

August 29, 1964 The following statement was given by telephone by Dr. Aaron Henry, chairman of the Freedom Democratic Party delegation, and delivered to a mass rally welcoming Freedom delegates back to Mississippi: (rally in Jackson)

The participation of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party just concluded in Atlantic City focussed the attention of the world on the problems of the Negro people in Atlantic City.

This participation rejected the issue of white America telling Negroes who their leaders will be, and this participation also rejected the idea of tokenism that white America is using all over the country to silence the Negro demands for Freedom.

We went to this convention armed with the greatest might one could have on his side, the might of truth. We presented the truth and came within one vote in the credentials committee of winning all we went to Atlantic City for and that was to be seated as the Democratic representative from the State of Mississippi. It took the personal hand of President Johnson to keep this vote from our grasp. It was not that President Johnson was against us, he took that position so that he would not lose the states of Texas, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Georgia in addition to Mississippi and Alabama if the Convention voted to seat us. Thus the issue within the administration was purely political. Our victory on moral and legal grounds was overwhelming.

We have established a liason between the National Democratic party and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party which we feel will aid us in correcting the many evils that beset Negro and white Americans who want to be free. Many of our delegates will be accepting speaking engagements all over America, speaking in behalf of President Lyndon Johnson and Senator Hubert Humphrey for President and Vice-President. We shall begin immediately to secure the necessary signatures to guarantee the names of the Presidential electors for Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphrey on the ballot for the State of Mississippi. We have instructed our legal counsel, attorney Mr. Joe Rauh to proceed immediately to file proceedings quashing the injunction that has been levelled against the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, so that we will have no harassment as we go about our task of helping elect Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphrey to the office of President and Vice-President.

We wish to express our appreciation to all of our friends in this fight. Our special appreciation goes to attorney Joe Rauh, Congresswoman Edith Greene of Oregon, Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon, Congressman Phillip Burton of California, the 17 members of the Credentials Committee that supported our position, even when President Johnson said no.

To Senator Hubert Humphrey and Mr. Walter Reuther, who tried very hard to get the Mississippi Freedom Delegation to accept the Credentials Committee Report that seated the all-white, racist, disloyal delegation from the State of Mississippi, and refused to seat us, a delegation pledged to support the Democratic Party ticket with all we have, we say, we are truly sorry that you could not come up with a proposition that our delegation could in good conscience accept. We admit to not being politically oriented. Our orientation is based upon morality and rightness.

This is the only way we know how to fight, and we pray for the day when politics will embrace without reservation these two factors, so that we will not only walk in the same direction, but we will walk that way together.

Our delegates will be happy to speak all over America for the National Democratic Party in our effort and promise that regardless of the outcome of our fight in Atlantic City, we would come home and work for the election of the National Democratic ticket. We ask now for your assistance in relieving local harassment by the white officials so that this can be done. In the meantime, let us work together from now until 1968 to make sure that by then the National Democratic Party will have purged itself of all evils pertaining to race, religion, or national origin of Americans who are asking for the opportunity to participate in the National Democratic Party.

Special commendation to the students and civil rights groups that supported us. Without your support we could not have waged a good fight.