

the minute you do you're through as a jazzman. Maybe not as a musician, but jazz is only what you are.

"It's simple. A lot of slaves came over and a lot died on the way and so they had a pretty sad life at first. 'Oh, our troubles,'" he sang. "Well, that's two notes. Then you expand, a few ideas, some food for thought, maybe what happened to you and some chick, always something that's happened to you—the blues, depression, my man's gone to another woman—and then you have it. But not these kids today. Take 'You Made Me Love You.' They won't play something like that. Too slow for them. They gotta have something to pop their eyes out. When we hit Savannah we played 'I'll Never Walk Alone' and the whole house—all Negroes—started singing with us on their own. We ran through two choruses and they kept with us and then later they asked for it again. Most touching damn thing I ever saw. I almost started crying right there on the stage. We really hit something inside each person there. But these kids!" he snorted. "I've seen young fellows not thirty years old and they're on the way down. I'm playing for forty-four years now and when they reach my age they'll be lucky to be on a cane." He handed me a medicated toothpick.

THE TALK idled the rest of the way to Nashville. Armstrong proudly showed me the invitation he received to attend the ceremonies at Ghana. He couldn't make it but his wife was representing him. He dug out a telegram he had sent Nkrumah ("MANY MANY BLESSINGS AND HAPPINESS TO ONE OF THE FINEST CATS I EVER MET IN MY LIFE—SWISS KRISLY, SATCH").

Then he started reading *Ebony*. We discussed it article by article until we came to a piece on the Moore-Patterson fight. Louis said he had watched the fight. "So did I," I volunteered without thinking at first of any connotations. "I was pulling for Archie, but I guess he was just a little too old."

Armstrong stopped and considered my remark. "A good big man can always beat a good little man," he said. "And that's all there is to it."

## The Man Who Defies 'Easy Explanation'

DOUGLASS CATER

JOHN FOSTER DULLES: A BIOGRAPHY, by John Robinson Beal. Harper. \$150.

For all its publicity triumphs, the Eisenhower Administration exhibits strange difficulty in providing those first drafts of history on which bona fide historians can practice their craft. So far, not one of the top-drawer officials who have departed has produced a memoir. When reporter Robert Donovan, at the behest of Sherman Adams, wrote *Eisenhower: The Inside Story*, it was greeted by an embarrassed silence from those inside the White House—a silence which, according to Donovan, has not been broken to this day. (When this reporter sought to ques-



tion the President about one of the Donovan book's revelations at a news conference, Mr. Eisenhower quickly veered off on a discussion of Chester Bowles's latest book.)

The chronicling of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles's stewardship has been the most perplexing business of all. The two efforts so far—both by employees of the Luce Publications—have followed an almost identical pattern. First, the author, with allusions to private conversations with the Secretary and never-before-revealed information, brings forth a eulogistic and highly dramatic account of Dullesian triumphs in foreign policy. When, inevitably, questions are put concerning the more noteworthy episodes, Mr. Dulles denies, evades, or, with becoming modesty, refuses to discuss what is written about him. The situation is left right there.

That was what happened with James Shepley's thrilling narrative in *Life* in January, 1956, about the three times Dulles practiced brinkmanship. Now we have John Robinson Beal's book, which, among other things, adds yet a fourth episode. This one—the decision to withdraw aid for Nasser's Aswan High Dam—was admittedly a different kind of brinkmanship. Nonetheless, it was "a truly major gambit in the cold war."

"As a calculated risk," writes Beal, "the decision was on a grand scale, comparable in the sphere of diplomacy to the calculated risks of war taken in Korea and Formosa."

### Fearless Fosdick . . .

Beal has not been content simply to depict Dulles as a sort of Fearless Fosdick of international diplomacy. He has sought to work out a portrait of the "Peacemaker" whose concepts are "too immense for easy explanation, being no less than the political unity of Western civilization . . . idealistic beyond the normal grasp."

But how to reconcile such idealism with the abundant instances in which baser political motivations have been apparent? Beal answers with a note of condescension: "To those who . . . had not plumbed the combination of traits embedded in the Dulles character—the moral upbringing with the lawyer's requirement of 'getting things done'—the question remained a perplexing one." To many Washington correspondents covering the State Department, it is still a perplexing one.

