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The Texas Observer

A Journal of Free Voices

A Window to The South

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Dallas, After All

Dallas

On November 22nd, before breakfast in the Hotel Texas in Fort Worth, President Kennedy exclaimed to Senator Ralph Yarborough, "Did you see what the Dallas News is trying to do to us?" Kennedy had "a very strong feeling" about this; "He did not say it in the light bantering manner that he often used when meeting criticism," Yarborough says. The News that morning stressed the intra-party struggle that was being waged around Kennedy on his Texas tour—that was the news, forsooth—but the News also contained a full-page advertisement contending that the Kennedys were helping the communists, which Yarborough believes is what Kennedy was talking about.

"I was much concerned about going to Dallas," says Cong. Olin Teague of Bryan. "That morning by long distance, I talked with my office . . . in Washington and told them what a wonderful reception the President had received in San Antonio, Houston, and Fort Worth, but that I was very much concerned about the few hours to be spent in Dallas."

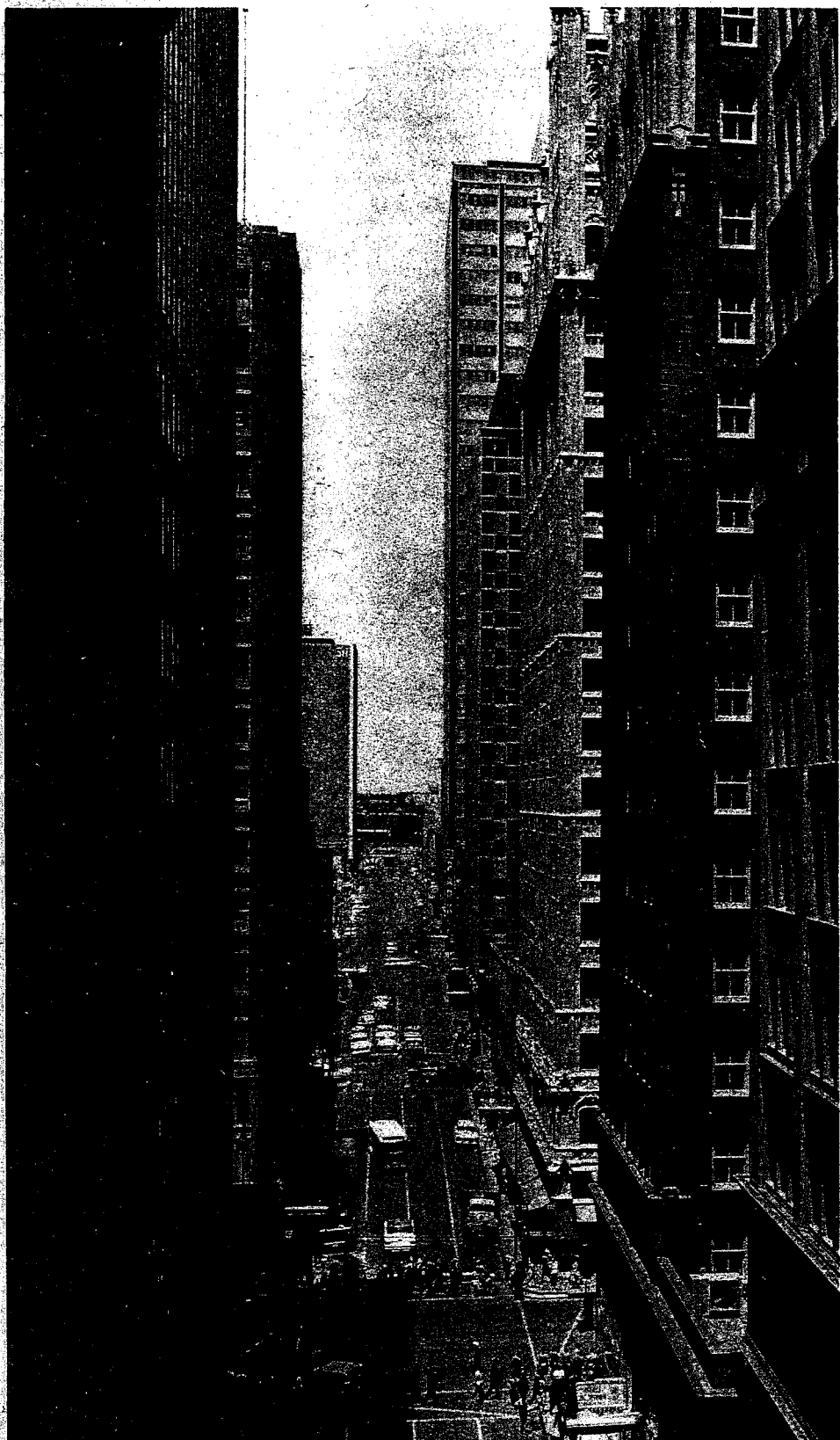
During the short hop in Air Force One from Fort Worth to Dallas, Kennedy and some of the Texans discussed hostility in Dallas toward "various public officials," Cong. Jim Wright of Fort Worth recalls.

"It was pointed out by Gov. Connally, I believe," Wright says, "that Dallas is essentially a financial center, the domicile of banking and insurance companies, which makes for very much a 'white collar' city. It was mentioned that being 'conservative' had come to be synonymous with social acceptability, and that various junior executives thought it useful to talk even more conservatively than the boss in order to prove to him and others that they had 'arrived.'"

"But there seemed to be a somewhat general consensus to the effect that the real culprit in the whole situation is the steady drum-beat of ultra right-wing propaganda with which the citizenry is constantly besieged. The Dallas News, of course, is the primary drumbeater," Wright says.

However, "The President himself expressed no conclusions," Wright recalls.

Photo, Downtown Dallas Committee



"He seemed puzzled by the prevalent Dallas attitude and asked questions of each of us in an attempt to understand its genesis and cause."

In a forward compartment, Cong. Henry Gonzalez, San Antonio, says, Teague was submerged in worry about what would happen in Dallas. Gonzalez says Teague was thinking there might be some shocking raspberry such as the scene the month before when Adlai Stevenson was spat on and hit with a picket sign, or in 1960 when the Lyndon Johnsons were assailed and almost assaulted by a mob here. Gonzalez joked around with Teague, telling campaign stories about Dallas, such as the time he said he would campaign here only if the city fathers would grant him "safe conduct."

Whether anyone on the plane spoke of it or not, there was also the worst possibility. As the presidential party was alighting onto Love Field, Gonzalez remembers that he said, "Well, I'm taking my risks—I haven't got my steel vest yet."

