The Combative Chronicler

(See Cover)

To take part in public affairs, to smell the dust and sweat of battle, is surely to stimulate and amplify the historical imagination.

—Arthur M. Schlesinger

With his horn-rimmed glasses and floppy bow ties, his retreating hairline and advancing waistline, the slightly built man with the professorial air hardly looked the part of the New Frontiersman. But wherever the action was during the thousand days of John F. Kennedy's Administration, there he was too.

Cigar clenched at a jaunty angle between his teeth, manila folder clamped firmly under his arm, Arthur Schlesinger bustled about the corridors of the White House in brisk, choppy steps, now stopping in for a chat with the President, now exchanging gossip with a colleague, now hurrying off to a meeting in the Cabinet Room. Rare was the party that he missed. He turned up regularly at Bobby Kennedy's Hickory Hill seminars, and once, fully dressed, he slipped or was pushed (the record does not show which) into Bobby's pool. He seemed to know everybody—actresses and artists, poets and politicians—and if Kennedy wanted to meet, say, British Philosopher Sir Isaiah Berlin or Composer Gian Carlo Menotti, Schlesinger could, and did, arrange it. He was the connoisseur on art and literature, movies and martinis, and he served as the Administration's bridge to the intellectual community. He savored the pleasures and perquisites of power with zest.

Actually, Schlesinger was more part of the atmosphere than the substance of the New Frontier. His office, symbolically, was tucked away in a remote corner of the East Wing, near the social secretary and the correspondence section. His specific assignments were few and vague. Though memos cascaded from his typewriter—"beautiful memos, witty, masterfully written memos," said a colleague, "but often showing bad judgment"—they were frequently ignored. He was only on the periphery of power. But at that, he was closer than most historians have ever been.

At First Hand. Schlesinger's thousand days amid the dust and sweat of public affairs have now borne fruit in *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*. After Kennedy's assassination, the participant reverted to the role of historian, and in 14 months of feverish writing sought to capture on paper the events he had seen at first hand. The result is, by all odds, the best of the 90-or-so Kennedy books that have appeared in the two years since Dallas. It has won Schlesinger critical acclaim and considerable affluence as well. With 175,000 copies in print and a fifth printing set for January, he stands to earn well into six figures.

The book is a virtuoso demonstration of the skills that helped make Schlesinger a Pulitzer prizewinner at 28 (with *The Age of Jackson*) and a bestselling author (with all three volumes of his still incomplete *The Age of Roosevelt*) who is also held in high respect by his fellow historians. Those skills include an almost unique combination of encyclopedic knowledge, sharp reporter's eye, extraordinary facility and a literary style any novelist would be proud of. Schlesinger has no use for the notion of the historian as a scientist. To Schlesinger, the historian is one who "noses around in chaos, like any other writer," and out of chaos produces a drama that illuminates the facts while simultaneously engaging the imagination.

In *A Thousand Days* he has done just that. From page 1 of the book, when he sets the stage for Kennedy's Inauguration by describing the "eerie beauty" of blizzard-bound Washington, to page 1031, when he rings down the curtain on a snow-covered grave in Arlington, he follows Thomas Babington Macaulay's dictum that "a truly great historian would reclaim those materials which the novelist has appropriated."

Here is the Cuban invasion force setting sail for the Bay of Pigs, with the boats "tinted by the red light of the dying sun." Here is Kennedy in Vienna, annoyed by Nikita Khrushchev's description of the Soviet Union as a young nation and the U.S. as an old one, and replying, "If you'll look across the table, you'll see that we're not so old." Here, in a less weighty moment, is Kennedy at his children's bedtime, inventing stories about "Caroline hunting with the Orange County hounds and winning the Grand National and John in his PT boat sinking a Japanese destroyer."

The Buddha. Coming from a man who is at once an avowed partisan and a direct participant in the events he chronicled, the book was bound to create a stir. Schlesinger hardly realized how great the stir would be. Mostly, it was over his treatment of Secretary of State Dean Rusk.

