

Dallas: Extreme Opposition, But No Influence

Washington Bureau of The News
WASHINGTON — An "atmosphere of extreme opposition to President Kennedy" existed "in some parts of the Dallas community" before his assassination there Nov. 22, the Warren Commission said Sunday.

But, the commission said, it found no evidence that this anti-Kennedy feeling influenced Lee Harvey Oswald in his decision to kill the President.

The commission told President Johnson in its lengthy report:

"It has been suggested that one of the motivating influences operating on Lee Oswald was the atmosphere in the City of Dallas, especially an atmosphere of extreme opposition to President Kennedy that was present in some parts of Dallas . . .

"The commission has found no evidence that the extreme views expressed toward President Kennedy by some right-wing groups centered in Dallas or any other general atmosphere of hate or

right-wing extremism which may have existed in Dallas had any connection with Oswald's actions on Nov. 22.

"There is, of course, no way to judge what the effect of the general political ferment in the city might have been . . ."

THE COMMISSION said that, although Oswald attended a meeting at which Edwin A. Walker spoke, it has found no credible evidence that Oswald associated with right-wing groups.

"Oswald's writings and his reading habits indicate that he had an extreme dislike of the right wing, an attitude most clearly reflected by his attempt to shoot Gen. Walker," the report stated.

Referring to the "atmosphere of extreme opposition to President Kennedy" present in some parts of Dallas, the commission said:

"Some of that feeling was expressed in the incident involving

President Johnson (then a candidate for vice-president) during the 1960 campaign, in the treatment of Adlai Stevenson late in October 1963, and in the extreme anti-Kennedy newspaper advertisement and handbills that appeared in Dallas at the time of the President's visit there."

THE COMMISSION said that, while there were "critical editorials and letters to the editors" in Dallas newspapers before the Kennedy visit, news stories reflected "the desire of Dallas officials to welcome the President with dignity and courtesy."

The Oct. 24 incident in which Stevenson was jostled and spat upon outside Dallas Memorial Auditorium aroused "increased concern" about the Kennedy visit, the commission said.

"The local, national and international reaction to this incident evoked from the Dallas officials and newspapers strong condemnation of the demonstrators," it

noted. "Mayor Earle Cabell called on the city to redeem itself during President Kennedy's visit. He asserted that Dallas has shed its reputation of the twenties as 'the Southwest hate capital of Dixie.'"

On Nov. 17, the report pointed out, the Dallas Chamber of Commerce president referred to the city's reputation for being "the friendliest town in America" and asserted that citizens would "greet the President with the warmth and pride that keep the Dallas spirit famous the world over."

THE REPORT quoted a Dallas Republican leader as calling on Nov. 19 for a "civilized non-partisan" welcome for President Kennedy. The report said this Republican, whom it did not identify, stated at the time that "in many respects Dallas County has isolated itself from the main

stream of life in the world in this decade."

Then, the report continued, "another reaction to the impending visit—hostile to the President—came to a head shortly before his arrival." It referred to the black-bordered ad which critics of President Kennedy placed in The Dallas News and to circulars which carried the words "Wanted for Treason" beneath pictures of the President.

The commission said the FBI office in Dallas and Dallas police told the Secret Service about the circulars. In addition, the commission said, the FBI gave the Secret Service "the name of a possibly dangerous individual in the Dallas area" and he was investigated.

THE COMMISSION said a Secret Service agent obtained photos of Dallas residents who participated in the Stevenson incident.

"On Nov. 22 a Secret Service agent stood at the entrance of

the Trade Mart, where the President was scheduled to speak, with copies of these photographs," the report related. "Dallas detectives in the lobby of the Trade Mart and in the luncheon area also had copies of the photographs.

"A number of people who resembled some of those in the photographs were placed under surveillance at the Trade Mart."

The commission said FBI Agent James P. Hosty knew that Oswald worked in the Texas School Book Depository building, but that Oswald was ignored while security officers concerned themselves with right-wingers.

It quoted Hosty as saying that he did not realize the Kennedy motorcade would pass the depository building and did not regard Oswald as a potential assassin.

WHEN President Kennedy reached Dallas, the commission said, "large crowds of spectators gave the President a tremendous

reception" as his motorcade moved through downtown streets.

"As the motorcade approached the intersection of Elm and Houston streets, there was general gratification in the presidential party about the enthusiastic reception," the report related.

"Evaluating the political overtones, Kenneth O'Donnell (an assistant to the President) was especially pleased because it convinced him that the average Dallas resident was like other American citizens in respecting and admiring the President.

"Mrs. John Connally, elated by the reception, turned to President Kennedy and said, 'Mr. President, you can't say Dallas doesn't love you.' The President replied, 'That is very obvious.'"

Seconds later Lee Harvey Oswald opened fire with a high-powered rifle, mortally wounding the President.