The millions of words that have been written, said, cursed, and prayed about Dallas since that morning cannot change these facts: the President and Texas members of his party were worried that something might go wrong here. What had happened to Dallas? How had it come to be true that a Democratic President could not come into this large, modern, wealthy American city without there being such unusual concern? Something was wrong.—What?

DEMOCRACY was working pretty well in Dallas in the early 1930's,

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when the liberal Democratic lady, Sarah Hughes, ran for the legislature three times and won each time. She remembers that in those years a candidate could play one interest off another—truckers off against railroads, for example. She remembers, too, that there were elements in the business community that opposed a retail sales tax. The city, as a democracy, was open; there was a sense of play, of give.

However, in the course of raising \$3.5 million to attract the Texas Centennial of 1936 to Dallas, the businessmen here encountered many delays in getting company approval. The story has been told a number of times lately how, in 1937, there consequently came into being the Dallas Citizens Council, made up only of the heads of businesses who could commit their companies' funds and policies without having to go back and ask their boards. These men were called "the yes or no men."

Until then, judging from the histories of the town one reads, there was nothing really unusual about Dallas. It is true that inordinate civic pride had always been a characteristic here, but every city has its chamber of commerce types, and Dallas had had a special need for them from the first.

There was no compelling reason for this city's existence. The land is flat, the river muddy. But a ridge of limestone intersects the river here, making a good crossing place; this seems to be what caused the town first to form. By a little civic-spirited skulduggery in the legislature, early Dallasites required the Texas & Pacific railroad to pass "within a mile of Browder Springs," which Dallas was. Gradually the town became a transportation hub and trading

center. Sinclair Lewis had not announced babbity in the Midwest when Dallas townsfolk first experienced it. For instance, badges that were circulated here at the turn of the century advertised the town as "The Inland Seaport of Texas," (which it is still trying to become through the Trinity River Authority,) and proclaimed "Dallas 150,000 1919," meaning that there would be that many people here by then.

Yet as late as the 1930's, anyway, Dallas could also be hospitable to bohemianism. The late Dave Williams of Childress, a creative architect, regaled his friends to the end of his life with stories about "the studio" in Dallas, his home and workplace, where anyone who said he was an artist was welcome, for parties, grub or sleep, and happy were the days and the nights.

Meanwhile Dallas was metamorphosing into a financial and insurance center. Because of its transportation advantages, it became more and more a distribution center and a place for business conventions. By 1960, according to the Dallas chamber of commerce, almost one fourth of the people employed here, 23.3%, were in the professional-managerial category; another 30.2% were in sales or clerical work. We are asea, these days, in numbers and statistics, but when facts such as those become true of a city, they sink into its bones.

The standard for status in the Dallas ethos is so obvious, it is easy to forget to mention it. The late Stanley Walker called it, tonelessly, "a very high regard for material success." If money is the motive in Dallas, conformity is the mode, and the upper middle class conformist, or someone richer yet, is the model. Very generally speaking, the people are well off; per capita income here is probably higher than in the other big cities of the state. The strength of the conservative bias here abides, not only in the really wealthy, really powerful men, but in the clusters of status—"status-clusters," a sociologist might as well call them—that form around the district manager of a retail distributor, or the sales manager for an insurance company, or a department manager in a clothing store. The men on the streets downtown are business-suited men, except for an occasional menial workman who has given up all hope, and the women are dressed with the fact that they will be seen in downtown Dallas very much in mind. The city's preponderance of professional, managerial, and sales people is nowhere more visually striking than it is at lunchtime in the Cattleman's Steakhouse at the edge of the downtown. Into this warehouse of a restaurant pour the besuited minions of the businesses of Dallas, looking very much the same, seated primly at small tables jammed too close together, eating standardized substantial meals, and pocketing their standardized receipts for income tax purposes as they leave their tables. The place is vast; it is not only the nature, but also the quantity of the phenomenon that makes it something to see.

DRIVING IN DALLAS, like driving in any large, modern American

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A Window to the South

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We will serve no group or party but will hew hard to the truth as we find it and the right as we see it. We are dedicated to the whole truth, to human values above all interests, to the rights of man as the foundation of democracy; we will take orders from none but our own conscience, and never will we overlook or misrepresent the truth to serve the interests of the powerful or cater to the ignoble in the human spirit.

Editor and General Manager, Ronnie Dugger.

Partner, Mrs. R. D. Randolph.

Business Manager, Sarah Payne.

Contributing Editors, J. Frank Dobie, Larry Goodwyn, Franklin Jones, Lyman Jones, Willie Morris, Charles Ramsdell, Roger Shattuck, Dan Strawn, Tom Sutherland, Charles Alan Wright.

Staff Artist, Charles Erickson.

Contributing Photographer, Russell Lee.

Subscription Representatives: Austin, Mrs. Helen C. Spear, 2615 Pecos, HO 5-1805; Dallas, Mrs. Cordye Hall, 5835 Ellsworth, TA 1-1205; Fort Worth, Mrs. Jesse Baker, 3212 Greene St., WA 7-2959; Houston, Mrs. Shirley Jay, 10306 Cliffwood Dr., PA 3-8682; Lubbock, Doris Blaisdell, 2515 24th St.; Midland, Eva Dennis, 4306 Douglas, OX 4-2825; Odessa, Enid Turner, 1706 Glenwood, EM 6-2269; Rio Grande Valley, Mrs. Jack Butler, 601 Houston, McAllen, MU 6-5675;

San Antonio, Mrs. Mae B. Tuggle, 531 Elm-hurst, TA 2-7154; Tyler, Mrs. Erik Thomsen, 1209 So. Broadway, LY 4-4862.

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city, is an experience that mangles itself, that cannot digest its own quantity: acres decorated with the ornamental homes of the well to do, subdevelopments of transplanted saplings and thinly disguised duplication-housing, anarchic clutter of traffic signals, signs, stores, joints, and decaying two-story houses, mile after mile of quiet, decent homes. It is something of a shock to wander over into West Dallas. Drive along, say, Beckley, until you see a corner street sign, "West Main"—that is, the extension of Main Street on the other side of the river; turn onto this street symbolically named and proceed at length between the miserable shacks, yards literally littered with broken bottles or piled over with scrap lumber, the lives of Negroes here enclosed by a railroad trestle on one side and railroad tracks on the other; a canal of poverty. Great swatches of West Dallas are an ugly twistage of industrial yards, commercial debris, and slums squeezed in where business has no use for the land.

