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GOD, GANDHI, AND GUNS: THE AFRICAN AMERICAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE IN TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA, 1964–1965

by Simon Wendt*

On the morning of 9 June 1964, over five hundred African Americans assembled at First African Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. They knew that the city's chief of police William Marable had prohibited their long-planned nonviolent protest march to the Tuscaloosa County Courthouse downtown, but the black Tuscaloosa Citizens for Action Committee (TCAC) had already announced that it would defy the ban. The large crowd of college and high school students who crammed into the church that day agreed, parade permit or not, they too were ready to march. Rev. T. Y. Rogers and fellow TCAC leaders had no doubt that the local police would stop them, possibly with violence. Indeed, dozens of blue-helmeted police officers and deputies, armed with nightsticks and cattle prods, surrounded the historic brick building. Nearby, firemen readied high pressure water hoses to disperse potential protesters. Rumors among African Americans that the local Ku Klux Klan had infiltrated the police force intensified the activists' apprehension.¹

When Rev. Rogers led the long column of marchers out of the church into the summer heat, they faced a cordon of police officers. Chief Marable immediately confronted the black minister, reminding him that the demonstration had been banned. He asked bluntly, "Do you intend to march anyway?" "Yes," Rogers said firmly and nodded. The police chief was furious. "You're under arrest," Marable snarled and motioned his deputies to lead the minister to the waiting squad car.² Shortly thereafter, police officers arrested TCAC's remaining leadership. The black students were undaunted by the arrests. Singing and clapping, they made another attempt to break through the line of blue-helmeted policemen, but were brutally forced back. Using their cattle prods, sticks, and fists, the police pushed the demonstrators back into the church, while firemen began to spray them with high-pressured streams of water.

When a few angry teenagers allegedly began to throw rocks and bottles at the police, Marable's men suddenly hurled a tear gas canister into the church. Inside, the gas immediately caused a panic. "Tear gas, tear gas," the protesters screamed and began to break some of the church windows with chairs and other objects to let in fresh air. This prompted the police to shoot another barrage of gas shells into the building. Gasping for air and their eyes welling with tears, the frightened students poured out of the church. Outside, they received a violent welcome. Angry policemen chased the fleeing demonstrators and bloodied

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them with sticks and fists. When the almost one-hour-long siege finally ended, ninety-four demonstrators had been arrested. Thirty-four persons, among them one policeman, needed hospitalization for cuts, bruises, and injuries caused by tear gas.³

Tuscaloosa's black community was outraged at the brutal police response. Not only had police officers attacked one of the last sanctuaries of the African American community; worse, they had brutalized peaceful women and children. In particular black men, few of whom had participated in the demonstration, were outraged. The violent events seriously undermined their faith in nonviolent protest. Later that day, dozens of these men armed themselves to safeguard their community. Some of them drove downtown with their guns, seeking revenge against the white community. During the night, scattered violent incidents left two African Americans wounded.⁴

Concerned about this volatile situation, a group of older black activists tried to calm the potential rioters. In particular, Joseph Mallisham, a Korean War veteran and long-time labor organizer, sought to convince the angry group of the futility of violent disorders. Rather than burn down the city, he argued, African Americans ought to organize their own protective agency to prevent violent incidents like the one at the church that day. Moreover, he suggested, this group could provide protection against the Ku Klux Klan.⁵ The labor activist's reasoning convinced the group of hotheads; they handed over their weapons. The riot averted, Mallisham assembled a small group of World War II and Korean War veterans who decided to put his plan into action. At a larger second meeting, a diverse group of men officially voted to organize the defense unit, asking Mallisham to lead it. The following night, African Americans began to guard the home of T. Y. Rogers with rifles and shotguns.⁶

This incident sheds light on a little-known chapter of civil rights history. Among students of the black freedom movement, Tuscaloosa is known primarily for Governor George Wallace's "stand in the schoolhouse door" at the University of Alabama in 1963. Several scholars have also chronicled the case of Autherine Lucy, a black woman who faced mob violence when she attempted to enroll there seven years earlier. But no historian has yet explored Tuscaloosa's indigenous civil rights movement, whose first tremors began in 1962.⁷ As in Montgomery, Birmingham, and other Alabamian cities, a charismatic black clergyman led nonviolent protests against segregation and discrimination. Aided by pre-existing organized networks and federal civil rights legislation, the all-black TCAC managed to integrate Tuscaloosa by 1965.

Beyond providing another insight into local civil rights history, however, a closer look at the Tuscaloosa movement also reveals the little acknowledged relationship between nonviolent direct action and black armed resistance during this violent era. A small number of studies have called attention to the significant role that black self-defense played in southern civil rights campaigns. In 1957, for example, NAACP activist Robert Williams organized a rifle club in Monroe, North Carolina to protect the black community against attacks from the Ku Klux Klan. Seven years later, African Americans in Jonesboro, Louisiana founded the Deacons for Defense and Justice, whose Bogalusa chapter gained nationwide attention in 1965 after trading shots with white segregationists. During the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project of 1964, similar defense groups emerged in the Magnolia state, protecting African Americans against the klan's campaign of terror.⁸ Tuscaloosa's defense unit closely resembled its predecessors and those groups that

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simultaneously operated in Louisiana and Mississippi. Mallisham's group also consisted mostly of black army veterans, who patrolled black neighborhoods and protected movement leaders and white allies. Similarly, while opposed to nonviolence as a way of life, the unit accepted tactical nonviolence and operated side by side with peaceful protest.

FIRST CHALLENGES TO SEGREGATION IN THE 1950s

Located about fifty miles southwest of Birmingham, Tuscaloosa in 1964 was an industrial and manufacturing city. One-third of the city's 63,000 residents were black. Although African Americans had challenged segregation in numerous Alabamian cities by 1964, the "Druid City" remained a blank spot on the map of the Civil Rights Movement. Rigid racial segregation continued to permeate public life, and whites had traditionally used violence to enforce it.⁹ The first well-publicized challenge to segregation came in 1956 when lawyers from the NAACP successfully argued that Tuscaloosa's prestigious University of Alabama could not deny the enrollment of African Americans. On 1 February 1956, after a three-year battle in the courts, a shy and nervous young woman named Autherine Lucy arrived at the all-white campus. Accompanied by Birmingham's civil rights leader Fred Shuttlesworth, she was determined to become the university's first black student. But white animosity was palpable as soon as Lucy walked to her first class. Many of the more than 7,000 students enrolled at the university at that time opposed integration. On 6 February, some of them joined a crowd of about 500 angry whites from the Tuscaloosa area, yelling racial epithets and pelting Lucy with eggs and gravel.¹⁰

Officers of the state highway patrol finally rescued her from the mob and brought the unnerved woman to the safety of black Tuscaloosa. At Howard and Linton's Barber Shop, beauticians washed Lucy's hair and cleaned her clothes, while the white mob began to regroup in the vicinity of the shop. Its owner Nathaniel Howard, Sr. feared that the crowd of frenzied whites might attack Lucy. He immediately dispatched telephone calls to his friends, asking for protection. Shortly thereafter, black men armed with rifles and shotguns arrived on the scene. Confronted with this little army, the white crowd weighed its chances. Discouraged, the mob gradually dispersed. Later that afternoon, the armed men escorted Lucy to nearby Birmingham.¹¹ When NAACP lawyer Thurgood Marshall arrived there a few days later to challenge the university's decision to expel Lucy, local people took no chances. At night, men armed with machine guns guarded the home of Marshall's host, a local NAACP lawyer. When Lucy's trial began at the end of February, armed watchmen positioned themselves along the route to the federal office building, where the trial took place. However, Marshall's efforts proved fruitless. The court upheld the young woman's expulsion.¹²

The injustice of the Lucy incident stirred local African Americans. They knew all too well the humiliating feeling of being discriminated against on the basis of race. However, in the 1950s, few of them seriously considered engaging in political activism to challenge the status quo. On occasion, a small group of men met at Nathaniel Howard's barber shop to discuss the community's grievances, and a few businessmen sometimes met with representatives of the city administration to talk about improving race relations, but with little success.¹³

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Only a black Baptist minister named W. B. Sheeley seriously attempted to organize for active protest. When Rev. Sheeley became the minister of the city's prestigious First African Baptist Church in the early fifties, he openly discussed civil rights and began to hold small meetings. Prior to 1956, when Alabama's Attorney General Lloyd Patterson banned the NAACP from the state, the Baptist minister also urged the association's Tuscaloosa chapter to become more active. But Rev. Sheeley's conservative middle-class congregation, consisting mostly of business people, teachers, and school principals, opposed his efforts. Comparably well-off and respected in their community, few of them were willing to risk their status. Black teachers in particular were likely to lose their jobs if white authorities learned that they openly supported integration. In 1957 the congregation's opposition to his civil rights activism compelled Sheeley to resign. By the time that Autherine Lucy arrived in Tuscaloosa, the activist pastor and his family had already left the city.¹⁴ Only the Ministers' Alliance, a small group that six young black preachers founded in the mid-1950s, remained interested in organizing for social change. The group's semi-public meetings resulted in no overt protest, but the concerned ministers were willing to take a stand against discrimination and injustice.¹⁵

CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISM IN THE EARLY 1960s

In spring of 1962, the Ministers' Alliance was transformed into Tuscaloosa's first active civil rights organization. The group's involvement grew out of an incident on the city's bus line. On 5 May 1962, a white bus driver ordered three black students from Tuscaloosa's Stillman College and one high school student to vacate the front seats for two white passengers. Since Tuscaloosa's bus company had adopted an official policy of non-segregated seating in 1957, the teenagers angrily refused, starting a heated argument with the driver. As the debate went on, a few students left the bus and rushed to find black minister Willie Herzfeld, who they believed might be able to help them. A member of the Ministers' Alliance since he moved to Tuscaloosa in 1960, young Rev. Herzfeld had been a counselor to the first sit-in protesters in Greensboro, North Carolina. He immediately agreed to assist the students and hurried to the bus stop to settle the argument. However, his efforts were unsuccessful. About an hour after the incident began, police arrested the four students on charges of disorderly conduct.¹⁶

That night, after a local black physician had bailed out the four youths, Herzfeld called an emergency meeting, inviting three members of the Alliance and a handful of black community leaders. During the meeting, this group decided to form the Tuscaloosa Citizens for Action Committee. Herzfeld became the new organization's president and immediately started negotiations with the bus line officials about their ambiguous stance on segregation. In addition, hundreds of students from Stillman College marched in protest, blocking the buses that approached the campus. In the end, TCAC secured the bus company officials' assurance that they would ban any future discrimination and harassment. Buoyed by this victory, TCAC affiliated with Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and held a number of meetings at the churches of Herzfeld and TCAC's vice-president Rev. Norman Stevenson.¹⁷

But few African Americans at that time supported Herzfeld's ambitious plan to fight for full equality in Tuscaloosa. Neighbors avoided him and his pregnant wife on the street,

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and his relationship with fellow ministers quickly deteriorated. Moreover, he received numerous death threats from white residents, prompting some members of his church to guard his home with guns.¹⁸ Although the activist minister continued to meet with SCLC affiliates in Alabama for another year, he knew that his efforts were leading nowhere. Herzfeld's denominational affiliation was a major impediment to mobilizing the black community. As a Lutheran minister, he faced an overwhelming majority of established Baptist preachers, few of whom were willing to support the dangerous ventures of a relatively unknown newcomer. Since the rest of TCAC's officers consisted of Methodists, Herzfeld was able to reach only a fraction of the city's African American population.¹⁹ Even if the Baptist ministers had supported TCAC, however, building a local movement would have proved difficult. Teachers and principals employed with the local Board of Education, for example, still feared losing their jobs and thus opposed civil rights activism, while black businessmen worried about possible economic sanctions by the white community.²⁰

More than economic pressure, most African Americans feared the United Klans of America (UKA). Its headquarters was the home of Tuscaloosa native and ex-tire salesman Robert Shelton who had joined the klan in the early 1950s. Within a mere decade, Shelton successfully laid claim to the most powerful position within the klan hierarchy. During a meeting of several klan groups in Indiana Springs, Georgia, in July 1961, the thirty-two year old was instrumental in uniting several splinter groups of the hooded order into the UKA, which became the largest multistate klan of the 1960s. Shelton became the new organization's Imperial Wizard.²¹

By the end of 1961 the overall membership in the Ku Klux Klan rose to over 20,000. This enormous increase was primarily a reaction to the failure of the local White Citizens' Councils (WCC) to prevent desegregation by "respectable" means, such as economic reprisals against the African Americans in the community. Founded by white businessmen in the aftermath of the *Brown v. Board of Education* U.S. Supreme Court decision, the WCC's membership grew steadily in the 1950s.²² By the end of the decade, however, the organization had accomplished little, alarming working-class whites, who increasingly favored the Ku Klux Klan's method of fighting the black freedom movement with terror. In the following years, thousands of new members swelled the ranks of the Invisible Empire. While never as strong as the klan resurgence in the 1920s, which had boasted millions of members, the revived klan's violence in the 1960s made it similarly notorious.²³

The UKA, which had recruited about 30,000 members and sympathetic supporters in nine states by 1965, did much to establish the klan's violent reputation. Although its leader Robert Shelton repeatedly denied his organization's proclivity to violent terror, the UKA's bloody record proved otherwise. Bomb making was the UKA's specialty, and several of the organization's most extreme Alabama "klaverns" were responsible for dynamite bombings and racially inspired murders throughout the state.²⁴ With the headquarters of this violence-prone branch of the Invisible Empire right on their doorstep, black Tuscaloosans undoubtedly feared its wrath.

It came as no surprise, therefore, that by the summer of 1963 when two black students made another attempt to break the color line at the University of Alabama, TCAC's efforts to build a local movement had fizzled. Since 1956, when a white mob had forced Autherine Lucy from campus, university trustees had devised a successful strategy to prevent similar

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incidents. Hiring private detectives to find incriminating material that could be used to disqualify potential black candidates, white officials had managed to throw out most applications. Vivian Malone and James Hood, however, two qualified African Americans who applied for admission in 1963, were outstanding citizens with faultless records. When it became clear that the university could not reject them, recently elected Governor George Wallace announced that he would carry out his long-promised "stand in the schoolhouse door" to block school desegregation.²⁵

In early June, an army of news reporters descended upon Tuscaloosa to cover the showdown between Wallace and the administration of President John F. Kennedy, who had vowed to enforce integration on the campus. On 11 June 1963, Deputy U.S. Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach, soaked with sweat in the sweltering heat, faced Governor Wallace at the university's entrance. For several minutes, the ambitious segregationist lectured Katzenbach about states' rights and the tyranny of the federal government. Eventually, however, Wallace had to step aside. Later that day, Malone and Hood were enrolled at the University of Alabama. Still, in the eyes of white southerners, Wallace's defiant gesture elevated him as the region's most prominent defender of white supremacy.²⁶

Federal administrators lauded the enrollment of Malone and Hood as a victory against segregation, but their presence on campus had no impact on the situation for Tuscaloosa's black population. Segregation in restaurants, theaters, and other public facilities persisted. African Americans had not even witnessed the spectacle, since only university officials had been allowed on campus. Few of them cared.²⁷ Rev. T. W. Linton spoke for many when he explained years later to an interviewer: "The university was kind of a different world."²⁸ In fact, except for law professor Jay Murphy and his wife Alberta, the white campus community rarely interacted with African Americans. Not surprisingly, the battle over the integration of the university did little to rally people, and even Rev. Herzfeld balked at making another attempt to win black support. Tired and frustrated, the Lutheran minister prayed for someone else to organize and lead the local freedom movement.²⁹

REV. T. Y. ROGERS AND THE NONVIOLENT PROTEST CAMPAIGN

In 1964 Rev. Herzfeld got his wish, when the twenty-eight year old Baptist minister T. Y. Rogers arrived in Tuscaloosa and quickly became what Herzfeld called "the catalyst" of the city's freedom movement. A former assistant minister at Martin Luther King's Dexter Avenue Church in Montgomery, Rev. Rogers had honed his skills as civil rights organizer as the pastor of Philadelphia, PA's Galilee Baptist Church. In the early 1960s, he became involved in Rev. Leon Sullivan and the "400 Ministers' " highly successful boycott campaign against discriminatory employment practices in the city's white-owned businesses. But Rogers longed to return to his native state to become more involved in the southern freedom struggle. Consequently, when King informed him in 1963 that Tuscaloosa's First African Baptist Church sought to call a new pastor, he immediately applied. With his mentor's recommendation and a style of preaching virtually identical to that of King, Rogers easily secured the prestigious position at the city's oldest and largest church. He and his wife moved to Tuscaloosa in January 1964.³⁰

Rev. Willie Herzfeld enthusiastically threw his full support behind the charismatic newcomer. He hoped that Rogers, with his experience in civil rights organizing, and as a

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Baptist and head of one of the city's largest congregations, might be able to energize TCAC and win new converts to the civil rights cause. Indeed, he seemed the ideal choice to lead the local movement.³¹ Former members of TCAC also committed themselves to assisting Rogers. In this spirit, at a state meeting of SCLC in Montgomery, Herzfeld, Rogers, and three other ministers decided to revive TCAC with its veteran leadership. Rogers joined as the organization's new Executive Secretary.³²