As Schlesinger relates it, Kennedy had grown "increasingly depressed by [Rusk's] reluctance to decide." In meeting after meeting, "Rusk would sit quiet-

CAPT. CECIL W. STOUGHTON—U.S. ARMY

SCHLESINGER & FRIENDS* AT WHITE HOUSE WATCHING FIRST U.S. SPACE SHOT (1961)

Savoring the pleasures and perquisites of power.

* From left, Bobby Kennedy, McGeorge Bundy, Lyndon Johnson, Schlesinger, Admiral Arleigh Burke, J.F.K. and Jacqueline.

ly by, with his Buddha-like face and half-smile, often leaving it to [McGeorge] Bundy or to the President himself to assert the diplomatic interest." By the autumn of 1963, Schlesinger declares, "the President had reluctantly made up his mind to allow Rusk to leave after the 1964 election and to seek a new Secretary of State."

That sentence first appeared in an excerpt from the book printed in LIFE magazine four months ago, and the controversy over whether Schlesinger should have published it has yet to subside. He was accused of "the height of historical irresponsibility," of cashing in on confidences from a dead man, of writing "peephole history," of endangering the national interest. In his defense, he quoted British Philosopher Walter Bagehot: "When a historian withholds important facts likely to influence the judgment of his readers, he commits a fraud." (But Schlesinger himself ignored that injunction when, according to a friend, he decided to omit a similar account of how Kennedy had been planning to dump FBI Chief J. Edgar Hoover too.)

In public, Rusk kept his silence except to assure that when people "deal with me on the basis of confidence, that confidence will be respected." To a visitor he said, "Only two men know about my relations with President Kennedy. One of them is dead and the other won't talk." Nevertheless, he is known to be particularly resentful of Schlesinger's claim that Kennedy considered Viet Nam his own "great failure" in foreign policy because "he had never really given it his full attention." Schlesinger simply had no way of knowing of all the hours that the President spent on the problem, Rusk has told friends. As for the report of Rusk sitting Buddha-like at White House meetings that Schlesinger attended, one of Rusk's defenders suggested that it was absolutely true. Rusk considered Schlesinger one of the biggest gossips in Washington and deliberately decided not to say anything important when he was in the room.

The Dilemma. The squabble points up the inherent dangers in the writing of "insider" memoirs, and no one was more aware of these dangers than John F. Kennedy. When he first came to the White House, he told his aides that he did not want them recording his idle comments and irreverent wisecracks, as Henry Morgenthau had done with Franklin Roosevelt or as Emmet John Hughes was later to do with Dwight Eisenhower. Kennedy frankly hoped to be his own biographer. Once, so the story goes, Kennedy caught Schlesinger pounding at his typewriter, and quipped: "Now Arthur, cut it out. When the time comes, I'll write *The Age of Kennedy*." But after the Bay of Pigs he changed his mind. "I hope you kept a full account of that," he said to Schlesinger after a meeting. Schlesinger reminded the President that he had been told not to keep such records. "No, go ahead," Kennedy insisted. "You can be damn sure that the CIA has its records and the Joint Chiefs theirs. We'd better make sure we have a record over here."

From then on, Schlesinger scooped up information like a vacuum cleaner, recording everything on a sheaf of white 8-in. by 4-in. cards that he carried in an inside jacket pocket. On weekends he transferred his notes to white foolscap, eventually filled three black leatherette binders with nearly 400 single-spaced pages. He had intended to put them at Kennedy's disposal. Instead, they became the nucleus for his own book.

Working in a rented office atop a three-story building in Washington, Schlesinger churned out as many as 4,000 words in a nine-hour day, breaking only for a long lunch.