When he was mayor, Earle Cabell campaigned for acceptance by the citizens of a slum clearance program, but the builders turned against it, and the plebiscite went against the reform, five to three. The opposition said the solution was enforcement of building codes, Cabell recalls, "But what are you gonna do with those people? The problem is housing for them. Are we going to build tents under the viaduct again? Run 'em out to the city limits?" Over the last few years, landlords have been pressured by the city to make some improvements, but the influx of new citizens from moribund rural areas looking for work in Dallas has offset any such gains. "Some \$35,000 or \$40,000 was spent by the opposition. I had a helluva hard time raising \$10,000 to publicize the election," Cabell says. "The chamber of commerce likes to point to this large pool of labor and say to prospective businesses, 'They're available.' But then they don't want to do anything for them."

Only a man like Cabell, a dairy owner and a known conservative, could have caused such a stir by championing slum clearance in Dallas. If a liberal had done it, nothing would have happened in this town. Dallas is the most conservative city in Texas, and one of the most conservative in the United States, but swiftly after 1954, it became also a city that was receptive to intolerance of liberalism, a crucible for political outbursts and occasional political violence—a closed shop of the mind. Democracy in Dallas may have been actually aborted; at the best, it had become misshapen. (It is, of course, my premise in so saying that anyplace where any substantial body of opinion cannot find a respectful hearing, whether that opinion is liberal or conservative, there is something wrong with the way democracy is working.)

The original charter of the Dallas Citizens Council said the council was to be "absolutely non-political," but in 1946, when State District Judge Sarah Hughes ran for Congress here, she says, she became aware of the existence of a power structure that had not been here in the 1930's. She lost. Moreover, with the one exception

of Rep. Barefoot Sanders, not a single Democrat one would ordinarily think of as a liberal person has held a controversial elective office in Dallas since then, and Sanders, too, despite his moderation, lost when he ran for Congress. Dallas politics became the property of conservatives. Until 1954 it was the monolithic property of conservative Democrats; then, the ideological Republican upstart, Bruce Alger, defeated the chosen Shivercrat, Wallace Savage, for Congress, and the Republicans had a beachhead they have been expanding since then. The point, however, is that the political disputations in Dallas

A Memorial

There will be a monument, probably a curved white marble wall ten feet high and 20 or 30 long, at the assassination site, and in addition a gift is to be sent to the Kennedy Library Fund, the 25-member Dallas John F. Kennedy Citizens Memorial Committee has announced.

This ended speculation that there would not be a monument, or would be, only a small historical marker, at the site. Dawson Sterling, chairman of the committee and president of the Southwestern Life Insurance Co., said the public, in pilgrimages to the site, had "more or less chosen the site of the monument."

The wishes of Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy were conveyed to the committee by Stephen E. Smith, the late President's brother-in-law, according to Dr. Luther Holcomb, executive director of the Dallas council of churches, who said neither Mrs. Kennedy nor the committee wanted a statue or an elaborate monument in Dallas.

Sterling said that while the monument's form and exact location are not finally set, so far the committee's thinking indicates it will be located at the northernmost end of Dealey Plaza, in which Kennedy was shot. It is to carry a quotation from Chapter 3 of Ecclesiastes and possibly excerpts from the late President's speeches.

There is to be a Dallas-sponsored portion of the Kennedy Memorial Library in Boston, it is indicated. The library is to cost \$10 million, of which \$4 million has been contributed. Contributions to the library can be sent to the John K. Kennedy Library, Inc., care of the memorial committee, P.O. Box 424, Dallas, Tex. □

for the last decade have been among conservatives; since the assassination Democrats in Dallas have been canvassing blocks that have not been canvassed, in a search for national Democrats, in the last ten years. As those years passed and an ideological virus multiplied that equated liberalism with communism, liberalism became a way-out activity, a municipal treason.

ORIGINALLY the Dallas Citizens Council was made up almost entirely of tory Democrats. As Alger's victory, and then, in 1961, John Tower's, increased the Republican population of the city, some of the council's 250 members became Re-

publicans. None of them was a known liberal; only one of them, Stanley Marcus, the proprietor of Neiman-Marcus, was a known dissenter of the kind who always stood with the national Democratic Party. The Dallas Citizens Council became, in substance, the government of Dallas. The Dallas Charter League is in effect the subordinate agency of the council that is in charge of city politics. The council never, of course, formally endorsed or opposed candidates; that was not necessary. The mere fact that such a power structure existed and that half a dozen or so men at the top of it made the fundamental decisions for the group meant that all these few men had to do was to agree among themselves on a candidate, and that candidate became "the candidate."

This is not to say that the council always had its way in politics. Alger was not "the candidate"; Savage was, and he lost. Then, in 1961, Cabell ran for mayor contrary to the wishes of the business leaders. He says today that he was running against "an arbitrary power structure." In power, however, the business community found that he was the sort of man they could work with. He recalls going before the Citizens Council to ask for support of the slum clearance election, but that a few builders in the council blocked it. The council has never sent him "the word" on anything, Cabell says, and "there's been no bitterness. I think I have the complete confidence of the business community."

Disenchantment with Alger among the business people has been directly related to Dallas' loss of favor in Washington, a loss of favor which has been financially costly to Dallas businessmen. This was the context last fall when, on its front page, on Sept. 8, the Dallas Morning News announced: "Whether he likes it or not, Cabell is the choice" of "the Democrats" to oppose Alger. Ostensibly it did not occur to the News reporter that the Democrats were having a primary this spring; actually he knew whereof he spoke. When Baxton Bryant announced against Cabell for the Democratic nomination—Bryant stressing that he is running as a liberal Democrat, supporting the national Democrats—there was something shocking about it here in town, because that hasn't been the way Dallas has been run.

Yet the fact that Cabell did not alienate the Dallas power structure by his fight for slum clearance shows that the key leaders of the Citizens Council are capable of sophisticated action. When gradual desegregation became inevitable and it became apparent from other episodes that a city's business life is badly damaged by ugly racist outbreaks, the Citizens Council, using public relations man Sam Bloom and a very shrewdly coercive movie that was shown to thousands of meetings in Dallas, engineered peaceful compliance. When the privately-owned city bus system became a drag on the citizens' mobility, it was socialized, just because that was the solution that made sense.

In her 1963 book, *The Decision Makers: The Power Structure of Dallas*, (SMU

Press, \$4), Carol Thometz, (who is the daughter of a federal judge in Dallas, Joe Estes,) credits the council with a genuine commitment to the idea of "devotion to Dallas." She stresses that the council had provided to Dallas, for no or little pay, top business executives for political service. In fact, in one of the frequent insights of a kind that illuminate her subject and her own naivete at the same time, Mrs. Thometz said, "We have here a case of business subsidizing government."

