

MISSISSIPPI DELEGATION

POSITION PAPER

We, members of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and of the Mississippi Delegation, came to the NCNP Convention for a purpose. That purpose was to see that the NCNP act so as to speak to the needs of the Black people of Mississippi as we see them.

Black people in Mississippi are faced with virtual genocide and are therefore, fighting for their survival. The Primary thrust of our organizing has been to develop economic and political power, and self defense in Black communities, and to get away from reliance on the federal government, or other outside agencies. We feel the following programs are not necessarily those which will result in the liberation of Black people, but are those needed for our immediate survival.

Let it be clear that new politics is no new thing in Mississippi. Ne politics started with the first attempts by Black people to register to vote and organize politically within the FDP. In doing this they put their lives on the line.

ELECTIONS

This November over 60 Black candidates are running for election to local offices as Black independents. We are organizing for their victory. To aid in this we need:

1. Pressure put on the Federal Government to ensure that Black poll officials are appointed to all 82 counties in Mississippi, and that they are selected by Black political organizations in the state.
2. Financial support. Money is required to finance the campaign of over 60 candidates. For example \$3,000 is needed for Holmes and Carroll Counties plus 2 cars. \$4,000 has already been raised locally by the Black community. Twelve Black candidates are running in Holmes, and 4 in Carroll. (Money should be sent to P.O. Box 447, Sunflower, Miss.)

EDUCATION

It is our belief that the system of education as effects Black people in Mississippi is totally corrupt and serves as a mechanism of control for white and racist society. It must be dismantled and reconstructed from top to bottom.

Faced with the immediate needs of the Black community, we call for immediate and massive efforts to correct the inadequacies of black schools. The Black schools must be controlled by the Black community, and funds must be provided for a program of Black cultural history to foster a sense of identity and pride.

WELFARE

We believe that the economic basis of society in Mississippi as presently

MISSISSIPPI DELEGATION - POSITION PAPER

- 2 -

based on the exploitation of Black by white must be changed, to end the genocide starvation of the poor of Mississippi; to remove the necessity of colonialist, degrading welfare systems; and to provide for economic self determination and land ownership by the black community in place of the present plantation economy.

In order to relieve the present conditions of medically documented starvation, we demand more free food stamps to all poor Black Mississippians supplemented by free medical care.

MILITARY DRAFT

We demand the abolition of the draft for Black men in Mississippi. Instead of drafting young men, they should be offered job training to the end of rebuilding the Black communities in Mississippi.

LABOR

1. Segregation must be ended in the Mississippi AFL-CIO and all other unions.

2. The KKK control of striking Masonite workers in Laurel, Miss. should be investigated and publicized.

ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

There are certain areas where outside groups such as the NCNP can be of help (some of those areas have already been outlined) either in providing direct financial support, or pressure for certain kinds of demands on the authorities.

Many Black communities are now able to support organizing efforts within their own communities. There is not, however, the money for a State-structure providing information and coordinating efforts of local Black radical groups. There is a definite need for:

1. Money to support 35 full-time organizers for the five congressional districts.

2. Money to support operations and pay for 2 full time staff in the FDP State office. This staff would service information and research needs of all radical Black organizations in Mississippi.

In conclusion, we would like to remind you the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party is NEW POLITICS. If you are serious about new politics you have no other choice but to lend full support to the demands of the Mississippi Delegation.

New Politics Convention:
Chicago, 1967

One cannot help but be impressed by the concern of this Convention of New Politics for the democratic process and the respect it accords each individual and his group. In a very real sense, existentially, it is this commitment to the rights of every human being, and the sacredness of his personality that has brought us here in a new togetherness. We are determined that not only shall we all equal, but that each of us shall be unique. We ask for more than racial equality; we ask for racial integrity. The area of democracy is best bounded by its range of diversity.

