

MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM DEMOCRATIC PARTY

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INFORMATION SHEET

The primary basis for the Freedom Democratic Party's convention challenge is the systematic denial of the constitutional rights of Mississippi Negroes by state and local governments controlled by the all-white Democratic Party. Negroes constitute nearly one-half of the population of Mississippi.

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The vast majority of Mississippi Negroes (more than 93 percent) are denied the right to vote. Out of an eligible Negro voting population of 450,000, only 25,000 are registered to vote. In many Mississippi counties, Negroes constitute a majority, yet they make up only a small minority of registered voters.

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After 100 years of Freedom only 25,000 Negroes can vote in Mississippi. To prove that Negroes want to vote, the MFDP organized a Freedom Registration drive, using registration forms similar to those used in the North. The result: 50,000 people registered in less than two months.

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In June 1964, for the first time since Reconstruction, registered Negroes tried to take part in precinct meetings of the all-white Democratic Party. Those few who were not barred from attending, were denied full participation as equal citizens.

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Starting in early July the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party began the series of precinct, county, district and state meetings required for the formation of a new party. A 68-man integrated delegation to the National Democratic Convention was elected by the State Convention of the MFDP on August 9th.

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The MFDP has received support from the Democratic State Conventions or State Executive Committees of California, Oregon, Wisconsin, Colorado, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Minnesota, Washington and the District of Columbia. These nine states plus the D.C. will send delegations to Atlantic City which have been instructed to initiate and support appropriate action at the convention to seat the challenge delegation.

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The Freedom Democratic Party delegation is going to Atlantic City pledged to support the platform and candidates of the National Democratic Party. In 1960 the regular Mississippi Democratic Party repudiated the national party, its platform, and its candidates. 1964 promises more of the same.

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Dr. Aaron Henry of Clarksdale, Miss. is chairman of the delegation. Mr. Lawrence Guyot of Pass Christian, Miss. is chairman of the Party.