THE PROBLEM that occurs when business runs the politics of a city without effective challenge is suggested by Mrs. Thometz' finding that in Dallas, "... elective governmental officers are not considered as makers of community decisions by either the informed people [who were] first interviewed . . . or by the decision-makers themselves. . . . It is noteworthy that the city council—official governing body of the community—was never mentioned by any person interviewed when discussing how decisions are made regarding the city's main problems. . . . The solutions to issues are crystallized and power to implement them mobilized by the real leaders of the community, usually within the [Citizens Council].* When this has occurred, the city council acts—if legal action is required." It is vitally interesting that "key leaders" of the power group keep out of the limelight because, Mrs. Thometz said, "The less controversy surrounding a leader, the less likely his power position is to be threatened. Second, committees whose membership is not overweighted with the most powerful leaders appear free from behind-the-scenes direction." Robert Cullum, president of the Dallas chamber of commerce, now speculates that the Citizens Council may have come to the end of its usefulness because it has been widely publicized since the assassination.

Who are the people who have run Dallas? Mrs. Thometz said 67 were identified in her study. "All are white males. The majority are top business executives. Every person interviewed stated without hesitation that Dallas leadership comes primarily from the business and financial sectors of the community. Throughout the interviews no contradictory opinion was ever expressed. . . . Financial leaders alone—banking and insurance executives—comprise a striking 31.3% of these decision-makers."

None of them are leaders of organized labor. The Citizens Council, of course, includes businessmen only (except for Willis Tate, president of SMU). One person told Mrs. Thometz, "One big reason for the power of the [Citizens Council] is that 95% of the members have the same point of view. They believe in free enterprise, and in maintaining a strong local government as opposed to a strong central government. It is a homogeneous group." The

*Mrs. Thometz did not name the Citizens Council—she called it by a made-up name—but there is no doubt what she was talking about.

closed and corporate character of the Dallas power system is wrapped up in one remark made to Mrs. Thometz by a person she described as "one of the top leaders," to wit:

"The front line leadership is backed by the old power houses. The younger leaders are groomed by the older men—so it perpetuates itself. . . . It becomes a sort of a partnership in civic responsibility and honors."

The essential process is simply that of "clearing" a project with the Citizens Council. Cabell tried to clear slum clearance, and it didn't clear. One respondent told Mrs. Thometz: "Why, the Board of Education would not think of proposing any bond issue, or doing anything without first clearing it with the [Citizens Council]. This body has the power to make or break any idea or proposal that certain groups may come up with. It is such a powerful group that nothing can succeed without its support."

When the power group decides on a project, it is announced by a committee, studied with the names of leaders, in the daily press. Mrs. Thometz thought she perceived occasions on which editorial comment in the daily papers was influenced by the "leadership decisions." But in form, Dallas remained a democracy, and in fact, democracy was always an uncertain factor. "It's a little bit peculiar," Sarah Hughes, now the federal judge, remarks. "The Citizens Council has influence on the members of the city council, and the same group controls the schools, but I don't think that always the people realize it. The power structure now doesn't want Alger, but the power structure can't control the voters. There are three of the nine members of the [city] council who won as independents. So I really think that the people do not realize that the city is controlled by the power structure. They [the people] are manipulated by the Dallas News more than anything else. . . . For weeks and months, the lead editorial every day was anti-Administration, and frequently one or two other editorials would be against the Administration."

AS OUR READERS, of course, well know, certain incidents began to plague Dallas a few years ago. First, in 1960, there was the right-wing mob, one of whose leaders was Alger, that surrounded and insulted Sen. and Mrs. Lyndon Johnson in Dallas. In 1961, Ted Dealey, publisher of the Dallas News, accepted an invitation to lunch in President Kennedy's house and during the course of the occasion read to the President, in the presence of other newspaper executives, a statement that included the words, "We need a man on horseback to lead this nation, and many people in Texas and the Southwest think that you are riding Caroline's tricycle." There were private apologies, as, for instance, from an executive of the Dallas Times Herald, who received from the President an acknowledgement with a handwritten postscript that he was sure the people of Dallas were glad when afternoon came.

The News during this period—as thousands who read it can attest, as to a fact intuitively known—"was the point that fed fuel to a lot of little fires," in the words of Robert Stoltz, a professor in the psychology department at Southern Methodist University. One example may suffice to recall the newspaper's recurrent tone during the last decade. When Kennedy said civil rights is a moral issue, the News asked, "Is it moral to follow the communist line . . . ? (The American Communist Party long has advocated what Mr. Kennedy now asks the Congress to approve as civil rights bills.)" One does not need to have been present at subsequent meetings of the John Birch Society's Dallas chapters or of the fervid admirers of Gen. Edwin Walker to arrive at a reasonable conjecture about the effect of such thrusts in the Dallas News on these types of people.

In 1962 the Republicans won most of the city's legislative positions, and the Democratic Party here began disintegrating. Before last November, two of the last three Democratic representatives quit their jobs to take appointive plums. Caught between liberals' accusations of political hypocrisy and the Republicans' phenomenal local successes, the tory Democrats were hard pressed. Although elements in the power structure were upset by Dallas' increasing disfavor in Washington because of Alger, Cabell would have had a much more difficult task but for the assassination. He had to visualize the effects on his candidacy of being the Democratic nominee next November on a ticket headed by John Kennedy; political camouflages aside, this was a disastrous prospect for him here. The Republicans on the ascent had been harboring in their garden many of the virulent vines of reaction that the Dallas News had been cultivating. "There was no good counterforce in the city," Stoltz says. "The newspapers certainly weren't. A political party could have been, but it was decaying."

Then, less than a month before Kennedy's visit, Adlai Stevenson was struck and spat upon. This was serious and the power structure knew it. Cabell openly condemned the far right; a wire of apology was signed by 100 civic leaders. Alger's denial that Dallas need feel guilty for any group's or any individual's display against Stevenson underscored—whatever the rights and wrongs of the theory of collective guilt—the political security his kind of politics gave him here.

The Life Line broadcasts, whose uncanny ubiquity are discussed in Bob Sherrill's article in a current Nation Magazine, are the brainchild of H. L. Hunt, the Dallas oil billionaire. The Dan Smoot Report, a split-off vestige of Hunt's old Facts Forum operation, is still published here. Some businesses were asking employees to attend seminars where conservatism was taught. The Dallas civil defense program actively pushed right-wing polemics; pamphlets of the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade turned up on a proposed reading list for Dallas public school children. And, of course, the National Indignation Convention was here; the Birchers; Gen. Walker,

who had a rally the night before Stevenson's visit. "We're the eye of the nutty storm," a local journalist said. As Kennedy's visit neared, a profound uneasiness set in.

