

OSS

The **SECRET** History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency

R. Harris Smith

What did Stewart Alsop, John Birch, David Bruce, Julia Child, Allen Dulles, John Gardner, Arthur Goldberg, Charles Hitch, Herbert Marcuse, Walt Rostow, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. have in common? They were all members of the OSS.

"Mr. Smith's lively and objective account brings to life the mixture of intelligence, bravery, creativity, confusion, corruption, monarchism, communism and sheer zaniness in Wild Bill Donovan's circus."

—Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

"This is a readable and entertaining book on that astonishing wartime organization, the Office of Strategic Services."

—Stewart Alsop

"Vividly portrays an important feature of America's democratic martial spirit at its best and worst—exemplified by the most brilliant team of amateur enthusiasts the nation ever assembled in wartime. A delight to read."

—Paul Seabury

"A rich file of facts, vignettes, and who was who in the OSS, the chief intelligence agency during World War II." —Kirkus Reviews

"Unquestionably the best history of the OSS ever written... is also a fascinating study of politics and people, intrigue and imagination, accident and adventure."

—Thomas Braden

\$10.95

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
Berkeley • Los Angeles • New York

its wants, its desires, its felt and expressed needs. The people watch and vote, they cast their ballots, and the medium's supposed absolute rulers respond in kind, respond to the voice of the people. Here is an economy of feelings and emotions, not of dollars alone. Not to appreciate that is not to know the most formidable communications device man has ever used.

Clearly, Mayer touches on many important television themes. Some he develops with understanding and thoroughness; and these chapters merit reading and rereading. Mayer is particularly telling in his treatment of Joan Ganz Cooney and her formidable Children's Television Workshop, perhaps the single most innovative and creative contribution that has been made to or by American television. His explanation of the genius of French television research under the leadership of the extraordinary Pierre Schaeffer is fascinating, and is probably included as an object lesson to less imaginative American researchers who still believe that counts are sufficient for conclusions. Mayer deals skillfully, too, with the impoverished thinking of those who see each new step in communications technology as the solution to older problems of infinite complexity that require something so much more telling and profound. Here he writes about political access, but change the subject and the judgment remains the same: "The hope that the multiple channels of cable systems will resolve this problem is more than usually childish."

But there is nothing childish about this book. It misses its mark: to do for television what its author has done for other American institutions. But it at least begins the discussion of this vital medium that must now take place if we are to deal effectively with its strengths and weaknesses. And it begins it well. □

KIKE!

**A Documentary History of
Anti-Semitism in America**
edited by Michael Selzer
Straight Arrow/World, 231 pp., \$7.95

Reviewed by Irving Malin

In his introduction Michael Selzer urges us to be concerned with anti-Semitism. It still *matters*—even after the relative acceptance of Jews in hotels, universities, and clubs—because it is bound to explode again at any time. He is less interested in the various social surveys that have been made

of anti-Semitic attitudes—one of white church members in 1963 revealed that 33 per cent of Protestants and 29 per cent of Catholics agreed that "Jews are more likely than Christians to cheat in business"—than in exploring the causes of these attitudes.

But Selzer soon runs into problems. He claims that anti-Semitism isn't "as, Simmel insisted, a social disease," and it is not confined to one area or class or race. He regards it, instead, as a "moral aberration." "It is one of the more prevalent and hence significant manifestations of man's pervasively (but not ineradicably) evil nature." The questions leap forth. What causes this "manifestation" of evil? Why devote an entire book to a survey of American anti-Semitism unless *our* kind is radically different from other manifestations? What exactly does he mean by "moral" and "aberration"?

At times Selzer seems to believe that anti-Semitism lies deep in the soul—it belongs to the "Kingdom of Satan"—but he also accepts it as severe mental illness. Satan? Paranoia? The categories are hopelessly mixed. I do not want to condemn Selzer for his vague remarks—he is, after all, trying to grapple with huge abstractions in a ten-page introduction—but I do think that he tries to cover too many bases at one time.

Selzer is, however, not very different from critics of American-Jewish literature who refuse to define "Jew" before they begin to label everything good as "Jewish" (or vice versa). Selzer should define the Jew, perhaps in purely theological terms. By never limiting his point of departure (or arrival), he moves erratically in all directions.

