

CORE - Congress of Racial Equality
38 Park Row, New York, N.Y. 10038
(212) CO 7-6270
ATTN: Jim Peck or Val Coleman

FOR IMMEDIATE RELFASE

FREEDOM MARCH THROUGH RANKIN COUNTY

Brandon, Miss., June 3, 1965--Rural Rankin County, which set Mississippi's county record for the number of Negro churches burned within the past year (five), was the scene of a Freedom March May 28-29 by some 300 Negroes and whites.

Aimed at protesting the seating of Mississippi's five congressmen and the voter discrimination which made this possible, the march was sponsored jointly by CORE and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. One of the demonstration's leaders was CORE Task Force Worker George Raymond.

"We want to let them know we're not afraid," commented Rube Lee Myers, a marcher from Haynes Chapel. But on this particular occasion there was little grounds for fear since state and county officials apparently were anxious to avert the kind of terrorism which has prevailed in this Klan stronghold. State and county police accompanied the marcher for the entire 15 miles from Fannin to Brandon, the county seat.

When the marchers arrived at the courthouse, Mayor C. J. Harvey promptly met with their leaders. About 50 of the marchers were guided to the registrar's office to take registration tests and the remainder were escorted to an upstairs courtroom where they sang freedom songs until the start of the rally in;front of the courthouse.

The main speaker at the rally was CORE National Director James Farmer, who predicted that as an outcome of the new voting bill, from one to two million southern Negroes will be registered to vote within six months.

At present only 94 of Rankin county's 6,944 Negroes of voting age are registered in contrast to over 12,000 of its 13,264 whites.

#