For some months before the Times Herald had been edging toward the middle of the road. The Stevenson incident had provoked the kind of "Look, now, let's think this over" reassessment that had preceded the calculated program to integrate peacefully. On Nov. 20 last, the Times Herald carried a column by the editor of the editorial page, A. C. Greene, entitled "Why Do So Many Hate the Kennedys?" Cautiously, Greene said he was not an apologist for the Kennedys, but he didn't hate them, either.

The next day, on Nov. 21, in the Dallas News, there was a sports column (which no one seems to have remembered in the retrospect) in which a journalist whose responsibilities were not even casually associated with politics inadvertently symbolized in a metaphor the attitudes that were about to cause a terrible knot in the city's stomach. The sports writer suggested that Kennedy might talk about sailing to avoid controversy in Dallas. He concluded: "So, Mr. President, if the speech is about boating you will be among the warmest of admirers. It is about Cuber, civil rights, taxes or Viet Nam, there will sure as shootin' be some who heave to and let go with a broadside of grape shot in the presidential rigging."

President Kennedy did not, one assumes, see that column; but he saw the Dallas News of Nov. 22, and Senator Yarborough has recorded what he said.

THE CIVIC TRAUMA that began for Dallas at 12:30 that day has been terribly severe simply because so many people in Dallas had been afraid something would go wrong. Those few hours after the shooting, when it was assumed that "they," the right-wingers, had done it, must be recorded, in the city's history, as the nearest civic analogy to suicidal despair that can be imagined. The millions of words about Dallas since then dissolve in the solvent of the facts about Dallas until then. It is the plain truth that many of the people of the city felt guilty because Kennedy had been so hated by so many people there. As the debate has been turned by defenders of Dallas, it has focused on whether guilt *should* be felt, a logical question; as for the fact itself, however, guilt *was* felt, and by many people, in Dallas.

In *Ship of Fools*, Katherine Anne Porter characterizes the subtly different, subtly similar forms and expressions of participations in contempt against Jews aboard a ship bound for Europe in the 1930's. A subtly different, subtly similar literary subject is suggested by this story, told, during the full tide of grief and guilt after the assassination, by Rev. W. H. Dickinson, Jr., a minister of the world's largest Methodist church, in Dallas. He said that on Nov. 20 he went to a "nice, respectable dinner party" at which a bright, young, well-educated, church-going couple said to the other guests that they hated Kennedy and

"wouldn't care one bit if somebody did take a pot shot at him."

The "somebody" who did has been identified as a Marxist. This has been the first line of "the defense of Dallas." How can you blame the right for what a leftist did? Professor Stoltz thinks it possible that a pathological leftist might have been attracted to Dallas to do his deed, to throw suspicion on others. The wife of an SMU graduate student advanced to me, the Thanksgiving after the assassination, at the flower-strewn site in Dealey Plaza, the hypothesis that Oswald might have been attracted to Dallas because he was spoiling for a fight and knew he could get one here.

100 Days of Love

One of the ways Dallas has mourned Nov. 22 has been an observation called "100 Days of Love," during each of which a minister has written, and the daily papers have published, a brief comment on love. The one we pass along with this report on Dallas was written by Dr. Thomas A. Fry, Jr., pastor of the First Presbyterian Church there. Wrote Dr. Fry:

"And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." Colossians 3:14.

"A large, muscular man stepped into an elevator in a Washington hotel. Following him was his bellhop struggling with five large and two small suitcases. As the boy tried to get the bags into the levator the man said, 'Out where I come from we'd give that boy a pack mule.' From the rear of the elevator came a voice that said, 'Where I come from, we'd give him a hand.'

"The lack of harmony that is so obvious in our homes, our business, our race relations, and our international relationships is the direct result of our unwillingness to give people a hand. Harmony is seldom created by giving people advice. It does not result from handouts. It comes as we give people a hand to accomplish the worthwhile goals they have set for themselves.

"In a world that is too often bound together by fears and hatreds, we would do well to see to it that our contribution is one of love." □

These are but guesses; if Oswald was acting as a Marxist, the resentment from rightists that they are expected to accept blame for the killing is thoroughly understandable.

The second line of defense has been a logical point, that guilt is personal, not collective, and that nothing as amorphous and huge as a city can be blamed for anything. Surely this defense applies to most of the citizens of Dallas. What, however, about that bright, young, well-educated, church-going couple at that nice, respectable dinner party? And what about anyone present that evening who might have failed to dissent, and vigorously? As guilt is per-

sonal, it is personal, and participation in hate can be its common denominator.

IN THE NATURE of the case, Dallas' initial response to the assassination was a function of its power structure. The Citizens Council and the Dallas Assembly, a sort of Citizens Council for younger executives, were sponsoring organizations for the President's visit, along with a scientific research group. The speech Kennedy was to have made began with a hedged compliment to them: "It is fitting that these two symbols of Dallas progress are united in the sponsorship of this meeting. For they represent the best qualities, I am told, of leadership and learning in this city—and leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." The "key leaders" were assembled at the trade mart waiting for the President to arrive when he was shot, and when the fact was confirmed, a few of them adjourned to John Stemmons' office upstairs from the meeting hall. Stemmons is now president of the Citizens' Council. As Bob Cullum, who had been in charge of arrangements for the visit, says, they got in touch with city hall at once. The small group of men in Stemmons' office made the real civic decisions in Dallas during the hours after the assassination.

Who were they? J. Erik Jonsson, who was president of the Citizens Council and was to have introduced Kennedy; Cullum; Stemmons; Dawson Sterling, president of the Dallas Assembly; C. A. Tatum, a utilities executive; Sam Bloom, the P.R. man; and two clergymen, the Rev. Luther Holcomb, executive of the Dallas Council of Churches and the city's religious officiator, and Rev. Dickinson.

An advertising executive suggested a penitential march to the scene of the assassination. Someone else suggested a torchlight parade; someone else, a mass mourning in the Cotton Bowl. The group thought such an event would not be respectful and might lead to violence. "All along we were trying to quell this surge of the more flamboyant kind," Cullum says. Finally the group proposed a day of prayer, and that everyone go to church and pray. It is widely agreed that people did this, and in phenomenal numbers . . . Friday night, Saturday; Sunday, Cullum says, the congregations "broke out the walls of the churches." The wranglings about guilt have obscured the fact that the grief in Dallas was like a drowning sea. Hundreds of thousands of Dallas people flowed over and by the assassination scene, grim, bitter, fascinated, crying.