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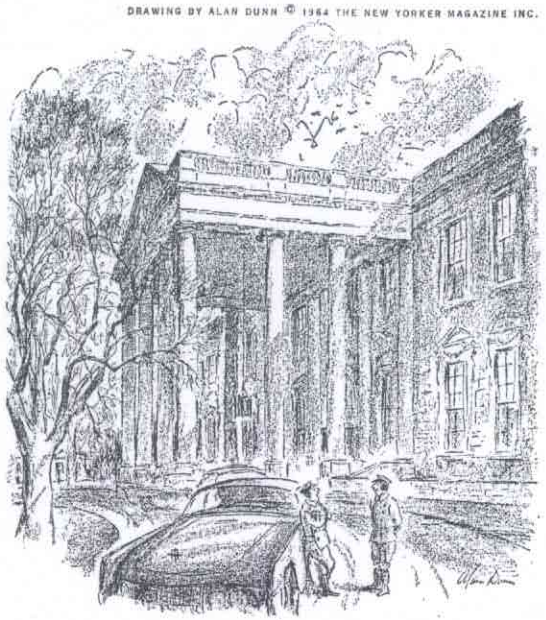

"NO USE MY RESIGNING. SORENSEN AND SCHLESINGER WRITE BETTER THAN I DO."

Sob-Sisterish Story. During the writing, he consulted often and intimately with Bobby Kennedy and Jackie. He is close to both, and if Bobby ever launches another Frontier, Schlesinger will undoubtedly be part of it. Jackie found him congenial from the first, because of his interest in and contacts with the intellectual and cultural community. Together and singly, they filled in gaps in his information, read his proofs, corrected errors, suggested changes. Almost undoubtedly it was Jackie who told Schlesinger about how her husband "put his head into his hands and almost sobbed," then took her in his arms after the failure at the Bay of Pigs. When the anecdote appeared in LIFE, it was criticized as being tasteless, and Schlesinger later cut it out of the final version. "It didn't come off," he explains. "It sounded sob-sisterish."

Schlesinger feels that his toughest "purely literary problem" was how to deal with himself, for "historians aren't used to using 'I.'" In fact, it is more than just a literary problem. Schlesinger is writing history, not a novel, and the "I" in question is not only involved in events but judging them as well.

Who Goofed? Schlesinger never really solves the problem. For one thing, he understandably magnifies his own role in the shaping of policies and the making of decisions. More important, he occasionally slips from objective analysis into outright apology. During strategy sessions before the Bay of Pigs, for example, the CIA assured everybody that the invasion force could "melt away" into the mountains if it were beaten on the beaches. But nobody bothered to check on just where the mountains were. "I don't think we fully realized," Schlesinger writes airily, "that the Escambray Mountains lay 80 miles from the Bay of Pigs, across a hopeless tangle of swamps and jungles." Surely somebody deserves censure for failing to consult a map. But who? Schlesinger does not say, and understandably—since he himself was there for almost all the briefings.

Aside from partisanship, other pitfalls exist in the sort of "instant history" that Schlesinger has undertaken. Even if he had not been partial to the Administration, some critics ask, wouldn't his very closeness to events distort his perspective? Harvard Economist J. K. Galbraith, perhaps Schlesinger's best friend, thinks not. "Saying he was too close to events is like saying he had too much information," says Galbraith. But won't future books offer a much better perspective? Says Author Theodore H. White, who has written a good deal of instant history himself: "It's not that the future will write it better—just different." Schlesinger himself replies that "it is unfair to wait until other participants in events recounted are dead—grossly unfair. People who are alive can make their own answers, and the clash of judgments enriches the record."

But he is weary of the arguments. Since the book came out, he has heard "the same questions 15 times," and the same answers have tumbled from him. Only one question matters to him, and he claims that those who criticize him never bother to ask it: "Is it true?" Schlesinger insists that it is, but he realizes that truth in some situations is not a satisfactory defense. In this respect, Schlesinger likes to quote Sir Walter Raleigh's comment in the preface to his *History of the New World:* "Whosoever, in writing a modern history, shall follow truth too near

the heels, it may haply strike out his teeth." Sir Walter did not get his teeth kicked out—he got his head chopped off; and while Schlesinger need hardly fear a similar fate, he has come to realize that the writing of history can be a bruising affair.

Albania & Albinos. Not that Schlesinger minds. As the heir to a proud historical tradition, he was encouraged from his earliest days to hold the mirror up to everything, past and present, and to declare his judgment of what he saw. His judgments were loud and clear and precociously decisive. Says a friend: "Arthur has always had to contend with an enormous coalition of the envious and the aggrieved—those who are jealous of his talents and those who have suffered from them."

