Interview with **Joseph Rauh**
October 31, 1985
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Note: These transcripts contain material that did not appear in the final program. Only text appearing in ***bold italics*** was used in the final version of *Eyes on the Prize.*

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[camera roll 309]

[sound roll 1305]

[slate]

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: IT'S TWELVE.

INTERVIEWER: OK. LET ME BEGIN BY ASKING YOU ABOUT 1948 AND JUST BRIEFLY THE, THE SIGNIFICANCE OF, OF WHAT HAPPENED THAT YEAR? THE CONVENTION.

Rauh: At the 1948 Democratic Convention, we upset the machinery. By "we," I mean Hubert Humphrey and a bunch of young people. We upset the establishment of the Democratic Party. The establishment of the Democratic Party was just as reactionary on civil rights as the Republicans. So what did we do? We tied civil rights to the masthead of the Democratic Party. Hubert Humphrey made this great speech. It was a lovely—it was a great platform we put in there. It came out for all the statutes that one would want, FEPC, anti-lynching, anti-poll tax. It was just perfect. And Hubert offered it as the minority plank. It was the first time since prohibition that the minority plank had won. And as we came out of there, it was an hundred degrees that day in Philadelphia, and it was a hundred and twenty in that thing, but as we came out of that sweatshop, we all knew that we had forever changed the Democratic Party and that's absolutely right. Everything that has happened since then resulted from the

fact that we made the Democratic Party take a civil rights plank and then who walked out? Strom Thurmond and the southerners. We built—we shifted the whole emphasis of the Democratic Party from a southern dominated party to a civil rights dominated party.

00:01:50:00

INTERVIEWER: OK, BRING ME UP TO 1964. FIRST TELL ME WHO JOE RAUH WAS IN 1964?

Rauh: Well, by that time, I was General Counsel of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, a group then of say, sixty civil rights organizations. I had been in the various fights for civil rights. For example, in 1954—57, I had been the chief lobbyist along with Clarence Mitchell for the '57 Civil Rights Act. That was a pretty pale one then, but it was better than nothing. It, it dealt with voting rights. Then I—in 1963, I lobbied for the bill that was later passed the next year. I helped with the march. I think if you just look at the pictures you will see that I was one of the leaders of the march in September—August 1963. And so, it was that having fought for the statute, which became the Civil Rights Act of 1964, I was asked into the fight on the floor of the Democratic Convention in 1964 by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

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INTERVIEWER: TAKE ME BACK A LITTLE BIT. WHEN DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT SOMETHING CALLED MFDP AND THE CHALLENGE?

Rauh: In March of 1964, I first heard of MFDP and the challenge. There was a meeting of the then, it's now defunct, National Civil Liberties Clearinghouse, and we were having a discussion of the whole problem of black voting. And out of the audience rose a man I had never met, Bob Moses. And I was the Chairman of the panel that they had at that moment and Bob rose from the audience and said, Mr. Rauh, we are thinking of taking a challenge to the lily white Mississippi delegation at the upcoming convention in August. What did you think our chances would be? Well, I thought for a second and I said, I think your chances are pretty good and the reason I think that is there's not gonna be any excitement at the convention. Johnson's going to be re-nominated for President. He's gonna choose the Vice President. He's gonna write the platform. You might—this might be the one thing that would stir up the convention. I think you've got a good chance. I didn't know the name of the man who was interrogating me at that time. And that's how I first heard about it. That's how Moses, Bob Moses, who was the executive director of COFO which was the backing the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, that's where we first saw each other. Apparently, he—I liked him. He liked me and we started in partnership there for the August fight.

00:04:47:00

INTERVIEWER: SO, YOU, YOU COME TO ATLANTIC CITY. DO YOU, YOU PLAY ON A STRATEGY, BECAUSE YOU'RE REALLY THE TACTICIAN IN THIS PERIOD. TELL US ABOUT THE STRATEGY.

