

Advertising

By PETER BART

A magazine article criticizing the ideological climate of Dallas has set off a chain reaction of events that resulted yesterday in two surprise resignations.

The first resignation was submitted by J. M. Shea Jr., who was senior vice president and a director of The American Petrofina Company, a major Dallas oil company.

The second resignation was submitted by Freeman & Gossage, Inc., a small San Francisco advertising agency that had been handling the American Petrofina account. Until yesterday's resignation, American Petrofina was by far the biggest account at Freeman & Gossage.

According to reliable sources, both resignations stemmed from reaction to an article called "Memo From a Dallas Citizen" that appeared in the March 24 issue of Look magazine.

The article had been written by Mr. Shea, who was described as an oil executive. No mention was made of American Petrofina. The article criticized Dallas civic leaders for not opposing extremist organizations. "When the hate throwers came along, they simply stood back and let the stones fly," Mr. Shea wrote.

Look magazine said yesterday that one Dallas newspaper had refused to accept ads promoting its article.

Following publication of the article, the pressure on Mr. Shea started to build up. According to one source, Mr. Shea's company received hundreds of phone calls, most of which were favorable to his article. Some holders of credit cards, however, mailed in mutilated cards with notes attacking Mr. Shea.

Events were climaxed by Mr. Shea's resignation yesterday from the oil company, which was followed shortly by that of Freeman & Gossage. Howard Gossage, a principal of Freeman & Gossage, is a friend of Mr. Shea, who is understood to have strongly sympathized with his position.

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End Papers

DALLAS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE. By Warren Leslie. 229 pages. Grossman, \$4.50.

At 12:30 P.M. last Nov. 22, self-congratulation in Dallas soured. The city that had prided itself on being unique in Texas and in the nation suddenly saw the need for protective coloration. Big D, the Athens of the Southwest, overnight became Everytown, with the civic slogan: "It could have happened anywhere."

Warren Leslie, who moved there 17 years ago from New York, attempts to explain in this book how Dallas differs from Denver, Des Moines and Detroit.

He points to the insularity of Dallas business leaders, the stridency of its right-wing politics, the editorial policy of The Dallas Morning News.

But Mr. Leslie, pointing at all of these obvious targets, punctures few of them. As a former reporter for The News and a public relations executive for Neiman-Marcus, he writes about Dallas with the mixed responses of a missionary gone native. Begun as analyses, his chapters often die away into apology.

In the book's best passages, the author contrasts the disregard for law in Dallas with the deep respect for white-collar management. For example, the policeman who confronted Lee H. Oswald in the Texas School Book Depository was assured by the manager that Oswald was an employe and above suspicion. Mr. Leslie explains: "In Dallas, the training is that management is benevolent and always does good."

Too much of the rest of the book sounds like a tactful memorandum urging mild reforms on the executive board of the Dallas Citizens Council.

—JACK LANGGUTH.