But these values, precious as they are to us in each of our affiliations, would not alone have brought us to this Convention. We are each of us very much the Homo Politicus. We believe that we have the power to create change, that we can build a new society through relevant political action. This may involve voting and getting votes; putting up candidates and getting them elected; setting up a political party and organizing clubs in the local community. We will probably do some or all of these at this Convention, but many of us here will also look toward New Politics to provide the spiritual climate for the kind of democratic participation and commitment that demands direct action of a more personal witness. There are two areas in which we have come to recognize a strong individual responsibility for the actions of our nation, peace, and civil rights. We cannot relegate our moral obligations to elected representatives who cannot, first of all, represent humanity. We refuse to underestimate and certainly will not abdicate our own power to be human. We cannot least demonstrate dramatically and personally our witness to the total repudiation of the horrendous role of our country in Vietnam by direct confrontation with our government in the truly creative acts of Civil Disobedience and Draft Resistance. This Convention of New Politics, therefore, ought to endorse and support such direct attempt to reach the conscience of America and so widen the movement of dissent and protest that will compell our government to withdraw its troops from Vietnam. We shall thus have played our part in helping America to vindicate her democratic principles, both for herself and Asia.

The second area, that of Civil Rights now demands an even more direct and democratic assault upon the bastions of bigotry and the walls of the ghetto. In 1954, the Supreme Court spoke for the suppressed conscience of our people. It asked us to recreate America in a new image, Black and White, in a new and reconstructed pattern of democracy. But we were not equal to the challenge. We refused to extend to the Afro-American the same rights we gave to the Irish-American, the Italian-American, or to the Jewish-American. We excluded him from social, economic, and cultural participation in our democracy, but condemned him instead to the exploitation of a ghetto colony. The Black man, therefore, has no other alternative but to ask for his political independence, and for his cultural and economic autonomy. In this endeavor to control his own destiny, new politics should give him every support. Wherever possible this should be done by amendment of state and municipal charters providing for the transfer of control in the ghetto to the black people who live there. Political administration of all agencies should rest with them, including schools, order, and safety, hospitals, and law courts. Economic controls likewise be transferred and vested in them through cooperatives and other community authorities that have the right to eminent domain, taxing, and borrowing privileges. They should be able to issue bonds guaranteed by the federal government and the International Development Fund Corporation.

pending such a changeover by legislative action, the excluded and Black community should be supported in the necessary sit-ins, take-ins, and work-ins. The slum houses, evidently better suited now for rodents might well be put on trial for their life as dwellings. if found wanting in the respect they should be torn down by ghetto manpower; if given another chance they should be renovated by work-ins of the same communities. paint and plumbing could be commandeered and requisitioned; labour recruited from those barred by the monopoly of the labour elite. The bills should be forwarded to the departments of urban Affairs in Washington. new politics could help see to it that the work-ins got paid before the military contractors got theirs. As a new beginning the draft board headquarters might be remodelled for necessary housing. old schools might come next; after them the police stations and prisons. new parks new libraries and new houses could be produced the same way; even new colleges. in a short while they could tackle the rest of the city, with escalators instead of subway stairs, a hostess instead of a subway cop, flowers in the streets instead of night sticks.

The power of blackness that made montgomery a spiritual triumph could create a new civilization where violence disappears from the human dialogue. in the measure that new politics can assist the ghetto community to vindicate its negritude the sooner will we all be invited to instigate a new society. The best political action the best political action against the walls of injustice is non-violent direct action.

Edward p. Gottlieb
national Chairman
War Resisters League

GHETTO SCHOOLS NEED BLACK POWER

The white liberal community of the north has not only lost all initiative in the drive toward racial integration but perhaps has now forfeited the last opportunity to prevent racial conflagration. Unfortunately, we were never able to develop the spiritual resources in the North to match the non-violence of the Montgomery Boycott. We developed nothing but a cheering squad. We let Martin Luther King, who took mankind to a new peak, collapse in a political and psychological crucifixion amid rocks and battles in a 20th century Roman holiday, suburban style.

