

for International Peace. As he could not resist appeals for personal help, so he could not resist the idea of helping the world.

In Dr. Zelig's view, Chambers's life was ruled from beginning to end by relentless psychic conflict, a recurrent pattern of love-hate, envy, and destruction. He was early estranged from his neurotic parents. He felt responsible for his brother's suicide, and was burdened by guilt that he had neither saved him nor joined him in the death pact he claimed his brother had suggested. Chambers repeatedly sought to "resurrect" his brother and then to "kill" him again. Alger Hiss was the last of a long line of surrogate brothers met, exploited, and betrayed.

The psychological strains under which Chambers labored required him to alter his name and his identity regularly, and Dr. Zelig, physician turned detective, traces the succession of changes at length, with full documentation. Chambers lived under many names in many places, falsified many documents, and created and recreated his own history as a means of inventing an identity acceptable to him. Conversely, he projected upon other people, especially those he victimized, his own numerous flaws: he was reportedly alcoholic, homosexual, thief, and defaulting debtor.

At his high school graduation ceremony Chambers delivered the class prophecy, in which he predicted that a

girl classmate would become a prostitute. She was the first of many victims. Inflicting various degrees of damage, Chambers subsequently slandered or blackmailed college friends, fellow-workers, and political associates, as well as "dead, deported, or mythical persons." All this was a part of "the fictionalization of his own reality." And indeed, Dr. Zelig's explication of Chambers's prose, poetry, and literary translations reveals, among other things, startling prefigurations of the relationship with Hiss.

In 1948 Hiss was publicly named by Whittaker Chambers as having been a leader of the Communist "apparatus" in Washington during the mid-Thirties. Hiss denied the charges, asserting that he had never known anyone named Whittaker Chambers. He eventually recognized his accuser as one George Crosley, a free-lance writer whom he had assisted in small ways more than a decade earlier.

Hiss promptly sued for libel. The process led to his being tried twice for perjury. The second and decisive trial concentrated finally upon documents allegedly passed from Hiss to Chambers, and claimed to have been written on a Woodstock typewriter once owned by Hiss.

The possibilities, now or ever, of real certainty concerning the documents or the typewriter are remote. A main service of Dr. Zelig's book is its directing our attention along the right lines: far from deepening the futile cloak-and-dagger mystery, it deepens instead our wonder and awe. If the mechanics of courtroom justice failed, it was because the jurors could not believe that Chambers's charges could be lies: no man would tell such things about another without some basis; somewhere there must be motive.

But where? "The many episodes in [Chambers's] itinerant and vagabond existence were linked in a long chain of clinical evidence presented by [Hiss's] counsel to show Chambers's sociopathic personality." The prosecution derided this evidence of motive because "you can't see" the imaginative workings of the mind. The defense psychiatrist, Dr. Carl Binger, reminded of "his legal limitations as a witness," attempted to explain that he had been "trained to include . . . not to exclude," but the court was skeptical and the jurors more so.

Hiss's legal defeat had the effect of freezing the public memory of the case. He entered contemporary history as the archetypical traitor, Chambers as the repentant patriot. The view was reinforced by Chambers's *Witness*, published in 1952, the factual distortions and psychological defenses of which Dr. Zelig analyzes extensively.

As knowledge overtakes our age, the invisible becomes increasingly visible.

Hidden or unconscious passions are as real as assassin's bullets. And as we move farther away from the political atmosphere of 1949 the vindication of Alger Hiss becomes more probable. Toward that end this "psychobiography" irresistibly leads, for Dr. Zelig's care and labor must win the respect of open minds capable of including the invisible.

Ever Since Greencastle

By Naomi Lazard

EVER since Greencastle
where I boarded the train,
crossing the bed of foamflowers
that slept beside the shed,
I have played a part, I have brazened
it out in the gentian gardens, the
cafeteria,
the auditorium, everywhere.
I was none too steady after the fruit
punch.
The girl on the coin winked twice
as I dressed for dinner at eight and the
reception.
Thank you, thank you all. No applause
please.
Having seen you once I didn't dare
to turn my head, those bees swarmed
out of your eyes.
I fastened mine on my book
all about the new mathematics.
But you touched me first with a hot bee
pressed
to the small of my back, sent my shivers
of nerves
humming like quick black birds
in a dangerous sky. Later you said,
"But I saw you at Greencastle. You
looked proud."
Proud! I saw us lying together on some
enormous shore,
folded like leaves that have spun
down in a draft, lulled by the low
sounds of gulls
and our names forgotten.
But you were always so far away.
I turned to discover the slope of your
neck
bending toward someone else.
I smiled on my imaginary stage,
performed in the spot of an amber lens.
And you. You were cornered, I presume,
back to the wall and swollen with
success.
Barbecued on their hot smiles.
Ah, my well done turned to perfection
morsel,
who is the white lamb, who
the ravenous one that blessed the fire?
We lifted a departing toast
to our separate ways, and as if in a
dream
I remember our only silence.
How we turned face to face
in the cruellest part of the night.
How we curled to each other
with never a sound to save us.