THERE WOULD BE neither point nor profit in reviewing now the shudders of controversy and recrimination that proceeded then to envelop Dallas. The national magazines—from Life to the Nation—have had their say, in almost every case bitterly, and in some cases bitterly with errors. It does have point to ask, however: Has Dallas changed?

There is a committee of nine clergymen who have been conducting a study of free-

dom of speech in the schools. They came into being because of the firing of the Dallas teacher after her letter critical of Dallas appeared in Time Magazine. But they have not reported.

Dean Joseph D. Quilliam, Jr., of Perkins School of Theology makes the point that there is no longer any possibility of a "news blackout" on suppressive or oppressive events in Dallas. "Some of us have come into an awareness of possibilities and procedures" having to do with news media outside Dallas, he said. (Dean Quilliam's reference to a news blackout proceeded from the Perkins faculty's unanimous support of Rev. William Holmes, the Methodist minister who referred, on a network, to school children in Dallas cheering the President's death. The dean says the faculty's support of Holmes was submitted for publication to both Dallas dailies, and was not printed.)

The Dallas Times Herald has been refusing to print letters that express hate or abusive extremism. Although the Dallas News has printed extremist letters since the assassination, including some reverting to the theme that liberals are in league with communists, the News' letters column has been somewhat restrained since Nov. 22.

Feelings of guilt in Dallas found no clearer statement than in the Nov. 27 column of A. C. Greene in the Times Herald. He wrote:

"It had become a game to hate John F. Kennedy. And, a lot of people played it, people who didn't really dislike John F. Kennedy at all. But they felt constrained to play the game because so many of their friends were—or seemed to be—sincere at it.

"When tragedy struck so hard, so swiftly and so near, then suddenly, the game was no longer a game. It was a haunting presence—the ghost of our own bad conscience."

The subject of the Dallas News editorial page is a difficult and complex one. Generally speaking, it has become, if not more moderate, much less frequently immoderate. The News has been publishing Walter Lippman's column—once promptly refuting it in an editorial—and on occasion an editorial has undertaken to explain that the editorial cartoon does not mean something abusive that might be read into it.

Stanley Marcus sought assurances from the News after the assassination that ads of the kind placed by Bernard Weissman in the Nov. 22 News (the one accusing the Kennedys of helping communists) would not appear again. He received what he regarded as satisfactory assurances. Along about the same time, Dec. 8, the News ran an editorial saying: "A sincere conservative can be just that—a sincere conservative—without being a Black Shirt, and a sincere liberal can be a liberal without being a Red," a point the News had not troubled to emphasize before. Three days later, the News was urging, in an editorial entitled "Try Tolerance," that "we Americans could learn to tolerate each other."

But two months to the day after the assassination, in an editorial entitled "Cold War Hotter," the News said, "... many naive leaders in the West have continued to press for a more 'liberal' attitude toward the communists, seeking new ways to accommodate or appease them. . . . The appeasers call for a 'neutralization' of Viet Nam, or an outright retreat, and press for internationalization of the Panama Canal. They want us to recognize Red China and to increase trade with Russia and other communist nations."

Sen. Mike Mansfield, D.-Mont., has advocated neutralization of Viet Nam; President Johnson has upheld the sale of wheat to Russia. A Bill McClanahan cartoon in the News Feb. 24 shows Khrushchev sitting beside a grave he has dug under a headstone, "Here Lies Uncle Sam, Buried 19—," while Uncle Sam holds open a picnic basket for Khrushchev. The basket is labeled, "U.S. Wheat," and as Khrushchev eats from it, he is saying, "Digging Makes Me Hungry." There is no editorial on this day's page anxiously assuring readers that this cartoon does not imply that Johnson is helping Khrushchev bury the United States.

The News has published, in news columns, a number of studies on social problems in Dallas within the last year. Last week, for example, the News ran a six-part series on poverty in Dallas by staffer Dennis Hoover.

IT IS CONJECTURED HERE that President Johnson must decide whether to come to Dallas for the forthcoming American Legion convention. Whether he will come, and if he does, whether he will ride in the closed, bullet-proof car which it is reported by a wire service that he now uses, will be matters that the Dallas power structure will have to cope with as best they can.

They have not changed this power structure, and they do not intend to. Indeed, Jonsson, the president of the Citizens Council as well as of Texas Instruments, was selected, by the city councilmen who go along with the Citizens Council, as the new mayor of the city to succeed Cabell when he resigned as mayor. A recent traffic safety program was announced with the customary fanfare by a committee made up of key Dallas leaders.

However, there is an X, an unknown, in the situation: the phenomenal increase in Dallas poll taxes paid, a reported increase of almost 100,000—about 40%—over 1962's record total. In addition, the Democrats' canvassing on behalf of the national Democratic cause could have an effect on the Cabell-Bryant election, as well, obviously, as on the winner's prospects against Alger. Johnson's more conservative image in Dallas has improved the Democrats' chances against Alger.

Democracy is still the unclosable open end in the Dallas situation, even though the power structure continues pretty much as was. Facing criticism as alloyers of democracy, some of the Citizens Council people have begun fighting back. One, a leader in the Council and a thoughtful, brooding

man, says, "The council is a means of accomplishment, rather than a means of decision. They have excluded those people who did not have the capacity to put the money on the line, because they did not think of themselves as a keeper of the community. Anybody would be a damn fool to deny that it is a power structure. The question is whether it is a decision-making structure, or a means of accomplishment."

Jonsson's reaction to the criticism of the Council is heated. A likable and natural man, Jonsson enjoys soliloquizing on Dallas; he is really sold on the place and the people, who he says are independent, don't ask a lot of favors, and act on their own initiative. Defending Dallas agitates his temper. The Citizens Council, he says, is not intended to do anything that interferes with the democratic process—"only to aid it." As mayor he will consult with its members. "I go to a group of citizens I know are substantial and ask their help. What's wrong with that?" he asks angrily.

For Cabell, Dallas continues essentially as it was: "Dallas is essentially a town of businessmen, by its very nature. Dallas' major economic factors are financial institutions, insurance companies, the distribution of many, many commodities, and we do have a good industrial complex, but it's not the type of industry that's dominated by any one concern or any one union. Dallas is made up of businessmen, business people, and naturally their perspective is along those lines."

Cullum, a food chainstore executive, says there is no disposition among the town's leaders "to revolutionize attitudes in the town," but, he says, there is more self-consciousness and a desire to consider outside opinion more carefully, to "come unsloganized" and "see more of the grays in the middle, and not so much the blacks and whites." The last eight or ten years, Cullum says, extremists of the far right and far left caused moderates to fall silent. "The middle just shut up." Now he believes the Democrats' revival is a good thing for the town.

