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Editorial Book Review

An American Hero: Rise And Fall

EISENHOWER: CAPTIVE HERO
By Marquie Childs. Harcourt, Brace and Co. \$4.75.

THIS is a fine and moving exercise in the art of reporting which is to say it is literature of the first rank. Nothing about Eisenhower written before approaches its power and truth-telling; nothing written before will reduce its importance or make it "just another" of a thousand books that will be written on the same subject. This is because of the unique construction of the book: over a framework of facts deftly fitted and joined, facts which record how Eisenhower was shot out of a cannon from complete obscurity to a position at the very top. Childs has built a drama that fairly flashes with revelation.

The drama essentially is a tragedy that has no audience within these shores: Eisenhower is the central character and all the rest of us are members of the cast. At the end we are filled with sympathetic understanding of the man with earnest belief in the man's good intentions but with the harsh knowledge that we have little confidence in the President.

How this happened, how we constructed a hero larger than life who is stubbornly believed in the illusion, and how he seldom tried and never succeeded in scaling down that image before events smashed it beyond repair is the stuff of the story.

BUT that is not all the story. The sixtyn of Wild Bill Hickock and other legendary heroes whose exploits still beguile the President have a place in it as do the spunkies and the ballistics missiles of Nikita Khrushchev. For the trajectory of Eisenhower's career "went from the drowsy Indian posts, from Fort Lewis, Fort Leavenworth, Jefferson Barracks—where he had spent nearly thirty years of his life as part of an unknown caste—to Paris, London, Algiers, to the center of the stage of a vast struggle for world power. He was a professional soldier before December 10, 1941, that is to say, a museum piece. Overnight he was given authority on a scale exercised by few human beings in recorded his-



Marquie Childs

tory. The transition itself might well have been expected to overwhelm most men.

The transition did not overwhelm Eisenhower. Transition was his forte, moving on from one post, one continent, one position to another, concealing the fears and the inexperience behind the confident smile, believing and exhorting others to believe that he carried a guarantee of success, insisting that the sheer force of simple virtues would simplify the hateful and horrid riddles of our time.

Abilene, Kansas, has a key place in the book as it does in the Eisenhower story and the Eisenhower myth. "What if he had grown up in Brooklyn? Impossible," Santa Barbara, California? "He would never do. Abilene was so right that no novelty would have ventured to put him there." But he was there in his boyhood absorbing that synthesis of inner attitudes and outward behavior that was to identify him with the hopes and desires of most Americans for a hero to win the war and keep the peace. He was there and in his intellectual and emotional responses he has never gotten far away from Abilene.

CHILD'S magnifies also the formative effect of the little recalled and insular years at the Indian posts which were so distant and so uninvolved in the

From The Irish Digest

SEEING IS BELIEVING

IT is human nature to believe more what one learns by word of mouth. A newspaper editor said to his housekeeper one morning: "I think we'll have a good potato crop this year."

"No such thing," asserted the housekeeper. "I think the crop will be poor."

Ignoring her remark, the editor proceeded to his office and had inserted in

social and economic revolution being wrought in the nation which he was called to govern, and in the world the nation was called to lead.

Over and over the reader is impelled to view the gap between Eisenhower's capabilities and his responsibilities between the legendary figure elected almost by acclamation and the very fallible human who took the oath of office, between what the public wanted him to do and what it was willing for this "captive hero" to do.

Childs shows these as very large gaps, but he takes pains to demonstrate that Eisenhower sometimes bridged them with that peculiar combination of good luck, good will and intuitive perception of the moods of others that has marked his entire career.

There is no mockery here. A cynic could not see with Childs' perception how Eisenhower even after his evidence, ineptitudes and infirmities became apparent, continued for five years to serve as the focus of an American dream of peace and stability and as the recipient of a vast and little-questioning faith.

THERE were some questions about the man around him, the story told out that Defense Secretary Wilson, "a practical man looking about his vast domain for candle ends to pare" had indeed "invented the automatic transmission so that he could free his feet to put in his mouth." Some people were frustrated and others shocked by the record of John Foster Dulles, "a mixture of sophistication and evangelism of great knowledge and a weakness for eth stunts of showmanship and windy idealism of harsh realism and the most naive wishful thinking." There was some worry about the extraordinary power of Sherman Adams, the old reliable hand always there, always ready with an answer in his dry understated New Hampshire fashion, an answer or an opinion delivered with an unassuming cracker-barrel gravity that never failed to impress "the boss." And perhaps among Republican frogmarchers regrets remained that Douglas MacArthur had not carried the 1952 convention with that speech "full of Olympian thunderbolts hurled at the wicked past."

But like remained the national hero, although he clearly was a weak President, "who seemed to regard the presidency almost as a ceremonial office, a lofty platform from which to view the scene, and confer when concurrence seemed to be called for. The explanation would seem to go back to that persistent belief, originating long before his nomination to the presidency, that he was working on the man to say yes, that he would be president of all the people, standing above the battle, unifying the country."

