

W. St. Paul

11/25/73

Debating the Assassinations

By John Mathews

Star-News Staff Writer

The Conference on a Decade of Assassinations closed yesterday with participants trading charges of conspiracies to disrupt the proceedings or to limit the scope of the discussion.

About 400 dissidents among the 200 participants demanded and got a final session to discuss the possibility of links between Watergate conspirators and the assassination of President John F. Kennedy a decade ago in Dallas.

"Our host, Mr. Fensterwald, should be knowledgeable about that since he represented James McCord, the Watergate spy some of us believe was at Dealey Plaza (in Dallas)," said Sherman Skolnick, a spokesman for the dissenters.

Bernard Fensterwald Jr., the local lawyer who organized and supports the

Committee to Investigate Assassinations that sponsored the two-day conference, said the group led by Skolnick "are the type who should normally be called Know-Nothings."

"It's discouraging that serious efforts like these have to be disrupted," he said. "I don't have any proof, but . . . federal agencies could be interested in disrupting this conference. They have fought us in the past in every way I can imagine."

ANOTHER dissident, A. J. Weberman, a well-known figure in the underground press, said that "left-wing assassinologists have been excluded from the conference." He added that the sessions at Georgetown University "could be a CIA front to keep an eye on what people are learning about the assassinations."

Fensterwald countered that all points of views were

represented among conference speakers. "Most of us on the committee are liberal Democrats, and if anything, we have been accused of being too far to the left."

Skolnick, who led the dissidents at the assassination conference, heads his own Committee to Clean Up the Courts in Chicago. Recently, he has conducted an investigation of the plane crash last Dec. 8 in Chicago in which the wife of E. Howard Hunt, another Watergate conspirator, was killed. Skolnick charges the flight was sabotaged and that the media and the government have conspired to cover up the facts of the crash.

Despite the dissent at the final day of the conference, discussions continued with virtually no new facts disclosed, but with much re-

view of well-aided conspiracy theories.

DONALD FREED, co-author of "Executive Action," the new film on the assassination of President Kennedy, urged assassination buffs to "strike a balance between paranoia and naivety."

Along with Mark Lane, the other author of "Executive Action," Freed said he rejected the comment of the producers that the films was "pure entertainment."

Peter Noyes, a Los Angeles television news producer who has written a new book, "Legacy of Doubt," alleging that a Mafia figure was connected to the assassination of President Kennedy, said, "Until we have the power of subpoena and a congressional investigating committee takes action, we will accomplish nothing."