MARCUS is the most liberal man who is "in." His manner is continental, his manner unobstrusive; he is a quiet and civilized man. He says:

"The thing that has been wrong here—and it's infecting the bloodstream of democracy around the country—is this idea that a certain group of people are the sole recipients of the divine, revealed political truth, and that anyone who disagrees with them is absolutely wrong, and not just maybe wrong, and anyone who agrees with them is absolutely right, and not just maybe right."

Dallas suffers, he says, from "a lack of moral indignation. I don't expect that to change radically, any more than I expect the Dallas News to change radically. If we get these men to move a little bit, we have a chance of establishing an area of fair play. I think the leadership is headed slightly differently . . . that if they were challenged with something, their response would be better."

Rabbi Levi Olan of Dallas, a regent of the University of Texas, addressed himself to the subject in these words:

"Is Dallas guilty of anything because the President of our country was assassinated on her streets? . . . The people of this city did not pull the trigger and they are certainly not assassins. . . . [Yet] Before the President came to our city, were were apprehensive. . . . Behind our apprehension lay the fact that we had become the number one spot in the nation for intolerance. . . . What is now evident is that the value system by which Dallas lives is now open to criticism. . . .

"Consider our city which boasts of great wealth, high fashion, fabulous bank buildings and luxurious, palatial homes, yet one-fifth of the residential area is a slum and has been officially condemned as unfit for decent human habitation. In this 'Big D' the local paper recently reported that many children do not go to school because they cannot afford to bring a lunch or buy one. . . . On high principles we reject government aid and praise individual initiative. The child, to our shame, has been left without a lunch and we are left with our so-called high principles. . . . Perhaps to paraphrase the late President, our value system in Dallas ought to be, 'Ask not what Dal-

las can do for me—but what can I do for Dallas?'"

I do not know Dallas well, but I have spent a lot of time here since Nov. 22, and it is my guess that the city will not again be quite the kind of place it has been the last ten years: A solution to the slum situation may be coming soon. There may be more courage, although perhaps not much more, to speak out for the reasonable and the humane. Right-wing extremism will persist, but it is no longer *de rigueur*. One also senses here, unspoken—indeed, denied—more humility than there was before. Pride goeth before a fall, and what a fall that was.

R.D.

A Comment

Let's Stop and Think On LBJ

Austin

I believe Democrats should reconsider their apparent decision to nominate Lyndon Johnson for president. I should at least like to hear some serious discussion of the matter. It is represented widely, that there is no precedent for any party failing to nominate its incumbent president. We are supposed to fall down prostrate before this precedent—especially us Texans. I do not see why. The situation, also, is unprecedented, and unprecedented situations can require unprecedented responses.

There is a question about Johnson's motives in public life which I discussed at some length in this column last October. In Texas there has always been doubt that the man has strong convictions; there has always been some feeling that he has been actuated mainly by a desire for power.

Johnson has all the power he can use now, of course. The question is, will he go on having it.

The finest thing about his presidency so far, it seems to me, is the several fervent statements he has made against the insane futility of nuclear warmaking. Yet last Saturday he again gave grounds for concern that he is too willing to risk nuclear war, such as with an invasion or blockade of North Viet Nam.

To be sure, in his State of the Union speech he seemed to go "all the way" with liberalism. He has certainly committed himself in words to the Kennedy program, specifically including public accommodations legislation, the tax cut, and medicare. But he has added some very conservative tones to this. The contradictions between a reduced federal budget and a war on poverty, and between his shockingly scaled down request for foreign aid funds and the requirements of world leadership for freedom and against poverty abroad, are profound, as I shall subsequently undertake to illustrate. A great deal also still turns in his performance. Will the Senate drop the enforcement powers for the attorney general from the civil rights bill?

Will Johnson regard his liberal promises as applicable only through November,

1964? What, very closely examined, do those promises amount to? Once he has the liberal Democrats' Democratic convention behind him, will he swing back toward the right? We do not know.

But this is only one of the two areas I believe the Democratic Party should be thinking about earnestly. The other is suggested by the disclosures to date in the Bobby Baker scandal. Let no one prejudge, or rush to conclude about, the serious tendencies of that evidence. Let the matter unravel itself as it will. But the revelations so far do tend to remind us that Johnson has a longer political past than perhaps any other presidential nominee-apparent in history.

There is, for instance, the matter of the 1948 campaign. Johnson made statements against civil rights and labor that year that will deafen many eardrums when they are played back into them. The idea that Johnson is not a man of principle, and is a man of compromise, will be strengthened as the Republicans unfold their campaign. Then, that year 1948, there was Box 13.

People disposed to criticize Johnson anyway will not lack for lyrics as his past is replayed. As long as Johnson was only a very powerful senator, majority leader, vice president, the criticism of him was spasmodic, and it was muted in many places. But now he is the President, and the stakes are control of the United States government and its policies for the next eight years. The Republicans will mute nothing; they will record everything they can, and they will trumpet it to the farthest corners of the nation, even into snowbound Minnesota towns, even into swamp camps in Louisiana.

They are researching feverishly, and in Texas. What will they excavate? Let us speak candidly—why not? for the life of the nation is the subject. We Texans have heard many stories about Johnson. They were not proved, although attempts were made to see if they were so; often in their nature, they were unprovable. Those of us who believe in the truth and in the rules

about deciding what is truth and what is gossip discountenanced these stories and went on to other things, as the circumstances required responsible people to do.

One of these stories was that national advertisers placed ads with the LBJ TV company to play up to Johnson's power, to ingratiate themselves with him. There was no apparent way to prove or disprove that. Who would admit it? Who could look at the records? It was a rumor, possibly a malicious rumor, without ascertainable foundation.

Now there is the matter of the \$1208 advertising Don Reynolds contends he was induced to take on KTBC. Johnson has an excellent defense in this controversy, which has not been publicized enough. There is no contention that there was any public business involved as Reynolds was drawn into taking this advertising; it was a question of an insurance policy. Still, there is something very unsettling about the matter. The New York Times reported that the Republicans on the Baker committee want to know whether this was an isolated matter, or commonplace, a pattern. There is a demand that KTBC's books be audited. Well, we do not know if it was an exception or a pattern, but either KTBC opens its books or there will be a question.

We have heard other stories. In their nature, they are not worthy of being repeated: they are not proved, they are just hearsay. A thing can be completely innocent, and men can still discover wrongdoing in it. The especially grave thing about scandals for a President, however, is that he's damned if he does and he's damned if he doesn't. He is not given the benefit of the doubt or dealt with as an ordinary mortal with ordinary foibles. He is expected to set the standard, and to embody it, as well. The stereo gift is unsettling; a man in high public office ought not take such a gift, whether his name is Eisenhower or Johnson.