With a reliable organizing network already in place, TCAC immediately went to work. The first problem was how to involve Rogers' middle-class congregation, which had earlier forced the activist minister Rev. Sheeley to resign. The initial reaction to their new minister's message was indeed outright opposition.³³ But Rogers' charisma and eloquent oratory convinced the reluctant congregation. As Herzfeld reminisced later, shortly after Rogers' arrival, the First Baptist African Church "was literally turned over to the Civil Rights Movement."³⁴

In February 1964, the TCAC cautiously began to spread its message among the black population. Its strategy was simple. "No one else was going to move," Rogers explained this difficult phase a few months later, "[s]o we had to move, and hoped that . . . the people would join us in our efforts."³⁵ TCAC's first rallying point was voter registration, "a good catch-all," as Rogers explained. Canvassing the black neighborhoods together with a few SCLC field workers, TCAC activists promoted the ballot and prepared the ground for their primary goal: nonviolent direct action.³⁶ Although TCAC sought to mobilize the entire black population, college and high school students, who were less vulnerable to economic pressure, provided the bulk of the participants in the early mass meetings.³⁷ By early March, when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. visited Tuscaloosa to install Rogers as new pastor, TCAC had already won widespread support among the young.³⁸

The TCAC launched its nonviolent direct action campaign in April 1964. Tuscaloosa's new county courthouse became the first target. Originally, the three million dollar project had been planned without the "white" and "colored" signs, which traditionally hung in bathrooms, jails, and courtrooms. One year prior to the opening of the courthouse, the city administration had emphatically assured African Americans that no discriminatory signs would be included. However, when Governor Wallace came to Tuscaloosa on 12 April 1964 to dedicate the new building, the hated reminders of white supremacy were in place.³⁹ Tuscaloosa's leading white businessman George LeMaistre told an interviewer several months afterwards that he too had presumed that the new courthouse would be integrated. He speculated that some of Wallace's overzealous followers, who had probably heeded his famous line "segregation now . . . segregation tomorrow . . . segregation forever," put up the signs in the belief that they acted in the interest of their racist governor.⁴⁰

The courthouse controversy became an important rallying point for the TCAC. The planned march was unlikely to bring down the signs, but Rogers believed that TCAC could use it to recruit more people. In addition, he hoped that police would help dramatize the injustice of segregation by making mass arrests. On 16 April, TCAC sent a letter to Probate Judge David M. Cochrane and representatives of the city administration, demanding an end to the discriminatory practices at the courthouse. The activists hinted that if white authorities ignored their letter, African Americans would launch nonviolent demonstrations.⁴¹ In the following days, TCAC printed thousands of flyers calling for a large mass meeting at First African Baptist Church on Monday, 20 April and asked Baptist

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ministers to announce the meeting in their churches. In addition, Rogers went on the air on the local black radio station, urging people to attend.⁴²

The surprisingly large turnout of several hundred at the meeting on Monday night raised activists' spirits.⁴³ TCAC was now prepared to march. Predictably, the County Board of Revenue unanimously voted on Tuesday to deny the activists' demands, prompting Rogers to announce the nonviolent protest march for 23 April. In addition, TCAC launched a boycott against downtown merchants in protest against their racist hiring practices. The night before the demonstration, hundreds packed First African Baptist Church. Over thirty people were still waiting outside when the meeting began. In an inspiring speech, Rogers accused the city administration of breaking their promise to integrate the courthouse. For that reason, he said, African Americans would march the next day "in a quiet and orderly fashion to the courthouse building" and "stand with dignity." The audience greeted his announcement with enthusiastic cheers.⁴⁴

On the morning of 23 April 1964, three hundred protesters gathered at Rogers' church. Most of them were students from Stillman College, located a few blocks away. Since police had denied TCAC's request for a parade permit, the demonstrators followed Rogers' instructions to walk two abreast on the sidewalk. Rogers started out with the largest of three groups, which walked toward downtown in intervals. Carrying signs that read "Segregation Must Go," the groups of marchers joined shortly before noon at the steps of the courthouse. A large crowd of several thousand whites and dozens of policemen, county deputies, and firemen looked on in the warm sun. For a moment, the protesters stood silent, holding up their signs. Then Rogers mounted the steps to read a prepared statement, but police officers immediately herded him and his fellow demonstrators down the steps and away from the building. Policemen pushed and beat those teenagers who spilled into the street, but made only a few arrests. At that point, TCAC's leadership recognized that their plan to fill the jails with nonviolent protesters had failed.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, African Americans had made their point. At the mass meeting that night, Rogers summed up the demonstration's message: "We stated that we would march. We marched today. And all Tuscaloosa knows that our determination shall last until complete integration is achieved."⁴⁶ He then announced that TCAC would file a suit in the Federal District Court to force the city administration to remove the Jim Crow signs at the courthouse. But activists already pondered new targets, such as the city's lunch counters and public parks. A few days later, Rogers disclosed that the boycott of downtown stores and the voter registration drive would be intensified as well.⁴⁷

These proclamations were no empty threats. Impressed by Rogers' charisma and his unwavering determination, more and more people attended the Monday night rallies.⁴⁸ Throughout April and May, at least four hundred people regularly crammed into First African Baptist Church, responding with cheers to Rogers' eloquent oratory. He preached Martin Luther King's philosophy of Christian love and Gandhian nonviolence, but his frequent biblical allusions also expressed TCAC's uncompromising resolve to fight for full equality. "We're gonna march around that wall of segregation," he proclaimed one night, "and like another wall a long time ago . . . it's gonna come tumbling down."⁴⁹ Rogers' inspiring words instilled in many African Americans a confidence that they themselves might be able to topple white supremacy.

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Indeed, the nascent movement was gaining momentum. By the end of May, TCAC had set up citizenship schools for voter education in six churches and two local homes. Martin Luther King's SCLC provided some of the funds.⁵⁰ King also dispatched numerous civil rights workers and guest speakers to Tuscaloosa, among them his right-hand man Ralph Abernathy. Sometimes, King himself visited the community, conferring with Rogers about the course of the local movement. SCLC field workers regularly assisted TCAC, and their workshops on nonviolent direct action became an integral part of the local movement.⁵¹ On 18 May 1964, encouraged by this growing support, TCAC activists sent another letter to the city administration, now demanding the integration of all public facilities, including schools, hospitals, hotels, and restaurants. Black activists also called for equal job opportunities, which they stressed by picketing the Kwik Chek supermarket in one of Tuscaloosa's shopping centers.⁵²

As the number of activists increased, so did white resistance. In the beginning, it remained confined to threatening phone calls. Rogers and his wife had to bear the brunt of this nightly harassment. Interestingly, Lepezia Rogers appeared to be her husband's exact opposite. If T. Y. evoked the soft-voiced language of Christian love, Lepezia gave back to racist callers what she received.⁵³ By contrast, Rogers advocated philosophical nonviolence. His manner and rhetoric clearly reflected the tremendous influence of his mentor King. Evoking King's rhetoric on the night before the first demonstration, he declared: "We are coming here tomorrow without hatred in our hearts and without violence. We are not going to strike back, but will go in a spirit of Christian love."⁵⁴ Local activist Ruth Bolden remembered that Rogers strictly enforced nonviolence, telling teenage demonstrators to "carry no knife, no gun, no stick, no nothing."⁵⁵ TCAC officers similarly exhorted them to stay away from the demonstrations if they could not accept these rules.⁵⁶

RACIAL VIOLENCE AND THE BLACK DEFENSE ORGANIZATION

Among black adults, however, the violence that was launched against peaceful women and children during the 9 June 1964 demonstration seriously eroded the faith in peaceful protest. TCAC had planned the march to be the culmination of a new wave of direct action, which started on 2 June. Until 8 June, when police chief Marable banned any further demonstrations, small groups of African American teenagers had staged sit-ins and marches in downtown Tuscaloosa.⁵⁷ Resolved to defy Marable's ban, Rogers and fellow ministers gathered on the morning of June 9th with the expectation that police officers would stop and arrest them. However, the brutality of the tear gas attack and the beating of women and children that followed shocked everyone. Even the *New York Times* reported the violent incident on the front page.⁵⁸

Within the black community, shock soon turned into apprehension and anger. Many began to arm themselves. Ruth Bolden, for example, after seeing police brutally beat her young nephew, feared for her life. She telephoned a friend in nearby Northport, asking for protection. Over two decades later, she recalled: "I called my friends . . . to come over here and stay with me that night 'cause I was really scared to death. . . . we had to talk in codes. I said 'come and bring a lot of sandwiches', and he knew what that meant: it was guns and a lot of bullets." By Bolden's account, she began to carry a pistol hidden in a Bible.⁵⁹ When factory worker David Gordon's wife telephoned her husband to inform him about what

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had happened at the church, he immediately left the plant and hurried home. Concerned about his wife's safety, Gordon picked her up, took his gun, and drove down to First African Baptist Church. "At that time," he recalled later, "I wasn't [a] civil rights man . . . cause if anybody hit me I [was] gonna hit him back."⁶⁰

Gordon later returned to his work, but some outraged black men remained downtown with their rifles and shotguns. They were determined to retaliate with violence against both the police and the white community.⁶¹ Labor activist Joseph Mallisham later recalled the volatile situation: "I have never in my life seen so many folks walking down the street with shotguns on their shoulders."⁶² Trying to dissuade the angry men from their violent plan, he argued for the formation of a black defense organization that would provide the protection that the police refused to give. One by one, Mallisham and some of his friends persuaded the men to give up their weapons, promising to return them at a meeting later that night.⁶³ World War II and Korean War veterans dominated that meeting. They agreed that their community needed safeguards against police brutality and klan intimidation. At a second gathering the following night, almost three hundred men, including youth gang leaders, workers, teachers, and businessmen, enthusiastically endorsed the plan. That night, a small group of war veterans formed the nucleus of the new defense organization.⁶⁴ It came as no surprise that Tuscaloosa's black men entrusted Joseph Mallisham with the leadership of the group. His military training and service during the Korean War, together with his impressive record of labor activism, made him an ideal candidate.

Son of a Methodist minister, thirty-six year old Mallisham grew up during the depression years on a farm near Tuscaloosa. After graduating from high school in 1948, Mallisham took a job at Zeigler's meat-packing plant in Tuscaloosa. When war broke out in Korea in 1950, he volunteered. Like thousands of other African Americans, he found his military service to be a transformative experience that spurred him to political activism. Upon his return, Mallisham became a labor activist at the Zeigler plant. As an officer in that factory's first integrated union, he quickly established a reputation for aggressive negotiating. Unabashed by the management's attempts to ban his activities, the black labor organizer continued his unpopular work. At the same time, he became involved in the first tremors of Tuscaloosa's civil rights struggle. In the mid-1950s, he participated in the short-lived activities organized by Rev. Sheeley. In 1957, when a white mob threatened Autherine Lucy, Mallisham was one of the armed locals who rushed to her defense. Five years later, he joined TCAC and became chairman of its membership committee, a position that he would hold until the end of the 1960s.⁶⁵

The black defense organization clearly reflected its leader's army training. The group's structure mirrored that of a military combat unit. Mallisham led a small executive board that determined the organization's strategy, while a group of lieutenants and the rank and file executed specific operations. Mallisham established strict criteria for membership, accepting only married war veterans, who had served in active combat. In addition, new recruits had to be discreet and were required to conform to a rigid code of morality. If candidates passed the thorough background check, they solemnly pledged to protect fellow African Americans at the cost of their lives. Throughout the summer and fall of 1964, about one hundred men took this oath. Although it was a diverse group that varied widely in age and educational background, their common goal to protect the black community bound them together.⁶⁶

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Rituals such as the oath were part of the great secrecy that characterized the black self-defense squad. Mallisham believed that avoiding general publicity would lessen tensions in the city and increase the group's effectiveness. For this reason, it never acquired a name. Sworn to confidentiality, members never talked about the organization and whites thus remained unaware of its existence. Even among African Americans, few had full knowledge of the sophisticated protective system. Police officers, who sometimes encountered members of the group on their nightly patrols, appeared to tolerate its existence, since there were no attempts to outlaw or disarm the group.⁶⁷

The security of T. Y. Rogers and other TCAC officers was the defense squad's major concern. By early June, death threats against the civil rights leader had become routine, and few nights went by without suspicious cars slowly passing by the parsonage. Only one day after the official formation of Mallisham's group, about twenty armed black men began to guard Rogers' home. Positioning themselves in bushes around the one-story building, the sentries were ready to repel potential klan attacks.⁶⁸ No hooded terrorists showed up that night, but the guards continued to protect the house in two shifts almost twenty-four hours a day.⁶⁹ Interestingly, while local African Americans anticipated racist violence in their neighborhood, Vivian Malone and two other black women had quietly entered summer school classes at the University of Alabama without incident.⁷⁰ The civil rights battle had now shifted to the trenches of segregated daily life.

In the following weeks, Rogers' small house became a fortress. Nathaniel Howard, Jr. remembered that "[g]oing by T. Y.'s house [was like] going on a military installation."⁷¹ Armed guards requested identification from those who approached the building and cars that passed the checkpoint had to blink a prearranged signal to avoid being welcomed with a volley of buckshot. According to Ruth Bolden, the guards fired at several cars, whose white drivers had ignored their motion to halt.⁷² Frequently, teachers and others who hesitated to participate actively in demonstrations assisted the movement by preparing sandwiches and refreshments for Rogers' bodyguards.⁷³

Willie Herzfeld received protection as well. He later recalled that members of Mallisham's organization "spent a lot of sleepless nights, some of them sleeping on the top of my house, . . . trying to protect me from what would have been the ravages of the Klan."⁷⁴ Since death threats against Herzfeld—sometimes in the form of burning crosses in his front yard—had become common, the Lutheran minister found the armed sentries an immense relief.⁷⁵ Rev. T. W. Linton, who became TCAC's main representative in the tense negotiations with white merchants, similarly recalled that about ten men regularly guarded his home. Throughout 1964, bodyguards followed Rogers, Herzfeld, Linton, and others wherever they went.⁷⁶

Finally, the defense unit watched over the handful of TCAC's white allies, frequently escorting them to the black section of town and back to their homes. Most prominent among them were Jay and Alberta Murphy. Because of their legal expertise—Jay was a law professor at the University of Alabama, while Alberta worked as a lawyer—African Americans had learned to appreciate their assistance. Joseph Mallisham was particularly grateful to the Murphys, who defended him in 1955 in a labor arbitration case against the Zeigler Company. In the early sixties, Alberta founded the Council for Human Relations, a group that consisted of like-minded liberals who regularly met to discuss civil rights. In 1964, the couple joined TCAC and began to attend its mass meetings. In the eyes of white

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Alabamians, these activities branded Alberta and her husband as "dangerous communist agitators" and threats against them increased.⁷⁷

Armed African Americans made sure that this menace was not translated into actual harm. When Alberta Murphy ventured into the rural areas of Tuscaloosa County to teach voter registration, for example, members of the defense unit inconspicuously followed her. Mallisham explained later: "When we saw the way she went all over the country any time of day or night to instruct voters without any regard of danger, we knew that woman needed some kind of protection."⁷⁸ Only later did Alberta find out that black veterans regularly ensured her safety on these dangerous trips. Unlike the Murphys, University of Alabama sociology professor Harold Nelson not only benefited from similar security measures, but gained deep scholarly insight into the defense group. Befriending Mallisham in the aftermath of the June 9 incident, Nelson participated in virtually all activities of TCAC and the protective association. Documenting the activities of the protective organization over the course of several years, he summarized his findings in a sociological article, which he published in 1967.⁷⁹ Except for the Murphys and Nelson, few other whites openly aided the black movement. Even among Tuscaloosa's white clergy support was negligible. However, those ministers who did come out in favor of integration could count on black protection against racist repercussions.⁸⁰

Some white activists still felt insecure. They too armed themselves. When hostile racists began to threaten Jay Murphy, for example, he informed them that he and his young son carried pistols, and that they would not hesitate to use them.⁸¹ James Jaquith, an assistant professor of anthropology at the university who participated in TCAC's attempts to integrate the city's movie theater, had never owned a gun. But as harassment against him and his family increased, he purchased several firearms. In August 1964, Jaquith conceded in an interview that before the threats began, "[t]he thought of shooting someone was just revolting to me." By the time of the interview, his scruples had vanished. "[T]he thought of shooting any of those people who come on my property now," he said, "is not revolting to me. I would look forward to it with some anticipation."⁸² Given this virtual arms race among klansmen and activists in the aftermath of the police attack on First African Baptist Church, it seemed only a matter of time before the two opposing camps would clash.

