

TIMES WESTERN EDI

DALLAS LEADERS URGE TOLERATION

Seek Improved Atmosphere
and End of 'Absolutism'

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Special to The New York Times.

DALLAS, Jan. 1 — The civic and religious leaders of this chagrined city have resolved that the new year should find an improved atmosphere in Dallas.

Letters to the city's two newspapers and sidewalk conversations would have suggested that Dallas had decided to shrug off recent criticism.

The assassination of President Kennedy, a popular argument ran, could have happened anywhere; to suggest otherwise was to libel the city's industrious and conservative population.

But the leaders have taken a different attitude.

"We've already seen changes here," one said recently, "and we're going to see many more."

In an advertisement in both newspapers today, Stanley Marcus, an owner of the Neiman-Marcus department stores, said publicly what others have said in private.

Under the headline "What's Right with Dallas?" his statement showed a tone of measured optimism.

However, after listing the city's merits, Mr. Marcus named "areas for community improvement."

Dallas has a slum problem that it has not faced, he said. More attention must also be paid to educational and cultural endeavors, he asserted.

Sees Spirit of 'Absolutism'

Chiefly, Mr. Marcus said, "this community has suffered from a spirit of 'absolutism' in recent years."

After quoting a definition of the absolutist as "the man who thinks that he alone possesses wisdom, patriotism and virtue," Mr. Marcus adds:

"The rejection of this spirit of 'absolutism' and the acceptance and insistence by all citizens on toleration of differing points of view seem to us to be essential for the future health of our community."

He called on The Dallas Morning News and The Dallas Times-Herald to "lead the way by the presentation of balanced points of view on controversial issues."

When a Dallas clergyman and a public school teacher recently raised much the same point, the outcry led to police protection for the minister and a brief suspension for the teacher.

A community where decisive leadership is exerted outside of City Hall, Dallas has been largely led by a close-knit group of businessmen, who were recently analyzed in a widely read master's thesis.

Published as "The Decision-Makers" by the Southern Methodist University Press, the thesis, by Mrs. Carol Estes Thometz, has become the University's all-time best-seller.

Mrs. Thometz, a 25-year-old sociologist whose family is active in the Dallas area, said the city's real leaders inclined toward "unofficial, unenforced, discreet political activity."

Memorial to Be Chosen

Such discreet activity is now under way within the citizens' committee chosen to recommend a memorial to President Kennedy.

Some members have indicated that the choice, to be announced this month, would reflect a new direction for Dallas.

"I think we're going to achieve something significant from the great price we have all paid," one man said.

Meanwhile, newspaper reports remind the city almost daily of the events that began Nov. 22, the day of the assassination.

Mrs. Marina Oswald, widow of Lee H. Oswald, the accused assassin, announced through her attorney that she would like to appear on television to thank the nation for gifts and cash contributions that so far total \$23,000.

Jack L. Ruby, a 52-year-old nightclub proprietor who shot Oswald, is to appear in court again Jan. 10, when his bail-bond hearing resumes.

But the murder trial of a handyman charged with killing his widowed employer has been set for Jan. 6 in the same courtroom. If the case extends throughout that week, Ruby's hearing may be delayed further.