His mother, Elizabeth Bancroft Schlesinger (pronounced *Shlay*zinger), is collaterally descended from the 19th century U.S. historian George Bancroft. His father, Arthur M. Schlesinger Sr., who died six weeks ago at 77, was a pioneer in U.S. social and intellectual history, taught at Harvard for 30 years —seven of them while "Junior" was also on the faculty. Young Arthur was born in Columbus in 1917, while his father was teaching at Ohio State. In 1924, Harvard outbid Columbia for his father's services, and the family moved to the Georgian-style brick house in Cambridge where his mother still lives. The house overflowed with books, and Arthur tried to devour them all. His father saw nothing unusual in that; he claimed to have read 598 books himself by the time he was 14. But others considered Arthur something of a prodigy. "You could picture him sitting on his father's knee enunciating truths about Populism," says Novelist Mary McCarthy, a longtime friend.

At first, Arthur went to public schools in Cambridge. "To Middle Westerners," his father once wrote, "popular education was an article of faith." But faith dissolved when Arthur's high-school history teacher solemnly informed her class that people from Albania are called Albinos because of their white hair and pink eyes, and at 13, Arthur was packed off to Exeter. He was two years younger than most of his classmates, a confirmed liberal in a conservative prep school, and an indifferent athlete. "He wasn't one of the boys," said a classmate. History was his solace and his escape. "He lived alongside the people we were studying," recalls Principal-emeritus William Saltonstall, whose cousin Leverett is the Republican Senator from Massachusetts. "When we were debating the trial of Socrates, Arthur could not contain himself. He literally sputtered about those who were accusing Socrates."

Stiff Exam. Since he was only 15 when he graduated from Exeter, his parents decided to take him and his younger brother Tom (now a historian-researcher for the Colonial Williamsburg restoration project) on a year-long tour of the world. On his return, he entered Harvard in the same class (1938) as the late Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., recalls him as a bright, amiable fellow who might have gone far in politics —but not so far as his brother John. Schlesinger made Phi Beta Kappa in his junior year, seemed a cinch to win highest honors—until his final oral exam. "Since Arthur knew so much," says Professor Paul H. Buck, "I felt I should give him a very stiff exam." It was so stiff that Arthur went home convinced he had flunked. That night a worried and embarrassed Schlesinger Sr. roused Buck from his bed to ask what had happened. "Arthur," said Buck, "it was a better exam than we usually get from Ph.D. students. In fact, it was superb." Arthur graduated *summa cum laude*.

ROBERT W. KELLEY—LIFE

WITH REINHOLD NIEBUHR (STANDING) & ADOLF BERLE AT A.D.A. MEETING (1950)
No Republicans between the sheets.

BEN MARTIN

WITH STEVENSON AT U.N. (1961)
He came along too soon.

As a member of Harvard's select Society of Fellows, a group of graduate students who were allowed to pursue their studies without worrying about Ph.D. requirements,* Schlesinger plunged into research on the Age of Jackson. In 1940, he also plunged into marriage. His bride was Marian Cannon, daughter of a Harvard Medical School physiologist and now a painter of children's portraits. In 1941 his studies yielded a series of lectures on Jacksonian democracy that became the nucleus for the book that later made him famous.

During World War II, Schlesinger served with the Office of War Information and the Office of Strategic Services in Washington and Europe, all the while working over the Jackson lectures, revising and expanding them. Just as the war ended, *The Age of Jackson* appeared. The Schlesingers doubted that *Jackson* would sell as well as a children's book that Marian had written and illustrated, *Twins at Our House*, to memorialize the birth of their first two children, Stephen and Kathy, now 23 (they have had two more since—Christina, now 19, and Andrew, 17). To their mutual delight, Arthur's history went on to sell more than 60,000 copies, and made Schlesinger, at 28, the *Wunderkind* of Academe.

Perpetual Tension. In *Jackson*, Schlesinger rejected Frederick Jackson Turner's long-unchallenged thesis that the common man of the frontier was the real muscle behind Jacksonian democracy. To Schlesinger, the laboring men of the Eastern cities, led by liberal

* Schlesinger has neither a master's nor a Ph.D. degree—a rarity for a man who reached the rank of full professor at Harvard.

intellectuals, were the true source of strength.

As Schlesinger saw it then, U.S. history was the story of "a perpetual tension in society, a doubtful equilibrium, constantly breeding strife and struggle." The source of that "irrepressible conflict," he believed, was "the struggle on the part of the business community to dominate the state, and on the part of the rest of society, under the leadership of 'liberals,' to check the political ambitions of business." In those days Schlesinger did not think well of businessmen—"a group that has invariably brought national affairs to a state of crisis and exasperated the rest of society into dissatisfaction bordering on revolt."

Since then, he has modified his views. American businessmen, he conceded last year, "share with American liberals a basic faith in the free society. I have more confidence now than when I wrote *The Age of Jackson* in their intelligence and responsibility." He is unembarrassed by his change—revision, he says, "is a permanent process in the writing of history."

Cowboys & Indians. Returning to Harvard as a professor, Schlesinger proved to his own satisfaction that he would never be an inspirational orator. But students came to his lectures to hear what he had to say, not how he said it, and they came in greater numbers than to any other upper-class course—some 400 a semester. Where the faculty was concerned, his popularity was less universal. To many of his colleagues, he was "an uppity kid." Says a friend: "He grasps things too quickly for his own good."

Arthur was already looking past the ivied walls and seeking contact with the larger world of affairs. To Schlesinger's rambling, brown-shingled house on Irving Street in Cambridge, across the back fence from the Galbraiths', came a steady stream of visitors. "There always seemed to be someone in the spare bed," says Mary McCarthy. "I remember once being asked, 'Do you mind sleeping in Joe Alsop's sheets?' " But among all the diverse types who trooped to the Schlesinger house, Novelist McCarthy cannot recall ever having met a Republican. "Arthur just doesn't like Republicans," she ventures. "There is a certain amount of cowboys-and-Indians about it." Summers, the Schlesingers shifted their headquarters to a weathered frame house on Cape Cod, in the section of Wellfleet known as "the woods," originally designed as a bird sanctuary and now a kind of enclave of intellectuals.

A Glint in His Eye. Soon Schlesinger was taking an active hand in Democratic politics. A staunch anti-Communist who early took the far left to task for "following the policies of the Soviet Union," he became a vice chairman of Americans for Democratic Action, was among the first to join the Stevenson bandwagon in 1952. During that campaign, says a friend, "he got a glint in his eye that never left." But two straight crushing defeats nearly dispirited him. "Stevenson came along too soon," he lamented in 1957. "Americans, after a generation's buffeting by depression and war, had to have a breathing spell. Even by 1956 they had not had their fill of inertia."

With the Republicans in Washington, Schlesinger turned in earnest to his massive *Age of Roosevelt*. He produced three volumes in four years: *The Crisis of the Old Order* (1957); *The Coming of the New Deal* (1958); *The Politics of Upheaval* (1960). All were favorably reviewed, all were Book-of-the-Month choices—and all

SR. & JR. AT 1963 HARVARD COMMENCEMENT
Thucydides served too.

were rough sledding. "It's much harder than writing history that's long past," he said. "For *Jackson,* the source material was limited and all the witnesses were dead. There was no one to pop up and say, 'You were wrong—I was there.' " The Roosevelt books were splendid training for *A Thousand Days.*

A Little Sore. With 1960 approaching, Schlesinger turned once again to the life of action. He has confessed to being "nostalgically for Stevenson, ideologically for Humphrey, and realistically for Kennedy." Fortunately for his future, realism won out. Kennedy, vacationing on the Cape at Hyannis Port, invited him for intimate dinners and sought his counsel. Stevensonians were furious, accused him of being a "turncoat opportunist" who had made "peace with the enemy." His wife announced that she was still for Adlai ("Can't you control your own wife," wrote Bobby Kennedy, "or are you like me?"). His mother was too, but the stately, grey-haired lady shrugged: "In a way I suppose it is good that Arthur is working for Senator Kennedy. If Kennedy is nominated and elected, he'll certainly need Arthur's brilliance in the White House."