But the following weeks were relatively calm. TCAC had halted further demonstrations, waiting for a federal court to issue an injunction against police interference. Not surprisingly, the city administration denied all allegations of restricting African Americans' civil rights.⁸³ If TCAC was unable to continue its direct action campaign, it had at least won the battle over segregation in the new courthouse. On 25 June 1964, Federal Judge Seybourn H. Lynne ordered Tuscaloosa County to remove all discriminatory signs from the building's rest rooms. Less than a week later, the "white" and "colored" placards were gone.⁸⁴

Still, white supremacy was far from defeated. In particular, the UKA stepped up its campaign of intimidation. Two days after Judge Lynne's decision, klansmen held a huge rally on the outskirts of Tuscaloosa. Almost 1,500 whites cheered the speeches of Imperial Wizard Robert Shelton and other klan leaders. The eerie scene was bathed in the blazing light of a burning eighty-foot cross.⁸⁵ Another segregationist group that organized to stop the black freedom movement was the White Citizens for Action Committee (WCAC). A handful of white Tuscaloosans had formed the organization in May or June 1964 to

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counteract the activities of the TCAC. The white racists' decision to adopt part of the black organization's name reflected their mission: to initiate immediate countermeasures that would stop the local freedom movement. The WCAC's president, local businessman James L. Frazier, vowed to use economic pressure to deprive TCAC of its black rank and file. Suggesting in a leaflet that white businessmen who were subject to the black boycott launch "Operation Ban," Frazier argued that firing black employees would weaken their resolve in support of local civil rights leaders. At the WCAC's biweekly meetings, Frazier called upon his followers to force civil rights "agitators" out of town.⁸⁶

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, signed into law on 2 July, brought the city's uneasy peace to an end. The trouble began when African Americans began to test the compliance of the city's movie theater and its restaurants with the new legislation, which prohibited segregation in all public facilities. Predictably, many restaurants and snack bars refused to serve the small groups of young activists. In addition, angry whites accosted them on the street.⁸⁷ On 8 July harassment exploded into violence. That night, a group of African American teenagers desegregated the city's Druid movie theater. When they left the building, a jeering crowd of two hundred hostile whites greeted them with a barrage of stones and bottles. Fortunately, a cordon of police officers prevented the mob from surging forward. But the deputies had difficulty controlling the belligerent crowd, and the black students waved in vain for cabs to pick them up. Desperate, they telephoned Joseph Mallisham, who immediately led a two-car convoy manned with armed men to rescue them. When the two cars arrived, the teenagers jumped in and crouched to the floor. As the drivers sped away, the angry mob continued to hurl bottles and rocks toward the vehicles.⁸⁸ Racing toward the black neighborhood, the rescue team joined up with other defense squad members, who escorted them to safety. Suddenly, klansmen who had hidden behind trees next to the street opened fire on the convoy. Poor marksmen, they missed, and several black men rolled down their windows and returned the gunfire. The stunned white assailants, not expecting armed resistance, fled.⁸⁹

The following night, white mobs again rampaged at the Druid Theater. This time, they attacked famous white actor Jack Palance, who was in town to visit his wife's family. Loitering in front of the movie theater, the mob waited for African Americans seeking to enter the building. When Palance arrived that evening with his family to see a movie, the crowd mistook the dark-tanned actor for a black man boldly trying to integrate the theater with a white woman. The sight of what whites believed to be an interracial couple threw the crowd into a frenzy, resulting in a violent riot that police officers had difficulty quelling. In the end, police had to resort to tear gas and water hoses to disperse the raging mob. Giving shocked Palance and his family helmets for protection against rocks and bottles, police officers escorted them out of the building. When Palance finally reached his car, he found a sticker pasted on his bumper, which read: "The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan is Watching You."⁹⁰

In reaction to the violence, police imposed a curfew on minors and patrolled downtown Tuscaloosa for the following two weeks.⁹¹ The police department's hard line on rioters diminished intimidation and violence against African Americans; but the restraint of Shelton and his UKA appears to have been a direct result of the black defense organization's determined resistance during the shoot-out on 8 July. Indeed, the klan's organized campaign of harassment ceased almost completely after this incident.⁹²

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While local African Americans helped thwart klan violence with arms, SCLC field workers enforced strict adherence to nonviolence. Their account of small direct action projects in early July read like a report from a nonviolent army platoon: "Sunday July 5, 1964: On Sunday 7:55 one Bat. of the 101st Freedom army proceeded down town to the Bama Theater located on Greensboro ave. & 6th street. The Bat. consisted of 25 men but only 15 reached the rendezvo[us] point. . . ." The author of the report then "decided that four of us would go into the establishment. We proceeded accordingly, with no weapons in our hands. (I checked all of the men)" Despite these careful preparations, police arrested the protesters shortly before they reached the theater.⁹³ Asked in late June 1964 about SCLC's responsibility in Tuscaloosa, one field worker answered emphatically, "I'm here to see that the struggle remains nonviolent." In his opinion, this was "going to be quite a task."⁹⁴ Local African Americans, field worker Powell A. Middlebrook explained two months later, should at least acquire "an idea and a better concept of what nonviolence is, and the practical approach to nonviolence."⁹⁵ Perhaps the field workers sensed that African American activism stemmed not from their belief in redemptive love, but primarily from their anger about the police attack on First African Baptist Church.

Those who protected the local movement with rifles and shotguns saw no conflict between their guns and nonviolence. Their leader had never considered nonviolence a way of life, but he accepted it as a successful tactic. In fact, Mallisham viewed it as the only possible strategy in the black freedom movement. The black defense group, he emphasized years later, would have never started a fight. "Our membership," he reminisced, "was a membership of peace. . . ." Protection was the group's main responsibility. "Any violence would be the last resort, and that was stressed," he said.⁹⁶ Harold Nelson also noted in his article on the organization, that its members attempted to defuse volatile situations, knowing that publicized black violence might undermine the nonviolent movement's moral position. Even T. Y. Rogers, despite his philosophical commitment to nonviolence, welcomed the group and frequently consulted with Mallisham and his men about movement tactics. Several members of the defense group became an integral part of TCAC's executive board. However, aware of SCLC's distaste even for defensive violence, neither the defense organization nor TCAC ever fully informed Dr. King and his aides of their sophisticated protective system.⁹⁷

Surprisingly, African Americans were not the only active opponents of the klan. While the defense squad fought the hooded terrorists with buckshot, Buford Boone, the white editor of the *Tuscaloosa News*, blasted the UKA with a barrage of verbal bullets. When TCAC launched its nonviolent campaign against segregation, Boone called for reason and moderation. He harshly criticized the UKA, in particular its leader Shelton, whom he mocked as "a sickly-looking, pitiable little man. . . ."⁹⁸ Rather than take the law into their own hands, the white editor argued, klansmen should let local police preserve law and order.⁹⁹ James Frazier, the president of the WCAC, was the first to attack Boone for his stance. Whites, Frazier said at a meeting on 16 July, needed to "stick together" in their fight against "outside and local agitators."¹⁰⁰ Boone's editorials undoubtedly undermined this goal. But Frazier's criticism remained confined to angry diatribes. Robert Shelton, on the other hand, sought revenge for the public humiliation, threatening Boone with financial ruin. On 24 July Shelton filed a \$500,000 libel lawsuit against Boone and the *Tuscaloosa*

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News.¹⁰¹ After a four-year legal battle, a jury awarded Shelton a mere \$500 in punitive damages.¹⁰²

THE BUS BOYCOTT AND THE MOVEMENT'S DECLINE

The controversy between the combative editor and Shelton indicated that the white community was far from united in the fight against desegregation. The local black freedom movement, on the other hand, was stronger than ever before. By the end of July, a majority of African Americans stood behind TCAC, with students and the unemployed still at the forefront of civil rights insurgency. "It was basically the little people who broke Tuscaloosa wide open," Lepezia Rogers said later, acknowledging their contribution.¹⁰³ Neither jail nor economic reprisals could threaten this group. However, if young and poor people provided the manpower, the black middle-class and some white liberals provided the necessary funds. Teachers, principals, doctors, and white university professors still shied away from active participation, but contributed considerable amounts of money. Without these financial contributions, TCAC would have struggled to continue its voter registration drives and direct action campaigns.¹⁰⁴ Finally, working-class people like Mallisham assisted the movement by spending long and sleepless nights to protect their leaders. Without a doubt, the black movement had reached its peak.