and resentment set in, followed by contempt. Hiss and Chambers are linked by a deep "bond," a "tacit esteem of character," they share a "simplicity of taste, a gentleness of character." But Hiss is not Chambers' equal, we are to understand, in intellect; not equal to the minds Chambers grew up with, not interested in ideas, not even interested in Shakespeare. Then Hiss's character itself—praised before for its gentleness—comes under attack: it contains a streak of "cruelty" and "savagery." That underlying meanness is turned on Chambers himself: Hiss reproaches Chambers for his uncared-for teeth; Chambers is victimized, and he forgives Hiss. It is evident that this passage, like all of *Witness*, works for Chambers' self-glorification. He portrays himself as noble in spirit: noble, in his generous praise of Hiss's character, in his appreciation of the friendship, and in his tolerance of Hiss's shortcomings (anti-intellectualism and savagery). If we believe Chambers, he cannot lose.

—From "Friendship and Fratricide."

Destroying Angel from Missouri

Orrin Porter Rockwell: Man of God, Son of Thunder, by Harold Schindler (University of Utah Press. 399 pp. \$7.50), recounts the violent life of the man non-Mormons feared as the "Destroying Angel" of Mormonism. Meredith Brown is a lawyer in New York with an abiding interest in American history.

By MEREDITH BROWN

HIS BLACK hair poured over his broad shoulders, so long that it had to be done up in a bun in back. He never let it be cut after the Prophet Joseph Smith told him: "Cut not thy hair and no bullet or blade can harm thee." The prophecy held true. During the remaining thirty-five years of his life Porter Rockwell fought and killed unknown numbers of men—whites and Indians, Mormons and Gentiles—without suffering harm. He died a peaceful death in 1878: with his boots on, but in bed.

The violence of Rockwell's life is impressive. With the rest of the Mormons in Missouri, he experienced the brutal raids of the Missouri Gentiles in the 1830s. When the dread Danite band was organized in self-defense, Rockwell was a charter member. He learned the secret sign: "to clap the right hand to the right thigh, and then raise it quick to the right temple, the thumb extending behind the ear." Swearing loyalty to the Church and secrecy upon pain of death, he became "a man of God and son of Thunder."

With the encouragement of Governor Lilburn W. Boggs, the old settlers of Missouri—"pukes," the Mormons called them—drove the Saints out of the state. From Nauvoo, Illinois, Joseph Smith prophesied that Boggs would die by the hand of the Destroying Angel. Soon afterwards, Rockwell left Nauvoo for Missouri; Boggs was shot in the back of the head as he read in his library; and Rockwell returned to Nauvoo to receive a team and carriage from Joseph Smith and the name "The Destroying Angel" from the Gentiles. A Missouri grand jury declined to indict Rockwell for the attempt on Boggs's life.

A lynch mob slaughtered Joseph Smith in the jail at Carthage, Illinois, while the local militia stood aside. Rockwell, who had served as Smith's

bodyguard, found vengeance by shooting the leader of the Carthage militia dead out of his saddle. The Mormons trekked west; Rockwell helped to guide them, fighting Indians along the way. Once in Utah, Rockwell shot more hostile Indians, ran off 1,400 cattle from Albert Sidney Johnson's army during the Mormon war, killed numerous rowdies and rustlers, and was heavily implicated in the murder of five gamblers he was guiding out of the Territory in 1857. Undisturbed by the law as long as Brigham Young lived, Rockwell was indicted in 1877 for one of the 1857 murders. When he died before trial, a Gentile paper screamed that he had cheated the hangman; Mormons eulogized his devotion to the Church, despite all "his little faults."

Harold Schindler has attempted to strip away Churchly whitewash and Gentile vitriol to reveal Rockwell as he was. At once a Mormon and a trained police reporter, Schindler comes well-equipped for the job. He is dispassionate

in an area of American history long marred by partisanship. If he presents the Mormon version of a controversial incident (and all incidents in early Mormon history seem to be controversial), he presents the apostate or Gentile version in the footnotes; and vice versa. This counterpoint between text and footnote, perhaps necessary when sources conflict so sharply, demonstrates the thoroughness of Schindler's research. It also slows the telling of his tale.

SCHINDLER achieves, not the balanced portrait he strives for, but a Pirandellesque presentation of opposites. We never know what Rockwell actually did, and still less why he did it. The result, though frustrating, may be inevitable: there are no neutral sources, and Rockwell himself, unable to read or write, never recorded his own story. But the piecing together of the differing accounts of Rockwell's deeds, though it tells us little about Rockwell himself, tells us much about Mormon history. From his baptism by his cousin and neighbor Joseph Smith in Manchester, New York, to the death of Brigham Young, Rockwell was close to the leadership of the Saints. If his life was violent, organized violence was a product of the zeal from within and persecution from without that gave shape to the Mormon Church.



"No, madam, I have nothing to do with Vietnam. I'm in charge of shipping such terrible instruments of warfare as T-shirts, undershorts, shaving soap and PX supplies!"