

AN URGENT MESSAGE FROM NEW YORK SNCC

July, 1967

Dear Friend:

This is a special and urgent report for residents of New York State, from the New York Office of SNCC.

This report contains information which has not appeared in the major media of the press.

This report concerns matters of particular concern and immediacy to you as a supporter of SNCC and its activities, and as a New York resident.

This report is primarily to inform. Knowledge is power; knowledge also calls for action. We ask you to join us in our concern about two current issues which are far less dramatic than recent events in Newark, N.J., but no less significant in their own way:

1. Longstanding racist personnel practices by the Chase Manhattan Bank, already notorious for its large-scale support of the South African economy. As you may know, this is the bank whose President--David Rockefeller--is the brother of New York's Governor. For months, the New York Human Rights Commission has sought to investigate charges of discrimination at the bank. Recently, the bank fired nine black employees within an hour and a half--for complaining of injustice. New York SNCC and other groups have undertaken to support their struggle.
2. The continuing effort to destroy SNCC has been further evidenced by the case of "The TSU Five": five SNCC-affiliated black students at Texas Southern University stand falsely accused of murdering a Texas patrolman. They face trial in Texas on July 25, when the District Attorney is expected to ask the death penalty.

Because of such developments, the New York Office of SNCC recently issued an appeal to the African and Asian Missions to the United Nations on the grounds that racism in this country is a matter of international--not merely domestic--concern.

Details on all these events will be found when you turn the page. We ask you to read the enclosed report and to do whatever you can to support the Chase Manhattan group as well as The TSU Five--they must not die! Suggestions for concrete action are given.

Needless to say, SNCC itself needs support so that it can continue to lend organizational aid in such crises as these. If you wish to send a contribution for SNCC at this time, it will be much appreciated. A reply envelope is enclosed.*

Yours sincerely,

James Forman

James Forman
Director, New York Office

* You will note that this is not the usual reply envelope. Because of the urgency of the cases described in this letter, and the urgency of our need, we have used a supply of envelopes already on hand. We urge you to send more than the \$1.00 requested on that envelope.

RACISM AT CHASE MANHATTAN BANK

The Chase Manhattan Bank is a pillar of the South African economy and thus of the apartheid system by which 3 million whites keep 12 million black people in misery and degradation. In 1961, Chase Manhattan extended \$10 million in loans to the South African government, thus helping to rescue a tottering economy. Chase has also invested millions in various South African enterprises and continues to do so. Its declared position on these investments is that they are profitable (as indeed they are, thanks to semi-slave black labor). So business is business--while millions of human beings are oppressed with an inhumanity unique in our world today.

But Chase Manhattan does not merely support apartheid. It also practices it--right here in New York!

THE FACTS

1. At least as early as 1966, black employees at Chase Manhattan have experienced discrimination and sought to lodge complaints about it. On several occasions, they went to the Personnel Office to complain but before they could report their charges, their supervisors learned of their intentions and pressured the employees into leaving their jobs.
2. On March 22-23, 1967, seven black male and five female employees at the bank's main office (1 Chase Manhattan Plaza) filed complaints with the New York City Human Rights Commission charging their supervisors with discriminatory practices in the areas of job-related training and schooling; promotions and advancement opportunities; distribution of workloads.
3. While awaiting the Commission's investigation, black employees repeatedly sought to meet with high-ranking bank officials (above the Personnel Office level) and were turned down. Those blacks who filed complaints and others friendly to them became the victims of even more intensified discrimination, intimidation, constant surveillance, vicious remarks and even pressured resignations by bank authorities.

It should be noted here that the Personnel Department assists in the injustices committed by white supervisors. Rather than deal with complaints, it tries to find justification in an employee's records for firing the person or for accepting his resignation too readily. The records are compiled by the racist supervisors themselves and therefore loaded with excuses to conceal injustices.

4. Early in May, Mr. Jackie Robinson, Special Consultant on Urban Affairs, was informed of the deplorable situation; he, in turn, informed Chase Manhattan's President David Rockefeller, who promised to conduct an investigation. No evidence of such an investigation has ever been manifested.
5. Attempts by the Human Rights Commission to bring the complainants and Bank officials to a friendly conference table failed when the Bank refused to attend. The Commission was thus forced to subpoena the responsible Bank officials to a conference on June 6, 1967. The Bank's representation at that conference was so pathetic that, at one point in the discussion, the Commission's attorney told the senior official, "I would like to inform you that some of your replies to these people's questions are way out in left field!"
6. On June 26, a black employee was discharged from the Bank. Eight others spoke up in his defense, calling the dismissal unfair. One by one, they in turn were discharged and told to leave the premises immediately. Nine black men, most of whom have wives and children, lost their jobs in less than one hour and a half.
7. The employees and their supporters have formed the Organization for Self-Improvement to fight for their rights, and have appealed again to the Human Rights Commission. Meanwhile black employees continue to be abused, harassed, intimidated and fired.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

1. Write to:
Mr. Robert A. Wallace, Assistant Treasury Secretary
Department of Treasury of the United States
Washington, D.C.

He has the power to recall federal funds from Chase Manhattan. Demand that he do so.

2. If you have an account with Chase Manhattan, close it immediately with a letter explaining that you do not wish them to have your money for their use in supporting racism here and abroad.

