

President Johnson and His Program

San Antonio

In the early Greek democracies, every man had his public duties to perform . . . sometimes as a soldier, sometimes as an office-holder, sometimes as one participating in an organization. To those of that era who would not concern themselves with politics the name "idiot" was applied, and so, interestingly enough, the original meaning of the word idiot, both in Greek and later in early English, meant a person not holding public office or not participating in public affairs. When we participate in a political organization—when we involve ourselves with the politics of our home town, history says that this is an honorable endeavor.

People have to understand that they are not always right, be they rich or poor, black or white, you or me, Good Government League or the Democratic Coalition, organized labor or the business community. Everywhere in America, and at every level, a loyal opposition is needed.

This is what Walter Lippman meant when he wrote. "The opposition is indispensable. A good statesman, like any other sensible human being, always learns more from his opponents than from his fervent supporters. . . . In a democracy the opposition not only is tolerated as constitutional, but must be maintained because it is in fact indispensable."

The late Mexican muralist Orozco said the same thing another way: "Without conflict there would be no films, no bullfights, no journalism, no politics, no free struggle, nothing. Life would be most boring. As soon as anyone says yes it is necessary to answer no. Everything should be done against the grain, against the current, and if some foolish fellow proposes a remedy that would do away with the difficulties, we must rush him at whatever cost . . . for civilization is at stake."

In San Antonio, the Bexar County Democratic Coalition has made its greatest contribution by significantly helping to provide that X factor which, to date, has kept this community from being completely controlled by an oligarchy such as that which runs Dallas.

With these background thoughts provided by Lippman and Orozco, I say it is time for Texas Democrats to gird for the

Maury Maverick, Jr., of San Antonio is an attorney, a member of the State Democratic Executive Committee of Texas from San Antonio, and a former member of the Texas House of Representatives, where he fought the battles of liberalism when it was lonely and hard to do.

Maury Maverick, Jr.

biggest battle of all, the coming battle for the White House.

We shall go to the polls and vote for all Democrats from the Courthouse to the White House. We will do this partly because we are for the announced national program of L.B.J., and certainly we are for it more than his best friend, Governor John Connally, or his national Democratic committeeman, Frank Erwin. In short, Mr. Johnson is now the President, his record in that office is extra good, and as people who have a special obligation to do the positive, we ought to go to bat for a Johnson victory.

If we fail on the grass roots level, L.B.J. will fail nationally. President Kennedy's choice for vice president, Harry Truman's good friend, Lyndon Johnson can stand as a welcome visitor at the graves of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, and we must fight for him in the weeks ahead.

It is time to strengthen friendships. It is even time to shake hands with political enemies if they will shake on medicare, if they will shake on civil rights, if they will shake on the war on poverty.

In some Texas circles, the President is praised in meaningless phrases along the lines that it is good to have a Texan in the White House. Only that and nothing more and don't mention his program for America, and maybe even sabotage it a little.

Oh, I can hear them now. We like the tall Texan, they say—but not medicare or civil rights. But my friends, that's not the package. The package is L.B.J. and civil rights, L.B.J. and medicare, L.B.J. and world peace, L.B.J. and the war on poverty, and those Texans who would have it otherwise are not only going against the vast masses of the people, they are plunging a political dagger into the heart of Lyndon Johnson.

Of course, it is nice to have a Texan in the White House, but he can't win by being a South of the Mason-Dixon Line provincial Texan, and those who would try to put him in that position are only hurting him in New York, Chicago, Detroit, and Los Angeles.

LYNDON JOHNSON'S political emancipation from the confines of this state will not be as easy thing. Conservative Democrats in Texas can be unfair in insisting that he be a Texan first and an American second. Liberals in the East can be equally unfair by writing him off as

they once did Hugo Black when Senator Black was appointed to the Supreme Court. Thereafter, you will remember, out of the Southland—with all its glory, ignorance, and agony—Hugo Black became and still is the greatest jurist in this precious land in the field of human rights.

