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Statement from Allard K. Lowenstein, Chairman, Advisory Committee
Henry for Governor -- October 27, 1963

What is going on in the State of Mississippi in October, 1963, is astonishing to an American citizen not experienced in the ways of this state. It is of course no secret that Negroes in general are not allowed to vote in Mississippi, but the American people need to know that in addition to disenfranchising Negroes, the preservation of the "Mississippi way of life" demands the intimidation of anyone not willing to support white rule.

This "way of life" can be called the "Mississippi way of life" only in the sense that it is enforced by the state in violation of the United States Constitution. But in a larger sense it is unfair to call this the Mississippi way of life because as the people who run the state well know, it could not survive the test of a free election. That is why these people will not allow a free election to be held.

The effort to present an alternative to the current situation has come to be centered upon the candidacies of Henry and King.

Campaign workers for these candidates have discovered that it is impossible to function in Mississippi with the minimum safeguards that are assumed in any free society. People are arrested for distributing leaflets, for violating curfews while trying to enter hotels, for committing the most imaginative variety of non-existent traffic violations. Ministers who offer the use of church facilities for meetings are threatened. Negroes known to have talked with campaign workers are told--sometimes by private citizens, but more frequently by officials of the community--"not to let it happen again." In short, the atmosphere of this campaign is more nearly reminiscent of a campaign under communist tyranny than of an election in the United States of America. In such a situation the courage of the people who are continuing their efforts in the campaign cannot fail to impress and move those of us who have come from other parts of the United States.

We shall tell what we have found in Mississippi wherever we go when we leave, and we shall not leave until we have seen through the rest of this dismal experience. We shall submit evidence of what we have found to the Civil Rights Commission and to Members of the Congress of the United States in the faith that the American people, once they know the facts, will not long be willing to allow tyranny to wrap itself in the American flag in an American State.

We are particularly grateful to the students of Yale University who have taken time from their studies and traveled long distances to assist in these efforts. It is of course a pity that it should be necessary for people to make such sacrifices in our country at this late date, but it is wonderful to know that there are many people prepared to do so as long as it may be necessary.