IT COULD NOT be that way, and has not been that way. In time there came Little Rock, the spunkies, the lag in missile development—and sudden, shocking disillusionment.

"In our dismay . . . we called on the President to unify and inspire the country, and the commonest judgment was that he failed. But what an inordinate task it was—a task for a man with a sense of mission such as Eisenhower, the compromiser, the reconciler, has never had. He began by believing he could unify the country. Yet in his years in the White House the differences—the differences that transcend the conventional political boundaries—have if anything been accentuated. Whenever, after, will have to resort to the authority that has been permitted to decline. . . we shall be more fortunate than we deserve if we find the man who has at the same time sufficient strength and sufficient restraint to fill an office of the demands made on it and so little in the resources available to it."

THE EISENHOWER STORY that Childs has told is in many respects the story of a nation whose most deeply cherished dreams of peace, order and stability have failed to come true. Some have been dashed beyond repair during the presidency of a man who was thought to have the magic key to a fabulous future.

No nation has such a key. In pursuit of its dreams, a nation can have only leadership and it cannot have that unless it demands it and recognizes it when it appears.

the evening paper his estimate of the crop situation.

That night when he returned home he found the housekeeper waiting for him with a sheet of paper on her face and a copy of the paper in her hand.

"It was wrong," she said apologetically. "It says here in the paper that the crop will be excellent this autumn."

'I Wouldn't Let You Use This Old Thing — It Might Not Give You Enough Protection'



U. N. 'Cover-Up' Exposed

America's Shattering Defeat

By JOSEPH ALSOP

THE last fortnight the United Nations has been exposed as a cover-up for the Middle East. The U. N. is even more exposed to the grand pretenses of the modern world, the United States as is proven by the case of Kashmir. The U. N. can hurt us in other words but it is impossible for it to hurt us in the Middle East.

By no practical test, for example, the President's fourth annual speech to the General Assembly of the U. N. was a quite exceptionally unimportant event. The President looked well. He said what he had to say with vigor and apparent conviction. He was freed from the apoplexy that was due to his great past and his obvious good intentions.

But in fact the President's speech and the program of the United Nations are all equally meaningless. They will not save the Jordan of Lebanon from the fate that hangs over them. They will not prevent the Arab from accepting Egyptian sovereignty and this seems to be what the Saudis count on. They will not rescue Iraq. They will not protect against Nasser's Kanaif and the other oil-squirrels of the Persian Gulf.

STRANGE ORGY

Presenting Gamal Abdel Nasser to all the world's eyes, the United Nations has been the scene of a strange orgy of smartly self-righteousness during the Six Day Crisis.

This American policy has now been shamelessly defeated, with incalculable future effect. What has happened here in the United Nations is not a defeat, it is a triumph. The defeat at Six Day was all.

In a democracy, only the majority counts. But the country is not to be understood and face might not be given a huckster's coup. The U. N. has already shown its true face in this instance. Hence it must be admitted that this reporter, began his inquiry into the present goldmine at the U. N. in an entirely good mood.

What does one find, after making such an inquiry? First of all, an unhappy 99 per cent of all the solemn things that are

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MEANINGLESS

By this, their own public opinion, the United States and the other Western powers may be hampered and hamstrung by the decisions of the U. N. But the U. N.'s decisions are meaningless to the Soviet Union, as Hungary proved. The U. N. will not stop Gamal Abdel Nasser too.

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whispering but by not talking, not pretending, and not making any. He still shines away from Democratic campaigns. He hates too much public discussion. He knows that when he gets a subsonic snarl in the privacy of the cloakroom he can out-charm him and out-lie him

Victory On Trade

This was the way Lyndon put across the four-year extension of the Reciprocity Trade Act. An unexpected extension. Hitherto not even Democratic presidents have been able to persuade Democratic Congresses to vote more than a three-year extension. However, Lyndon wanted at least four years and Johnson gave it to him. Johnson's opponent was a very effective Democrat, Sen. Bob Kerr. Kerr wanted special preference for oil. Finally Johnson won a friendly showdown with the Republicans, going down to oil man from Oklahoma.

Lyndon told Kerr "Jack Garner, who played poker said sometimes you had to bet your whole stack. I'm not a poker

player but I'm putting my whole stack in the reciprocal trade showdown tomorrow. You're going to fight me, but I don't want you to fight me hard. I'm going to win."

Every Vote Counts

By putting in his "whole stack" Johnson meant that he had lined up every possible vote. He did knock out Mr. Kerr's amendment but he didn't quite get the five-year reciprocal trade extension he wanted. He went into the joint conference between the House and the Senate with the Senate record for three years, the House for five years.

ACE UP HIS SLEEVES

But Johnson had one ace up his sleeve on the Senate conference. Sen. Harry Byrd of Virginia, who temporarily opposed Johnson. This time was for him. Actually, the State Department had arranged with the Byrd government in Indiana for some special trade concessions to Sen. Byrd's apple. Byrd is the biggest grower in the world.

