

Mississippi Faces Challenge

**"Freedom Democrats"
to challenge Missis-
sippi Delegation at
National Convention**



**Council
Of
Federated
Organizations
supports**



**MISSISSIPPI
FREEDOM
DEMOCRATIC
PARTY**

The colorful Boardwalk in Atlantic City will be crowded this August with more than two thousand delegates and alternates to the Democratic National Convention. Newsmen, tourists, and politicians of all shapes and sizes will pack into the massive Convention Hall for the quadrennial rite of picking a Presidential ticket and writing a party platform.

Among the throng in Atlantic City will be a small but determined band of whites and Negroes from the troubled state of Mississippi. Under the banner of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, they will try to unseat the all-white delegation from Mississippi picked in meetings from which Negroes have been excluded.

There is an element of drama in this struggle, for the Freedom Democrats face heavy odds in their fight for recognition as the official delegation from Mississippi. Who are the Freedom Democrats, and why will they go to Atlantic City with their appeal to the convention?

Mississippi has not always been the scene of bitter-end struggles and politics built on racism. One of the stalwarts of Roosevelt's New Deal bloc in Congress was Senator Pat Harrison of Mississippi, and until 1960 the liberal Frank Smith was a respected member of Congress. But Mississippi lost a Congressional seat that year, and the powers-that-be defeated Smith, who now serves on the board of the TVA.

Negroes have not been welcome at the polls in Mississippi for many years, and a combination of poll taxes, fear, and discriminatory voting tests have kept them from voting. As a consequence, less than 7 percent of the eligible Negroes in the state are registered to vote.

In 1962, although they were shut out of both parties, Negroes and a handful of sympathetic whites decided to set up their own political structure. On an unofficial "Freedom Ballot" held in churches and stores, 83,000 Negroes voted for Aaron Henry for Governor and Edwin King for Lieutenant Governor. Henry, a Negro pharmacist and state president of the NAACP, and King, a young white minister who is chaplain of Tougaloo College campaigned through Mississippi on a civil rights and anti-poverty platform.

Last April 26, under the direction of the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), a committee of all the civil rights groups in the state, 200 delegates met in Jackson to establish the Freedom Democratic Party. They contended that Mississippi had no real Democratic Party, since the state Democrats had repudiated the national party (see excerpt from the platform shown here), and decided to register voters and run candidates on their own.

Four Freedom Democratic candidates ran in the recent Democratic primaries in Mississippi. The four, three running for the House and one for the Senate, all lost, but they intend to run in the general election under the Freedom Democratic banner. One candidate, Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer of Ruleville—home of Sen. James Eastland—told a meeting in Washington last month that the day after she tried to register to vote, her husband was fired from his job in retaliation.

Sitting in the hot, bustling office of the Freedom Democrats in Washington, one leader told the **Washington Report** that progress is being made in the national convention challenge. He pointed to a resolution of the Democratic National Committee that delegates must be "bona fide Democrats who have the interests, welfare and success of the Democratic Party at heart," and argued that this disqualifies the present Mississippi delegates. In his 1963 campaign, Gov. Paul Johnson said that his party "long ago separated itself from the National Democratic Party. . . ."

The Freedom Democrats are busily rounding up support for their convention challenge. Buttonholing delegates from Northern states and attending state Democratic conventions, they have already been assured of support from Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, New York, California, and Massachusetts.

But the tough fight will be in the credentials committee at the convention, on which each state has two members. They hope to get the needed backing of at least 10 percent on the credentials committee, and the support of 8 or more states for a roll-call on the credentials challenge on the floor.



Rev. John Cameron, young Hattiesburg minister, is Freedom Democratic candidate in 4th district of Mississippi.

Negroes in Mississippi are slowly making progress toward racial equality, but as the headlines show almost every day, they face bitter resistance from many quarters. Most of all, they want political equality; the right to register, vote and take part in the political process. The Freedom Democrats want to support national candidates and goals.

Atlantic City will be crowded this August, and the eyes of the nation will be focused on Convention Hall. In the Hall and up and down the boardwalk, serious Negroes and whites from Mississippi will be collaring delegates from other states, arguing that their color or support of civil rights not bar them from the convention in place of a delegation determined to oppose civil rights. The time has come, they will say, for Mississippi to rejoin the union of states. They are determined, and the convention will have to listen to them.

PLATFORM OF THE MISSISSIPPI STATE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Adopted In Convention In the City of Jackson, August 16, 1960 (After the 1960 National Convention in Los Angeles)

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF MISSISSIPPI

(1) That we reject and oppose the platforms of both National Parties and their candidates.

Wayne County Demos Train Guns On Lyndon

JACKSON DAILY NEWS

Friday, June 28, 1964

Paper
Reports
Call for
"Complete
Defeat" of
President
Johnson

WAYNESBORO, Miss. (Special) — The Wayne County Democratic convention was held here at the Court House, and delegates elected to represent Wayne County in the District and State Convention were James Mashburn, Henry W. Odom, S. C. Kennedy, and Rab Sanderson.

The Convention adopted a resolution that the delegates to the District and State Convention would be instructed to vote for and support only those persons were pledged to bring about the complete defeat of Lyndon Baines Johnson.

The States Speak Out

Wisconsin . . .

Whereas: the Democratic Party of Wisconsin is firmly committed to the principle of one man, one vote; and, . . .

Whereas: in certain states, such as Mississippi, delegates are elected by a non-representative white minority; . . .

Be it . . . resolved: that the Wisconsin delegation to the Democratic National Convention be urged to support the accreditation of the Freedom Delegation as an expression of our support for the principle of one man, one vote and to encourage those who are working for voter registration of a disfranchised Negro minority.

Michigan . . .

Whereas: the traditional Democratic Party of Mississippi is undemocratically constituted in that it discriminates against large numbers of citizens; and, . . .

Whereas: a Freedom Democratic Party is being established in the state of Mississippi which is open to all citizens regardless of race and which will support the national platform and candidates; . . . now, therefore, be it

Resolved: that this Convention instructs the Michigan delegation at the forthcoming national convention to take all appropriate action to seat the delegates from the Freedom Democratic Party of Mississippi. . . .

Minnesota . . .

Whereas: the traditional Democratic Party of Mississippi is a totally segregated party which does not permit hundreds of thousands of Negro citizens in Mississippi to vote or otherwise participate in its affairs; . . .

Therefore, be it resolved that this convention instructs the Minnesota delegation to the forthcoming Democratic National Convention . . . to consider the request to seat the delegates of the Freedom Democratic Party with sympathy. . . .