

POSITION PAPER

by: Aaron E. Henry, Chairman of MFDP Delegation, Atlantic City, N. J. August 29, 1964

The participation of the MFDP, just concluded in Atlantic City, focused the attention of the World on the problems of the Negro People in Mississippi. 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. Of the one-thousand and sixty-seven messages, letters, telegrams, etc., 1,011 of these support the MFDP in rejecting the Compromise worked out by the National leadership of the National Democratic Party while 56 thought the Miss. Freedom Democratic Party should have accepted the compromise. This Compromise would have given Aaron E. Henry, Chairman of the Delegation, and Rev. Edwin King, National Committeeman, delegate status, but would deny delegate status to all the other delegates of the MFDP. The MFDP had no choice in selecting to whom the two votes would go. This was decided for us.

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 representatives from the State of Mississippi. It took the personal hand of President Lyndon Johnson to keep this vote from our grasp. It was not that the President was against us, however, he took the position that he would lose the states of Texas, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Georgia, in addition to Mississippi and Alabama, if the Convention voted to seat us, we of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.. 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 MFDP 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 Johnson and Senator Hubert Humphery for President and Vice-President.

We shall begin immediately to secure the necessary signatures to guarantee the anmes of the Presidential Electors for Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphery on the ballot for the state of Mississippi. We have instructed our legal Counsel, Attorney Joe Rauh to proceed immediately to file proceedings quashing the injunction that has been leveled against the MFDP, so that we will have no harrassment as we go about our task of helping elect Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphery to the Office of President and Vice-President of the U. S.

We express our appreciation to all of our friends in this fight. Our special appreciation goes to Attorney Joe Rauh, Congresswoman Edith Green of Oregon, Senator Wayne Morris of Oregon, Congress Ohillip Burton of California and the seventeen members of the Credentials Committee who supported our position even when President Johnson, said no.

Senator Hubert Humphery and Mr. Walter Reuther who tried to get the Miss. Freedom delegation to accept the Credentials Committee's report (the compromise?) that seated the all white, racist, disloyal delegation from the state of Miss. 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 in good conscience accept. We admit to, not being politically oriented. Our orientation is based on 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, regardless of the outcome of our fight in Atlantic City, that we would come home and work for the election of the National Democratic Democratic Ticket. We ask now for your assistance in relieving local harrassment by local 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 seeking the opportunity to participate in the National Democratic Party.

A special commendation to all of the friends and Organizations that supported us including, NAACP, CORE, SNCC, SCLC, and the National Council of Churches. Without your support we could not have fought the good fight.

...and this Convention stands with the greatest might and could have on his side the might of truth. He pledged the truth and our faith in the God-given rights of all men and women to be free and to live in peace and harmony. It took the personal hand of President Lyndon Johnson to keep this vote from our grasp. It was not the fault of Johnson but of the states of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Georgia. In addition to the states of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Georgia, we of the National Democratic Party... From the laws within the United States and our victory on moral and legal grounds was overwhelming.

We have established a liaison between the National Democratic Party and the NWP which will aid us in carrying the many evils that have been plaguing our people. Many of our delegates will be appointed speaking engagements all over America, speaking in behalf of President Johnson and Senator Hubert Humphrey for President and Vice-President.

We shall begin immediately to secure the necessary signatures to guarantee the cause 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 Joe East to proceed immediately to file proceedings questioning the election that has been held against the NWP, so that we will have no involvement as we go about our work of helping elect Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphrey to the Office of President and Vice-President of the U. S.

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Our delegation will be happy to speak all over America for the National Democratic Party in our cities and towns, regardless of the outcome of our fight in Atlantic City, that we would come home and work for the good of the National Democratic Party. We ask now for your assistance in collecting local harassment by local white officials so that this can be done.