In the final analysis, however, it is up to the President himself, for there will be those moments of truth when he must stand alone like a Lord Jim out of a Joseph Conrad novel.

The world then is Mr. Johnson's oyster, and his statements as President demonstrate that he understands this, for they illustrate national appeals by an American who is at home in all 50 states . . . suggesting a Paul Douglas reaching out to a Martin Luther King for a better tomorrow . . . a George Norris talking the merits of T.V.A. or a John Kennedy reminding us that Massachusetts Avenue is no longer a local thoroughfare, but a street which encircles the globe.

And how is the President talking? I tell you he is talking good.

Listen . . . listen . . . to his words delivered to a joint session of the House and Senate on January 8, 1964:

"Let this Congress be known as the session which did more for civil rights than the last hundred sessions combined;

"As the session which enacted the most far-reaching tax cut of our time;

"As the session which declared all-out war on human poverty and unemployment in these United States;

"As the session which finally recognized the health needs of all our older citizens;

"As the session which reformed our tangled transportation and transit policies;

"As the session which achieved the most effective, efficient foreign aid program ever;

"And as the session which helped to build more homes, more schools, more libraries, and more hospitals than any single session of Congress in our nation's history."

Mr. Johnson has established the President's Committee on Consumer Interests and recommended the following legislation for the individual consumer who has no lobbyist in Washington:

Additional testing authority for the Food and Drug Administration not only for prescription drugs but for over-the-counter drugs as well.

Legislation to require labels clearly warning the consumer of possible dangers.

Legislation to grant the Federal Trade Commission authority to issue temporary

restraining orders against false advertising.

Legislation requiring all lenders of money to disclose to borrowers in advance the actual amount of their commitment and the annual rate of interest they will have to pay.

In the field of agriculture the President has pointed out that three-quarters of those employed as farm laborers earn less than \$2,000 a year in cash wages and that we should not only improve the lot of the agricultural worker but that we should use our food abundance to raise standards of living both at home and around the world.

In the field of medicare the President told the Congress that our Social Security system should be enlarged to protect people 65 or over against the heaviest costs of a serious illness—the costs of hospital and skilled nursing home care, home health services, and outpatient hospital diagnostic services.

In the war on poverty, the President's legislation provides important opportunities through the Office of Economic Opportunity:

It gives almost half a million underprivileged young Americans the opportunity to develop skills, continue education, and find useful work.

It gives every American community the opportunity to develop a comprehensive plan to fight its own poverty.

It gives many workers and farmers the opportunity to break through particular barriers, racial and otherwise, which bar their escape to a better life.

And now let's talk about the civil rights act. Who is the author of that piece of legislation?

Well, there isn't any single author. It was an angry man, John Brown, kicking over the traces at Harper's Ferry. It was Hubert Humphrey smoothing them over on the floor of the Senate.

It was Tom Paine, and it was a Republican Chief Justice, Earl Warren. It was John Kennedy dead in his grave. It was Medgar Evers, white moderates, and black extremists like Malcolm X. It was the impact of Communism on this world, prodding us to live up to our own Bill of

Rights. It was Homer Rainey, Bull Connor's police dogs, Frankie Randolph, and Jim Sewell, the blind District Judge, who can see with his heart. It was old Ralph Yarborough, God love him, up to his ears in Confederate ancestors, standing alone—so terribly alone.

For different motivations, it was all this and much more, but the culminating victory belonged to Lyndon Johnson. His style in triumph may not have set your heart on fire, and old memories may be a mesquite thorn under the saddle, but when the bill went to the White House, it was Lyndon's day.

HERE IN TEXAS, let us rally to the good fight for the man from the Pedernales River. Let us force the great debate with the Dixiecrats in our midst who talk favorably about the tall Texan but who turn their backs on his program. Let's keep our eyes on that package: L.B.J. and medicare, L.B.J. and civil rights, L.B.J. and world peace. And let's get to work. □

Perhaps the Old Fragrances

Austin

I suppose those days have been mercifully fuzzed-up by the myopic eye of time; those days tracing pristine roots to the scattered sands of fifteen years ago, when my dodge was recording the daily trivia of following history for the Midland Reporter-Telegram and the Odessa American out in the flat and hostile badlands of West Texas.

