

SCHLESINGER DEFENDS SUPPRESSION OF ASSASSINATION DOCUMENTS

by Mark Lane
Friday evening, May 24, found the ADA in New York presenting a debate among supporters of various presidential candidates, Alice Sachs, the venerable young Democrat, was to speak for the Liberal of the Last Generation, Hubert Humphrey; Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., was of

course, continuing his campaign for Robert Kennedy and another seat those to the throne, Shirley Keating whose recent article "Why Tin For McArthur" in "The New Republic," represents the only known moment of public passion, was to speak for his candidate, and an attractive young lady was to speak on behalf of

Richard Nixon to the ADA membership. The discussion it was so gentle it could hardly be called a debate, unluckily a feeling of good fellowship, an almost total lack of animosity toward the absentee, and a spirit of general well-being that appeared to be totally unrelated to

Many of the questions from the floor were directed to Schlesinger who had earlier been referred to as America's outstanding contemporary historian. He fielded questions with a practiced skill and an aplomb which indicated that he had been asked and answered the same questions 100 times before. Why had Bobby Kennedy served as counsel for McCarthy's infamous committee? Without breaking stride, Schlesinger explained that Bobby was just a kid at the time although he was closer to 30 than 20.

The evening's tamponade was destroyed when a member of the audience said: "Mr. Schlesinger, following the death of President Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson appointed a presidential committee to inquire into the facts surrounding



Mark Lane at the Free Press telling of Garrison's harassment by the Federal Government. Free Press photo by Catherine Ussillo.

the consequences of the matter at hand. In the well-appointed bathroom of the Roosevelt Hotel with such phrases, ascending as "all these Democratic candidates are free men, and the country will be well-off with any of them in the leadership. It was hard to believe that the men of map, Veterans and Americans might be dependent on the choice made by the American people.

the assassination. As you know, following the publication of Wolk's "Crisis of the Warren Commission," polls taken, including the Gallup and Harris poll, revealed that the vast majority of the people rejected the Warren Commission report and stated that they believed that a conspiracy was responsible for the death of the president. Surely this represents a terribly important political

The most important medical documents in the case, the autopsy, photographs and x-rays, which, in and of themselves, could prove or disprove the Warren Commission's case were not even examined by the members of the Commission. Senator Kennedy, as you may know, has actively participated in suppressing those documents. It has been suggested by responsible critics that pathologists in the leading medical schools be permitted to examine those medical documents and issue a finding to the American people as to their meaning. That being my premise, I should like to ask if you (cont'd. on page 11)

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might respond to a three-part question. First, can you explain why your candidate, Senator Kennedy, opposes a new investigation when the American people are clearly dissatisfied with the last one; two, supports the decision to suppress vital reports for more than 70 years; and three, continues to play an active role in preventing pathologists from examining the medical documents?"

There was an unnatural stillness in the hall as the question was asked. At least one observer felt that the gentle ADAers (don't let the word "action" in the title fool you) felt that it was a breach of etiquette even to raise the question. Schlesinger rose to answer and for the first time during the evening betrayed a sense of panic. First he assured the audience that he had been moved by the death of President Kennedy. The audience reacted non-violently to that news. He then assured the audience that he had never even read the Warren Commission report.

A contemporary historian who offers himself as the expert on the Kennedy era admitted, indeed almost boasted, of his total ignorance regarding an important official document which contains the orthodox view of why the era ended. Schlesinger's historic omission, almost four years after the publication of the report, certainly

justified the admission price of 99 cents, and calls into question the accuracy of the word "historian" when applied to him, even when that word is somewhat qualified by the word "contemporary." Even contemporary historians are obligated to read the evidence before writing massive bestsellers about the period.

Schlesinger then began to grapple with the last of the three questions. He wiped beads of perspiration from

his brow and said that Robert Kennedy was going to arrange to have the photographs and x-rays available to experts "sometime in the future." The audience stirred just a bit. Perhaps until Schlesinger conceded it to be a fact, the ADA members had not known that Robert Kennedy had played an active part in suppressing the vital documents.

At that point Schlesinger decided evidently to abandon both the question and the answer and launched into a vituperative attack upon the questioner. Twice he used the word "lunatic" in describing "the implications" and "the suggestions" involved in the question. "It is a lunatic suggestion," said Schlesinger "to believe that Robert Kennedy wants the evidence hidden."

The three questions remain unanswered.