with a new twist. But it will ultimately quiet none of the uneasiness which surrounds the case. The effect of his reconstruction of the personality of Chambers, which at first seems quite convincing, is diminished when Hiss is not accorded the same rigorous treatment. The duality, therefore, becomes a little too Manichean, too perfect, too lacking in discriminating gray.

Still, Friendship and Fratricide should win a niche in the enduring mystery. Hiss partisans will enlist it gladly as an excellent rhetorical ally against Chambers and his ilk, and the investigating Goths of HUAC. The literary establishment will damn it with faint praise, pointing out that it establishes neither Hiss's innocence nor Chambers' guilt, that Chambers-unlike Hiss, who submitted to a long-distance variety of analysis-refused to communicate with the author, that Zeligs' analysis, resting on Chambers' literary remains, is often overly imaginative. Richard Nixon may privately whine about the way the book makes him seem overly zealous to prove that Hiss (or anyone else) was a communist. William Buckley, Chambers' Boswell, will launch anathemas against Zeligs, sublime in their arrogance, from his pulpit in The National Review.

But whatever pettifoggery that Friendship and Fratricide inspires should not obscure the real accomplishments of its author: his narrative is fascinating as a species of literary-scientific detective work, and in the main, it is a serious attempt to make psychiatric technique, so fruitful for Erik Erikson in Young Man Luther, relevant also to a reconstruction of the dark, clammy places in history.

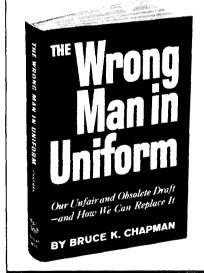
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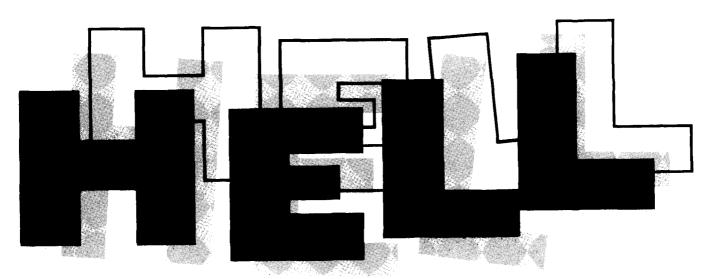
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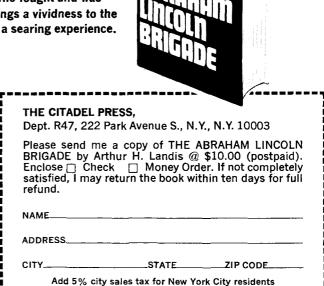
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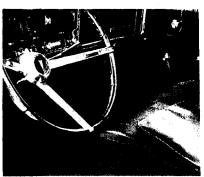


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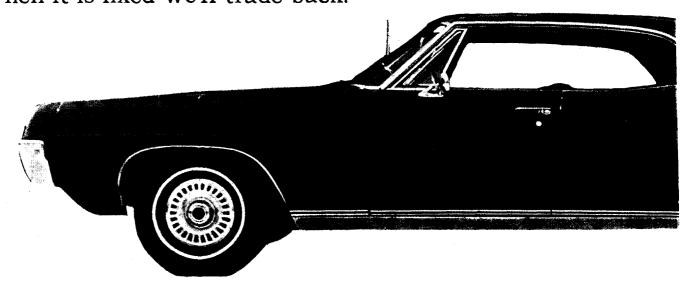
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