In August 1964, TCAC used this unity to focus concentrated energy on ending discrimination on the city's bus lines. By that time, fifteen of Tuscaloosa's restaurants faced a federal civil rights suit for their policy of segregation. But on the buses, racial incidents continued. Although the bus company had agreed two years earlier to enforce integrated seating, black passengers who sat in front of the bus still faced discrimination and harassment. Frequently, bus drivers and white customers hurled racial slurs at African Americans and sometimes attacked them physically. As a result, TCAC announced on August 1st that the black community would boycott the bus line, unless the company's integration policy was made effective. The managers of the Druid City Transit, Inc. refused. Two days later, one white bus driver drew a .38 caliber pistol and fired in the direction of a black man, who allegedly had cursed the driver. This incident only reinforced people's impression that the white drivers never intended to change their treatment of African American passengers. In the following days, angry black teenagers pelted buses with bricks and bottles. But the bus company remained silent, which prompted TCAC to initiate the boycott on Monday, 10 August. Now, activists demanded an end to discrimination and the hiring of black bus drivers.¹⁰⁵ That night's mass meeting at First African Baptist Church was a demonstration of the community's strength. The large and confident crowd's first song was "If You Miss Me from the Back of the Bus."¹⁰⁶

The boycott was nearly one hundred percent effective within the African American community, cutting off the company's entire business within a few days. Like in Montgomery eight years earlier, TCAC sustained people's morale by organizing a system of "courtesy cars," which local African Americans used instead of the buses. After only three days of empty buses, the management laid off over twenty employees. Although the bus company now considered hiring black applicants, the Amalgamated Transit Union that represented the interests of the bus line's drivers refused to cooperate. Union officials argued that no white driver could be fired without a valid reason. Confronted with

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financial ruin and no prospect of resolving the impasse, company officials threw in the towel. On 10 November 1964, the Druid City Transit, Inc. surrendered its franchise to the Tuscaloosa City Commission.¹⁰⁷ The following months were difficult ones for TCAC because, among other things, the fleet of private cars that had replaced the buses strained the organization's finances. The situation forced T. Y. Rogers in late December to appeal to SCLC for direct financial assistance. But TCAC's perseverance paid off. On 12 April 1965 the new Tuscaloosa Transit, Co. resumed bus services with an integrated work force and a public policy of nondiscrimination. TCAC had officially ended its boycott the week before.¹⁰⁸

By that time, the local movement was past its zenith. TCAC had organized one last nonviolent demonstration on 12 March 1965, protesting the brutality against nonviolent demonstrators during SCLC's campaign in nearby Selma. That day, almost 1,200 African Americans marched from First African Baptist Church to downtown Tuscaloosa, singing the songs of the freedom movement. In stark contrast to the brutality against protesters the previous summer, police officers now blocked off the demonstrators' route, permitting them to walk in the center of the street. When the marchers reached downtown, the entire column halted, knelt down, and listened to the prayers of Rogers and other ministers.¹⁰⁹

The tranquil atmosphere that characterized the local movement's last demonstration reflected white residents' grudging acceptance of the inevitable. In February 1965, a white member of the biracial Tuscaloosa Committee for Human Rights observed that "[p]eople in Tuscaloosa seem ready to accept change at this time and are more open to reasonable negotiation."¹¹⁰ Indeed, hard-core white resistance had vanished. Even the integration of Tuscaloosa County's schools in September 1965 provoked no opposition. About one hundred black students quietly enrolled in four formerly all-white high schools without violent incidents.¹¹¹ In retrospect, the pace of racial change in Tuscaloosa was amazing. With the help of federal civil rights legislation, local African Americans' united determination had brought the entrenched white supremacist establishment to its knees in little more than one year.

Understandably, the movement lost momentum after this series of stunning victories. In 1966 TCAC made efforts to improve the pitiable plight of poor African Americans in Tuscaloosa's slum areas. But tackling the complex economic effects of segregation and discrimination proved difficult. In addition, remnants of Jim Crow remained, primarily in the city's white churches. In the 1970s some white congregations still refused to integrate their services.¹¹² Despite the city's peacefulness, the black defense organization took no chances. Armed men continued to protect the homes of both Rogers and Herzfeld until they left in 1967 and 1968, respectively. Only toward the end of the decade did the group finally disband. Rogers moved to Atlanta, where he focused on his new position as SCLC's director of affiliates. He remained the pastor of First African Baptist Church, but his departure further diminished local people's flagging enthusiasm for political activism.¹¹³ Only Joseph Mallisham remained interested in politics, running for the post of Tuscaloosa's Public Safety Commissioner in 1968 and again in 1972. Although he lost each time to a white candidate, his ambitions symbolized the new assertiveness of African Americans. In 1985 Mallisham finally won public office, becoming the first black County Commissioner ever elected in Tuscaloosa.¹¹⁴

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CONCLUSION

Looking back, one might ask why Tuscaloosa witnessed so little violence during the civil rights era. Compared with the bombings and brutal beatings that activists endured in Montgomery, Birmingham, and Selma, Tuscaloosa escaped the worst forms of racist terror. One reason could be that the local movement started after the state's wall of segregation had already begun to crumble. Seeing the changes that had already taken place in parts of the South, white residents might have believed that violent resistance was pointless. In hindsight, former black activists also note the role of police chief Marable, who after the June 9 demonstration was more willing to avert violence. Others speculated in subsequent interviews that the UKA's fairly limited campaign of intimidation stemmed from Robert Shelton's hesitancy to launch violence so close to the organization's headquarters.¹¹⁵

On the other hand, it is important to stress the role of the black community's defense organization in pacifying Tuscaloosa. It is very likely that klansmen hesitated to attack African Americans after the formation of the group, knowing that local civil rights activists would respond in kind. Joseph Mallisham was certain that his protective unit had not only thwarted white racist attempts to attack the local movement, but had also lessened tensions in the community.¹¹⁶ Asked by an interviewer why klan harassment diminished during 1964, he responded: "Because violence would have met violence, and they knew it."¹¹⁷ Thus, the story of the Tuscaloosa freedom movement serves as another example of the southern black struggle's innovative flexibility on the local level, where African Americans relied on God, Gandhi, and guns.

NOTES

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¹*New York Times*, 10 June 1964; *Tuscaloosa News*, 9 June 1964; Odessa Warrick, interview with Alan DeSantis, Tuscaloosa, AL, 6, July 1987, tape recording; Ruth Bolden, interview with Alan DeSantis, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 16 June 1987, tape recording; Rev. Willie Herzfeld, interview by Alan DeSantis, Tuscaloosa, AL, 12 August 1987, telephone, all in Alan DeSantis Collection (hereafter cited as DeSantis Collection), W. S. Hoole Special Collections Library (hereafter cited as HSCL), University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL; "7-8-76 Interview with Ms. Olivia Maniece, Librarian at the VA Hospital," Anthony J. Blasi Collection (hereafter cited as Blasi Collection), HSCL; Mrs. Palister, interview with Marsha Tompkins, Tuscaloosa, AL, 29 June 1964, tape recording, in possession of author; Harold A. Nelson, "The Defenders: A Case Study of an Informal Police Organization," *Social Problems* 15 (Fall 1967): 129.

²Marable quoted in *Tuscaloosa News*, 9 June 1964, 1.

³The actual course of events that day is not entirely clear. According to newspaper accounts, black students began to throw rocks, bricks, and even furniture at the police. However, those who participated in the demonstrations denied these accusations in subsequent interviews. They assert that the students only threw back objects that were hurled into the church by police. Others recalled breaking the church's windows only after the beginning of the tear gas attack to let in fresh air. My account of the events is based on *New York Times*, 10 June 1964; *Tuscaloosa News*, June 9 and 10, 1964; Odessa Warrick interview; Willie Herzfeld, interview with Alan Desantis; Nathaniel Howard, Jr., interview with Alan Desantis, Tuscaloosa, AL, 29 June 1987, tape recording; Olivia Maniece, interview with Alan DeSantis, Tuscaloosa, AL, 24 June 1987, tape recording, both in Desantis Collection; T. Y. Rogers, interview with Harvey Burg, Tuscaloosa, AL, Summer 1964, transcript, 44;

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Harvey Burg, "Interviews with People Who Witnessed or Were Victimized on June 9th," transcript, 8, 22, 26–27, 37–39, 61–63, 76–79, both in 1964 Civil Rights Movement in Tuscaloosa, Alabama Collection (hereafter cited as Tuscaloosa Collection), Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, New York City; E. G. Williams, interview with Marsha Tompkins, Tuscaloosa, AL, 29 June 1964, tape recording, in possession of author.

⁴Ruth Bolden interview; Rev. David Gordon, interview with Alan DeSantis, 28 July 1987, Tuscaloosa, AL, tape recording, DeSantis Collection; Joseph Mallisham, interview with the author, 22 March 2002, Tuscaloosa, AL, tape recording, in possession of author; Alvin Adams, "Shadow of Montgomery Bus Boycott Falls on Tuscaloosa," *Jet Magazine*, 3 September 1964, 8–9; Nelson, "The Defenders," 130; *Tuscaloosa News*, 10 June 1964.

⁵Mallisham, interview by author, 22 March 2002; Mallisham quoted in Nelson, "The Defenders," 131.

⁶*Ibid.*; Mike Williams, "Smiles and Guns: The Fragile Sensitivity of Race Relations in the South," Honors Thesis, Department of American Studies, Amherst College, 1978, 127; *New York Times*, 13 June 1964.