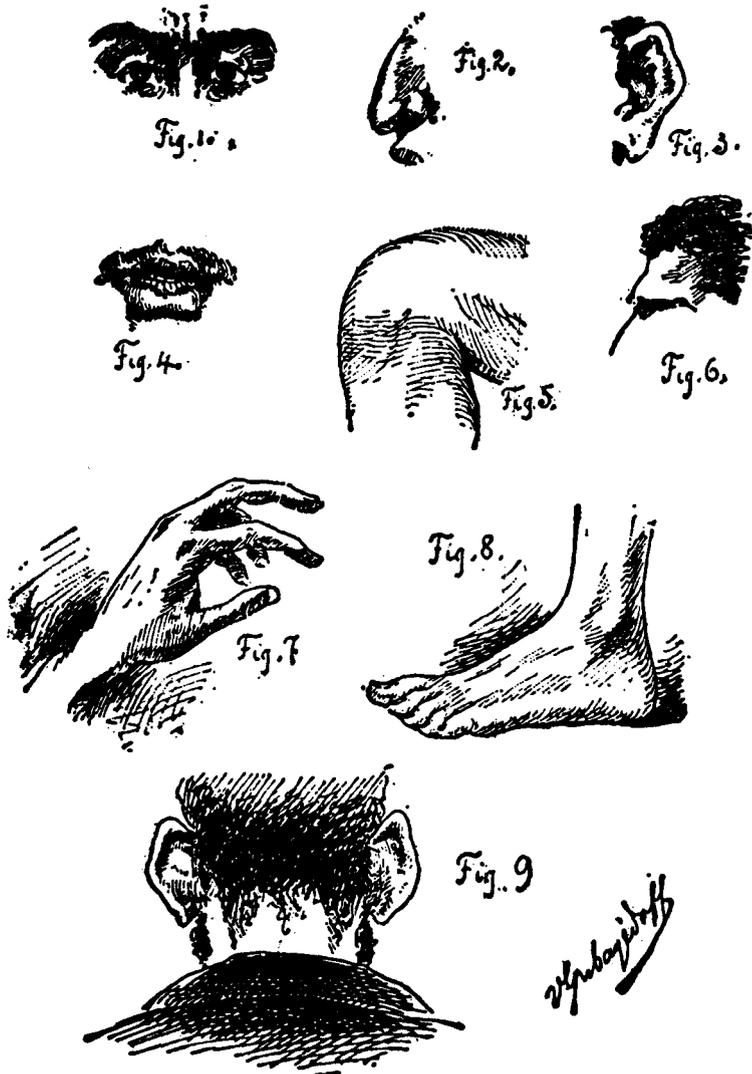
So, by the way, does Herbert Gold in his foreword to the book. He ranges from personal history to psychoanalytic double-talk: the "Jew as Shadow." He mentions matzah balls, the "Jewish American Princess," the "devil-tenant." He is more colorful, autobiographical, and perceptive than Selzer, but he is also imprecise.

Although I am dissatisfied with the lack of firm definitions (or attitudes) in their introductory essays, I find that this "documentary history" is strongly interesting. Selzer is a fine editor. He is able to suggest that even though there is historical change—we move from Peter Stuyvesant's request to expel the Jews (September 22, 1654) to subtler responses to surveys of anti-

Irving Malin teaches at City College of New York. He is the author of *Isaac Bashevis Singer* and *Nathanael West's Novels*; he is the editor of the forthcoming *Contemporary American-Jewish Literature: Critical Essays*.

HOW WE MAY KNOW HIM.

- Fig. 1. Restless suspicious eyes.
- Fig. 2. Curved nose and nostrils.
- Fig. 3. Ill-shapen ears of great size like those of a bat.
- Fig. 4. Thick lips and sharp rat's teeth.
- Fig. 5. Round knees.
- Fig. 6. Low brow.
- Fig. 7. Long clammy fingers.
- Fig. 8. Flat feet.
- Fig. 9. Repulsive rear view.



A diagram from a nineteenth-century anti-Semitic tract, from "Kike!"

