

Summer 1964

To: All Project Staff  
From: Stokeley Carmichael  
Re: Second District Convention

Everyplace that we have a project must be represented at the District Convention to be held this Sunday at 1:00 pm sharp at the Friendship Baptist Church in Greenville. Each project must provide its own transportation. Every delegate and alternate elected at the county meetings should come to the convention and strong local people should be encouraged to come as observers. The meeting MUST begin on time and it is urgent that everyone be there. If anyone has transportation problems call Eli Zaretsky (collect) at Greenwood immediately. Local people must have priority in attending this meeting. This is not a staff meeting. Dinner will be provided by the people in Greenville at about 4:30. Thus it is absolutely necessary that the meeting begin at one o'clock so that everyone can get home before dark. It is also important that each project hold a workshop with delegates before Sunday's meeting. In it you should prepare the delegates by explaining what will happen at a District Convention and at a state convention. It would also be good to explain what the regular Democrats did at their convention last Tuesday. This material is included in a memo from Jackson that all projects should have received last Tuesday. Jim Foreman will probably be the keynote speaker.

At the convention we will have the chairman appoint a credentials committee. The Credentials Committee will be empowered to pass on the recognizing of delegates from such counties as Tunica, Quitman, Carroll, etc where little work has been done or where it is too dangerous to hold a precinct or county meeting. In such an area affidavits should be taken testifying to the dangers of holding a meeting. It is very important that people be brought to the convention from areas such as these.

There will be five separate series of elections at the District meeting: 1) the election of a permanent chairman 2) the permanent chairman will then appoint a credentials committee 3) a secretary is appointed and a parliamentarian 4) a presidential elector is elected (there are 5 electors elected at the 5 district meetings; 2 more will be elected at large at the state convention) 5) Six delegates to the National Convention will be elected. 6) Three people will be elected to the State Executive Committee.

It is essential that the delegates be well prepared for the convention. The state executive committee positions are crucial because this 15 man committee will run the FDP for the next four years. Generally its members are also delegates to the National Convention. A presidential elector can also be a delegate. The other delegates to Atlantic City will be elected at the State Convention.

Resolutions will be taken at the District Convention and will be presented to the State Convention for the preparation of a Party platform. These will be taken from the floor so all delegations should have written copies prepared which they can present to the Convention. Resolutions will be discussed

All elections at the State Convention will be by nominations from the floor and by hand vote. If there are any questions concerning this procedure contact Eli Zaretsky in Greenwood. Also for transportation, etc.

It would also be profitable to discuss the regular party's State Convention which was held tuesday in Jackson. Basic decisions at that convention were dominated by the fear of the Convention Challenge and the Freedom Democratic Party. Gov. Johnson spoke in terms of "Our enemies have already revealed their strategy..." etc. The papers report that no one seems to want to serve on the delegation- partly because of the danger of their being unseated at Atlantic City. Essentially Johnson postponed the convention until next September when it will reconvene. Until that time the convention has decided on a slate of pledged electors and a x slate of unpledged electors. Thus the convention, in effect, hypocritically promises that Lyndon Johnson's name will be on the ballot next November but this is a decision which can be revoked- and very possibly will be revoked- next September. The tone of the convention was autocratic. Johnson spoke in terms of "the need to control ourselves, the eyes of the nation are upon us, etc. All votes but one went off unanimously. This can be contrasted with the FDP in the same way that our precinct meetings contrast with theirs.