⁷Only one sociological study has examined the city's freedom struggle beyond 1963. See Anthony J. Blasi, *Segregationist Violence and Civil Rights Movements in Alabama* (Washington, DC, 1980). The standard work on the desegregation of the University of Alabama is E. Culpepper Clark, *The Schoolhouse Door: Segregation's Last Stand at the University of Alabama* (New York, 1993).

⁸On Robert Williams and the Monroe movement, see Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1999); Craig S. Pascoe, "The Monroe Rifle Club: Finding Justice in an 'Ungodly and Social Jungle Called Dixie,'" in *Lethal Imagination: Violence and Brutality in American History*, 393–424, ed. Michael A. Bellesiles (New York, 1999), 395–424. On the Deacons for Defense and Justice, see Christopher B. Strain, "'We Walked Like Men': The Deacons for Defense and Justice," *Louisiana History* 38 (Winter 1997): 43–62. On defense efforts in Mississippi, see Akinyele O. Umoja, "'We Will Shoot Back': The Natchez Model and Paramilitary Organization in the Mississippi Freedom Movement," *Journal of Black Studies* 32 (January 2002): 271–94; Akinyele O. Umoja, "1964: The Beginning of the End of Nonviolence in the Mississippi Freedom Movement," *Radical History Review* 85 (Winter 2003): 201–26.

⁹Clark, *The Schoolhouse Door*, xii; Herbert Shapiro, *White Violence and Black Response: From Reconstruction to Montgomery* (Amherst, MA, 1988), 224–25; Glenn Feldman, *Politics, Society, and the Klan in Alabama, 1915–1949* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 1999), 253, 251–52, 292–93.

¹⁰Clark, *The Schoolhouse Door*, 57, 71–77.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 78; "6-29-76 Interview with Robert Glynn"; "June 17, 1976 Interview with Rev. T. W. Linton," both in Blasi Collection; Nathaniel Howard, Jr. interview and Ruth Bolden interview; Rev. David Gordon, interview with Alan Desantis, Tuscaloosa, AL, 28 July 1987, tape recording, Desantis Collection.

¹²Juan Williams, *Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary* (New York, 1998), 248–49; Clark, *The Schoolhouse Door*, 87, 99, 102.

¹³L. V. Hall, interview with Alan Desantis, June 23, 1987, Tuscaloosa, AL, tape recording, Desantis Collection; Nathaniel Howard, Jr. interview.

¹⁴It is unknown whether Sheeley remained in the South. L. V. Hall interview; "6-25-76 Interview with Joe Mallisham," Blasi Collection; Mallisham, interview by author, 22 March 2002; "7-8-76 Interview with Ms. Olivia Maniece," Blasi Collection; McDonald Hughes interview with Alan Desantis, Tuscaloosa, AL, 22 June 1987, tape recording, Desantis Collection. On the importance of status among the black middle-class in the 1950s, see E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie: The Rise of a New Middle Class in the United States* (1957; reprinted New York, 1962), 162–95.

¹⁵Rev. T. W. Linton, interview by Alan Desantis, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 22 July 1987, tape recording, Desantis Collection.

¹⁶*Tuscaloosa News*, 5 May 1962, and 20 February 2000; Millie German, interview with Harvey Burg, Tuscaloosa, AL, Summer 1964, transcript, 1–5, Tuscaloosa Collection; Adams, "Shadow of Montgomery Bus Boycott Falls on Tuscaloosa," 8–9; Rev. Dr. Will L. Herzfeld to Anthony J. Blasi, 2 July 1976, Blasi Collection.

¹⁷"June 17, 1976 Interview with Rev. T. W. Linton," Blasi Collection; Willie L. Herzfeld, interview with Harvey Burg, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Summer 1964, transcript, 8–10; Herzfeld, interview with Desantis.

¹⁸Herzfeld, interview by Burg, 17–19.

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- ¹⁹Ibid., 23; Mallisham, interview by author, 22 March 2002.
- ²⁰Mallisham, interview by Desantis; Rev. E. J. James, interview with Alan Desantis, Northport, Alabama, 23 July 1987, tape recording, Desantis Collection.
- ²¹Robert M. Mikell, *They Say—Blood on My Hands: The Story of Robert M. Shelton, Imperial Wizard of the United Klans of America* (Huntsville, AL, 1966), 7–26, 49; Harold H. Martin and Kenneth Fairly, "We Got Nothing to Hide," *Saturday Evening Post*, 30 January 1965, 29; Wynyn Craig Wade, *The Fiery Cross: The Ku Klux Klan in America* (New York, 1987), 313.
- ²²Wade, *The Fiery Cross*, 305–6, 309. For a history of the White Citizens Councils, see Neil R. McMillen, *The Citizens' Council: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction, 1954–1964* (Urbana, IL, 1971).
- ²³Wade, *The Fiery Cross*, 254.
- ²⁴Arnold Forster and Benjamin R. Epstein, "Report on the Ku Klux Klan," published by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, New York, 7, Buford Boone Papers, box 255, folder 8, HSCL; Mikell, *They Say—Blood on My Hands*, 50; Wade, *The Fiery Cross*, 313, 315; Dan Carter, *A Politics of Rage: George Wallace, The Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1995), 140.
- ²⁵Carter, *A Politics of Rage*, 130–31.
- ²⁶Ibid., 146–151; Clark, *The Schoolhouse Door*, 225.
- ²⁷Herzfeld, interview with Desantis; Odessa Warrick, interview with Alan Desantis, Tuscaloosa, AL, 6 July 1987, tape recording, Desantis Collection; Olivia Maniece interview; Mallisham, interview with Desantis.
- ²⁸Rev. T. W. Linton, interview.
- ²⁹Herzfeld, interview with DeSantis; Herzfeld, interview by Burg, 23.
- ³⁰T. Y. Rogers, interview with Burg, 2–8; Lepezia Rogers, interview with DeSantis; Adams, "Shadow of Montgomery Bus Boycott Falls on Tuscaloosa," 8–9. On Leon Sullivan and his boycott campaign in Philadelphia, see Leon H. Sullivan, *Moving Mountains: The Principles and Purposes of Leon Sullivan* (Valley Forge, CO, 1998), 11–24.
- ³¹Herzfeld, interview with DeSantis.
- ³²Ibid., 10–11; Herzfeld, interview with Burg, 22.
- ³³Lepezia Rogers interview; Nathaniel Howard, Jr. interview.
- ³⁴Willie Herzfeld, interview with DeSantis.
- ³⁵T. Y. Rogers, interview with Burg, 12–13.
- ³⁶Ibid., 16; Herzfeld, interview with Burg, 25.
- ³⁷Ibid., 16.
- ³⁸*Tuscaloosa News*, 5 March 1964.
- ³⁹Adams, "Shadow of Montgomery Bus Boycott Fall on Tuscaloosa," 9; Rogers, interview with Burg.
- ⁴⁰George LeMaistre, interview by Harvey Burg, August 1964, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, transcript, 8–9, Tuscaloosa Collection; Wallace quoted in Carter, *Politics of Rage*, 11.
- ⁴¹*Tuscaloosa News*, 16 & 17 April 1964; Rogers, interview with Burg.
- ⁴²Rev. E. J. James, interview by Alan DeSantis, Northport Alabama, 23 July 1987, tape recording, DeSantis Collection; T. Y. Rogers, interview with Burg, 23, 14–15.
- ⁴³T. Y. Rogers, interview with Burg, 17.
- ⁴⁴*Tuscaloosa News*, 22 April 1964.
- ⁴⁵Ibid., *Tuscaloosa News*, 23 April 1964; T. Y. Rogers, interview with Burg, 24–26.
- ⁴⁶*Tuscaloosa News*, 24 April 1964, 2.
- ⁴⁷*Tuscaloosa News*, 28 April 1964, 1, 2.
- ⁴⁸Odessa Warrick, interview; Nathaniel Howard, Jr. interview; Herzfeld, interview with Burg, 31.
- ⁴⁹*Tuscaloosa News*, 5 May 1964, 1, 2.
- ⁵⁰T. Y. Rogers to Andrew J. Young, 27 May 1964, Southern Christian Leadership Conference Papers (hereafter cited as SCLC Papers), microfilm; part 4, reel 4, frame 00171, copy at Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Edwina Smith to T. Y. Rogers [n.d.], SCLC Papers, microfilm, part 4, reel 4, frame

