

CONSCIENCE ABOVE PARTY...

The Sunday
Herald Tribune

FOUNDED BY JOHN W. GREENE, APRIL 18, 1811

The Herald Tribune makes available a broad cross section of informed and responsible opinion through the views and observations of our columnists. Our own opinions are expressed in these editorials.

22

OCTOBER 4, 1964

We Choose Johnson

For the Presidency: Lyndon B. Johnson.

Travail and torment go into those simple words, breaching as they do the political traditions of a long newspaper lifetime. But we find ourselves, as Americans, even as Republicans, with no other acceptable course.

For many Republicans, this has been a season of soul-searching—whether, out of loyalty to the party and the two-party system, to embrace Goldwater; whether to defect to Johnson; or whether, caught between two unpalatable alternatives, to abstain from choice.

For us, as we suspect may be true for others, these considerations were decisive:

Abstention is impossible. Officeholders and candidates for office, beholden to the party, are limited by their obligations in what they can say. A newspaper cannot take refuge in this; and no agony of indecision can make the choice go away, unless we maintain that the White House should be vacant for the next four years. One or the other has to be elected; the choice is only which, not whether.

...

We opposed Barry Goldwater for the nomination. We felt that his simplistic views on world affairs, and his appeal—whether calculated or not—to ugly racial passions in this climactic year of the struggle for equal rights, were alone enough to rule him out as the Republican standard-bearer.

But he won.

We then hoped that he might prove our fears unfounded, rise to his responsibilities as nominee, show himself equal to the office he sought, and thus make it possible to close ranks behind him.

He didn't. At every step of the post-nomination way, two things became ever more evident: 1) that Senator Goldwater, for all his obvious sincerity, simply does not have the combination of personal talents necessary for the Presidency of the United States; and 2) that his course, if pursued as he has pursued it, would wreck not only the Republican party but the two-party system.

...

The more he discusses foreign affairs, the clearer it becomes that his vision is limited; that he has no grasp of the infinite complexities of a dangerous, frustrating and volatile world. The constant confusions over what he really means suggest little talent for the nuances of diplomacy. He has shown himself, in sum, a poor risk for that most personal and most awesome of a President's responsibilities, the conduct of foreign relations in an age when survival may, in crisis, depend on his judgment—and his judgment alone.

His whole Southern strategy, his embrace of Senator Thurmond, his thinly veiled equations of Negro rights with violence in the streets—these have been a mockery of the fundamental Republican dedication to equal rights. However pure his own heart, his tactics dishonor the heritage of a century.

At San Francisco his first response to victory was one of unabashed arrogance. He rejected all moderate counsel; worse, much worse, he raised a banner for the extremists, the bigots, the implacable "antis," even while issuing, in effect, a manifesto for a new party, taking the Republican name but excluding the Republican soul.

His first great responsibility was choice of a Vice-Presidential candidate. He passed up every man of Presidential stature within the Republican ranks, to choose instead a party functionary of little distinction then, and distinguished since only for the vigor of his vituperation.

Goldwater's unity gesture at Hershey was utterly superficial and soon forgotten (he himself was quick to insist that he had made no concessions); his carefully selected lieutenants, taking over the party machinery, sought pathlessly and at once to convert a great national party into a narrow ideological faction.

If Senator Goldwater were to succeed in transforming the Republican party into a narrow Goldwater party—which is clearly the intent of the men behind him, and in which the Senator at least acquiesces—he would reduce a great political organization to a permanent, ineffectual opposition. By destroying the inner balance of the party, he would destroy the balance of political power in the nation.

The mass defection now evident from the Goldwater ticket can't be laid simply to sour grapes, or disgruntlement by poor losers. It's a nationwide, grass-roots defection, a mass exodus based on lack of confidence and respect. Senator Goldwater could have made it possible for many, even most, of these people to support him; instead, he made it extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible.

We believe, strongly, in Republican principles; we feel that the Republican party is best fitted to govern a free nation. And we urgently want to see the Republican party, already dangerously diminished, grow stronger.

But this, in our judgment, does not justify making Barry Goldwater President of the United States.

...

In supporting Lyndon Johnson, we do so with our eyes open and our fingers crossed. We hold no brief for the Democratic doctrine of ever-encroaching Federal authority; we fear a continued spending spree; we despise the traditional Democratic practice of buying votes by the bloc, with special-interest legislation wrapped in compassionate slogans.

But in Mr. Johnson we are offered a man of vast experience and manifest competence. In the Senate he proved himself one of the ablest legislative leaders of the age. As President, he has moved with sureness and responsibility through almost a year of crises—not least of these, the crisis of assassination and succession.

Moreover, Lyndon Johnson's greatest talent is the one needed now as seldom before in our history; that of reconciling the seemingly irreconcilable, and pulling opposites into a consensus. In a nation torn by racial and sectional strife, its divisions exacerbated by the ugly passions stirred up (on both sides) by the Goldwater candidacy, the nation needs a President who can bind up its wounds and let it find its soul again.

Senator Goldwater says he is offering the nation a choice. So far as these two candidates are concerned, our inescapable choice—as a newspaper that was Republican before there was a Republican party, has been Republican ever since and will remain Republican—is Lyndon B. Johnson.

Reprinted from the N. Y. Herald Tribune
Sunday, October 4, 1964

Voters! Read This Editorial Carefully...

... it clearly explains why our organization is endorsing Johnson.

**RESPONSIBLE AMERICANS ALL
OVER THE UNITED STATES ARE PUTTING
CONSCIENCE ABOVE PARTY!**

Sponsored by Women for Johnson

Mrs. William T. Gossett and Mrs. Ben D. Mills
cochairmen