Rauh: The strategy for the ’64 Convention in Atlantic City was laid earlier. I went to the meeting the convention of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in early August. The Democratic National Convention is late August. But in early August they had a convention in Jackson at the temple there on Lynn Street. I’ll never forget it. And there at that convention they, it was practically all black, there may have been a couple of whites, ringers and so forth, but it was a black party and they were meeting there in a Masonic Temple in Lynn Street. And I spoke and the strategy was adopted there. The strategy was called, eleven and eight. What eleven meant was you needed eleven members of the Credentials Committee for a minority position. That’s ten percent of an hundred and something. And you needed eight states to get you a roll-call ‘cause you couldn’t win without a roll call. The Chairman of a Democratic Convention always hears a voice vote the way the machinery wants. So you have to have a roll call if you’re ever going to win anything. So when I announced, the strategy is eleven and eight, and I kept pounding away at eleven and eight, and they were shouting, eleven and eight, before the speech was over and that was the strategy. That’s all the strategy you need. Nobody wants to vote—nobody that year wanted to vote against blacks. They just didn’t want to vote for ‘em. So if they could shove it under the rug that would be fine. Eleven and eight made it impossible to shove it under the rug. That was our strategy. When I got back to Washington, after the Convention, I got—the, the White House suddenly realized that we had a strategy that we had something that was pretty hard to beat. After all you ought to be able to find eleven people in an hundred. And you ought to be able to find eight states in fifty, I mean, how in heaven’s name could they beat us? So they really got scared. And I got a lot of pressure. And pressured right up to the Convention time, but what the heck, it’s—was a lot of fun, and I was gonna eat whether they pressured me or not, so I went ahead with the fight and that was the situation. We wrote a brief show on the outrageouses [sic] of Mississippi. How the whites wouldn’t let the blacks vote. At that time, only 6% of blacks were registered to vote. And only about 2% of them actually voted, so that this was a perfect case to take to the Convention.

INTERVIEWER: LET ME ASK YOU ABOUT THE PRESSURE, BECAUSE LYNDON JOHNSON WAS NOT A, A GENTLE MAN—

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: KEEP IT ROLLING—

[cut]

00:07:40:00

[slate]

[change to camera roll 309]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: MARK IT.

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: THIRTEEN.

INTERVIEWER: LET'S GO BACK TO THE—YOU COME BACK FROM JACKSON, ELEVEN AND EIGHT IS THE CRY, WHAT HAPPENS?

Rauh: The pressure that, when I returned from Jackson, was incredible. Johnson was—President Johnson was a man who believed every man has his price. And he had two things on me which he could squeeze with. One was that I loved Hubert Humphrey and that I wanted Hubert to be president—vice president and, hopefully, one day president. The other was that I was General Counsel of the UAW and Walter Reuther could have some effect, he figured. So they would call and sort of say, the President is very angry at that eleven and eight. The President doesn't want anything like that to go on, on there. Joe, you've got to stop it, and Walter would be very serious. He'd pound on me, and I'd say, well—he said, just—I said, I just can't give up. I believe this Walter. I'm—after all I'm an employee of the UAW, but I'm not operating that way here. With Hubert it was a little bit different. It was more fun. I'd say—he'd say, Joe just give me something to tell the President! And I'd say, why don't you tell him that I'm a dirty bastard who is absolutely uncontrollable. And he says, well, the President wouldn't like that if I told him I couldn't control you. I said, well, then you'll have to think of what you want to tell him yourself, because that's the only thing I can think of telling him. He'd laugh. Hubert was, was wonderful. Reuther was tough. Anyway, they—those—that was Johnson's idea. My biggest account, the UAW, my best political friend, Hubert and he had 'em both. The girls in our office would sometimes, when I'd get one call, cause Johnson see something on television and get mad and call them both. Why one of them would call and then my secretary would say, it's the other one. Cause Johnson was using Hubert and, and Reuther in, in tandem to try to persuade me not to continue this thing. Well, I, I said that there was no great sacrifice in continue [sic], it was lot of fun. Worst could happen is something didn't go right and I'd still eat. So I didn't, it didn't bother me terribly. It was a lot of fun actually.

