

620 West 189 Street
New York 40, N. Y.
19 January 1963

Dear Faith,

Reading your letter about the advance of "democracy" in Georgia was a revelation for me, and I am certain that as it gets passed around, it will have a similar impact upon my colleagues. I don't believe that the absence of newspapers here has anything to do with the absence of feeling about the matters you have discussed. It's simply that there doesn't appear to be anything that will move New Yorkers. They have sunk into a torpor from which nothing has been able to stir them, and their separation from reality appears to be complete. There is also a kind of delight, too, in hearing that a public official has been caught with his hand in the till, or otherwise betraying his trust. There may be some people whose consciences will be stirred by what has been happening all over the United States during the past few years, but these have been persons whose feelings have been involved in matters of concern for many years past. Their commitment is nothing new.

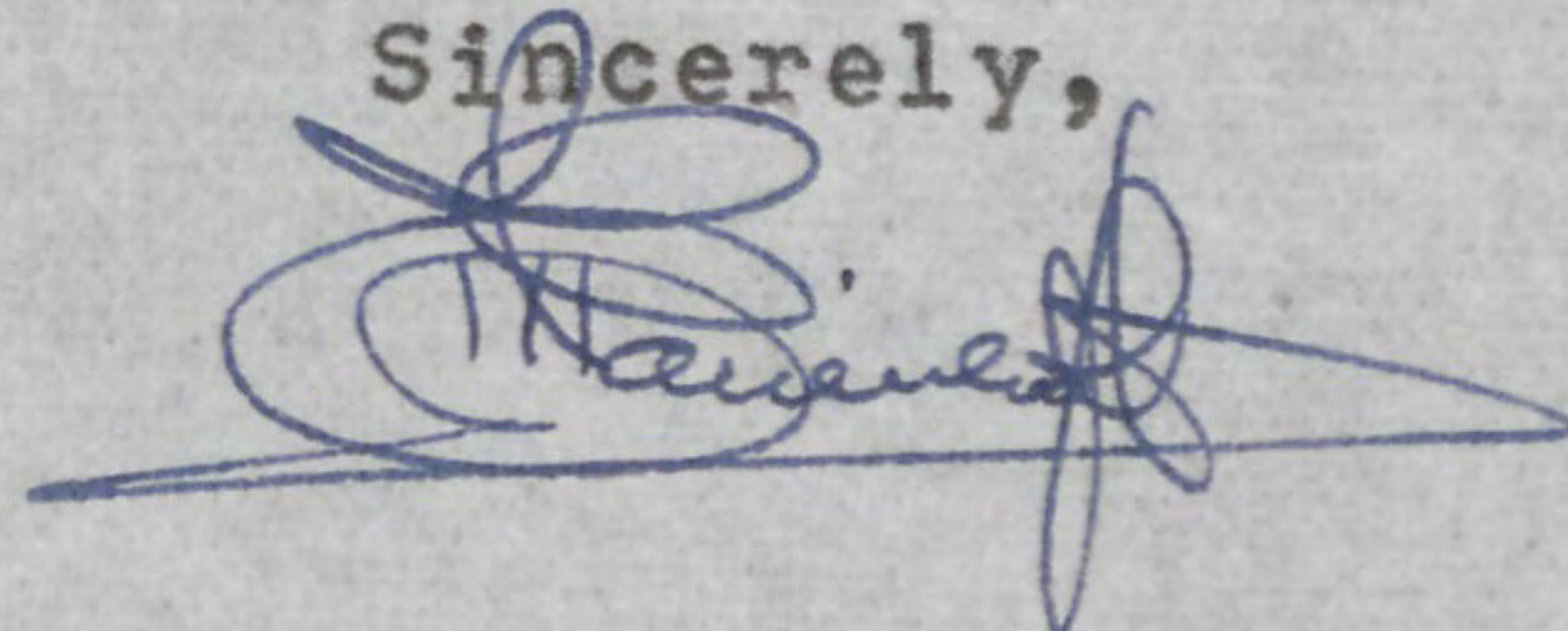
By and large the overwhelming majority of our fellow citizens don't care, except about themselves. I read James Bladwin's article in the New Yorker recently, and although I was disturbed by the tone and his approach, he really hasn't said anything different from what Myrdal wrote almost a score of years ago. The pressure of time and circumstance lend all the current writing a kind of poignancy that the "old stuff" didn't have, but there is nothing really new about the anger or the ambition. Nor is there anything different about the operations of the adversaries of freedom; they are the same everywhere, in Georgia or in Nazi Germany. Terror and intimidation have never been exclusive weapons indigenous to one country or one time, as I am certain you know. What is ironic is that Richard Russell

should be defending freedom of debate in the current Senate filibuster and nobody has introduced the gentle element of what has been going on in his home state in the name of states rights. But then hypocrisy is not peculiar to this time and this country; hypocrites have been a part of humanity ever since ancient Greece. The pity of it is that their dissembling is given status in the Congress of the United States.

TV reports indicate that the Attorney General has personally argued the case of Georgia redistricting before the US Supreme Court, and that the Department of Justice will be pressing indictments in voting cases elsewhere. These rate as good signs, and there are others. Progress is slow and painful, but it is refreshing to hear the students at Clemson College indicate that they have learned something from the episode at Oxford and that they are determined not to repeat the tragedy on their campus. I used to be cynical enough to believe that all education was wasted on the South, but this interview on CBS has made me doubt that. I hope that I am not snatching at straws to justify inertia, although I realize that the latter is characteristic of the attitudes here, and all over the United States.

It was good to hear from you; it goes without saying that I wish you well in all that you do. I hope, too, that there will be more powerful allies for you than prayerful hopes. Perhaps the enclosed check can help to defray the cost of some telephone calls to encourage people to get to that registration office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be "Martin Luther King Jr.", written over a horizontal line.