

STATEMENT MADE BY GEORGE RAYMOND, CANTON PROJECT LEADER
ON FREEDOM DAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1964, AT PLEASANT GREEN CHURCH

My name is George Raymond presently field representative of the Congress of Racial Equality. I am working in Mississippi, in Canton Mississippi as director of the ~~present~~ present program that is going on working under the Council of Federated Organizations. Voter registration activities in Canton Mississippi began in June, 1963. Since that time local citizens who attempted to register ^{To} and vote have been fired from their jobs, ~~been~~ threatened and have suffered economic reprisals. Voter registration workers have been beaten or placed in jail on various charges. Freedom day is the beginning of an intensive campaign to get Negroes $\frac{1}{2}$ registered to vote. Today's activities show that in a county where Negroes comprise 70 per cent of the population there is a desire on the part of Negroes to become registered voters, and that under the present conditions Negroes cannot exercise their constitutional right. Out of approximately 400 ^{Negro} people who went to the court house at 9 o'clock this morning the ^e report is that only two ^{have} people/filled out application forms by one this afternoon. Today's activities disprove previous statements made by state and local officials that a large assembly of Negroes would create violence. Today's activities show that the Negro people themselves and civil rights organizations are capable of maintaining ~~law and~~ order. We call upon local, state, and federal officials to execute voter registration in Madison County. Negro citizens want to exercise their constitutional right and this only. Our facts which will be reported to the proper authorities will be substantiated by observers from the National Council of Churches, the FBI, the Justice Department and other related groups witnessing racial discrimination in voter registration in Madison County. ###