INTERVIEWER: LET'S BREAK JUST FOR A MINUTE. PRU WE HAVE A, A—YOU STOPPED?

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: YEAH.

[cut]

00:10:13:00

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: FOURTEEN.

INTERVIEWER: HUBERT'S GOT YOUR BEST FRIEND AND HE'S GOT YOUR, YOUR BASIC CLI—LYNDON HAS HUBERT, YOUR BEST FRIEND, AND YOUR AND YOUR, YOUR CLIENT, YOUR CHIEF CLIENT. STAGE ONE, HE'S, HE TURNS UP THE, THE HEAT. WHAT ABOUT STAGE TWO?

Rauh: Well, we go to the Convention. That's really stage two on the heat. We go to the Convention and on Saturday afternoon, before the Convention, we have this marvelous show. ***We had an hour before the Credentials Committee. Fannie Lou Hamer made her famous pitch. Martin Luther King, we had the greatest array of people you have ever can imagine and the Credentials Committee was very impressed, but Johnson was not.*** He still wasn't prepared to give us anything. Sunday was the first Credentials Committee meeting and I am a member of the Credentials Committee as well as being lawyer for the Freedom Party. And, at the meeting, it's clear they're gonna give us nothing. Governor Lawrence, who should have called on me because I was the spokesman for the party, he's the Chairman of the Credentials Committee, he calls on a hack politician from Wyoming, I think it was, who announces that they will be—seat the regulars and we would be guests of the Convention. Well, I arise demanding the floor, because, my God, I'm the counsel for it and I don't even get that. It's all rigged. Lawrence calls on Al Ullman, a Congressman from Oregon on the Credentials Committee, who moves to amend that giving us two delegates at-large. Then a brawl starts and then he finally admits me. And I says, totally unsatisfactory. And, at this particular moment, when it—we adjourn on Sunday, we have seventeen instead of the eleven we needed. We have seventeen who are willing to go for seating—both the lily whites and the others. And we also have twelve roll call states. So, I'm in a pretty good position to bargain. Then on Monday we were gonna go forward, but it's a stalemate. They don't know what to do and we don't know what to do. There was a meeting, many meetings with Humphrey—and let me just interject a word for Hubert Humphrey cause this thing has gotten mixed up in history. I never went to bed the whole time without first going by Hubert's suite and say—and talking to him and say, give us some more. We need more. And Hubert never once said to me, look Joe, give me this and I'll be vice president. Someday I'll be president and I'll make it up to you. He never once did anything dirty like that. We discussed it at arm's length on the merits. And all I can say for Hubert Humphrey is that was pretty noble. When here, one of his best friends is his opponent and he never uses that friendship to try to get me to do something that, that was wrong. At any rate, this is now on Monday. There's a stalemate. On Tuesday morning, Reuther about eight o' three in the morning comes into the—flies in. Johnson orders him in. He's actually in negotiations, I think, with General Motors. Johnson orders him to come. You know, Johnson's a pretty tough character. So Reuther comes in and they make the deal that they offer us, namely, the two delegates at large. The ousting of the lily whites which they do by saying they have to take an oath to support the party which [laughs] they're not gonna support a party with this kind of civil rights in it. So they were ousting them. They were giving us two delegates. They were throwing them out. They promised us that it would—no lily white delegation would ever be seated again. And they'd set up a civil rights committee of the Democratic National Committee so that no civil rights can—no lily white delegation could ever be seated again. We're about to have a meeting of the Credentials Committee I get a call from Reuther. He said, this is what the Convention has decided. What he meant was, this was what he and Johnson had agreed to, and I want you to accept it. And he—what he says is—he tells me that's it. Well, I thought it was wonderful. I mean, it is wonderful. It's the basis from which the whole Democratic Party has been opened up to blacks, to women, to Hispanics, to everything. It was a great, great, great victory, but I couldn't accept it. I said, Walter, look, I cannot accept this without talking to Aaron Henry. We have a deal sealed in blood that neither of us will ever take anything without talking to

