

Miss Norma Manna
Jan 4-01-1
A. Shouard
Ways

'A Thousand Days'— More Than a Memoir

CIA-7 Page 3
Page 1

A THOUSAND DAYS: John F. Kennedy in the White House. By Arthur M. Schlesinger jr. 1087 pages. Houghton Mifflin. \$9.

By Maurice Dolbier

THESE are the years that were, from the day in January, 1961, when we seemed to have become younger and stronger, to the November day in 1963 when we were suddenly and terribly older ("We'll never laugh again," said Washington journalist Mary McGrory. And Daniel Moynihan, Assistant Secretary of Labor, said: "Heavens, Mary. We'll laugh again. It's just that we'll never be young again").

Norman Maller wrote then, "For a time we felt the country was ours. Now it's theirs again," and in the first shock of grief and despair, that is how it seemed to be. But it wasn't "theirs," because those thousand days had been, and during that short and shining span of time John F. Kennedy, in the words of historian Arthur Schlesinger, had "re-established the republic as the first generation of our leaders saw it—young, brave, civilized, rational, gay, tough, questing, exultant in the excitement and potentiality of history. . . . 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."

Mr. Schlesinger was a Special Assistant to the President, a post that had been described to him in advance as that of a "roving reporter and trouble-shooter." He roved, he reported, and he served as a kind of human "hot line" between the Kennedy Administration and the nation's easily disenchanted intellectuals.

He also kept a private journal. At first, the notes were fragmentary; the President had made it clear that he didn't want members of his staff setting down all the daily chit-chat of White House life, because "he wished no restraint on his own freedom of expression." This changed, for Schlesinger, after the Bay of Pigs: The President said to him, "I hope you kept a full account of that." Schlesinger writes: "I said that I had understood, he did not want us to keep full accounts of anything. He said, 'No, go ahead. You can be damn sure that the CIA has its record and the Joint Chiefs theirs. We'd better make sure that we have a record over here. So you go ahead.' I did." (Schlesinger opposed the Bay of Pigs expedition. In its aftermath,

McGeorge Bundy reminded Kennedy of this. The President said: "Oh, sure. Arthur wrote me a memorandum that will look pretty good when he gets around to writing his book on my administration. Only he better not publish that memorandum while I'm still alive. . . . And I have a title for his book: 'Kennedy: The Only Years.'")

Mr. Schlesinger describes his book as being a personal memoir and not a comprehensive history. This doesn't do the work full justice, for while it is not comprehensive—it deals principally with foreign affairs—it is much more than a personal memoir, much more, even, than an ac-

count of "John F. Kennedy in the White House." It deals clearly and perceptively with the state of the world in the Kennedy years—the issues at stake in all the continents, the challenges of the nuclear age, "the grand dynamic of modern history." Its views of both the foreign and domestic scenes are not narrowed to a partisan and political focus, but widened to include social, economic and cultural trends. "A Thousand Days" is a formidably long book, but there isn't a moment of dullness in it. Mr. Schlesinger's style is witty and vigorous, and the matters he deals with are still of immediate and immense concern.