Semitism taken during the last three decades—basic patterns persist. The Jew, for example, is continually pictured as odd, dirty, fiendish, and needlessly shrewd. Neither Selzer in his editorial comments nor the anti-Semites quoted really explain why the Jew is pictured in these particular ways. But the effect is chilling, as in the brief, quoted comment by a "patriotic" American that the "way to solve the Jewish problem is to get a Hitler over here, and then forget about the whole business once and for all."

Selzer paces the selections well. He alternates long and short passages, prose and verse. The short passages are clearly the most frightening. Henry

Adams, for example, maintained that "the Jew is also a curiosity. He makes me creep." Selzer is also able to show us that John Jay Chapman and H. L. Mencken, among other intellectuals, were not the completely noble figures we have been accustomed to think they were. He deflates their pretensions by merely quoting them. (I think of Mencken differently after having read these statements: "The Jews could be put down very plausibly as the most unpleasant race ever heard of. As commonly encountered they lack many of the qualities that mark the civilized man: courage, dignity, incorruptibility, ease, confidence.")

I quarrel with some of Selzer's edit-

ing. Although he includes Henry Adams, *et al.*, he does not offer selections by Pound, Eliot, and Hemingway. Surely their anti-Semitic comments are as pertinent. Curiously, he also omits selections by Jewish writers dealing with anti-Semitism. This survey is surely incomplete without passages from Bruce Jay Friedman's first novel, *Stern*, (a book that says more about the problem than Selzer's entire introduction), Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep*, Nathanael West's *The Dream Life of Balso Snell*, or yes, even Portnoy's *Complaint*. The comparisons could have been fascinating. (Who is more disturbed by the "creepy" Jew? Henry Adams or Alexander Portnoy?) Here I reveal my own prejudice—I believe that art tells us more about life than newspapers, forged historical documents, and edicts—the kinds of material Selzer favors.

I do not want to end with complaints. I think that, although Selzer does little to explain the nature of anti-Semitism, he performs a valuable, necessary service in making us recognize that throughout our history many Americans have thought that "Judaism is the antithesis of Americanism." His selections shock and illuminate. □

Free

NEW CRITIC
 Nat Hentoff
 John Williams
 Peter Steinfeld
 George Elliott
 Ellen Willis
 Seymour Krim

Send now for a free subscription to *New Critic* and free membership in an exciting new book club.

Each month share the critical views of America's best writers and an opportunity to buy books that anyone who reads will want to read at up to 40% off list price.

Subscription and membership are entirely free. Buy as many books as you like or none. You still get *New Critic* free each month.

YES! Start my free subscription and free membership now. I understand all books offered are at special reduced prices and that I may buy as many or as few as I like. Each issue will contain descriptions of selections along with an option card for ordering or refusing books. \$1

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

NEW CRITIC • 59 Fourth Ave. • N.Y.C. 10003

Theater

Summer Solace

BY HENRY HEWES

Summertime puts Broadway and Off-Broadway to their severest test. Many highly praised shows that would have flourished between September and June have to fold, simply because the audience for theater decreases considerably in July and August. This year the number of shows in Broadway playhouses has dropped to nine, which must be the all-time low since the invention of air conditioning.

On the brighter side are the sold-out performances at Lincoln Center's Beaumont Theater, with its original-star revival of *Man of La Mancha* and the gradually improving business at both the Edison, one of Broadway's "middle houses," where *Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope* is cheerfully offering a mixture of blues, hand-clapping gospel friendship, and self-reliant vigor, and the Ethel Barrymore, where *Don't Play Us Cheap!* is drawing a sizable black audience to Broadway.

As usual in summer, shows occasionally replace their original stars with new ones, and for the critic it is interesting to see how the replacements' different personalities and approaches to their roles can change a play. A case in point is Neil Simon's *The Prisoner of Second Avenue*, in which the star roles originally played by Peter Falk and Lee Grant are now being undertaken by Art Carney and Barbara Barrie.

When the show opened last December, it seemed, for the most part, to be just a man and his wife making the same jokes about the discomforts of living in New York City that nightclub comics and late-night TV hosts toss around. Nevertheless, it was a hit.