the other. You get me a postponement. Tell me where Aaron is, because he was—I knew Aaron was gonna go, go there, but I didn't know how to get hold of him, and I said, we can probably make this unanimous. Walter said he would. So I went back into the Credentials Committee Room and said to David Lawrence, the Chairman, I want a postponement for this purpose. And he said, well, go ask Mondale, who is the Chairman of the Subcommittee which is walking up the stairs there. So I did and Mondale says, well, of course, Joe, you can have a postponement. And some little punk, I think his name was Sherman Markman [sic] from Iowa, says, no postponement. We're going ahead. He was the one Johnson had put in there to watch Mondale. Mondale might be nice, fair, and there was none of that. And so Mondale says, well Joe, that's the way the ball bounces. They all went in. I tried to get the floor for a postponement. I couldn't. So then Mondale announces what the compromise is. And it is so perfect!

[cut]

00:16:29:00

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: MARKER.

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: FIFTEEN.

INTERVIEWER: OK.

Rauh: Mondale was coming up the steps and I went to him and I said, Fritz, I think we can make this unanimous if I can have a postponement. So I can talk to Aaron Henry, the Chairman of the Delegation. He said, of course. Then a lousy little punk named, Sherwin Markman or something like that, pretty close, from Iowa, says, no postponement. We're going ahead with the present position. And Fritz Mondale looks at me and says, Joe, that's the way it is. This guy had been made Johnson's appointee on the subcommittee and he was there to watch Mondale to be sure Mondale wasn't fair. So what happened was, then, we went into the meeting. I tried to get the floor. I couldn't. Then Mondale announces what the proposal is, the compromise proposal. He made it sound so favorable to us and he would interject all the time about how much I had won and it made it harder to fight. But I got up and said, I'm not arguing whether this is good or bad. Life alone will tell that. But what I am saying is we ought to have a postponement so Aaron Henry's views can be injected in here and we can decide probably that we're all in agreement. Vote. Have you ever been in a lynch mob? Because if you haven't, you haven't ever heard anything like this. A hundred people shouting, vote, vote, vote, while I'm talking. I finally had to say, it's your rudeness that's the problem. I've got a right to speak. I've got the floor. You oughta [sic] shut up. Vote, vote, vote! It's like a, it's like a machine there. And it, it mowed me down. I moved for a postponement. I moved for a roll call. I moved for everything, but I didn't get it. Then he announces, takes a vote on the Mondale proposal, the proposal that I, in my heart knew was a victory, but I had to vote no. There were—eight of us voted no. It was a ragtag eight. They had gotten the rest of them away from us. Now you said something about were there two

stages of, of pressure?

00:18:40:00

[cut]

[wild audio]

Rauh: Yes, there was one before the convention where Reuther and Humphrey were working me over.

INTERVIEWER: HOLD ON.

00:18:45:00

[cut]

[slate]

[change to camera roll 310]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: MARK IT.

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: SIXTEEN.

INTERVIEWER: THE SECOND STAGE OF PRESSURE.

Rauh: You mentioned two stages of pressure. There was the first one where Hubert and Reuther were carrying Johnson's orders out to get me to get out of it before the Convention. The second was at the Convention. See, we started, I think with eight—eighteen, I think we had, and we only needed eleven. We started with twelve states for roll-call we only needed eight. Once this offer was clear they just wiped out our people. For example, one of the delegates from the—one of the Credentials Committee members from California was told, by Pat Brown the Governor, that she wouldn't get her husband's judgeship if they went along with me. The fellow from the Canal Zone was told he'd lose his job, he was a professor down there in the Army School, he'd lose his job if they went along. The—Mayor Wagner's Secretary, a black, left me and she was—had tears in her eyes when she told me she couldn't vote. Anyway, we got—we were down I think from eighteen to eight, and the eight were a ragtag group. No important people, nobody from California, New York or any of the important states. So Johnson was able, through this pressure, to knock out the full amount. So, there was no way to have a minority plank. But the eight of us did file a statement with the, the Convention that we had voted against it. Strangely enough, three of the people or four, later went in, two days later or something and signed that statement. They wanted it—the dirty dogs wanted it both ways. They wanted the blacks to think they were with them.

