

# 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 Lost Generation, Hubert Humphrey, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., was, of course, continuing his campaign for Robert Kennedy and another seat close to the throne. Murray Kempton whose recent article "Why I'm For McCarthy" in "The New Republic" represents his 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 indicated a feeling of good fellowship, an almost total lack of animosity toward the adversaries 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 read and digested the same questions that Kennedy served as a model for McArthur's infamous committee without breaking rank. Schlesinger explained that Bobby was just a kid at the time (although he was closer to 30 than 20).

The evening's tranquillity 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

development. I guess most Americans state that they do not know who killed their president. Most Americans also believe that a commission appointed by the president and presided over by the Chief Justice issued a deliberately false statement. Senator McCarthy had said that if elected president he will call for a new investigation. On the other hand, Robert Kennedy has stated that he will not ask for a new investigation. As you may know, some 250 documents which may bear a direct relationship on the conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy have been classified by President Johnson until September, in the year 2039. Senator Kennedy had said that he would not make those public documents available to the public.

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 preface, I should like to ask if you (cont'd. on page 11)



Free Press photo by Catherine Ursillo

the assassination. As you know, following the publication of Wouk's "Critical 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

## SCHLESINGER DEFENDS SUPPRESSION (cont'd. from page 2)

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.

(OVER)

\*no continuation of this sentence in original from which this copy was made.

See also Los Angeles Free Press 21 Jun 68, filed Garrison.