Beal makes a manful effort to explain why "most of the large group who write about foreign affairs" have developed "a cordial dislike" of Dulles: It is because of personal pique, antipathy toward "the legal mind in action," the instinctive dislike of the critic for the performer. "Dulles, more than any predecessor, personifies U.S. foreign policy . . .,"

Beal writes. He is "a dedicated man" who has not sought "to please politicians or get a good press in order to ingratiate himself for further advancement." Beal concludes: "... primarily his conduct as Secretary cocked an eye toward the moral judgment of history."

In spots, Beal cannot conceal his pique at those who have sought to pass contemporary judgment. He writes, for example, about the criticism arising from decisions made by Under Secretary Herbert Hoover, Jr., during Dulles's absences: "In the sputterings of the more rabid critics there was unconsciously satiric reflection of their frustration at not being able to alight on their usual victim."

### ... or Modern Joshua?

With such heavy strokes Beal fills out his portrait of a man who has never wavered amid the upheavals of history and the carping of the critics. Even Dulles's "liberation" policy has not changed. It was simply misunderstood. "In short, what Dulles meant and what he specifically defined was an operation no more warlike than Joshua's march around the walls of Jericho. His concept was too simple for general acceptance; his slogan, 'liberation,' was gross oversimplification of what he had in mind."

Beal adds by way of explanation, "One of history's most monstrous oversimplifications is the equation  $e = mc^2$ . When Einstein produced the formula, it meant nothing by itself to those who had not gone through the enormous calculations behind it . . . 'Liberation' was the distillation of a similar amount of background thought by Dulles . . ." Now if the Hungarians can only figure out Einstein's theory, liberation à la Dulles will be a cinch.

Despite its pretended intimacy, Beal's biography contains only pedestrian explanations about a man who is mightily in need of explaining. In view of subsequent responses to queries made by the Secretary and the President, its so-called exclusives on events of high historical importance are suspect. Despite its special pleading, it doesn't answer many of the important questions historians will be asking about this Administration.

## Ten Days That Shook Some Americans

ROBERT BENDINER

THE ROOTS OF AMERICAN COMMUNISM,  
by Theodore Draper. Viking. \$6.75.

Threading his way skillfully through a jungle of sectarian underbrush, Theodore Draper has brought off a triumph of history over polemics. If something like this lucid, detached, and impressively documented study of the Communist Party's early years had appeared in the mid-1930's, perhaps thousands of idealistic young Americans would have been spared a hallucination that was merely unpleasant for some but permanently disabling for others.

To many of my generation, the merest brush with the party in the days of the Popular Front, or even

moral and intellectual bankruptcy was to become cumulatively apparent with the Moscow trials, Molotov's reconciliation with von Ribbentrop, and the grand assault on Finland.

This first volume of Mr. Draper's study, which is sponsored by the Fund for the Republic, stops in 1923, twelve years before the Popular Front. But through the historical perspective it provides, that fantastic era yet to come, in which Hollywood millionaires toasted the wretched of the earth in champagne, is made plausible. It was merely the farthest reach of a pendulum that has been swinging between the impotent sectarianism of a revolutionary party and the opportunism of a would-be "popular" party ever since the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917.

No one was more surprised than the Bolshevik leaders when they found power suddenly within their grasp. Less than a month before the Czar's abdication, Lenin was telling a Zürich audience that he probably would not live to see the Russian Revolution. At the same time Trotsky and Bukharin had nothing more stirring to do than discuss the future of American radicalism with some left-wing Socialists in a Brooklyn living room. Trotsky was lecturing here, editing a New York Russian newspaper and boning up on the country as though digging in for a long stay. Mme. Alexandra Kollontay, according to Draper, "was busy tattling on Trotsky and Bukharin to Lenin," who once wrote back, "What a swine that Trotsky is!"

### The Cruel Deception

The author is under no lingering illusions concerning the freakishness of the October Revolution. Five months before it, there were only eleven thousand Bolsheviks in all Russia, a fact that is sometimes



with its offshoots, was enough to cure us—not because it seemed sinister at the time, but because it was clearly absurd, with its grandiose self-deceptions, solemn pompousness, and suffocating banalities; with its obsequiousness to Moscow and ignorance of America; and above all, with that travesty of the democratic process which it called "democratic centralism" and which was hardly a shade less autocratic than a feudal barony. The full depth of the party's