They wanted Johnson to think they'd done what they could, which was that the statement signed then made no difference, because the Convention had approved the Credentials Committee decision.

00:21:03:00

INTERVIEWER: TELL ME ABOUT THE NEXT MORNING OR THE NEXT DAY.

Rauh: Well, the next morning we'd the thing was really over. But at the post-mortem the next morning in the church where we had our meetings of the Freedom Democratic Party a lot of people spoke for the acceptance. Sort of a retroactive acceptance from the night before, because the night before, the Credentials Committee, the Credentials Committee report had been approved. But this was sort of—we might try to reopen it or something. Martin Luther King spoke for the acceptance. Wayne Morse, the great civil rights senator, spoke for it. Jim Farmer spoke for it. Bayard Rustin spoke for it. I spoke for it. But there wasn't any real possibility of doing that. At one stage, there was a real movement to go ahead and get a different two. You see, they had made a terrible blunder, Reuther and the President and the others, when they gave us that compromise. They chose our two. In a group of participatory democracy you don't let somebody choose the two that are gonna be. And they choose two intellectuals: Aaron Henry, a professional pharmacist, and Ed King, a pro—white professor. They left the sharecroppers, who were the bulk of the delegation, out and that, of course, they left, Fannie Lou Hamer out. And Fannie Lou Hamer wa—was the fire in this thing. If they'd have said, Aaron Henry and Fannie Lou Hamer it might have been different. So they came to me and said, could you get this? I said, I will try to get this even now if you vote or tell me you're certain it can be approved. But I can't go and get Humphrey to get Johnson to make this shift unless I know I can get it back here. Aaron and Ed King went around the room talking to a few people and they came back and said, forget it. This crowd now is angry. They came to get more and you're just not gonna be able to, to make anymore. Why don't we just do what we did which was we didn't take the deal. But the results of that were just as great as if we'd had taken it.

00:23:34:00

INTERVIEWER: TELL ME ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP. NOW THE YOUNG MAN, WHO HAD STOOD UP SEVERAL MONTHS BEFORE, BOB MOSES, WHEN DO YOU SEE BOB THINK—WHAT HAPPENS? WHAT'S THE FIRST THING YOU SAY TO EACH OTHER?

Rauh: Bob's mad, but that was a mistake. I'm glad to tell the story of Joe Rauh and Bob Moses cause I love that man. At the Convention, while I am in the Credentials Committee on Tuesday, trying to get a postponement so I can talk to Aaron Henry, Reuther, Humphrey and others of the Administration are talking to Martin Luther King. This is Tuesday afternoon. Martin Luther King, Bayard Rustin, Abernathy, Moses, Henry and a few others from the Freedom Democratic Party. While they're talking the television which at a Convention—anybody should know about a Convention, you never get away from a television, because you may get out of touch with a big event that involves you. So the television is going, low,