We deserve the backlash of Black Power because we northern liberals have bowed our heads to the Naked White Power in our communities. We applauded the victories of Negro non-violence against the walls of bigotry in the South but we had no capacity to use it ourselves here in the North. Unfortunately, the Negro in the North had no heart for it either. But the responsibility was ours to bring the Constitution and the 1954 decision against segregation into our boxed-in ghettos. Instead we chose to reenact once more the ancient drama, "The Sins of Their Fathers."

The Negro, North and South now has to follow the old pattern of nationalism and racism. The onomie of alienation of even the "Successful" Negro and the despair of the disinherited exploited Negro, both demand a new image of pride, a renascent Negritude. If this self-esteem demands the denegration of the White so much the worse, but it will have to come through at all costs if the Negro is to climb up to Equality. The racial imperialism of the white community of America has given the Negro no other choice but to fight for Independence. When the Colonists were denied the "rights of Englishmen" they struck out for themselves. The Negroes' right to participate in American life has been more abridged. He owes it to himself to build his own Negro Community Action Committee, revolutionary committee, wherever he is ghetto-caged. His first Tea Party should come off in our segregated schools where he should Take Over Completely and begin to demonstrate the power of pride in being Black. Not teachers, nor supervisors, nor services will lick his educational dropout but the Substance of Soul and Spirit that resides in Negritude. Let the Negro community define their goals, establish curricula, choose a staff, make a partnership arrangement with University, negotiate with Teachers Union and assume full budgetary responsibility for the enterprise. If the City, State or Federal Government won't subsidize it, the Community can apply to United Nations or get foreign aid from U.S. I have no doubt but that with full responsibility will come a new sense of freedom that will lead then to invite white teachers, supervisors and custodial force to help them make education their number one priority,

Like the framers of our own Declaration of Independence, who couched their own needs in terms of Universal principles, the Negro Nation that has already shown its spiritual potential in its campaign of non-violence must be trusted to rebuild their Harlems in the image of a New World, equal, free, interdependent and multi-racial.

Edward P. Gottlieb
Principal, P.S. 165 Man.

POSITION OF THE RADICAL CAUCUS ON ELECTORAL ACTIVITY

1. Electoral activity is neither a good nor an evil in itself but depends upon its context and content.
2. Traditionally most of the involvement of the left in electoral activity has been characterized by
 - a. an ambiguous and evasive program
 - b. a lack of person to person organizing
 - c. grandiose estimates of the campaign's capacity to change people's living conditions.
 - d. candidates who are not subject to the control of their constituencies.
3. Nonetheless, electoral campaigns can serve valuable political functions such as
 - a. relating to local concerns raised through issue organizing. For example, organizers in Lowmes County raised the issue of police brutality and then attempted to deal with it by running candidates for the position of sheriff.
 - b. helping issue organizing through creating structures that facilitate such work. For example, a city council could pass legislation providing for ~~xxxxx~~ easily initiated referenda and locally elected school boards and police departments
 - c. Raising radical issues in a well publicized form. For example, on the issue of Vietnam a radical position would include a radical analysis drawing attention to the imperialist nature of American foreign policy and a radical solution: the immediate withdrawal of troops.
 - d. helping to build a viable organization by avoiding superficial means of reaching people and placing intensive emphasis on person to person contact in a manageable area.
 - e. Improving people's immediate living conditions and increasing activism by showing that people can work together to win victories.
 - f. Drawing attention to the relationship between electoral activity and immediate problems while pointing out the fundamental limitations of electoral politics in ending people's oppression.
4. Constituencies: all constituencies within our society are legitimate and valuable areas for our organizing work. At this time priority must be given to organizing the white working class and the white poor.
5. Within this context a state-wide presidential challenge initiated by grass roots groups is compatible with our concerns.
6. A national third party or ticket in 1968 is incompatible ~~xxxxxx~~ with our organizing goals at this time.