

Statement of the  
Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party

on arrival in Atlantic City

August 21, 1964

The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party delegation has come here to Atlantic City with the expectation that, if our case is fully heard, we will be seated.

The recent court injunction against ten of our party leaders has not caused us to modify our stand in any way; on the contrary, the injunction has only strengthened our case against the so-called Mississippi "Democratic Party".

The fundamental reason for the formation of the Freedom Democratic Party and for our being here in Atlantic City is the fact that nearly one half of the citizens of Mississippi are denied their basic constitutional rights by a state government entirely controlled by the traditional Mississippi Democratic Party. The great majority of Negroes have been barred from the ballot box by discriminatory laws and registration practices.

New political organizations have always been stifled in Mississippi, especially if the new groups threatened to mobilize the Negroes or to create a split among the whites. The Freedom Democratic Party, with its 51,000 members from 79 of Mississippi's 82 counties and its county organizations in 42 counties, poses a real threat to Mississippi's power structure, in spite of the fact that most of its members are presently disfranchised. The Freedom Democratic Party is providing a channel so that, for the first time in this century, thousands and

and thousands of Negro Mississippians can voice their grievances and aspirations at a national level. Is it any wonder that an attempt has been made to outlaw our party?

The State of Mississippi charges that the Freedom Democratic Party has no right to use the name "Democratic". We believe that it is the so-called Mississippi "Democratic Party" which has forfeited all claims to the name "Democratic". We are Democrats, loyal to the National Democratic Party and pledged to support the platform and nominees agreed upon by this convention. It is up to the National Democratic Party to decide which group is entitled to use the name "Democratic", which group truly represents the aims and ideals of the National Democratic Party.

We have faith that the decision handed down here in Atlantic City will recognize the legitimate demands of the Freedom Democratic Party and the very real grievances it voices for thousands & thousands of Mississippi citizens.