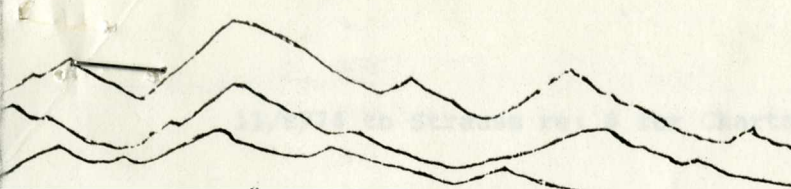


Maya



~~Robert S. Strauss, Chairman~~ Maya Miller

6185 Franktown Rd,
~~Route 1--Box 621~~ Carson City Nevada 89701

November 8, 1974

Robert S. Strauss, Chairman
Democratic National Committee
1625 Massachusetts Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Bob,

Now that the election is over, the good Democratic returns are in, and I am back from my efforts for the party slate - unsuccessful, alas, for Harry Reid for a number of reasons - I want to answer your letter of October 15 asking me to make a "generous contribution to the 1974 Conference Committee." (Parenthetically, we note in your solicitation for the male-dominated Charter Convention you ask for a "generous" contribution, while you solicit for women only a "modest" contribution!)

I can't imagine why you would think I am an appropriate person from whom to seek money for the Charter Convention.

- #1. I was not at Miami, and therefore am not among those you apparently feel should give because they voted to have the Convention. I applaud their decision, of course, as I assume most Democrats do.
- #2. I am not a delegate to the Charter Convention at Kansas City. As you know, I was running for the Democratic nomination for the U. S. Senate seat from Nevada at the time of our State Convention when delegates were selected.
- #3. I am working hard now to pay off the debts left from our Senatorial campaign. Those debts were made necessary, and my defeat insured, because of the support which traditional Democratic sources gave to my opponent early in the primary. I believe you have some sense, Bob, of the resentment I feel for the DNC's part in that discriminatory support, your targetting sessions, your cooperation with COPE and others like the Council for a Livable World as they gave money to Harry Reid to oppose me. For you to have worked against a woman as she tried to use the occasion of an open Senate seat (no Democratic incumbent) to make a wedge in that all-male bastion, the United States Senate, seems to me a disgrace ^{for} our Party, and illustrates perfectly your apparent lack of understanding of what affirmative action means.
- #4. That lack of understanding, yours and that of ^{most} other members of the Compliance Review Committee, was underscored plainly for women at the October hearings of the Tennessee, Illinois and Pennsylvania challenges. Once more you shoved aside justice for women in order to placate the old power boys already securely entrenched in our party.

To equate "recruitment" with "quotas", as the Fact-finding Committee does in the Tennessee finding, is to falsify the English language and to roll back the hard-earned perceptions of how we start to rectify old injustices born of racial and sex prejudice. What is affirmative action if not recruitment?

At those October hearings, as through the past winter, spring, and summer, you have sent signals that the present Democratic party leadership does not wish to understand the working of affirmative action. Must we therefore assume that you do not support the struggles our Party has been making to right the wrongs of prejudice? If the Party is not exercising vigorous affirmative action for inclusion of all peoples in its work and rewards, then of course it cannot seek vigorous affirmative action in the businesses, unions, educational institutions, government offices of the country at large.

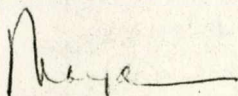
You signal for us a return to the early '60s. And this is a signal which those of us who have been left out of the governing system need clearly to appreciate as we lay our plans for the second $\frac{1}{2}$ of the '70s.

More than ever, therefore, we welcome our opportunity as a party to come together in Kansas City. The world is watching what our strong Democratic Congressional majority (overwhelmingly male in the House, totally male in the Senate) will do with its new power. The Charter Convention should give us a chance to declare our intentions to one another and to the American people.

What do we intend to work toward as a Party? When you, Bob, insist on underlining the "conservatism" of the Democratic Party, as you did on Meet the Press last Sunday, we need to know what precisely you mean by conservatism, so that we as members of the Democratic Party can sign on or sign off. Do you mean merely fiscal responsibility in curbing the flights of federal bureaucratic and boondoggling expenditures? If so, and that is all, then many of us would join you in that "conservatism." Or do you mean a return to the old politics of the strong against the weak - anti-black, anti-chicano, anti-native american, anti-women, muscle-flexing, warlike? Or do you mean simply a Democratic extension of Nixon's "benign neglect"?

I enclose a copy of Martha Ragland's fine letter to the Washington Post from the Tennessee Women's Political Caucus. It should help to set out for you, as well as for the press, the high seriousness with which women are approaching our dialogue and decision-making in December.

Cordially,



Mrs. Tom Ragland

3821 ABBOTT MARTIN ROAD • NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37215

August 25, 1974

To the Editor of The Washington Post:

It is disheartening to read the Washington Post's reporting of the efforts of the Democratic Party to carry out the reforms mandated by the 1968 and 1972 Democratic National Conventions.

The purpose of that mandate was to square the party's performance with its rhetoric. If it is the party of the people, then the continued exclusion of women and minorities must end.

But those who have been, and are, in control of the party, are firmly against such heresy. "Quotas" is the code word that expresses this opposition. "Quotas" has taken its place with "busing", "law and order" and "crime in the streets" as carrying a short-cut, well-understood message. The latter three took care of the blacks. "Quotas" includes the blacks, but also takes care of women.

It is not a case of "personal and procedural dogfighting" as your editorial of August 20 says. And you successfully fuzz up the issue by calling it a "fracas", "squabble", "discord", and "rift".

The reform movement in the Democratic Party is part of the worldwide struggle for survival. If the Democratic Party can emerge as truly concerned with the wellbeing of all people and accepts women and minorities as full partners in that commitment, it could trigger an heroic effort to face up to the triple threat of exploding population, diminishing resources and nuclear war. It could make survival to the year 2000 more likely.

If the issue of reform is swept under the rug as the Washington Post and the party fathers seem to tilt toward, the Democratic Party will have lost its chance to be a factor in helping the United States regain its earlier position of leadership toward liberty and justice for all.

Earlier efforts in this long fight for liberty no doubt spawned such headline putdowns as "BARONS SQUABBLE AT RUNNYMEDE" and "AMERICANS DOGFIGHT OVER TEA".

Martha Ragland

Martha Ragland, President,
Tennessee Women's Political Caucus