Dear Colleague:

The Civil Rights Department desires to enlist your active co-operation in four lines of work to which it will mainly devote itself this year. These four lines of work are: 1. Securing the enactment of an effective Civil Rights Bill in each of the Northern States. 2. The organization in each of the Northern States of some sort of machine, like the Constitutional League, to be composed mainly of persons not members of the Movement. 3. To improve traveling accommodations on local carriers in the South. 4. To force the service of colored men on grand and petit juries in the Southern States.

The work of this Department will have to be done very largely by the Movement as a whole. The effectiveness of the work attempted will, therefore, depend upon the amount of co-operation which we secure. We offer the following ideas, briefly stated, to guide you in your efforts to help us:

1. Discrimination in places of public accommodation and amusement is increasing at an alarming rate in all parts of the North. This emphasizes the need of effective Civil Rights Acts. Have you a Civil Rights Act in your State? If so, is it effective? If not why not get it amended? If you have it one, why not get one passed? Is your legislature in session this year?

2. It is but too evident that it will require a hard fight before we shall be able to get any sort of Reduction Measure thru Congress. We are going to fight. To fight effectively requires organization. In Connecticut we have organized a Constitution League the main purpose of which is the accomplishment of this very thing. The league was organized for the express purpose of enlisting in a common cause influential men who do not belong to the Movement. There must be a large number of good men in your State, outside the Movement, who could be used thru some such affiliated organization. Why not have one?

3. Our legal department is having much success in its "Jim-crow car" fight; but this fight relates mainly to interstate travel. For a long time to come, there will be "Jim-crow car" laws in the South which, if they are ingeniously drawn (and they will be), will...
be beyond attack so far as local travel is concerned—for over this the Federal jurisdiction does not extend. We cannot prevent separation, but we can improve conditions of local travel. The Federal Courts have held that the right to make a separation on a public conveyance, between white and colored passengers, can be upheld only when the carrier in good faith furnishes accommodations equal in quality and convenience to both classes. A systematic bringing of suits on this point, should result in material improvement of local accommodations. Why isn't this a fine opportunity for our State movement in the South? How about your State? What kind of local passage do you get for first class fares?

4. Exclusion of Negroes from Southern juries is one of the chief reasons for the too frequent miscarriage of justice in the trial of Negroes accused of crime. The United States Supreme Court has repeatedly allowed new trials for Negroes, where it has been shown that members of their race were excluded from the jury that convicted them. In those States where Negroes are excluded, why would it not be a splendid work for the local organizations to help Negroes in every worthy case to obtain new trials. An organized effort along this line would eventually result in the admission of Negroes to the jury. With the surety that new trials would be granted, the States would soon tire of the expense of fighting these cases. Are Negroes excluded from juries in your State? Are there any important cases pending in your locality? If so, why not give your jury system a whack on the head by taking them up and securing a new trial in case of conviction. Money? Take up a local subscription for the purpose. We are testing a law in our State, at this present time, by funds raised in this manner.

Now you can readily see that with the increasing expense of administration, and volume of its work, the National Organization will have neither means nor opportunity to attend to all these matters. It is evident that much of the work must be done by efficient State organization; and unless we are willing to confine our effort to a set of annual resolutions and an address to the Country, we must get busy. Don't sit down and wait on the initiative of the overworked General Secretary. Do something on your own initiative.

Yours for the Cause,

[Signature]

Chairman.