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- 00175; Andrew J. Young to Wiley Branton, 3 June 1964, SCLC Papers, microfilm, part 4, reel 3, frame 00435.
- ⁵¹*Tuscaloosa News*, 12 May 1964, 2; Olivia Maniece, interview; Nathaniel Howard, Jr. interview; Ruth Bolden interview; Herzfeld, interview with DeSantis.
- ⁵²*Tuscaloosa News*, 19 & 20 May 1964.
- ⁵³T. Y. Rogers, interview with Burg, 28; Lepezia Rogers interview.
- ⁵⁴Rev. E. J. James interview; Adams, "Shadow of Montgomery Bus Boycott Falls on Tuscaloosa," 8; T. Y. Rogers, interview by Burg, 7; *Tuscaloosa News*, 22 April 1964, 2.
- ⁵⁵Ruth Bolden interview.
- ⁵⁶*Ibid.*
- ⁵⁷T. Y. Rogers, interview with Burg, 43; *Tuscaloosa News*, 5, 6, & 8 June 1964.
- ⁵⁸*New York Times*, 20 June 1964.
- ⁵⁹*Tuscaloosa News*, 20 February 2000; Ruth Bolden interview.
- ⁶⁰Rev. David Gordon interview.
- ⁶¹Adams, "Shadow of Montgomery Bus Boycott Falls on Tuscaloosa," 8; Nelson, "The Defenders," 130.
- ⁶²Mallisham, interview with the author, 22 March 2002.
- ⁶³Nelson, "The Defenders," 130.
- ⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 131, Mallisham, interview with the author, 22 March 2002; Williams, "Smiles and Guns," 127; Mallisham, interview with DeSantis.
- ⁶⁵Williams, "Smiles and Guns," 121–22; Joyce Mahan, "Alberta Brown Murphy," in *A Collection of Biographies of Women Who Made a Difference in Alabama*, ed. Miriam Abigail Toffel (Birmingham, AL, 1995), 106; Rev. David Gordon interview; "6-25-76 Interview with Joe Mallisham."
- ⁶⁶Nelson, "The Defenders," 131–33.
- ⁶⁷Mallisham, interviews with the author, 19 & 22 March 2002 ; tape recording, in possession of author; Nelson, "The Defenders," 146.
- ⁶⁸Lepezia Rogers interview; *New York Times*, 13 June 1964.
- ⁶⁹L. V. Hall interview; Mallisham, interview with author, 22 March 2002;
- ⁷⁰*New York Times*, 11 June 1964.
- ⁷¹Nathaniel Howard, Jr. interview.
- ⁷²Olivia Maniece interview; Ruth Bolden interview; Mallisham, interview with DeSantis.
- ⁷³"7-9-76 Interview [with] Martha O'Rourke, Head Librarian, Stillman College," Blasi Collection; Olivia Maniece, interview.
- ⁷⁴Mallisham, interview with DeSantis; Herzfeld, interview with DeSantis.
- ⁷⁵*Ibid.*
- ⁷⁶Rev. T. W. Linton interview; Lepezia Rogers interview.
- ⁷⁷Mahan, "Alberta Brown Murphy," 104–7; Alberta Murphy, interview with Alan DeSantis, Tuscaloosa, AL, 4 August 1987, tape recording, DeSantis Collection.
- ⁷⁸Mallisham quoted in Mahan, "Alberta Brown Murphy," 108.
- ⁷⁹"6-25-76 Interview with Joe Mallisham"; Mallisham, interview with author, 22 March 2002; Nelson, "The Defenders," 128–29. Published only three years after the founding of the defense group, Nelson's article used pseudonyms for both Tuscaloosa and Joseph Mallisham to protect black activists against possible repercussions from the white community.
- ⁸⁰Nancy T. Ammerman, "The Civil Rights Movement and the Clergy in a Southern Community," *Sociological Analysis* 41 (Winter 1980): 340; Mallisham, interview with DeSantis.
- ⁸¹"7-2-76 Interview with Professor Jay Murphy of the University of Alabama Law School," Blasi Collection.
- ⁸²James Jaquith, interview with Harvey Burg, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Summer 1964, transcript, 29, Tuscaloosa Collection.
- ⁸³*Tuscaloosa News*, 12 & 122 June 1964.
- ⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 26 June and 1 July 1964.
- ⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 28 June 1964.

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- ⁸⁶Ibid., 1 July 1964; "United We Stand," leaflet, Buford Boone Papers, box 255, folder 9.
- ⁸⁷*Tuscaloosa News*, 5, 6, & 8, July 1964.
- ⁸⁸Ibid., 9 July 1964.
- ⁸⁹Nelson, "The Defenders," 135; Mallisham, interview with author, 22 March 2002; Mallisham, interview with DeSantis.
- ⁹⁰*Tuscaloosa News*, 10 July 1964; Mallisham, interview with DeSantis; Mallisham, interview with author, 22 March 2002; *Tuscaloosa News*, 11 July 1964.
- ⁹¹*Tuscaloosa News*, 10, 12, & 23 July 1964.
- ⁹²Nelson, "The Defenders," 135.
- ⁹³Unidentified to Eric Kindberry, 15 July 1964, SCLC Papers, microfilm, part 4, reel 8, frame 00941.
- ⁹⁴Unidentified SCLC worker interviewed by Marsha Tompkins during interview with E. G. Williams.
- ⁹⁵Harvey Burg, "Interview with Four SCLC Leaders Who Came to Assist Tuscaloosa Movement and Were Arrested 11 June 1964," transcript, 12, Tuscaloosa Collection.
- ⁹⁶Williams, "Smiles and Guns," 128; Nelson, "The Defenders," 144; Mallisham, interview with author, 22 March 2002.
- ⁹⁷Nelson, "The Defenders," 138, 140.
- ⁹⁸Ibid., 9 June, 7 & 9 July 1964.
- ⁹⁹Ibid., 7 & 8 July 1964.
- ¹⁰⁰Ibid., 10 July 1964; Frazier quoted in *Tuscaloosa News*, 16 July 1964, 3.
- ¹⁰¹Ibid., 25 July 1964.
- ¹⁰²Ibid., 18 July 1964; Jones, McEachin, Ormond & Fulton to Larry Worral, 20 September 1968, Boone Papers, box 156, folder 1.
- ¹⁰³Rev. David Gordon interview; Olivia Maniece interview; Lepezia Rogers interview.
- ¹⁰⁴Ruth Bolden, interview; McDonald Hughes, interview; Mallisham, interview with author, 22 March 2002; Odessa Warrick, interview; Rev. E. J. James interview; L. V. Hall interview.
- ¹⁰⁵Adams, "Shadow of Montgomery Bus Boycott Falls on Tuscaloosa," 8; Millie German, interview with Burg, 5; *Tuscaloosa News*, 3, 4, & 12 August 1964; T. Y. Rogers, interview with Burg.
- ¹⁰⁶Harvey Burg, "Mass Meeting taped by Harvey Burg, 10 August 1964, Tuscaloosa, Alabama," Tuscaloosa Collection.
- ¹⁰⁷*Tuscaloosa News*, 14 August 1964; "7-8-76 Interview with Ms. Olivia Maniece, Librarian at the VA Hospital," Blasi Collection; *Tuscaloosa News*, 18 August, 12 September, & 10 November 1964.
- ¹⁰⁸T. Y. Rogers to C. T. Vivian, 23 December 1964, SCLC Papers, microfilm, part 2, reel 17, frame 00132; *Tuscaloosa News*, 23 May 1965, 1, 2; T. Y. Rogers to Barbara H. Suarez, April 21, 1965, SCLC Papers, microfilm, part 3, reel 1, frame 00948.
- ¹⁰⁹*Tuscaloosa News*, 13 March 1965.
- ¹¹⁰"Editorial Comments," *TCHR* [Tuscaloosa Committee for Human Rights] *Newsletter*, February 1965, Alabama Pamphlet Collection, Vertical File, HSCL.
- ¹¹¹*Tuscaloosa News*, 15 August, 7 & 15 September 1965.
- ¹¹²"Tuscaloosa Citizens for Action Committee," [1966], SCLC Papers, microfilm, part 4, reel 19, frame 710; Blasi, *Segregationist Violence and Civil Rights Movements in Tuscaloosa*, 130-32.
- ¹¹³Mallisham, interview with author, 22 March 2002; David Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York, 1988), 548. Rogers' career as SCLC activists ended abruptly in 1971, when he was killed in a car accident in Atlanta. See *Tuscaloosa News*, 26 March 1971.
- ¹¹⁴Mallisham, interview with author, 19 March 2002; Mallisham, interview with DeSantis; Williams, "Smiles and Guns," 120; *Tuscaloosa News*, February 20, 2000.
- ¹¹⁵Nathaniel Howard, Jr. interview; Rev. Frank Davis, interview with Alan DeSantis, Tuscaloosa, AL, 12 August 1987, tape recording, DeSantis Collection.
- ¹¹⁶Nelson, "The Defenders," 144; Williams, "Smiles and Guns," 127.
- ¹¹⁷Mallisham, interview with DeSantis.