but somebody's listening to, so they can tell 'em. Somebody shouts out, it's all over. It was unanimous for the compromise. Bob Moses lost his cool. It, it was like hitting him with a whip like a white man hitting him with a whip. Everybody had ratted on him. It wasn't true, of course, because as the fact is that I, I had even voted no. I fought for the chance of dealing it. I voted no. It was not unanimous. What happened then was after the—our Credentials Comm—their meeting broke up because Moses just lost his—lost himself. Our meeting broke up because it was over. Mondale had won and there were eight shouted no votes. But we went outside and Mondale and I sort of had a little pushing match for the television cameras and Mon—the cameras really wanted Mondale. They want the majority before they get the minority and I, I understood that. So I waited. Mondale filibustered a little bit. He was savoring his victory. And he, he went along. He was having a good time talking. So I didn't get the floor for about fifteen minutes. And then I blew up the idea that there was any unanimity. And I said about eight of us and I said we may try to get enough so that we can go to the floor tonight. If we don't we'll file a statement on the eight of us. And there was a real thing. Then Bob couldn't recapture himself and he fought against it 100%. And he was angry, I—you, you couldn't reason with him that I had—that we had fought for him that we had not accepted it. You—he, he, he had, he had—this had struck him like a bolt of lightning. So when that evening, when we were on news, the Evening News, why I said that we would continue the fight. But I also said and I—it was my position, this is a great victory which is gonna end up with a new Democratic Party because of their promise that they'll never be a lily white group again. Bob got on and said you cannot trust the political system, I will have nothing to do with the political system any longer. But—

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: HOLD UP.

[cut]

00:27:14:00

[slate]

[change to sound roll 1306]

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: SEVENTEEN.

Rauh: Bob at that point ceased talking to white people. Went off to Tanzania soon and sort of—we dropped out of each other's lives. But I was determined that I was going to talk to Bob. I had such admiration for him that I wanted him to understand that he had his facts wrong. Well, I sent him letters to Tanzania. One was delivered through the embassy, but I got him. No response. Then a few years ago I was in Boston on The Advocates Show, defending busing of blacks for integrated schools—

INTERVIEWER: I'M, I'M, I'M SORRY. I'M SORRY ABOUT THE HAND, BUT WE'RE CAUGHT IN OUR TIME FRAME SO I'D LIKE TO TAKE YOU BACK—JUST, JUST TO

STAY WITH THE CONVENTION. I'LL COME BACK TO THAT STORY LATER.

Rauh: All right. Sure.

INTERVIEWER: TELL—TELL ME ABOUT FANNIE LOU HAMER. WHEN WAS THE FIRST TIME YOU SAW HER AFTER THE COMPROMISE?

Rauh: After the compromise, the first time I saw Fannie Lou was the next morning because at, at, at the church. After that I saw her many times. We were—people don't realize that we were mad. Fannie and I went on a number of fundraising expeditions for civil rights. We were both much in demand. She, because she's such an eloquent speaker and me because I'd been their, their counsel. So Fannie and I and we were kissing cousins from then on. She gets over things much easier and we, we never had any trouble. I remember a night at the legal, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, big dinner for money when she and I spoke, and boy, she couldn't have been any nicer to me and what I had done than if she had been my wife. She was absolutely wonderful. There was no, there was no hostility there whatever. And on my wall, of course, I carry the letter from Aaron Henry which I will treasure until the day I die.

INTERVIEWER: DID YOU HAVE ANY TROUBLE AT ALL WITH WHAT HAPPENED WITH THE COMPROMISE?

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: HOLD IT. CUT.

[cut]

00:29:26:00

[slate]

[change to camera roll 311]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: MARK IT.

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: EIGHTEEN.

INTERVIEWER: I'M GONNA ASK YOU TO, TO BACK UP FROM THE CONVENTION A LITTLE BIT. AND YOU WERE A HARVARD EDUCATED LAWYER, DEMOCRATIC PARTY CONFIDANT IN SOME WAYS. HERE COME THIS GROUP OF PEOPLE INTO THE CONVENTION. WHO ARE THEY AND WHAT IMPACT DOES THAT HAVE ON THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION?

Rauh: They were sharecroppers, black sharecroppers. They were professionals, a few, Aaron Henry, Ed King. They were people in the movement, civil rights movement, in Mississippi who thought this was a way to move civil rights in Mississippi. How right they were.