On the campaign trail, Kennedy used Arthur sparingly. After Kennedy won the Democratic nomination in Los Angeles, he scrapped an acceptance speech that Schlesinger had drafted "because it was written for Stevenson. My cadence and timing are entirely different. It was a beautiful speech, though. I guess Arthur was a little sore." But once in Washington, the new President summoned Schlesinger to the White House, and the professor moved into an 18th century red brick house in stylish Georgetown.

Virile Poses. He quickly found that his ability to influence events was marginal, at most. During Cabinet Room meetings on the Bay of Pigs, he never voiced his doubts, fearful that he might be branded "a nuisance." "It is one thing for a Special Assistant to talk frankly in private to a President," explains Schlesinger, "and another for a college professor, fresh to the Government, to interpose his unassisted judgment in open meeting against that of such august figures as the Secretaries of State and Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff." At this point, the historian shades imperceptibly into the apologist, as Schlesinger writes: "The advocates of the adventure had a rhetorical advantage. They could strike virile poses and talk of tangible things—fire power, air strikes, landing craft and so on. To oppose the plan, one had to invoke intangibles—the moral position of the United States, the reputation of the President, the response of the United Nations, 'world public opinion' and other such odious concepts."

Occasionally, the professor also found himself saddled with distasteful duties. When the Bay of Pigs invasion got under way, Schlesinger was ordered to tell newsmen the cover story that there were only 300 to 400 men in the landing force—not 1,400. "I was lying," he admitted last month. He regretted it, he said, but the choice was stark: "Either you get out or you play the game." Most newsmen appreciated his dilemma, but some took pleasure in needling him mercilessly about it. They had reason to do so, for they have never quite forgiven Arthur for writing in *Foreign Affairs* two years ago, that newspaper and magazine stories "are sometimes worse than useless when they purport to give the inside history of decisions; their relation to reality is often considerably less than the shadows in Plato's cave." So often did he, as an insider, come upon distorted accounts, he added, that it was impossible "for me to take the testimony of jour-

nalism in such matters seriously again." As a man who, by his own admission, had deliberately misled journalists, he might have conceded that the distortions can also come from the source.

Captain of Grenadiers. Despite the drawbacks of involvement, Schlesinger rejects the notion that the best historian is the one who has withdrawn to a perch above the heat and passion of life. Thucydides served as a general during the Peloponnesian War. Edward Gibbon, a soldier in his youth, found the experience valuable when he wrote *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.* "The captain of Hampshire Grenadiers," Gibbon insisted, "was not useless to the historian of the Roman Empire." Indeed, says Schlesinger, "until the last half of the 19th century, the great historians were, in one way or another, captains of Hampshire Grenadiers. Macaulay, Bancroft, Guizot, Carlyle, Parkman, Henry Adams—all were men for whom the history they wrote was a derivation from the experiences they enjoyed or endured."

Buff Coats & Breeches. For them, passionate engagement led to a view of history where great men mattered as much as great forces, where men did not bow to impersonal trends but tried to bend them. Inside the trade, historians class these men as romantics, and Schlesinger is one of their lineal descendants. He sees history as Carlyle did —a panorama of "men in buff coats and breeches, with color in their cheeks, with passions in their stomachs, and the idioms, features and vitalities of very men." The romantic influence waned toward the end of the century, and most historians bowed to the barren discipline of Leopold von Ranke's Prussian school of historiography. Under Ranke's technical, "scientific" approach to history, absolute impartiality was imperative, and readability was sacrificed to research. The monograph, freighted with footnotes, was triumphant, and out of the graduate schools poured a profusion of dreary doctoral theses on subjects no larger than thimbles. Legend has it that one professor, exasperated with the whole nit-picking business, wearily eyed an enormous tome that a Ph.D. candidate had just submitted. Informed that it was a study of the Wisconsin dairy industry, 1875-1885, he rasped: "Teat by teat?"