Although the new performers have not really changed the show's substance—it is still a scenario of jokes and still a hit—they have made it a little more of a story. Art Carney's portrait of Mel Edison is, from the beginning, that of a desperately anguished fifty-year-old executive on the verge of a breakdown. Eschewing the comic technique almost completely, he snaps out his complaints with compulsive anger. Is he paranoid? If one thinks about it, most of what Mel complains about is reasonable. However, Carney

makes Mel seem psychotic because he doesn't see why he should put up with the discomforts everyone else accepts and because he is aware that twenty-two years on Madison Avenue have left him unfit to exist in any other environment. Mel's reasonable revolt appears all the more insane because Barbara Barrie, as his wife, Edna, calmly and quietly resigns herself to everything. While this makes her less funny in the first act, it pays off in the second when her underplayed put-down of Mel's horrendous relatives is controlled emotion at its best, and in the final scene when she loses her job and goes berserk.

Off-Broadway the summer roster of shows is about normal. It includes the New York Drama Critics' Award winner, *That Championship Season*; the Chelsea Theatre Center's delightful revival of *The Beggar's Opera*; Arrabal's impassioned, shock-studded *And They Put Handcuffs on the Flowers*; Tennessee Williams's sublime *Small Craft Warnings*; Video Free America's composite of video tapes, *The Continuing Story of Carol and Ferd*, in which two young people deliberately and cruelly explore, with TV cameras, the intimacies of their relationship; and a comic double bill, *The Real Inspector Hound* and *After Magritte*, by Tom Stoppard.

The Stoppard comedies do not pretend to be much more than clever exercises. *The Real Inspector Hound* sets out to combine a parody of a mouldy British whodunit with a witty fantasy in which a third-string drama critic nefariously manages to become number one.

It shows us two critics, Birdboot and Moon, watching a new bit of trumped-up nonsense about a madman who may be one of the house guests at Muldoon Manor. The critics' pre-curtain conversation reveals that some of their colleagues have written their reviews in advance. Birdboot also urges his colleague Moon to recognize the talent of the play's ingénue, whom Birdboot has been seducing. Birdboot and Moon seem ridiculously vain when they compare their blurbs that have appeared blown-up in front of theaters, with poor Moon, the second-stringer, being able to boast only about one "unforgettable" for a play he can't recall. The pair are also preposterous as they scribble ponderous, fashionable-sound-

ing criticism that is either totally unrelated to the play they are seeing or that attempts to find hidden profundities in the trivial. Moon says, "I think we will find that within the austere framework of what is seen to be on one level a country-house weekend, and what a useful symbol that is, the author has given us . . . the human condition."

Ridiculous, yes. But Stoppard then does accept the difficult challenge of making his two spoofs merge into something that both adroitly completes the exercise and also reflects a certain degree of surreal truth. The cast, headed by Tom Lacy and David Rounds as Birdboot and Moon, is amusingly accurate. Nevertheless, this production often emerges as boringly facetious and repetitious, just barely saved by the subtlety in Stoppard's lampoon of the critics, and our awareness of a good erratic mind at work.

The shorter of the two pieces, *After Magritte*, is an interesting and remarkably successful attempt by the playwright to create a theater piece that has the quality of the Belgian surrealist painter René Magritte, or, that is, the quality Magritte would have had if he had been dealing with aspects of British middle-class society.

The play takes place in a home where people seem to be logically pursuing a bizarrely routine existence. A mother-in-law plays the tuba, and a husband and wife getting ready to go out and perform their dance act carry on oblivious of the eccentric images they present. They have been arguing about a strange sight they saw—a white-bearded, one-legged football player hopping down the street in striped pajamas—when a detective enters to question them about a crime he suspects them of having committed. The detective's pursuit of his own inquiry ingeniously leads to an explanation of both the crime and the couple's apparition.

Magritte once wrote, "Likeness is not concerned with agreeing with common sense or with defying it, but only with spontaneously assembling shapes from the world of appearance in an order given by inspiration." This formula also defines Tom Stoppard. □

Answer to Wit Twister, page 63: sager, gears, rages.