FIVE SNCC MEMBERS CHARGED WITH MURDER

In Texas, home of President Johnson and U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, five SNCC-affiliated black students at Texas Southern University have been charged with the murder of a white patrolman!

John Parker, 20
Trazawell Franklin, Jr., 20
Charles Freeman, 18
Floyd Nichols, 25
Douglas Wayne Waller, 21

The facts clearly indicate the guilt of the Houston police force and the innocence of the five youths:

On Tuesday, May 16, 1967, on the TSU campus, Houston police arrested Douglas Waller, a TSU student recently returned from service in Vietnam, when he refused to move on after being ordered to do so.

Minutes later, 500 police armed with rifles, machine guns, shotguns and dogs invaded the campus and surrounded two dormitories.

A few angry students responded to this blatant show of white armed force with firecrackers and pellets.

Police retaliated at once by emptying some 5,000 rounds of ammunition into the buildings, wounding several of the hundreds of students trapped inside.

Ordered to "go in there and clean out this mess," the 500 cops charged the dormitories, shooting wildly as they ran. They were in each other's way; young rookies who had never seen real danger panicked. One policeman shot another; one went berserk and was taken away in a state of shock.

During this massive assault, Patrolman Louis Kuba was killed.

Inside the dormitories police tore down doors, brutally beat students, wrecked everything in sight: University-owned furniture, students' radios and other property, even the sewing machine of a dormitory house mother, Mrs. Mattye Herbert, whom they also kicked and trampled.

Police herded all the dorm residents outside and forced them to lie face down on the cold, wet ground. Many were clad only in shorts. Then they arrested all 487 students and herded them into vans, beating and cursing them on the way to jail.

On June 3, 1967, a grand jury indicted five students for Kuba's murder, despite the fact that: (1) intensive search did not produce the murder weapon in the possession of any student; (2) Kuba was shot on the side of a building that had no windows or doors from which anyone could have fired.

The trial is scheduled for July 25. Houston's District Attorney will reportedly ask for the death penalty.

The arrest of these men, all of whom are militant and outspoken leaders in Houston, is clearly a racist attempt to intimidate other militants and silence the rage of the black community. It is also clearly an attempt to destroy the Friends of SNCC chapter at TSU, to which the five youths belonged.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Have your organization, church or social group reproduce this information and distribute it.
2. Inform President Johnson and Attorney General Clark in your own way that you are concerned about The TSU Five and the brutality in their home state.
3. Encourage black men not to fight in Vietnam when their struggle is in the United States.

THE TSU FIVE--THEY MUST NOT DIE!

SNCC APPEALS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

On June 12, 1967, prompted by a series of recent outrages such as those described here, the following statement was sent to all African and Asian Missions to the United Nations:

"We reject the position of the United States government that intolerable racism in the United States is a purely domestic concern. We find this claim as hypocritical as the claim of the racist government of South Africa that its suppression of the human rights of 12,000,000 Africans is an internal matter, or a similar claim by the government of Portugal. Such claims are typical of colonial powers. We maintain that unwarranted and brutal suppression of black people in the United States is a matter of international concern. We are therefore addressing to you an appeal for your moral support, in the form of direct and indirect pressure upon that government which loudly proclaims its concern for the freedom of the Vietnamese people yet will not guarantee basic human rights to black people in this country. We make this appeal in the spirit of SNCC's declaration, made formal in May, 1967, that it is a Human Rights Organization concerned with human rights not only in the United States but throughout the world."

SNCC thereby affirmed, in the spirit of the late Malcolm X, that it is not merely a "civil rights organization" concerned with the implementation of local law, but a group working for basic human rights spelled out by the United Nations and its agencies. SNCC sees black people in this country as standing in a colonial relationship to White Power; an internal colony in many ways similar to the external colonies of Europe. Therefore it has turned to others around the world for aid and, in turn, has promised its support where possible and appropriate to the liberation struggles against colonialism, racism and economic exploitation.

But SNCC's new international emphasis will be meaningless if it does not also do the job at home--work to defeat racism right here. It will therefore continue to build its political, social and economic programs with emphasis on independent political organizing as in Mississippi this summer; its anti-draft program; its campus organizing program.

It will therefore support such struggles as that of the Chase Manhattan group and the TSU Five. It invites your support also.

MAKE YOUR PROTEST NOW LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD NOW !

Excerpt from Statement Given by a Texas Southern Student

"I went to bed....When I woke up, two large German Shepherd police dogs were in the bed with me; one was tearing at the mattress and the other was biting me on the leg. I thought I was having a bad dream. I kicked the dog, and suddenly somebody hit me with a billy club and this white policeman said: "Get up nigger, and get downstairs." When I got up, he hit me with the stick and knocked me down, and the dog jumped on me again. Finally, I went behind my desk and got to the door; when I reached the door, they hit me again with the stick. When I got to the end of the hall, they hit me across the head with the stick. Then they kicked me down the stairs (I was on the second floor); when I got to the bottom of the stairs, he said, "Put your hands behind your head, nigger." Then he hit me again across the head with the night stick. When I reached the outside door, he hit me across the forehead with the stick; that's when the skin broke open and blood started gushing everywhere. They first made me sit down; then they came back through beating at people on the ground, saying, "Turn over, nigger, get on your face." Then they took us off to the jail. It was like a nightmare; they were just waiting to shoot somebody."