

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:

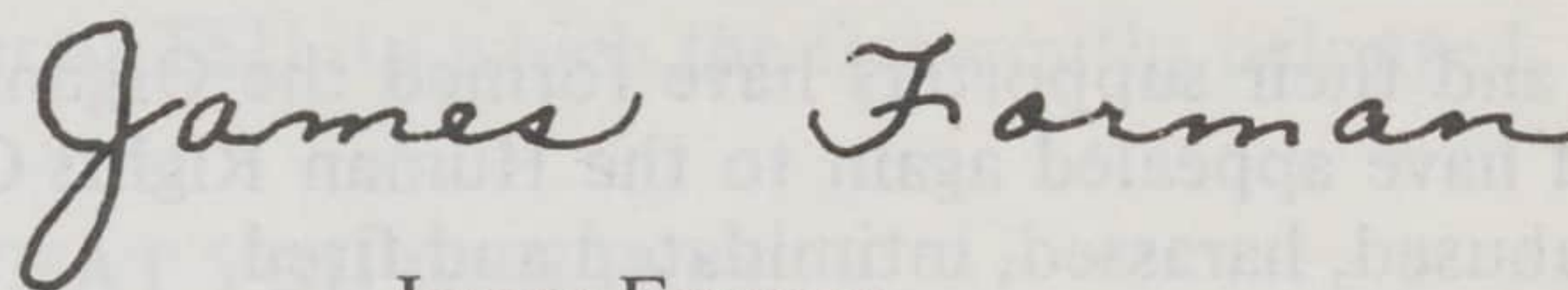
1. Longstanding racist personnel practices by the Chase Manhattan Bank, already notorious for its large-scale support of the South African economy. As you may know, this is the bank whose President—David Rockefeller—is the brother of New York's Governor. For months, the New York Human Rights Commission 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
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.