DOUBLE STANDARD

The truth is that a double standard of international morality, typified by U. N. Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld, is now an accepted fact. Hammarskjöld and the others like him ducked and dodged and pleaded and equivocated in order to avoid doing anything serious about the bloody mess in the Middle East.

SILENCE

What the President refused flatly to do was to speak in support of the principle of integration. This is the point where the Southern moderates led by Goldwater, in a sense, let out in hostile territory. Liberals control the presidential line. It does not greatly care about integration or at least is indifferent to it.

NOT GOOD BUSINESS?

He replied that he thought it was "just not good business for me to do so." He suggested it could "wreck public opinion." If he discussed separate cases of constitutional law "where I might agree or disagree."

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NEVER HUNGRY

The President himself has no real experience of extreme deprivation, personal intimacy, sexual smothering, lack of access to a proper education or economic disability. He is a product of his set, of his creed. These are the burdens often borne by minorities, and how calling them are shown by the first of bitterness they yield.

PREDICTION FULFILLED

Shortly after Lyndon Johnson came to Washington as a congressman, this column reported that a "rangey, 32-year-old, black haired, handsome Texan, who has been in Congress only three years, has political magic at his fingertips, and was with him that is irresistible in action."

STILL TRUE

The same column reported "If he Johnson tells you he can be elected President of the United States, don't bet against him."

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People's Platform
Calling Democrats

Charlotte

THE prolific pen of J. R. Cherry has defined a new splinter party to which he subscribes as "libertarian conservative." He could have said simply that he was a free-will fatalist, whose soul soared within its confines, flitting hither and yonder like a butterfly on a summer's day. For that's about what his high sounding political dogma evinces.

Jefferson, for whom we both share a common admiration, was no such Democrat as that. He was secretary of state under Washington, and prior thereto he was the author of our Declaration of Independence, which even cruddy old John Adams approved, and he was the author of the Ten Amendments to our Constitution, which safeguard our hard-fought liberties, but he was no free will Democrat, but rather a political realist who foresaw that his ten immortal amendments to the federal Constitution needed a great protector and so he gave birth to the Democratic Party.

I would never indict Mr. Cherry with the name he assigns to his political credo. I believe he could be a great Democrat and I invite him into the fold. We find a lot of Cherry who led North Carolina into greatness by riding her off at headbent and long to see a clause written into our state Constitution that forbids bonded indebtedness, such as the State of Indiana now has. I am not so far so far as Mr. Cherry is saying that if the bones of Jefferson could have walked with the late FDR, that Jefferson would have strangled him. There is nothing but blind hatred shown there. Jefferson's only blind hatred seems to have been against only one man and he was Aaron Burr, the worst liberal, that frustrated politics ever spawned.

About all I can hope for is to call the faithful to the polls for it is possible that the Southland may again be literally overrun with bayonets within the next two years and I know we can

Like On Little Rock
Strange Fruit Untasted

By DORIS FLEESON

WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Eisenhower has just affirmed publicly that he will maintain law and order in Little Rock and everywhere else in the United States. He is not alone in this.

But this very fact that the U. N. can hurt us in other words but it is impossible for it to hurt us in the Middle East.

By no practical test, for example, the President's fourth annual speech to the General Assembly of the U. N. was a quite exceptionally unimportant event. The President looked well. He said what he had to say with vigor and apparent conviction. He was freed from the apoplexy that was due to his great past and his obvious good intentions.

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THOMAS JEFFERSON
Founder of The Faith

Cornfields In August?

One Reader Dissents

Charlotte

Editor, The News:

The News "Cornfields Are Good Places To Go Into" of Aug. 20. Permit me to say how wonderful it is that different people hold different memories about the same subject.

For me, cornfields in August are anything but pleasant places. In my field stalks are standing yellow and brown, and the same blades either cut the unsuspecting victim or leave red rakes on his skin as he passes by. The disintegrating tassels tumble their fine fragments down his neck, induce acute itching and continued scratching.

The same fine-particle particles being an attack of hay fever. Grass (it about the stroller's eyes) and black flies sting him through his sweaty shirt. A waving of arms and shouting here and there intensifies both insects and the man too enough to wander into the field.

Cornfields good places to be in August? Hah! —S. R. SINGLE

THE President's syntax was cloudy as usual. But whatever a professor of English might think of it, it seemed to me obvious, in its purpose, which was to escape the notice of a conscience-pained man.

And last is the really remarkable fact about the President's pledge to use troops again, if necessary, in the integration struggle.

So the money is on the back of Gov. Orval E. Faubus of Arkansas, who is a determined segregationist.

The President made good on the background assurances of the Justice Department, which were all that could be had until he spoke. These assurances were in stating that the federal government would maintain order some how.

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