Surely those gone days could not have been the big blast now remembered; no doubt charity is at work in the belfry of the mind. For I was then bemoaning short shrift by fate, itching to hit the road, to seek in less parochial surroundings rendezvous with some illusive golden Dame of Destiny. The breath of the world was foul; blockade in Berlin, fighting in Korea, witch-hunting in the U.S. had replaced mahjongg and Bank Nite. Reporters were paid a pittance for labors lost. Life was one series of Kraft cheese dinners and day-old pies, of sneaking late with lights muted into the exit alleys of drive-in theaters, of grunting up a lone dollar to make prayerful wager on the football pool, of razor blades used until one shaved blood, and of covering civic luncheons where speakers told us how rich and blessed we had become under Free Enterprise.

There was little to admire in our daily product. The usual publisher's deference was paid to the narrow will of Doctor Advertiser, he of the long and potent dollar, in a land where money talked in honeyed accents and no propertied citizen need fear his name in print save for purposes of fulsome praise.

Larry King

To give due to proper devils, the American was much more the professional in its newsgathering, by the canons of the trade. But it made up for the oversight by flashing editorial policies backward enough to take stance on the immediate Right of Robert (Yonder-come-a-Comsymp) Welch: anti-public schools, roads, parks, post-offices; pro-McCarthy, MacArthur, strike-busting. In short, if it didn't make money or patriotic sounds, stomp it to death before it grew.

The Reporter-Telegram was too timid even to be monumentally wrong by reasons of ideology. It simply avoided all except the most puerile editorial subjects. But it did make deep bows toward the city's Mister Bigs in reporting straight news. If an independent oil operator under inspiration of grog hopped a curb and smashed his high-finned Caddy into somebody's stylishly-draped mannequins, he got in the paper as "a Midland man" (which narrowed it down to about 20,000 subjects) even if charges were filed. It was great Saturday night sport around the newsroom, as we povertied reporters became slightly hysterical after our 16-hour stints (with no overtime), to talk loudly about what a mean son-of-a-bitch that "Midland man" was and how he always seemed in large trouble. The anointed Executives (executive is always spelled with a capital E in Midland, the way you use G in God) of the R-T chose to stiffen their spines and pour over page proofs during the spoofing, paying us no heed. Giving us bleak silence was better than giving us money.

Yet, though recalling with clarity the

cruel tortures of small-town newspapering (petty jealousies between Courthouse and City Hall with inhabitants of each tattling to reporters on back stairs, numb backsides from sweating Council meetings longer than the Boer Wars, the juvenile inanities of JayCee luncheons where it was somehow thought to make one a Better Citizen to throw biscuits and wet napkins at brethren-of-the-lodge before watching filmed "Southwest Conference Football Highlights of 1947," irate parents trembling because Junior's name got spelled wrong in the box score, local goofuses who trundled in awkward essays predicting fire and flood and pestilence directly traceable to women wearing lip rouge and all that juke-box dancin' by them young'uns at the Youth Center, publishers simple enough to be named Simon and possessed of more sacred cows than an Indian rajah dairy-farming on the side)—yes, even recalling all those weird stings, one remembers the time with unaccountable pleasure. Man, pricked by thorns, reaches for roses still. . . .

PERHAPS THE OLD FRAGRANCES waft back over the years because there is the green vision of memorable characters who then had some strange left-handed faith in the wonderful nonsense of newspapering. It is barely possible that a few blithe spirits lurk today behind stolid neckties and gray flannels found in city rooms, but most reporters strike me as being impatient only to reach qualifying age for Rotary Club. I bet they are hooked on Norman Vincent Peale's synthetic done and sing in choral clubs and get their kicks at health-food bars. This balding head casts a vote for The Old Gang: