NEWS FROM

NAACP

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NAACP URGES FEDERAL ACTION
ON VIOLENCE IN MISSISSIPPI

August 18, 1955

NEW YORK, Aug. 18.--The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People today urged the U.S.Department of Justice to investigate a murder which occurred in Mississippi on Aug. 13 to determine whether the Negro victim was shot "as a result of a conspiracy against his exercise of the right to vote."

The request was embodied in a letter dispatched to Attorney General Herbert Brownell, and signed by Thurgood Marshall, NAACP special counsel.

An NAACP investigation of the killing has disclosed that the murdered man, Lamar Smith of Caseyville, Miss., "had received several threats on his life if he did not slow down on his political activities," the letter relates.

Mr. Smith "had been very active in the political circles of Lincoln County," the message points out. He was a registered voter and exercised his voting rights in the Mississippi Aug. 2 primary.

The letter says that Mr. Smith "was shot Saturday morning, Aug. 13...on the Court House lawn of the Lincoln County site, and in spite of the large number of persons who normally congregate there on every Saturday, the officials have not been able to locate one person who saw the incident."

Today's letter was the latest in a series of requests on the part of the NAACP for federal action on a worsening racial situation in Mississippi. That state has been described by Association officials in recent months as "a jungle of race hatred and terror."

Federal action regarding Mississippi first was requested by the NAACP in May after a Negro minister in Belzoni, Miss., was shot and killed following a warning to remove his name from the list of regis-