Though the technicians reduced history's kaleidoscope to a uniform grey, they did deepen the shafts of research, put new emphasis on the importance of thorough documentation, pave the way for the current use of computers to analyze voting patterns and population shifts. But electronic aids can carry a historian only so far. "Some of the profoundest problems of history are not amenable to statistical analysis," says Yale's C. Vann Woodward, historian of the American South. "Everything still must be digested by one man sitting at his desk." And that man, argues Schlesinger, is the better historian for having got up from the desk occasionally. He concedes that participation and partisanship have their pitfalls. "To act is, in many cases, to give hostages—to parties, to policies, to persons," he has written. But "visible commitment serves at least to alert the reader, while the ostensibly uncommitted historian is left free to shoot from ambush."

IVAN MASSAR

WITH MARIAN, CHRISTINA & STEPHEN
Something in common with Bobby's wife.

Little Shudder. Schlesinger believes in the "confusion theory" of history as opposed to the "conspiracy theory." According to Political Scientist James MacGregor Burns, the conspiracy theory holds that "if something happened, somebody planned it." Schlesinger, on the other hand, believes in "the role of chance and contingency, the sheer intricacy of situations, the murk of battle." Schlesinger is also scornful of the "prophetic" historians—Marx, Spengler, Toynbee—who use "one big hypothesis to explain a variety of small things." Says he: "They have reduced the chaos of history to a single order of explanation, which can infallibly penetrate the mysteries of the past and predict the developments of the future."

His White House tour only reinforced his confusion theory. "Nothing in my recent experience has been more chastening," he wrote, "than the attempt to penetrate into the process of decision. I shudder a little when I think how confidently I have analyzed decisions in the ages of Jackson and Roosevelt, traced influence, assigned motives, evaluated roles, allocated responsibilities and, in short, transformed a disheveled and murky evolution into a tidy and ordered transaction."

The Intruders. Even with this chastening experience, Schlesinger might still be accused of a tendency to tidy things up. His basic view of his and Kennedy's thousand days was the clash between the New Frontiersmen in the White House and the torpid bureaucracies. "The Presidential government, coming to Washington aglow with new ideas and a euphoric sense that it could not go wrong, promptly collided with the feudal barons of the permanent government, entrenched in their domains and fortified by their sense of proprietorship." The result, he said, was that the permanent government "began almost to function as a resistance movement, scattering to the Maquis to pick off the intruders."

He was never picked off, though as the most notorious liberal in the Kennedy entourage, he was often a target. Once, when he offered his resignation after conservative columnists began attacking him as "a threat to fundamental American concepts," as Walter Winchell put it, Kennedy reassured him: "Don't worry about it. All they are doing is shooting at me through you."

And there was never any question of his involvement, an involvement so personal that only his reputation as a scholar can ameliorate charges of prejudice in the historian. On the day after the assassination, a friend remembers talking to him on the telephone. He could barely speak. There were intervals of silence, so protracted that the caller wondered if he was still on the line. His final peroration on Kennedy in *A Thousand Days* is more accolade than judgment. "The energies he released, the standards he set, the purposes he inspired, the goals he established would guide the land he loved for years to come. Above all he gave the world for an imperishable moment the vision of a leader who greatly understood the terror and the hope, the diversity and the possibility of life on this planet, and who made people look beyond nation and race to the future of humanity."

Leaving a Mark. For a time after the assassination, Schlesinger remained in his East Wing office, but Lyndon Johnson gave him practically nothing to do. After 100 days, he left to work on his book, to serve for two weeks as a judge at the Cannes Film Festival, to help Bobby Kennedy in his New York senatorial campaign. His Cambridge house has been rented, and it is unlikely that he will return to Harvard. He plans to spend the next few months at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study, immersing himself in F.D.R.'s prewar foreign policy in preparation for Volume IV of *The Age of Roosevelt.* He will surely return some day to Washington, for, as an unfriendly writer puts it, he likes to "sniff at the hem of power" too much to stay away permanently.

Not long ago, a former White House colleague of Schlesinger's asked rhetorically: "Did he leave a mark?" He thought for a moment, then answered, "No—other than his book." Few of the men who served Kennedy will leave a mark so durable or so valuable.