Because, this is very important, even though this may come after your period, this has to be said. In 1968, the proof of the pudding was there. The civil rights crowd from Mississippi led by Aaron Henry with Mrs. Hamer, a part of the delegation, walked on the floor as the whole delegation from Mississippi. There wasn't one from the lily white organization. The proof that we had won in '64 was when the whole thing came together in '68. Julian Bond was seated—

00:31:03:00

INTERVIEWER: AT THAT MOMENT IN 1964 WHEN, WHEN THE COMPROMISE HAD BEEN ACCEPTED, WERE YOU ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN YOU HAD DONE THE RIGHT THING? OR SHOULD, SHOULD YOU THINK THAT PERHAPS FANNIE AND THE SIXTY-FOUR MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION WHO SAID, NO, WERE RIGHT?

Rauh: I, I thought the Convention had gone father than anybody had expected it would go. But I voted no, not cause I thought it wasn't a great victory. I knew in my heart it was a great victory. But I'd given my word that there would be no let-up on my part until I had talked to Aaron Henry. Reuther frustrated that effort to have that and there's nothing I could do about it. But if the question is, do I think that was a great victory? Do I kn—kn—do I think I was right in saying it was a great victory, the answer is a resounding yes.

00:31:55:00

INTERVIEWER: SOMETHING FUNDAMENTAL HAPPENED IN TERMS OF AMERICAN LIBERALISM AND BLACK PEOPLE AT THAT CONVENTION OR IN RETROSPECT IT SEEMS. DO YOU, DO YOU THINK IT WOULD—DO YOU THINK THAT'S TRUE?

Rauh: I don't really. I think that American liberals worked with blacks as much after as before. For example, the Voting Rights Act was a fight in which liberals and blacks cooperated like I have never seen any cooperation. The—there just isn't any question that cooperation went on. There were [sic] a short period in there when there was a debate over whether we had won. But the fact of the matter is that the outcome of that debate is that we had won. The—it could have been handled so that it there wouldn't have been any question raised about what we, what we had won. If they had had the sense to let the Freedom Party decide on the thing not have it decided for them. And this was a mistake in tactics. It was a mistake because Johnson is a strong-arm guy and he got the strongest-armed guy he could to speak for him.

00:33:04:00

INTERVIEWER: HUBERT HUMPHREY, A MAN WHO HAD—DESPERATELY WANTS THE VICE PRESIDENCY AND THE PRESIDENCY, AND LYNDON HAS ESSENTIALLY TOLD HIM WHAT HE HAS TO DO TO HAVE IT.

Rauh: Yes, but Hubert would never use strong-arm tactics. Hubert knew this was—at one night at the Convention in '64, Hubert said to me, I'm so tired of this. I don't even know if I want to be Vice President. He would have preferred not to be Vice President than to ask me to do something wrong for him. And that, that's why I still argue for—he's a great man. I disagreed with him 100% on Vietnam, but he was a great man.

00:33:44:00

INTERVIEWER: LET, LET ME GIVE YOU A COUPLE OF NAMES AND JUST GIVE ME SORT OF A REACTION TO THEM. EVERETT DIRKSON?

Rauh: Everett Dirkson, did help us with the 1964 Civil Rights Law. Everett Dirkson was a guy who came in on your side when you'd won. He was the guy who'd say, this is an idea whose time has come. Sure, you already had it won, so he could get in and say, this is an idea's whose time has come. So he was now gonna be on your side. I would say that he is a, a mellifluous, pious, polypolitical [sic], pallid cipher.

00:34:28:00

INTERVIEWER: LBJ?

Rauh: Well, President Johnson was a tough cookie. He—when he was a senator from Texas and the majority leader he fought against civil rights with everything he had. He represented his Texas constituency. When he came into the Presidency and, even earlier the Vice Presidency, he had a national constituency and he was wonderful towards civil rights. We would fight in the '50s and rub shoulders and work together in the '60s. I would say that he, he—Lyndon Johnson's convictions were those of his constituency.