Now it is alleged by responsible parties, including Cabell Phillips in an extremely

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damaging story in The New York Times, that the White House sought to impugn Don Reynolds' reliability as a witness by reading journalists excerpts from FBI files on Reynolds. A high White House personage, not the President, is represented as directly involved. This is a far more serious thing than a \$582 stereo set or the advertising of pots and pans, for this goes to the integrity of a free society and the security of citizens against selective persecution by the use of secret government police files.

IN MY OPINION—and I have considered it some weeks, and understand the different aspects of it — Democrats ought ask themselves two questions about Johnson and the Democratic convention, one a question of principle, the other of expediency.

The first is whether Johnson ought to be the Democratic nominee for president. Lest I be thought unrealistic, let me anticipate one of the rejoinders. It is beyond imagination that a Texas Democrat could buck an incumbent Democratic president from Texas. It is beyond possibility that the Democratic National Convention would fail to nominate Johnson. In effect, the liberals

who advance these arguments say, we're stuck; it is unDemocratic to ask that question; let's be grateful he's turned liberal and make the best of it.

But it is also true, is it not, that each man is responsible for what he does; responsible for each flexing of his personal influence, and each failure to flex it; responsible for each thing he says as a citizen, and for each time, also, that he is silent. In Texas we have a special responsibility this year; for Johnson is a Texan.

The second question is, Ought the Democrats act on the assumption that Johnson's past is inextinguishable? So, he is running very liberal, apparently. What about him?

Nothing more that is criticizable may be found, by the Republicans or by newspapermen; it is certainly to be assumed in fairness that it will not. But if it is, might not the Republicans lie behind the log until Johnson is nominated and then rise up with their shillelagns? It is certainly to be assumed, in the game of politics, that this is what they will do if anything turns up that gives them grounds to. Mostly rightists and racists believed strongly that Kennedy could be beaten, but there is a general feeling that Johnson could be beaten. There are

a lot of days, each one twenty-hours long, between March and November.

Of course, most Democrats now are committed to Johnson's nomination in the belief that it is the best, or the only, or the best and the only thing they can do. It is *not* the only thing they can do. It is just as possible for them to seek the nomination of someone just as liberal as Johnson talks, or more so, such as Senator Joseph Clark of Pennsylvania or, (even though there would be great difficulties,) of Adlai Stevenson of Illinois, in the belief that it is wiser to forego a certain advantage, running an incumbent president, than it would be to risk history on a politician one does not trust.

I write all this knowing that it is quite possible Johnson may be a great liberal president. The office has changed men before, and can again. Nevertheless, this is a subject that must be thought about and discussed in the open. I believe that everything should be considered and that no serious person should close his mind to any conclusion. I invite, not rhetoric or vituperation, but reflection. The arena is not Texas, where coy little masquerades so often pass for serious politics. The arena is the United States. R.D.

Integration in Texas

Austin

The valley of segregation, below the white icy mountain, has been dry for 10 these many years. The thaw, gradual like the coming of a millennial summer, has trickled into the valley a slowly rising river, lifting leaf by leaf, twig by twig, worrying loose great dead trees from their rotting roots, as it rises ever slowly, but steadily does rise. Surveying Texas since the Observer's last report on the thaw, ("Texas Is Integrating," Obs. June 28, 1963,) we must notice that the rising river has borne off some thickets of piled-up brush, some whole fallen-over timbers, but the valley is still wide and much of it cluttered and dry; the winter that began Nov. 22 has not yet become the spring.

THE ASSASSINATION, for instance, cut off rising expressions of discontent among the 3,200 students at Prairie View A&M College near Hempstead ("the exception" noted in the Observer's account of Houston as a backwater of the civil rights revolt, Obs. Nov. 15, '63). The discontent found focus in an economic boycott of the merchants in Hempstead, and it found an on-campus target when the administration of the school refused to support the boycott. For the homecoming football game with Bishop College Nov. 9, the students stayed away to chastise the administration, and the stands were almost vacant—estimates did not go higher than 100 fans in attendance. On Nov. 16, three white ministers joined students in picket-

ing G. Kelley's Steak House and the KC Steak House on Highway 290, which passes through Hempstead. Then came Nov. 22.

Just before the assassination, major changes began to break loose in Texas college customs, and these have continued all winter. On Oct. 29, addressing the general faculty, University of Texas Chancellor Harry Ransom let drop that public areas in living units were no longer segregated, and the Texas Relays and Longhorn Band had been integrated. Four days before the President's death, U.T.'s athletic director and head coach, Darrell Royal, announced complete athletic integration at the university—a step put off for years on grounds that whites would resent seeing Negroes carrying forward the cause of the orange and white at Memorial Stadium. The announcement caused cautiously approving responses from other coaches in this area, and a spokesman who did not let himself be named said the University of Houston's intercollegiate athletics are integrated, too.

Rumors that Baylor, the Baptist college, and its medical college in Houston would integrate became fact in November. In January the trustees of Texas Christian University, which is run by the Disciples of Christ, voted to integrate completely, with no reservations. Neither of these schools took the step by unanimous vote, but majorities prevailed. T.C.U. acted "on the strong recommendation of Chancellor M. E. Sadler," the school's trustees said. Last month U.T.'s regents approved integrated housing for a married students' dorm and summer seminar participants,

completing U.T. integration in every major area of student life except one, student housing, which is the subject of pending litigation.

This left Rice University the only segregated Southwest Conference school. The difficulty there, of course, is the 1891 instrument by which William Marsh Rice created an endowment for Rice, prohibiting acceptance of Negro students. Rice's trustees last year filed a civil suit asking that the restriction be set aside. Dr. Kenneth S. Pitzer, president, told the jury in Houston last month that Rice, not strictly a first-class university now, could go nowhere but downhill unless the race restriction was lifted. He specifically referred to the difficulty of getting federal research grants for a segregated college. The two Rice alumni opposing the suit contended, obviously and plausibly, that the trust is what Marsh made it and that if the trustees cannot fulfill its terms they should resign. Under cross-examination, Pitzer acknowledged that he knew about the restriction when he took the presidency. He said he might leave Rice if it was not lifted. The 1/4 jury ruled, in effect, that Rice cannot be a first-rate college, as the founder intended, as long as whites are barred, as the founder required. Just what this means depends on Dist. Judge William M. Holland.

WITH ALL THE STATE'S big city public schools already embarked on desegregation, changes in this area have begun to resemble the beginnings of mopping up operations.

Galveston's school trustees have already