

NEWS FROM....

STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MASSIVE DEMONSTRATION AGAINST MURDER HALTS BUSINESS IN
TUSKEGEE

DATE: January 8, 1966

TUSKEGEE, ALABAMA: A protest march in Tuskegee, Alabama, climaxed this afternoon when more than 1200 Tuskegee Institute students and adult Negroes from the town and Macon County, filled the entire street and sidewalks in Tuskegee's main shopping block for an hour and a half.

The largest demonstration in this town with a long history of protest against Alabama racism halted all business during the busiest time of a Saturday afternoon when rural people from the county come to town. The demonstration was in protest of the most recent civil-rights murder in Alabama and directed at several businesses which have been deeply involved in the denial of human rights to Negroes. Allan Parker, a member of the City Council, is president of the Alabama Exchange Bank at one end of the block. At the far end is the office of the Macon County Community Action Project, an anti-poverty committee which, it is felt, has failed to take a significant role in ending the county's tragic history of racial oppression.

In between are a number of stores owned by prominent whites in Tuskegee, including Keever's Fashion Shop, owned by Charles Keever, Mayor of Tuskegee; the Alley Mercantile Company; and the Macon Theater, which closed during an earlier attempt at desegregation.

For an hour and a half, the 1200 demonstrators sat on the street and sidewalks and sang freedom songs. After the demonstration, during which there were no reported incidents, the students marched back to the Tuskegee campus.

Starting at 10 A.M., 450 students marched from the campus toward the downtown shopping area. Public Safety Director, backed up by a line of 40 State

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Troopers and local police, halted the march as it turned onto the Old Montgomery Road, saying, "You do not have a parade permit -- in the interest of the citizens of this community it would be best for you to return."

George Ware, student leader at Tuskegee, told the group of marchers, "This is just another attempt to prevent us from exercising our constitutional rights and to preserve the disorder that has existed for one hundred years in Alabama."

The demonstrators moved into the street and sat down, prepared to stay all night if the police line did not let them by. Within an hour, the line opened and the students resumed their march. By the time they arrived downtown the original 450 had swelled to 1200.

The students marched to protest the brutal murder of Samuel Younge, Jr., 22-year old Tuskegee Institute student and civil-rights worker. Young was shot down on the night of January 3 after he attempted to use the public restroom in a local service station. Marvin Segrest, 67, an employee of the service station is being held for the murder and has reportedly admitted firing two shots at Samuel Younge near the spot where the body was later discovered.

The students who marched today are demanding Federal voting registrars under the Voting Law. They also demand a new county registrar to replace the one who the day before Younge was murdered threatened Younge's life in the courthouse, together with the safety of other civil rights workers and prospective voters.

In addition the students are planning a selective boycott of the stores downtown until the racial oppression and discrimination disappear and the human rights of Negroes in Macon County are fully respected. The violence, especially, which has lurked beneath the veneer of respectability in Tuskegee, is an object of the student's campaign. Above all, the students are calling for a boycott of Standard Oil service stations and products until the franchise for the Ed Wilson Standard Oil station in Tuskegee is dropped.