00:35:06:00

INTERVIEWER: THAT MOMENT IN 1964, WHAT IF THE CON—THE DELEGATION HAD BEEN SEATED? WHAT IF IN FACT THE COMPROMISE HADN'T BEEN FORGED?

Rauh: And we had all been seated? If they—if the Convention had accepted what was really my basic proposal, seat 'em both, which meant that they would have only seated us cause the other wouldn't sit with us, so it would just be us, so it was total victory. If that had happened it would have had very little greater effect than what did happen. What really happened was the promise of—against discrimination was the Civil Rights Committee set up for that very purpose and, then, what happened was it, it opened the party. The party, now, the minorities have more, more than normal strength. And that started the day that that compromise was made. I don't think it would have made a dime's worth of difference whether we had won more. I wanted to win more. I tried to win more. I voted no, but it—historically we won when the Mississippi delegation, blacks half, whites half, walked on the floor as the delegation in 1964 [sic].

00:36:21:00

INTERVIEWER: DID YOUR FATHER, WHO WORKED SO HARD TO PROVIDE—SEND YOU TO HARVARD, WOULD HE HAVE BEEN PROUD OF YOU IN, IN ’63 to ’64?

Rauh: He passed away before then. He was a conservative Republican. But, I think, he was proud of the successes of his children just as much when they were on the other side politically as when they were on his side. And, I guess, now as a father and grandfather, I understand that.

INTERVIEWER 2: JUST ONE ON—OK.

INTERVIEWER: CUT FOR ONE SECOND.

[cut]

00:36:57:00

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: FOR—MARK IT.

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: NINETEEN.

INTERVIEWER: THIS PERIOD, IN RETROSPECT, PROBABLY WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST TESTING TIMES OF DEMOCRACY. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT AND DO YOU THINK THE NATION GAINED FROM IT?

Rauh: I believe this was the greatest legal revolution, and I stress legal, in the history of a democracy. What we did was to take a legal system which supported segregation and discrimination and turned it upside down into one that opposed it. That does not give you equality. It gives you the opportunity for equality which we still have to find. But that legal revolution of our generation was a tremendous thing and it happened in the period from say, the mid ‘50s to the mid ‘60s.

00:37:50:00

INTERVIEWER: JUST GIVE ME A QUICK REACTION AGAIN TO FANNIE LOU HAMER. THE FIRST TIME YOU MET HER AND—

Rauh: Fannie Lou Hamer was incredible. Here is a woman of no education who has been whipped for trying to vote, who’s had all the privations, and yet, she was able to stimulate a whole movement. When she sang, we all cried. When she spoke, we all cried. She was a great leader and if there ever is such a thing as a natural-born leader, not a trained leader, Fannie Lou Hamer is the top among them.

00:38:35:00

INTERVIEWER: HOW ABOUT AARON HENRY?

Rauh: Aaron Henry had some of the advantages which Fannie Lou did not have. He was able to get a pharmacist degree. He had a drug store, but he's a very, very brave man. Aaron Henry's drug store had its windows broken so often that he finally put brown paper in the windows, cause it wasn't any sense of putting glass in there because the next day it would go. Aaron is a tremendously brave human being.

00:39:10:00

INTERVIEWER: HOW ABOUT THE SNCC KIDS, OTHER THAN MOSES?

Rauh: You have to have in any, any revolution people who go father than is possible. And they filled a, a need. They filled it for a short time, but it probably it made it easier in life for me to be able to look less extreme. A lot of people think I'm an extremist. I think that's absolutely nonsense. But having people on your left is the greatest thing that ever lived. I will only say as a liberal, the demise of the Communist movement in this country, is a disaster to us. We have nothing on our left. I wish we did. It would be nice if you could have a two front war for liberalism against the reactionaries and the Communists. But you don't have anybody on your left. SNCC provided something in that period. He made the Martin Luther King's of this world look like moderates which they were.

INTERVIEWER: I WANT—

[cut]

[end of interview]

00:40:20:00